



RELIVING PAST

Actor-author-filmmaker Tisca Chopra says a trip to her parents' home is a visit into one's childhood

LEISURE P2



CRUCIAL MEETING

Russian President Vladimir Putin says he had 'constructive' talks with US counterpart Joe Biden

INTERNATIONAL P10



FRANCE BEAT GERMANY

Mats Hummels' unfortunate own-goal allows France to beat Germany and make a winning start at Euro 2020

SPORTS P12

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TWITTER BOOKED

GHAZIABAD: It did not take long for the law to initiate action against Twitter. A day after Twitter lost its 'safe harbour' shield, UP Police booked the microblogging site, a news portal and six persons in connection with the circulation of a video in which an elderly Muslim man narrates his ordeal after he was allegedly attacked by some people here. The FIR said that the video was shared with an intention to provoke communal unrest. "Twitter Inc and Twitter Communications India also did not take any measures to remove the videos posted by various people," the FIR said. "The video was distributed with the intention to disrupt public peace and so proper action should be taken," the FIR further stated.

MORE P9

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	52501.98	↓ 271.07
NIFTY	15767.50	↓ 101.80
DOLLAR	73.66	↓ ₹0.03
EURO	89.01	↑ ₹0.04
GOLD	₹48,430	↑ ₹6
SILVER	₹71,580	↑ ₹332

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP		
MAX	32.6°C	32.6°C
MIN	25.4°C	25.2°C
Humidity	90%	92%
Rainfall	Trace	5.4mm
		Generally cloudy sky

Coke tanks USD 4bn after Ronaldo act

RONALDO PROMOTES WATER AS HEALTHIEST DRINK DURING EURO 2020 PRESSER

Budapest, June 16: Irrespective of where he plays and how he plays Cristiano Ronaldo (also called CR7) commands a huge fan following. Every action he commits has a cascading effect. Soft drink giants Coca-Cola will be the first to verify the fact. One act of Ronaldo during the press conference ahead of the Portugal-Hungary game played Tuesday was enough for Coca-Cola to lose a whopping USD 4 billion.

Just before the press conference was about to begin, Ronaldo picked up two bottles of the soft drink kept on the table and moved them afar. He then picked up a bottle of 'Aqua' (water in

TIME TO GORGE



Ring-tailed lemurs sit on the hood of a truck as they grab a bite after days of starvation due to Covid-19 inside the Buin Zoo in Santiago, Chile

Covishield dosage gap may be changed again

New Delhi, June 16: India will revisit the dosage interval for Covishield vaccine and take appropriate action based on emerging data, NK Arora, chairperson of the working group of immunisation advisory body NTAGI, said Wednesday.

Describing the Covid-19 and vaccination situation as 'very dynamic', Arora said in a statement that emerging evidence and reports regarding efficacy of partial versus full immunisation are also under consideration.

On the decision to increase the gap between two doses of Covishield from four-six weeks to 12-16 weeks, Arora said the move was based on scientific decision and there was no dissenting voice among the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) members.

"Covid-19 and vaccination are very dynamic. Tomorrow, if the vaccine platform tells us that a narrower interval is better for our people, even if the benefit is 5-10%, the committee will take the decision on the basis of merit and its wisdom. On the other hand, if it turns out that the current decision is fine, we will continue with it," a Union Health Ministry statement quoting Arora said.

The NTAGI chairman also explained the reason behind widening the gap



MINISTRY TRASHES CALF SERUM TALES

- GAP BETWEEN COVISHIELD doses was increased after assessing efficacy rate
- NTAGI OPEN TO any changes in vaccination process as recommended
- ARORA REFUTES claims of dispute among panel members

NEW DELHI: Facts have been 'twisted and misrepresented' in some social media posts which suggested that indigenously developed Covaxin contains newborn calf serum, the Union Health Ministry said in a statement Wednesday. Newborn calf serum is used only for the preparation and growth of vero cells that have been used for decades in developing vaccines against polio, rabies and influenza. The vero cells are completely destroyed in the process of viral growth. Thereafter, the grown virus is also killed (inactivated) and purified. The inactivated virus is then used to make the final vaccine. No calf serum is used in the formulation of the final vaccine, the statement further said.

between the two Covishield doses. "The decision to increase the gap lay in the fundamental scientific reason regarding behaviour of adenovector vaccines," he said.

In the last week of April, the data released by Public Health England, United Kingdom's executive agency of the Department of Health, showed that vaccine efficacy varied between 65 and 88 per cent when interval is 12 weeks. "This was the basis on which they overcame their epidemic outbreak due to the Alpha variant. We also thought that this is a good idea, since

there are fundamental scientific reasons to show that when interval is increased, adenovector vaccines give better response. Hence the decision was taken May 13, to increase the interval to 12-16 weeks," informed Arora.

"We have a very open and transparent system where decisions are taken on scientific basis. The Covid-19 group took that decision, with no dissenting voice. This issue was then discussed threadbare at an NTAGI meeting, again with no dissenting notes. The recommendation was that the vaccine interval has to be 12-16 weeks," Arora added.

FUEL PRICES HIKED AGAIN

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 16: Fuel rates increased again Wednesday across India adding more misery for the common man already grappling with rising food prices amidst shrinking incomes. With the latest hike Wednesday, petrol prices have reached very close to hitting the century-mark all across India. Petrol prices have already crossed the ₹100-mark in certain cities and towns of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh.

Petrol price was hiked by 26 paise per litre while diesel prices rose by

CITY FUEL PRICES	
PETROL	₹97.48 (+0.26)
DIESEL	₹95.31 (+0.14)

13 paise for the same quantity on the day all across India.

Petrol in the national capital now costs ₹96.66 per litre while the rate of diesel is ₹87.41 per litre. In Mumbai, where petrol prices crossed ₹100 mark for the first time ever May 29, the fuel rate reached a new high of ₹102.82 per litre Wednesday. Diesel prices also went up to ₹94.84 a litre, the highest among all metros.

With Wednesday's price hike, fuel prices have now increased on 25 days and remained unchanged on 22 days since May 1. The 25 increases have hiked petrol prices by ₹6.26 per litre. Similarly, diesel prices have increased by ₹6.68 per litre across India.

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Lockdown turns sweeter in state

SWEET SHOPS, CONFECTIONARIES CAN OPEN AS PER NEW TIMINGS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 16: In spite of the decrease in Covid-19 cases in the state, the Odisha government said Wednesday that partial lockdown will continue till July 1, but with some relaxations. The Odisha government had imposed lockdown from May 5 to 14, which was first extended to June 1 and subsequently to June 17 (5.00am).

Briefing mediapersons here, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra said, "To break the chain of Covid-19 infection, the government had imposed lockdown in three phases beginning May 5. With the support and cooperation of people and Covid warriors, the state has managed to overcome the peak of infections. Test positivity rate (TPR) which a week ago was around 15% has come down to six per cent," he said.

The chief secretary said that the 30 districts of Odisha have been divided into two groups on the basis of active caseload. The 17 southern and western districts have been marked as Category A, where the TPR has come down below five per cent. The remaining 13 where TPR is high have been put in Category B.

The Category A districts are Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Bargarh, Subarnapur, Kandhamal, Boudh, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Ganjam, Sonepur, Gajapati, Kalahandi and Nuapada. As the TPR in these districts are below five per cent, some relaxations like opening of shops from 6.00am to 5.00pm have been allowed. Street vendors have also been allowed to oper-

- Education institutions and coaching centres to remain closed till July 1
- Restrictions along Ch'garh and Jharkhand border eased
- Cinema halls, malls, market places to remain closed; however all types of shops can open in Category A districts
- All financial institutions to function as before
- Sales, services of cycles, automobiles allowed
- Movement of electricians, carpenters, plumbers, IT service-providers and self-employed persons permitted

ate, Mahapatra informed. The Category B districts are Puri, Kendrapara, Keonjhar, Khurda, Jajpur, Balasore, Jagatsinghpur, Bhadrak, Dhenkanal, Angul, Cuttack, Nayagarh and Mayurbhanj. In these districts shops can open from 6.00am-1.00pm. It should be mentioned here that sweet shops and confectionaries have been allowed to operate in both the categories.

However, the Chief Secretary informed that the weekend shutdown will continue across the state till July 1. He also said that border restrictions with the states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh have been relaxed. However, those will continue with West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.

Salons, gyms and parks will remain closed. Restaurants and dhabas will be allowed to serve take-aways, but will not be able to entertain customers.

All temples and places of worship will remain closed till July 1. However, rituals will continue as done earlier.

Jagannath Temple closed till July 25

DEBA SNANA PURNIMA RITUAL JUNE 24

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 16: The Jagannath Temple in Puri will remain closed for devotees till July 25, chief administrator of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA), Krishan Kumar said Wednesday. The decision was taken during a meeting Wednesday with servitors' body, 'Chhatisha Nijog' in Puri.

As per instructions of Odisha government, the annual Rath Yatra festival will be held without devotees from July 12 to July 23. Two days have been kept in hand, so that the decision to open the temple can be taken after reviewing the situation, post the chariot festival.

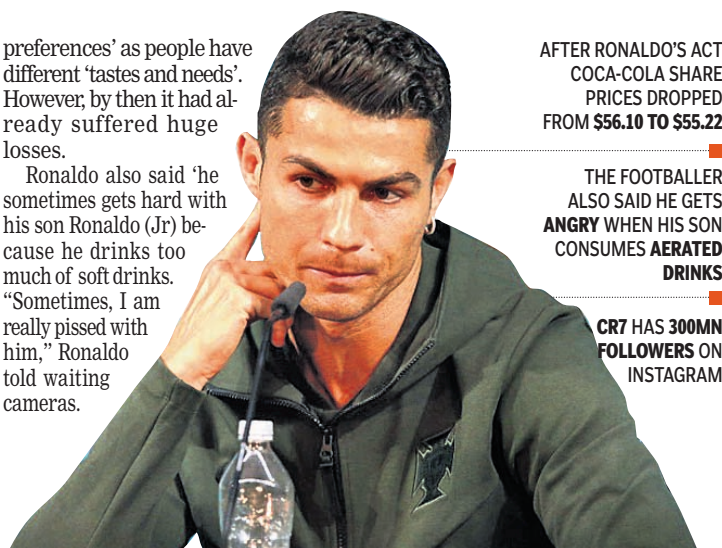
The SJTA has also decided that the upcoming

Deba Snana Purnima, the day which marks the grand bathing rituals of the Lords will be held June 24. This will also be done sans devotees. All the rituals will be conducted by the servitors and SJTA officials.

The temple has remained closed for devotees from May 5 to till date and now it has been extended to July 25.

In view of the Covid-19 situation, a bio-bubble has been created at 'Rath Yard', the workplace where construction of the chariots is currently on. This is to ensure a Covid-free environment for those involved in the building of the chariots.

It should also be stated here that the Puri district administration has imposed curfew during the entire duration of the festival like it did last year.



AFTER RONALDO'S ACT COCA-COLA SHARE PRICES DROPPED FROM \$56.10 TO \$55.22

THE FOOTBALLER ALSO SAID HE GETS ANGRY WHEN HIS SON CONSUMES AERATED DRINKS

CR7 HAS 300M FOLLOWERS ON INSTAGRAM

leisure



SCORSESE 'STILL ANGRY' OVER FINAL EDIT OF TAXI DRIVER: LEBOWITZ

Taxi Driver ranks among the best films from Hollywood veteran Martin Scorsese but the filmmaker still has some regrets about the 1976 feature -- mainly the colour red. Scorsese is 'still angry' over the final edit of the Robert De Niro-starrer cult classic movie, says his friend and American author Fran Lebowitz.

JLO TO STAR IN NETFLIX SCI-FI THRILLER ATLAS

Actor-pop star Jennifer Lopez will headline Netflix's *Atlas*, a sci-fi thriller, which will be directed by Brad Peyton of *Rampage* fame. Lopez, who recently signed a first-look deal with the streamer, will also produce the project, sources told *Deadline*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will focus your attention today on your beloved. You will feel very energetic, but your commitment to work will falter. So don't be surprised if your superiors are annoyed. However, Ganesh says today is a day for romantic pursuits.

TAURUS
This day you will be prone to be stubborn and uncompromising in your business and professional dealings and there by inviting unnecessary problems. Ganesh urges you to guard against this tendency and conduct yourself cordially and amiably with your colleagues and clients. The day will turn out well for executives and administrators.

GEMINI
A hectic and busy day awaits you, which will probably leave you feeling bored and listless. Find creative ways to beat the boredom, or take a break and do things which appeal to you today, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will be involved in a team effort and associated with work like inspection and examination. You will base your opinions on your friends' choices. So select good friends, says Ganesh. You will spend time with close circle.

LEO
It is an important day for you. Everyone in the office will accept your capabilities and will praise you. You may incur expenses on entertainment and luxuries. Your financial difficulties will now be solved. It is better to have an eye on long term gains. A progressive day on the whole, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Today you will feel monetarily much stronger than you have ever felt, says Ganesh. You will realise the need to make monetary arrangements for some unforeseen financial instability that may occur in the future. Your leadership qualities will be appreciated by people around you. Ganesh warns that there may be wild fluctuations in monetary transactions.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will be able to improve your relations abroad. There will be good news coming from friends or relatives living abroad. Your working ability and efficiency will make you popular in the office today.

SCORPIO
An electric wire of 440 volts is apt to describe you today. According to Ganesh, you are in a belligerent mood today and can burst like a fireball. Meditation and yoga is likely to improve the situation. Remember, treat others the way you want to be treated by them.

SAGITTARIUS
Suddenly, you become ambidextrous and plan to multi task today, says Ganesh. Your instincts will guide you today, trust them and move ahead. You may come across few challenges. But, anyway, who wants an easy way out, right?

CAPRICORN
Your interests are guarded by the Almighty, so don't worry about them. Not that you are not ambitious, but you are satisfied with what you have and gained. You have set some realistic goals for yourself and you are making sincere efforts to achieve them. You are a simple person and you like your life to be uncomplicated.

AQUARIUS
You are close to you family, and now is the time to enjoy the company of your loved ones at home. You will take them out for shopping, go with them on picnics and pamper them in every possible way, says Ganesh. Not that you made them feel special with a selfish motive, but your show of affection will work wonders for you.

PISCES
Ganesh asks you not to undertake any new project or business venture due to the alignment of the planets being unfavorable. You will do well in tasks that do not require too much creativity and innovation. Do not take sides when you are not required to and it make have heavy consequences in future.

When Zareen was told to put on weight

Mumbai: Actress Zareen Khan, who faced body shaming after the release of her debut film, the Salman Khan-starrer *Veer* in 2010, claims she was actually told to put on weight for the role by 'experienced people' who gave her 'instructions'.

Talking about whether the industry judges an actor on the basis of look, Zareen said: "It definitely does. I wouldn't say all of it, but a major section of the industry does. In the beginning it was really difficult because of the comparison, my weight was almost a national issue."

When Zareen made her debut opposite Salman in *Veer*, people were quick to notice that she had a passing likeness with Katrina Kaif. Soon, the focus shifted to her body type.

"Everybody was just talking about my weight and I couldn't understand - why is my weight such an issue, because I was told to put on that weight," she claimed. IANS

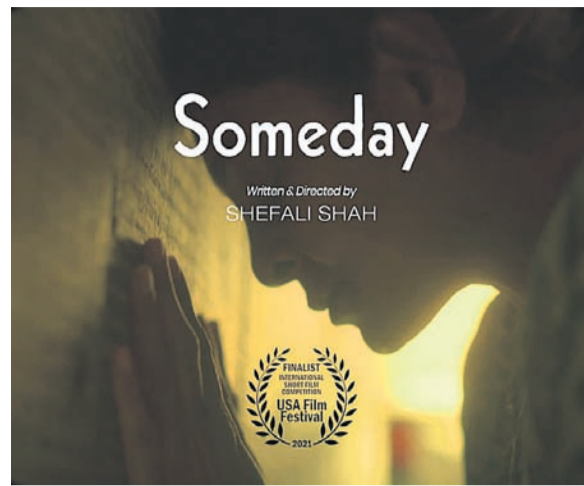


TISCA TURNS NOSTALGIC

Mumbai: Actress-author-filmmaker Tisca Chopra shared a nostalgic post Wednesday after a trip to her parents' home, recalling the lotus stem prepared by her mother as magical.

"Love and Lotus Stems A trip to the parents home is a visit into one's childhood. Familiar bartans, old bedsheets (that have now become kitchen rags) and of course the passage of one's own life scattered over their walls proudly.. pictures of my graduation, my first magazine cover; a poster of a forgotten film.. But what causes my heart to dance is how mothers will always be mothers.. they want to feed you, slogging away in the kitchen wanting to share their secret recipes, that never turn out the same," she wrote in an Instagram post.

"All mums believe that any troubles you may have will vanish by consuming their haath ka khaana.. and somehow, they do vanish.. because adult troubles fade as you become a kid again, get pampered again..," added the *Tare Zameen Par* actress. IANS



Shefali's directorial *Someday* to be screened in Germany

Mumbai: Actress Shefali Shah made her debut as a director in April with *Someday*. The film will be screened at the 18th Indian Film Festival Stuttgart, Germany.

"I can't even begin to tell how excited I am with the news of *Someday* being screened at the 18th Indian Film Festival Stuttgart, making its reach across the globe. It's a great honour," says Shefali.

She adds that it was a conscious decision to send the film to festivals across the globe, to see where she stands as a total newcomer in the area of direction. "The fact that it's been selected in a prestigious festival is such a big assurance," she says.

Someday is a story of a mother and a daughter. Vidhi, a frontline warrior, comes home to a seven-day quarantine after 15 days on duty, and meets her mother, who suffers from Alzheimer's.

The Indian Film Festival Stuttgart this year is scheduled to be held from July 21 to 25. Due to the pandemic, the festival will go online this year. IANS



Veteran actors Chandrasekhar, Swatilekha Sengupta no more

Mumbai/Kolkata: A pall of gloom descended on Hindi and Bengali film industries following the death of two of their veteran actors Wednesday. They are actor Chandrasekhar and actress Swatilekha Sengupta.

Chandrasekhar was 98 and suffering from age-related ailments.

In a career spanning from the 40s to the early 2000s, Chandrasekhar worked in over 250 films and television shows. The actor is often recalled for his role of Sumanta in Ramanand Sagar's popular serial *Ramayan*, and his other notable performances include roles in films like *Surang, Cha Cha Cha, Kaali Topi Laal Rumaal* and *Basant Bahaar* among others.

Apart from being active as an actor, Chandrasekhar had written, directed and produced two self-starring projects - *Street Singer* and *Cha Cha Cha*. He had also worked as Gulzar's assistant director in films like *Parichay, Koshish, Khushboo, Achanak, Aandhi, Mausam*.

Chandrasekhar had also served various film bodies in administrative capacities. He was President of Cine Artistes Association (CIN-TAA) from 1985 to 1996, and at various points in his career had served as President of the Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE), Vice-President of Indian Film Directors Association, and a member of Indian Motion Pictures Producers Association (IMPPA).



CHANDRASEKHAR



SWATILEKHA SENGUPTA

Several cine celebrities including Arun Govil, who played the character of Lord Ram in *Ramayan*

condoled the death. Similarly, Swatilekha passed away at a private hospital in Kolkata Wednesday afternoon. The 71-year-old theatre and film personality was reportedly battling kidney-re-

lated ailments. She shot to fame when the late maestro Satyajit Ray cast her as his leading lady in his 1984 classic *Ghare Baire*, as the female protagonist Bimala alongside the late Soumitra Chatterjee.

A popular name in the world of Bengali theatre, she returned to the big screen in 2015, once again pairing with Soumitra Chatterjee in *Bela Seshe*.

The second film of the same franchise, titled *Bela Shuru*, starring the late Soumitra with Swatilekha, is awaiting release.

The actress is survived by her husband, veteran theatre personality Rudraprasad Sengupta, and her daughter Sohini Sengupta, also an actress.

PEANUTS



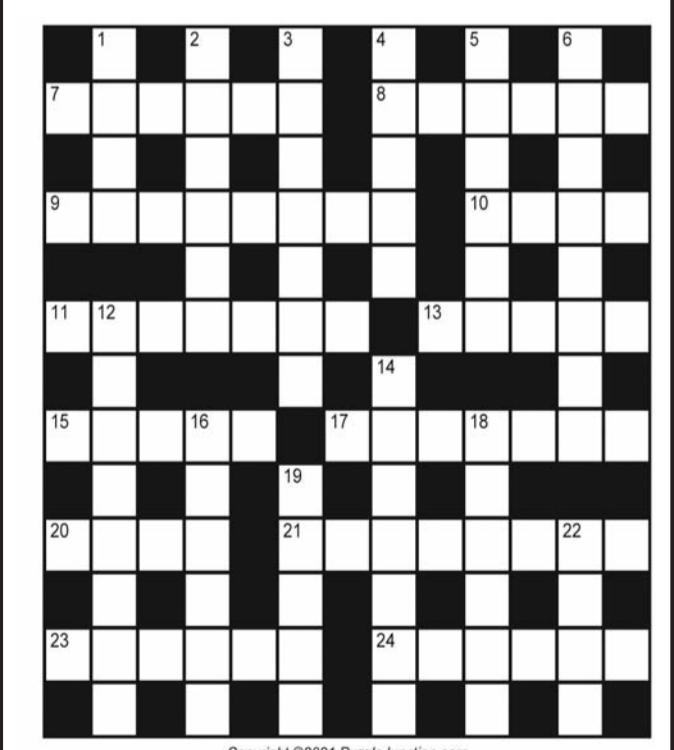
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Gumdrop
 - 8 Scottish clan leader and outlaw (3,3)
 - 9 Blonde's secret?
 - 10 Quarrel
 - 11 Golf course area
 - 13 Intense hatred
 - 15 Barrel part
 - 17 Busybody
 - 20 Toward shelter
 - 21 Put together
 - 23 Bucket accessory
 - 24 Jamaica, e.g.
 - Down**
 - 1 Olympic sled
 - 2 Hearsay
 - 3 Large seabird
 - 4 Salad oil holder
 - 5 Died down
 - 6 Hairdo
 - 12 Addax
 - 14 Diver's gear (3,4)
 - 16 City on the Danube
 - 18 Chin feature
 - 19 Sheik's bevy
 - 22 Air sac

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.

				9				
8	3	4	5					
5				3		2	6	
				3	1	2		
1	4						5	
		3	9	2				
	1	9	6	7				
8		2						
6								8

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

U	N	P	A	R	A	L	L	E	L	E	D
S	E	E	O	L	A	S					
H	I	N	G	E	L	E	I	T	G	E	L
E	G	L	I	G	R	I					
R	O	U	T	S	T	R	I	K	E	U	P
I	H	A	B	O							
S	I	N	B	A	D	G	L	U	T	E	N
P	C	P	E	R							
O	R	I	G	I	N	A	L	S	E	R	F
K	E	N	E	U	Z	L	A				
O	K	E	N	N	I	N	L	A	W		
Y	O	A	D	C	H	E	N	A	S		
A	T	T	A	C	H	E	C	A	S	E	S

SUDOKU

7	5	3	9	2	8	4	1	6
4	2	8	1	7	6	3	9	5
1	9	6	5	4	3	7	8	2
6	8	2	7	3	5	1	4	9
3	1	9	4	8	2	6	5	7
5	4	7	6	9	1	8	2	3
8	3	4	2	6	9	5	7	1
9	6	5	8	1	7	2	3	4
2	7	1	3	5	4	9	6	8

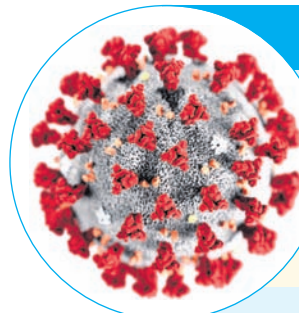
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



QUEUING FOR FOOD

People queuing up at an Aahar centre for subsidised meals at Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	17,75,50,893	16,20,19,715	38,40,442
India	2,96,33,105	2,83,88,100	3,79,573
Odisha	8,63,061	8,17,359	3,432

State investing ₹8,500Cr on health infra: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 16: Stating that healthcare is the prime focus of his government, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday said the government is investing more than Rs 8,500 crore on development of health infrastructure.

Patnaik said this while interacting with 786 newly-appointed doctors who were recently selected through Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC).

He said that the state government is continuously strengthening the healthcare system by recruiting large number of personnel in the last few years.

Appreciating doctors' role in the current pandemic, he said that doctors have a special respect in society. "People admire doctors as Gods, especially during life and death situation. The current pandemic has transformed doctors into warriors. The doctor community has been in the forefront in the fight against Covid for more than a year," the Chief Minister said.

Congratulating the young doctors, on virtual platforms, for choosing a life of a public servant and getting selected successfully as medical officers, Naveen said that it's a landmark during their life's journey which they achieved after years of sincere efforts and academic excellence.

"Your family is proud of your achievement. You are now a role model in your community," he told



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik interacting with the newly-appointed doctors virtually. ST Secretary VK Pandian is also seen

SECRETARY TO CM (ST) VK PANDIAN SAID THAT THE STATE HAS A ROBUST FEEDBACK MECHANISM WHICH HAS BEEN HIGHLY APPRECIATED BY THE PEOPLE

ACS HEALTH, PK MOHAPATRA SAID THAT THE SHRI JAGANNATH MEDICAL COLLEGE AT PURI WILL FUNCTION FROM THIS YEAR. ODISHA WILL ADD TWO MEDICAL COLLEGES EACH YEAR TILL 2024

the doctors. Speaking on the battle against Covid-19, Patnaik said that like rest of the world, Covid has taken a heavy toll on Odisha. There has been a lot of stress on the state healthcare system.

With the cooperation of highly spirited medical fraternity, the state has been able to save many lives in spite of all the challenges of infrastructure, manpower and medical supplies, he added.

"The fight against Covid is far from over. You are all joining during very challenging times in the midst of the second wave of the

pandemic. Even though the cases are coming down, we all need to be extremely careful," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Health Minister Naba Kishore Das said that Odisha is providing free healthcare and free medicines to Covid-19 patients. Efforts are on to make Odisha a doctor surplus state and the minister added.

Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra said that the government is making all-out efforts to provide quality healthcare to people in remotest corners of the state.

Interacting with the doctors, Secretary to CM (ST) VK Pandian said. "Serving to the satisfaction of the poorest of poor is the underlying mechanism of good governance. Using technology to provide quick, effective service can bring the real transformation. Doctors should follow the CM's motto- 'every life is precious'."

Speaking on Mo Sarkar programme, Pandian said that the state has a robust feedback mechanism which has been highly appreciated by the people. He advised the new recruits to work with empathy till the end of their career.

Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) Health, PK Mohapatra said that the Shri Jagannath Medical College at Puri will function from this year. Odisha will add two medical colleges each year till 2024, he added.

Post Covid complications can persist up to 3 months: Panda

PANDA CLAIMS THAT SUCH ISSUES ARE NORMALLY NOT SEEN IN KIDS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 16: Several health experts Wednesday threw light on the post Covid health issues and tried to allay the fears of people.

Jayant Panda from the department of medicines at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack said the post Covid health issues, referred as 'Long Covid', could persist up to three months.

"We have seen symptoms like insomnia, lack of hunger, diarrhoea, headache, nausea, cough and chest pain persisting for three months in people who have recovered from Covid. We call them post Covid issues. In some cases, we have seen health issues in patients even after three months of their recovery from Covid," Panda added.

He also said, "There are also cases of neuro psychiatric issues, increased heartbeat and loss of memory. Women, elderly people and those who had been hospitalised for longer period due to Covid infection are more vulnerable to post Covid issues. People with co-morbidities also suffer from such issues."

Panda, however, claimed that such issues are normally not seen



We have seen symptoms like insomnia, lack of hunger, diarrhoea, headache, nausea, cough and chest pain persisting for three months in people who have recovered from Covid

JAYANT PANDA | DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINES, SCB

in kids. "We do not see prolonged post Covid health issues in Children. However, cases of loss of smell and taste could be seen among them for four to six weeks," he said.

Banambar Ray, Critical Care Unit chief of SUM Ultimate Hospital, briefed the people about use of ECMO machine in Covid patients.

"Through ECMO machine, we purify the blood which is usually done by lungs in a human body. The machine is used in Covid patients whose lungs have been com-

promised. In the past, we had seen its utility in cases of swine flu. In cases of pneumonia or acute distress syndrome and lung fibrosis, the machine is also being used," he said

He also added, "Doctors were using ECMO in lungs transplant process much before Covid-19 pandemic. We can use ECMO machine on Covid patients for several months. But, it is not a treatment. It is just a support system. There are also side effects of ECMO use, including bleeding and infections."

NGT seeks reports from OCL India Ltd, Sundargarh Collector

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, June 16: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has granted the last opportunity of three weeks to M/s OCL India Ltd and Sundargarh Collector on a petition challenging environment clearance (EC) given to the company for expansion of limestone production.

A two-judge bench of the tribunal comprising judicial member B Amit Shalekar and expert member Saibal Dasgupta noted that the Odisha State Pollution Control Board and Ministry of Environment and Forests have filed their counter affidavits in response to the application. However, the Sundargarh DM and M/S OCL India Ltd have not filed their counter affidavits yet. The tribu-

nal granted the last one opportunity of three weeks to the OCL to file the counter affidavit. The NGT posted the hearing on the matter to July 14.

The petition filed by Bibul Topo alleged that the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests granted EC for expansion of limestone production from 4.2 million tonne per annum (MTPA) to 9.5 MTPA, 0.8 MTPA of dolomite and rejects/wastes to 7.42 MTPA along with installation of a new crusher unit of 1,600TPH in the mine lease area of 873.057 hectare located at Alanda, Bihabandh, Jhagarpur, Kesramal, Raiberna, Katang, Dhauraada, Lanjiberna and Kukuda villages under Rajgangpur and Kutra tehsils in Sundargarh district.

Topo contended that the environment clearance has been

granted in contravention of the existing norms and conduct of public hearing process. "There is also failure on the part of the project proponent to adhere to the terms regarding conduct of public hearing, assessment of impacts on wildlife, groundwater impacts and mitigation measures, effect on aquifer projects and details of species of flora and fauna likely to be affected," the applicant contended.

It is also alleged that the authorities have been misled by the project proponent by carrying out mining activities outside the mining lease area in violation of the existing statutory norms and regulations.

The tribunal had in August last year issued notice to all the respondents.

Raghurajpur is the pride of Odisha: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 16: A nine-day traditional mural art camp, organised by Odia Language Literature and Culture department in association with Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi, at heritage crafts village of Raghurajpur in Puri district concluded Wednesday.

More than 150 artists of the village participated in the camp with strict adherence to Covid guidelines. The artists used the walls of their houses as platforms to showcase their skills. Many of them have already created identity for themselves at national and international levels.

Each artist was awarded with a cash prize of Rs 10,000 by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik who participated in the concluding ceremony virtually.

The best five artists would be selected for felicitation by Lalit Kala Akademi, sources said.



An artist at the mural art camp at Raghurajpur in Puri

On the occasion, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said, "Raghurajpur village is the pride of Odisha and its artists and their art have brought laurels for the state. Raghurajpur is the birthplace of great artists

like Odissi guru Kelucharan Mohapatra."

Patnaik said the art camp at Raghurajpur has been documented and it will be available in the YouTube and other social media

MORE THAN 150 ARTISTS OF THE VILLAGE PARTICIPATED IN THE CAMP WITH STRICT ADHERENCE TO COVID GUIDELINES

EACH ARTIST WAS AWARDED WITH A CASH PRIZE OF RS 10,000 BY CHIEF MINISTER NAVEEN PATNAIK

platforms for the whole world. Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi president Sudarsan Pattnaik said, "The art camp was an opportunity for the painters to display their talent and uphold the artistic tradition of the craft village."

Odia Language Literature and Culture Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi also participated in the concluding ceremony virtually. Among others, principal secretary of the department Bishnupada Sethi and Akademi secretary Panchanan Samal were present on the occasion.

Khimji Foundation donates ambulance to Srimandir admin



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 16: Khimji Foundation, the philanthropic wing of Khimji Jewellers, Wednesday donated an ambulance to the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) in Puri.

The ambulance would be used in case of medical emergencies of the devotees, pilgrims, servants and the employees of the SJTA.

Mitesh Khimji, Director of Khimji Foundation, formally handed over the ambulance to SJTA Chief Administrator Krishan Kumar in Puri. "On behalf of the SJTA, I would like to thank Khimji Foundation for donating the ambulance. As we know, usually lakhs of devotees visit Srimandir to have the darshan of Lord Jagannath. We have always been looking forward to provide basic health facilities to everyone in need. And I hope this ambulance will definitely benefit the devotees, servants and employees of SJTA during health emergency," said Krishan Kumar.

Mitesh said, "While the entire country is fighting the second wave of Covid-19, the SJTA has taken up multiple responsibilities in its fight against the pandemic. We feel ourselves fortunate enough to get this opportunity."

Panel soon for shifting of iconic warrior-horse replica



The warrior-horse replica at Master Canteen Square in Capital city

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 16: The Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) will soon constitute an expert committee that will prepare a detailed strategy to relocate the iconic warrior-horse statue at Master Canteen Square to the Smart Janpath project.

Erected in 1988 by the BDA itself, the ancient replica of the famous sculpture of Sun Temple showcasing a warrior with the horse, will make way for the proposed multi-modal hub project at city railway station. While the Culture department has given approval for relocation of the statue, BDA has been entrusted with shifting of the structure and will bear expenses involved in it.

"The replica along with other statues placed at the Master Canteen Square will be shifted to the roundabout at Governor House Square in front of Raj Bhawan and will be placed adjacent to the statue of Utkal Gourab Madhusudan Das. As it is an important landmark of the city, we will form an expert committee which will ensure that no harm is caused to the sculpture during its relocation," a BDA official said.

Although the statue is also an emblem adopted by the state government, the structure is set to lose its place to the ambitious multi-modal hub project which was proposed by the Odisha government in September 2019. An MoU signed between the BDA and East Coast Railway had planned

Erected in 1988 by the BDA, the ancient replica of the famous sculpture of Sun Temple showcasing a warrior with the horse, will make way for the Railways' proposed multi-modal hub project

The replica along with other statues placed at the Master Canteen Square will be shifted to the roundabout at Governor House square in front of Raj Bhawan and will be placed adjacent to the statue of Utkal Gourab Madhusudan Das

to develop a state-of-the-art railway station, coupled with city bus terminal, multi-level car parking among others, spread over an area of a whopping 1.74 lakh sq ft.

While the idea of relocation was proposed by the Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL), the approval for the same was given by the Culture department after it was decided that the statue did not have 'ancient' status. As per the Ministry of Culture, any structure is considered ancient which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and has been in existence for not less than 100 years.

Moreover, sources said that the relocation was also given approval as the department felt that the structure will lose visibility as widening of roads for Smart Janpath and multi-modal hub is set to begin. With ample space left at Governor's House roundabout, the structure will be safely placed in order not to lose the city's unique identity.

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BJP slams govt over ₹10K cr unsold iron ore

Gang that supplied arms to D-brothers busted; 4 held

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 16: The state unit of BJP Wednesday demanded that the state government should take over the extracted and unevacuated iron ore worth around Rs 10,000 crore lying unsold in various iron ore blocks of the state.

Addressing a presser, BJP leader and Opposition Chief Whip Mohan Majhi said 16.5 MMT of iron ore worth around Rs 10,000 crore is lying unsold at different iron ore blocks of the state.

He said the minerals should be sold as per the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation (MMDR) Act to increase the revenue of both the state and Union governments, create employment opportunities and maintain a balance in the competition in the steel industry sector.

The BJP leader said, "Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, 17 mining leases with a total capacity



BJP leaders at the press conference, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

of approximately 58 to 60 MMT of iron ore were auctioned in March 2020 in Odisha. Out of this, 16.5 MMT ore, including 8.5 MMT in Nuagaon iron ore block of Keonjhar district, worth around Rs 10,000 crore was available as on November 1, 2020, and could not be lifted within the prescribed seven months period as per the MMDR Act."

Majhi said the leaseholders had

moved the High Court for the extension of their lease period. But the High Court stated that the Principal Mines Secretary would take a decision on the issue and the decision would be binding on all parties.

Later, the Mines Secretary denied the extension and held that the minerals not lifted are deemed to be the property of the state gov-

16.5 MMT of iron ore worth around ₹10,000 crore is lying unsold at different iron ore blocks of the state, says Oppn Chief Whip Mohan Majhi

ernment and can be sold or disposed of by the state government.

But the state government, the BJP leader alleged, has not taken any action to sell the iron ore leading to a shortage of the mineral in the market and a hike in iron ore prices.

Refuting the allegations of the saffron party, BJD leader Lenin Mohanty said, "BJP is making misleading comments on the mining affairs in the state to gain political mileage. In Odisha, auctioning of mines is done in very free, transparent and fair manner."

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 16: The twin city Commissionerate Police Wednesday claimed to have busted a notorious gang of gunrunners with the arrest of four of its members, including the kingpin, and recovery of illegal firearms from their possession. The gang was supplying arms and ammunition to notorious Dhalasamanta brothers, said sources.

Police commissioner Saumendra Priyadarshi identified the gang's kingpin as Tukuna Swain and three of his accomplices—Santosh Rout, Jyoti Ranjan Barik and Prashant Barik. As many as 11 pistols and 51 rounds of live ammunition have been recovered from their possession, the police top brass said in a press conference.

"Tukuna used to procure the il-



legal firearms from Munger in Bihar and supply them to the gangsters, including notorious Dhalasamanta brothers who are now lodged in jail," Priyadarshi said.

He added that as many as 18 criminal cases are pending against Tukuna in various police stations of Angul and Jagatsinghpur. While five cases are pending against Santosh in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, as many cases are also pending against Jyoti and nine cases against Prashant.

Tukuna used to procure illegal firearms from Munger in Bihar and supply them to the gangsters in Odisha

The police commissioner said that as many as 43 illegal firearms and 225 rounds of ammunition have been seized in the Cuttack Urban Police area in the last three months during a special drive.

Below 4K new cases for 2nd straight day after mid-April

Amar for free admission of Covid orphans in KVs



Youths queue up to get inoculated against Covid-19 at Unit-IV in Bhubaneswar

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 16: Odisha's Covid-19 tally surged to 8,63,061 Wednesday as 3,535 more people tested positive for the infection, while 44 fresh fatalities pushed the coastal state's coronavirus death toll to 3,432, a Health department official said.

The state registered less than

4,000 fresh infections for the second consecutive day after mid-April even as active cases dropped below the 50,000-mark.

As many as 2,016 new cases were recorded in quarantine centres, while 1,519 fresh infections were detected during contact tracing, he said.

Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls, reported the

highest number of new cases at 533, followed by Jajpur (348) and Cuttack (326). Khurda also registered the highest number of fresh fatalities at five, followed by four each in Ganjam, Kalahandi and Puri and three each in Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Jharsuguda, Rayagada and Sundargarh.

The state has so far tested over 1.28 crore samples for Covid-19, including 58,695 Tuesday

Fifty-three Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities thus far. The state now has 47,796 active cases, as 8,11,780 people have recovered from the disease to date, including 6,799 Tuesday, the official said. Odisha has so far tested over 1.28 crore samples for Covid-19, including 58,695 Tuesday.

The state's positivity rate stands at 6.72 per cent.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 16: Rajya Sabha MP Amar Patnaik Wednesday urged Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' to allow free admission of children orphaned by Covid-19 to the Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs).

In a letter to the Union Minister, Patnaik said that the coronavirus pandemic, especially the second wave, is nothing less of a bolt from the blue for many children as they

have lost one or both parents to the cruel disease. "In several cases, the children are too small to realise the loss of parental support, both in psychological and economic terms. One thing that we as a society and government could do is to ensure that their education, health and overall development are not hindered in any manner," Patnaik wrote in his letter.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has already announced a host of support schemes, including free

education and monthly pension, for the children who lost their parents to the Covid-19.

"I would, however, request you to kindly consider giving free admission beyond any quota whatsoever and beyond any sanctioned number of seats in any Kendriya Vidyalayas in the country in any class to these orphaned children," the MP said.

Since the session is about to begin and admissions are on, the usual process of govern-

ment collecting the names from districts and states and then allocating them seats in various schools may not be a smart move at this point of time as it would be time consuming, Patnaik pointed out.

The MP added, "A much more humane approach would be to allow these children to walk in to any KVs of their choice and take admission based on certificates of death of their parents due to Covid-19."

4 RPF OFFICIALS FETED WITH 'DG INSIGNIA'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 16: Four Railway Protection Force (RPF) officers including the Divisional Security Commissioner of Khurda Road, M Sambasiva Rao, inspectors Shamlal Sahadevan and Anil Kumar Singh and sub-inspector Pramod Kumar Pani have been felicitated with DG Insignia.

Sambasiva Rao has made strategic plans and sincere efforts by monitoring the works, reducing the number of pending trials, crowd management and action against illegal travelling and upliftment of barracks. He is a strategic planner in mega events.

Sahadevan undertakes relentless and dedicated efforts in streamlining and optimising operational efficiencies and he has major contribution in uplifting internal vigilance system.

Singh has contributed to detection of big rackets related to e-ticketing, recovering cannabis, rescuing left-behind luggage and arrest of child traffickers along with busting of fake recruitment rackets. He played a vital role in restoration of Puri railway station which was affected by cyclone Fani.

Pani maintains proven, impeccable and self-guided integrity. He maintains excellent rapport with internal and external agencies.

He has immense contribution in handling recruitment drives and other important security related works.

DG Insignia is the highest award from DG/RPF of Railway Board. Usually it is awarded once in a lifetime, barring exceptional achievements, when it is awarded again.

Vehicle showrooms to open today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 16: The state government has allowed opening of vehicle showrooms from Thursday.

In its latest lockdown guidelines issued on Wednesday, the government has allowed activities related to sale and service (including service units of dealers/ garage on wheels) of all

automobiles and bicycles from June 17.

Following this instruction, state transport commissioner has asked all Regional Transport Officers (RTOs) to continue registration of new vehicles from tomorrow till further order.

The RTOs are permitted to do registration of new vehicles by dealers throughout the state on VAHAN portal from June 17.

Ration cards as proof for vaccination

Bhubaneswar: The state health department Wednesday wrote to the district Collectors to include ration card as a valid document for identification of a beneficiary for Covid-19 vaccinations. The Health department said that as per approval from the Union government, ration cards with a photograph approved by the state government would be valid for the registration for vaccination and verification.

Link between nCoV & delivery modes ruled out

PREGNANT WOMEN URGED TO AVOID VACCINATION AGAINST COVID-19 DURING THE FIRST TRIMESTER

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 16: Modes of childbirth are in no way linked to chances of transmission of novel coronavirus from pregnant women to children.

Gynaecologists from the city said that in most cases of pregnancy, Covid does not have much impact on the foetus and there is lack of any study indicating vertical transmission of Covid (transmission from mother to child).

"There is no need to induce labour or deliver by Caesarean section early because of Covid-19 infection. Decisions regarding mode of delivery should be taken as per



standard obstetric practice in most situations. C-section could be considered for women with respiratory problems," said Abhipsa Mishra, senior consultant at Utkal

Hospital here. She also urged the pregnant women to avoid vaccination in the first three months of pregnancy but urged others to go ahead.

There is no need to induce labour or deliver by Caesarean section early because of Covid-19 infection. Decisions regarding mode of delivery should be taken as per standard obstetric practice in most situations

ABHIPSA MISHRA | SENIOR CONSULTANT AT UTKAL HOSPITAL

vertently in a pregnant lady, termination of pregnancy is not needed," she said.

Others claimed that there has not been any concrete study to prove link between foetal abnormalities and Covid-infected pregnant women. However, experts warn of special care during the first and last three months of pregnancy.

"The first trimester and last trimester in pregnancy cases are crucial. Pregnant women should try to ward off the threat of exposure to the virus by adhering to Covid-appropriate behaviour like social distancing, wearing masks and staying indoors," said Veena Panda, another gynaecol-

ogist from the city.

The state government has made special arrangements and wards in government hospitals like SCB Medical College & Hospital and others for delivery care of Covid-infected women while some private hospitals too have started offering such services.

Although norms bar pregnant women from anti-Covid vaccinations, recently lactating mothers have been allowed to take the prophylactic measures.

The state government has recently denied transmission of Covid from lactating mothers to newborns if Covid-appropriate behaviour is followed.

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Rourkela among 50 finalists in Global Mayors Challenge

6yrs on, 4 bridges in Jajpur still incomplete

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, June 16: As many as 15,000 residents of four blocks in this district are likely to get cut off from the outside world during rainy season as construction of four bridges in the district are only halfway through and yet to be completed.

Construction works are going on for last six years and there is no sign the bridges will get completed anytime soon. Moreover, the works are only halfway through despite funds worth ₹35,77,44,000 have already been spent in the projects.

The bridges are being constructed on Brahmani and Kharasrota rivers as well as Kani and Bhatia nullah in Bari, Jajpur, Rasulpur and Binjharpur blocks.

The bridges under the jurisdiction of the Rural Works Division-1 in Jajpur are being constructed with the financial assistance provided by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

The incomplete bridge has left the residents worried with monsoon making its arrival in the state. Residents apprehend that they will get cut off from the rest of the world if floods occur in the rivers during the rainy season.



They alleged funds worth ₹35 crore from Nabard has gone down the drain due to the non-completion of bridge works which has happened due to the apathetic and whimsical attitude of departmental officials.

This has sparked resentment among the public as they demanded stringent action against the concerned engineers and contractors for the inordinate delay in construction of the bridge.

Reports said that Nabard as the financier has failed to achieve its target as the bridge works are moving at a snail's pace in Jajpur district. It is alleged that frequent political interference and kickbacks made in the projects are delaying their timely completion.

works department said that the construction of a bridge in Kharasrota river under Bari block was started January 2, 2015. A plan outlay of ₹20.43 crore was made for the project out of which Nabard sanctioned ₹15.35 crore.

It was targeted to complete the bridge by May 1, 2015. Funds worth ₹21.52 crore have been spent and more than three years have passed since the expiry of the deadline for the project but the bridge work is still incomplete.

A plan outlay of ₹10.42 crore was made for construction of Jhalpada-Brahmabarada bridge on Brahmani river. The work for the bridge started December 16, 2016 and the deadline was scheduled for April 15, 2019. Meanwhile, funds worth ₹6.27 crore have been spent

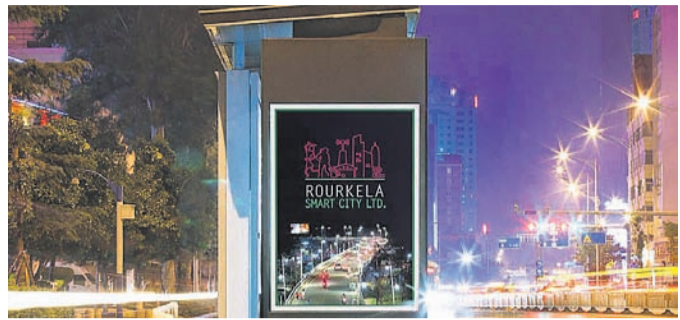
on the bridge project but the work is yet to get completed.

Two bridge projects on Kani and Bhatia nullah were approved and ₹2.67 crore was sanctioned for the twin projects. Works on the twin projects were started February 19, 2018 and were scheduled for completion by August 18, 2019.

Meanwhile, funds worth ₹49.29 lakh have already been spent. While work on Bhatia nullah is yet to begin, the work on the bridge in Kani nullah is only halfway through.

Similarly, a plan outlay of ₹9.59 crore was made for the construction of a bridge on Brahmani river at Anikana village under Bari block. The bridge work was started July 10, 2018 and was scheduled to end by July 9, 2020. Funds worth ₹7.47 crore were spent on the project but it failed to get completed on time.

When contacted, Bijay Kumar Moharana, executive engineer said that a fresh deadline has been made and the consultancy agencies have been asked to complete the bridge works by December, this year. He, however, said in a report that a change in design of the bridges under-construction has resulted in delay in their completion.



Rourkela selected to advance in Global Innovation Competition uncovering most transformative urban solutions to emerge during the Covid-19 pandemic

Idea to build sustainable solar powered cold storage solutions empowering small farmers and street vendors, managed by women self-help groups in Rourkela

2 cities selected from India among 630 applications from 99 countries

formed Parida Wednesday.

As a Mayors Challenge finalist, Rourkela city now advances to the four-month Champion Phase of the competition. From June 23 through October, the 50 finalist cities will refine their ideas with technical assistance from Bloomberg Philanthropies and its network of leading innovation experts. Fifteen of the 50 cities will ultimately win the grand prize, with each receiving \$1 million and robust multi-year technical assistance to implement and scale their ideas. Grand Prize Winners will be announced in early 2022.

"These 50 finalists are showing the world that in the face of the pandemic's enormous challenges, cities are rising to meet them with bold, innovative, and ambitious ideas," said Michael R Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg LP and Bloomberg Philanthropies and 108th mayor of New York City on this occasion.

Deputy commissioner RMC, Sudhansu Kumar Bhoi is leading the proposed project, being implemented under the guidance of commissioner RMC, Dibyajyoti Parida. Prasanta Kumar Nayak has been designated as the project manager for the same.

The initiative is being implemented with technical support from agro tech and clean energy startup Koel Fresh pvt ltd, led by Koel Fresh CEO, Ashutosh Nayak. A team of current students and alumni of NIT Rourkela is also working on the project.

Bloomberg Philanthropies is a philanthropic organisation that works to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people by focusing on five key areas: arts, education, environment, government innovation, and public health.

Earlier, Rourkela had been short-listed among the 25 cities for the 'Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge' cohort by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Admin bars shopkeepers from opening shop without vaccination

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, June 16: In a bid to motivate more and more people to take part in the vaccination drive to defeat the Covid pandemic, the district administration announced Wednesday that owners of business establishments who have not taken vaccines will not be allowed to open shops now.

On being directed, the Sundargarh municipality informed them about the new norms set by the district administration.

Meanwhile, the state government has announced partial relaxations to businesses to resume operations from 6am to 5pm daily except the weekends in as many as 17 districts.

Sub Collector Abhimanyu Behera informed the media persons about this Wednesday. He said, "As per the order issued by Sundargarh Collector-cum-administrator of Sundargarh municipality, the owners of businesses and shops of the town who have not taken vaccines may not be allowed

to open their establishments now." Business houses will be made aware that those who have not received the jabs and also not ensured vaccination to the sales personnel working under them will not be allowed to open their shops, said Behera.

He said that the first norm of the Covid management protocol is that it is executed for the welfare of the public, so people need to become aware and cooperate with the authorities for enforcement of the guidelines for vaccination.

The initiative is aimed at motivating people to align with the norms of the government as a section of people are hesitant to the inoculation drive, he said.

Few days back, in a bid to shake off dire reluctance among the general public to take the vaccine and create greater awareness about the importance of vaccination, some shopkeepers in Hinjili area of Ganjam district were seen offering a discount of at least five per cent to fully vaccinated people upon purchase of grocery items.



REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO

Hostage drama: Youth denies any shame or guilt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, June 16: A youth, who held three members of a family hostage at gunpoint in Shantipada area in this town the previous day, justified his act Wednesday.

The accused identified as Bikram Panda is a resident of Talpalipada in the town and runs a cyber cafe at Palaceline Square.

When questioned by mediapersons, he rejected having any guilt and shame over the incident. He said this while being taken to the Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital (BBMCH) for medical examination.

He said that he was in a relationship with a girl of the family for the past two years but her family members recently arranged her marriage elsewhere.

They also told him that he was not having a serious relationship and prevented him to speak to her, Panda said. He said that he was also educated like the girl and



wanted to marry her.

He, however, was angered when the girl's father told him that his love for the girl is just for time pass and asked him to forget her as her marriage had been fixed with a government service holder. He held

Divine wedding of Shiva, Parvati culminates sans grandeur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, June 16: Celebration of Sital Sasthi - the divine wedding of Lord Shiva with Goddess Parvati - reached its completion in Sambalpur district in the wee hours of Wednesday.

Counted among the most widely celebrated festivals of western Odisha, the wedding rituals began at different Shaivite temples after Lord Shiva reached in groom's attire late Tuesday night. Special 'Alati' rituals were performed at the beginning to mark the festivities.

The divine wedding ritual began at around 12.30am. 'Hasta Bandhan' ritual marking conclusion of the di-

vine wedding was performed at around 3.30am, a servitor Sashank Sekhar Panda informed.

The newlywed divine couple will have food offerings at the bride's adopted paternal house later in the day, which will be followed by 'Mangal Alati' rituals, the local servitor added.

Notably, Sital Sasthi has become a low-key affair this year owing to the lockdown restrictions prevalent all over the state. The usual pomp and grandeur associated with the festival is not being witnessed in rural and urban areas.

As congregation of devotees was prohibited this year, the rituals were performed with strict adherence to Covid-19 safety protocols.

Youth beaten to death over illicit affair; 2 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baisinga, June 16: A youth was allegedly beaten to death over a suspected illicit relationship late Monday night in Badalpur village under Baisinga police limits of Mayurbhanj district.

Police detained two persons in this connection while a forensic team was pressed into service to collect more evidence.

The incident occurred when the deceased, Badal Soren (24) visited the house of one Ravana Marandi in the

village late last night.

Ravana suspected Badal of having an illicit relationship with his wife and questioned him on visiting his house at this odd hour. However, Badal could not justify his visit. Enraged, Ravana and his son, Katia Marandi and some other villagers tied Badal's legs and hands.

Later, they thrashed Badal mercilessly with an iron bar inside the house which ultimately led to his death. On being informed, police reached the spot and detained Ravana and his son for questioning.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, PHULBANI
Phone-06842-253708; E-mail: rw_phulbani@yahoo.co.in
No. 2779 RWPD, Dated the 07.06.2021

Government of Odisha e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. Online Tender/02/EERWD PHULBANI/ 2021-22
No. O-334:-

1 Name of the work	:: Road Works (6Nos.)
2 Estimated cost	:: Rs. 6.96 Lakhs to Rs.17.40 Lakhs
3 Period of Completion	:: 2 (Two) Calendar Months
4 Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the Portal	:: From 17.06.2021 to 29.06.2021
5 Last Date/ Time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	:: 29.06.2021 up to 5.00 PM
6 Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	:: Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Phulbani

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal website <https://tenders.ori.nic.in/nicgp/app>
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Phulbani
OIPR-25077/11/0002/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, BALLIGUDA
Tender Call Notice
No. 1313 Date 15.06.2021
E-mail: eonacballiguda@yahoo.in

Bid Identification No. EO_BLG.N_07_2021-22
No. C-394:- The Executive Officer, NAC, Balliguda, Dist- Kandhamal inviting percentage rate bid in online mode for the works from eligible contractors for civil work as detailed in the table below.

1. Name of work	As per DTCN
2. No. of work	2
3. Tender Cost	Rs.5.00 Lakh to Rs.6.43 Lakh
4. Class of Contractor	D & C or equivalent
5. Period & time of completion	As per DTCN
6. Available of Bid Document in the Website	From Dt.16.06.2021, 9.00 AM to Dt.23.06.2021 Up to 04.00 PM
7. Date of opening of Bid	Dt.23.06.2021 at 04.30 PM
8. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://tenderodisha.gov.in . Any Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.	

OIPR-13097/11/0010/2122 Sd./- Executive Officer, NAC, Balliguda

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, NAYAGARH
E-mail ID: eemidivisionnayagarh@gmail.com, Phone No.06753-253277
No. 1305 / MIDN., Dated- 06.06.2021

1st Corrigendum to E-procurement Notice No.EEMIDN 01 of 2021-22
No. A-191:- The E-procurement Notice No.EEMIDN-01 of 2021-22 invited by the Executive Engineer, M.I.Division, Nayagarh is hereby modified as follows:

- Regarding Bid Security (EMD) : As per Finance Department Govt. of Odisha No 8943 Dated- 18.03.2021, due to Covid-19 pandemic, no provision regarding Bid Security should be kept in the Bid Documents and only provision for " Bid Security Declaration" should be kept. Further, wherever, there are compelling circumstances to ask for Bid Security, the same should be done only with the approval of the next higher authority to the authority competent to finalize the tender. The bidders should execute a Bid Security Declaration in lieu of Bid security with stipulation that if they withdraw or modify their bids during period of validity etc. they will be suspended for the time specified in the tender documents.
- Class of Contractor : Read as 'B & A' Class contractor of Sl.no-07 instead of 'C & B' Class.

All other terms and condition in DTCN remains unchanged.
Sd./-(Er. Bishnupada Pattayat)
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, Nayagarh.
OIPR-32260/11/0004/2122



Doubt is not a sport to indulge in with impunity; it is a poison, which drop by drop corrodes the soul.
THE MOTHER

Mitigate global threats

Both the COVID-19 pandemic and global warming are about survival, and are health crises at their core. But typology is not their only common feature. We can also overcome them in a similar way – by working with, rather than against, our human nature.

The alpha and omega of climate policy is reducing greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions: the European Union aims to cut them by 55 per cent by 2030, and to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Our first reaction to these ambitious goals frequently is that we ought to eat less meat, fly less often, reuse what we use, and question our assumption that GDP must increase constantly. From this perspective, cutting GHG emissions seemingly entails a reduction of our current living standards.

Likewise, we initially tackled COVID-19 by curtailing social life, closing shops and businesses, and reducing civil liberties. That meant fewer contacts and fewer contracts. But it soon became clear that these measures were no more than a temporary quick fix. In our liberal Western societies, it is – fortunately – impossible to keep people locked up at home.

The fact that almost all countries have struggled through a second or even a third wave of infection shows that a strategy of ‘less’ cannot bring a durable victory over the pandemic. Humans are not built for ‘less.’ Although people often are wrongly portrayed as being mere profit maximisers, we are without doubt born competitors. We love wheeling and dealing and making big plans to leave behind a better world for our children. But, as Aristotle observed, we are also social animals par excellence.

Any climate-change policy that denies or ignores these fundamental traits is doomed to fail. After all, what initially slowed down the coronavirus was not brutal rule enforcement, but our sociability: the collective acknowledgement that every individual effort mattered and our willingness to shield others from harm by keeping our distance.

But what the pandemic showed, above all, was the power of human curiosity, which enabled us to develop COVID-19 vaccines in less than a year. The very concept of a vaccine – injecting a weakened version of an actual virus into someone’s bloodstream – is as daring as it is ingenious. Ever since Edward Jenner developed the first vaccine, against smallpox, in 1796, scientists have constantly modified and improved the technique. By the end of the twentieth century, vaccines were protecting billions from myriad diseases, including polio, diphtheria, yellow fever, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, hepatitis, rabies, and tetanus. Partly as a result, average life expectancy in Europe has increased from under 40 years in the 1800s to about 80 today.

In the twenty-first century, this combination of incremental improvement and innovative breakthroughs resulted in the new mRNA technology that makes vaccine production more stable, and therefore faster and more predictable. Because of mRNA platforms, some COVID-19 vaccines can be adapted to coronavirus mutations almost overnight.

We should tackle the climate crisis in the same way. The strategy we need is not ‘less’; it is ‘more, but different.’ That means reorganising our economy and investing in new technologies, while recognising that there is no silver bullet or miracle solution. Science and entrepreneurship are piecemeal: two steps forward, one step back, and then another two sideways before we progress again. Moreover, human creativity cross-pollinates economic activity. Today, electric vehicles still emit a significant amount of carbon dioxide indirectly. But in another decade or so, EVs will be close to zero-emission, and we will also fly carbon-free.

Innovation and competition are the flywheels that drive knowledge and innovation. The wind turbines of the 1980s and 1990s had steel rotor blades with a diameter of 17 meters (56 feet) and produced an average of 75 kilowatt-hours of electricity. Today’s turbines have carbon rotor blades with an average diameter of 126 meters – bigger than an Airbus A380 – and produce 7,500 kilowatt-hours on average. That represents a 100-fold increase in production capacity in a little over 20 years.

Battery capacity has increased rapidly, too. The nickel-iron batteries of the 1970s were still pretty much the same as those Henry Ford used for his Model T. They pale in comparison to the lithium-ion batteries that today power whole cities such as Zhangbei, China. These leaps in innovation often do not appear fundamental to the public, but they constitute the very essence of human progress. Our impending victory over COVID-19 shows the way forward for limiting global warming. We will conquer the virus by focusing on a common goal, cooperating, and allowing people the freedom to innovate. Furthermore, governments worldwide have recognised when to step in to encourage innovation and when to take a step back.

Today, many countries have developed post-crisis recovery plans. Governments should use stimulus spending to turbocharge private investments and reduce private risk. Every climate-friendly project – whether new hydrogen technology, trains, or offshore wind farms – both embodies previous innovations and drives future breakthroughs. The result is a virtuous cycle of change, with each revolution bringing into being a world that is a little different, a little more efficient, and a little better.

We will overcome the pandemic by channeling our human nature. And we will overcome the threat of climate change the same way. By adding every individual contribution to the collective effort, we can and will make a huge difference. That is how humanity moves forward together and mitigates global threats.

The writer is Prime Minister of Belgium.
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WISDOM CORNER

- “The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.” **SUN TZU**
- “In the practice of tolerance, one’s enemy is the best teacher.” **DALAI LAMA**
- “A good traveller has no fixed plans, and is not intent on arriving.” **LAO TZU**

WORDSWORTH

Nipperkin

A famous English West Country song called the Barley Mow was once a favourite at the raucous celebrations that followed the completion of the barley harvest. An early verse in some versions is this: *We’ll drink it out of the nipperkin, boys, Here’s a health to the barley-mow! The nipperkin and the jolly brown bowl, Here’s a health to the barley-mow, my brave boys, Here’s a health to the barley-mow!* Because the size of the toast increased verse by verse, by reading it (or preferably singing it with beer in hand) you will get a good education in the old British names for units of volume, some still familiar, some defunct: gills, pints, quarts, pottles, gallons, ankers, hogsheds and pipes (this last was 126 American gallons, or old British wine gallons, roughly 475 litres). Most units were twice the size of the one before. At the end, the song goes quite out of control and speaks of wells, rivers and oceans. The word could be used equally for the measure or for the container it was served in. There is some confusion about the actual size of a nipperkin, with various works recording or implying anything between half a pint and 1/32nd of a pint, but most agree that it was one-eighth of an English pint (or about 70ml).

FOCUS VACCINATION

ATTAINING HERD IMMUNITY

When will the world have vaccinated 80 per cent of all adults, the level presumed by scientists to produce herd immunity against COVID-19? Most people’s answer is 2023 or 2024, which suggests deep pessimism about the progress of vaccinations outside the rich world. That is also why pledges at the recent G7 summit to donate one billion doses to poor countries during this year and in 2022 look to some like generous game-changers.

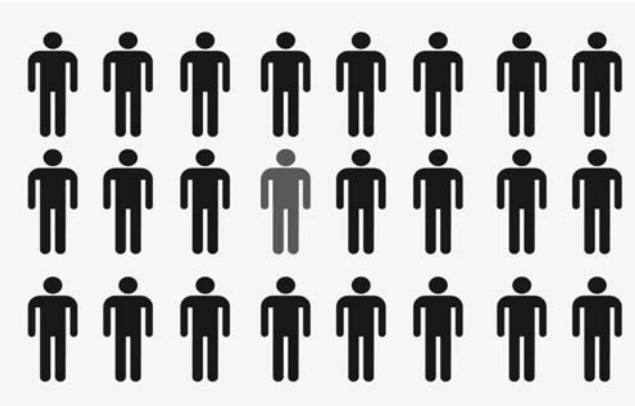


Bill Emmott

MASS VACCINATION CAMPAIGNS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD ARE NOTHING NEW. SUCCESS DEPENDS ON GENEROSITY, POLITICAL WILL, AND A BELIEF THAT THE SOLUTION IS BOTH NECESSARY AND ACHIEVABLE

The arithmetic is simple, but first you have to decide whether to regard China, the world’s most populous country, as an inspiration or an exception. According to Our World in Data, China now accounts for 17-20 million of the 33-36 million doses being administered worldwide every day. With China included, the countdown reaches zero in just over 200 days; without China, the time increases to 370 days. That is an important difference, but it amounts to reaching the finish line in July 2022, rather than in January. Even if a higher threshold of 90 per cent becomes necessary, owing to the lower efficacy of Chinese vaccines, we are still nearly there.

Let’s look at the numbers. The world’s population is 7.9 billion, an estimated 5.85 billion of whom are adults (74 per cent). If the goal



The G7 countries are offering their billion doses on a timetable convenient to them, divided between late 2021 and 2022, but actual demand from poor and middle-income countries is coming much sooner than that

is an immunisation rate of 80 per cent, 4.7 billion will need shots, which on a two-dose vaccine regimen means 9.4 billion doses. As of June 11, 2021, Our World in Data reports that more than 2.3 billion doses have already been administered worldwide, leaving just over seven billion doses. Divide that by a mid-range daily figure (34 million) and you get roughly 211 days – January 2022.

Yes, seven billion is a very large number. But look at what is happening: every day, China is administering 17-20 million doses; India is administering just over three million; and even Africa is administering nearly 900,000 – a 37 per cent increase since the start of the month. Moreover, these numbers are still rising in most countries. Though not every middle-income country will be able to match China’s pace, that at least should be the motivating goal.

Until recently, the main constraint and source of frustration was the limited supply of vaccines. But production is rising sharply, with the global monthly output of vaccines approved by at least one major regulatory body increasing from 420 million doses in April to

822 million doses in May. China’s two vaccine makers, Sinovac and Sinopharm, accounted for more than half of this total (nearly tripling output from 164 million doses in April to 454 million in May). Output of Pfizer-BioNTech and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine doses in the European Union doubled, from 69 million to 140 million, while the number of Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson doses in the United States rose from 71 million to 105 million. The only disappointing production figures were in India, where output slipped from 76 million doses in April to 62.6 million in May.

In the coming months, the key constraint will no longer be supply shortages but rather financing and logistical challenges, particularly in poorer countries with limited infrastructure and health-care coverage. These hurdles can be lowered if rich countries release their production more quickly for others to buy, and if more bilateral and multilateral aid funding is made available to support public-health systems and vaccine purchases.

Make no mistake: China will

likely play a large and perhaps leading role in this process. As the world’s biggest producer of COVID-19 vaccines (albeit of a less sophisticated variety than the Western ones), China will have immunised its own population by September or thereabouts, giving it abundant spare production capacity to supply the world (along with funding).

That is why the Western pledges at the G7, welcome as they are, are in reality somewhat behind the curve. The G7 countries are offering their billion doses on a timetable convenient to them, divided between late 2021 and 2022, but actual demand from poor and middle-income countries is coming much sooner than that. This means that China is being given a huge market and diplomatic opportunity of stepping into the breach with perhaps 500 million doses every month during the last four months of 2021.

If that happens, the surprisingly short timescale indicated by our vaccine countdown can actually be shortened further. Rural parts of Africa and unstable parts of Latin America will face the biggest challenges, but these can be overcome with aid from rich-country governments, including China’s, and from big philanthropic foundations. Mass vaccination campaigns in the developing world are nothing new. Success depends on generosity, political will, and a belief that the solution is both necessary and achievable.

With new variants emerging rapidly and new outbreaks in places that had seemed to have the virus under control, COVID-19 remains a global problem. We should know by now that it demands a global solution. The recent increase in supplies and the Global Commission’s vaccine countdown indicate that what we need is well within reach.

The writer, a former editor-in-chief of The Economist, is Co-Director of the Global Commission for Post-Pandemic Policy.
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SPECTRUM AFGHAN CRISIS

India shows the way, but to no avail

Now, US forces are leaving Afghanistan by the 20th anniversary of Taliban facilitated al-Qaeda terror attack on US in 2001. And this is about to happen without accomplishing the forces’ much tom-tommed assignment of releasing the landlocked nation from the clutches of dreaded Islamic terror.



Bimal Prasad Mohapatra

HAD WESTERN POWERS FOLLOWED INDIA’S POLICIES ALONG WITH SECURITY PROVISIONING TO FIGHT TERRORISTS, THE SITUATION MIGHT HAVE IMPROVED IF NOT FULLY NORMAL BY NOW

It isn’t that during their long two decades of presence in the civil war ravaged country, no attempt has been made to bring in normalcy. They located and killed al-Qaeda’s head Osama bin Laden in Pakistan’s Abbottabad, and revamped Afghanistan security set up and helped set up democratic governance mechanism apart from building development infrastructure.

Western forces have tried their best to remove and destroy the terror elements and terror infrastructure, which caused deaths to around 2500 of their soldiers and cost more than \$800 billion, but failed to bring the much-shouted normalcy mostly due to (i) uncompromising commitment of Sunni Islamic terrorists to Islamic religious doctrines, (ii) land-locked uneven terrain which greatly supports Islamic guerrilla warfare, and (iii) continued political, diplomatic, financial, logistic, intelligence and military

support to Taliban from vested interest Pakistan. As a last ditch effort, the Trump Administration had initiated negotiation with Taliban ignoring Afghanistan’s elected government’s objection. Even during last months of his tenure, Trump had pressurised an unwilling Afghan government to free hundreds of dreaded terrorists under its captivity, though the terror attacks had not been eased, in order to motivate Taliban.

In the meanwhile, India invested approximately \$3 billion building the Afghan Republic’s Parliament, economic and social infrastructure such as dams, hospitals, roads, schools, facilitating livelihood projects, and even sponsoring the nation’s cricket teams, training the country’s sports enthusiasts and organising their matches back in India ignoring taunt from Trump who had gone to the extent of saying, “You know what that is? That’s like five hours of what we spend. And we’re supposed to say, ‘Oh, thank you for the library.’ I don’t know who’s using it in Afghanistan.” It isn’t that India’s achievements were possible without the West. But this author thinks: had the Western powers followed India’s policies along with secu-

with China and Pakistan to get rid of Western forces from the region. After that, the fight among them may not be ruled out resulting in expansion of the civil war not only in Afghanistan but also in additional geography in Pakistan. Going by the Soviet Union occupation history in Afghanistan, it’s difficult to predict Chinese success in fighting against Islamists in the rugged territory of Afghanistan and in Western provinces of Pakistan through which much of Chinese BRI project will pass. And, again, will the US and its allies, which entered the region in early 1980s to stop Soviet Russia’s march towards strategically significant Indian Ocean via Afghanistan, remain silent when Communist China marches to the same region via Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran?

But, unlike 1990s, Communist China is about to join Taliban and Pakistan. Lately, China is found much interested in the crisis as it looks for a land transit to Iran on the western border of Afghanistan where it has under its Belt and Road Initiative an investment plan of \$400 billion. But, will Islamist Taliban and highly Islamised Pakistan population appreciate China having control over infrastructure in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is a known fact that the influential Islamists in Pakistan oppose Chinese projects in their country accusing China of de-radicalisation of Muslims in the Xinjiang province. For the time being, Taliban and its sympathisers in Pakistan may join hands

with China and Pakistan to get rid of Western forces from the region. After that, the fight among them may not be ruled out resulting in expansion of the civil war not only in Afghanistan but also in additional geography in Pakistan. Going by the Soviet Union occupation history in Afghanistan, it’s difficult to predict Chinese success in fighting against Islamists in the rugged territory of Afghanistan and in Western provinces of Pakistan through which much of Chinese BRI project will pass. And, again, will the US and its allies, which entered the region in early 1980s to stop Soviet Russia’s march towards strategically significant Indian Ocean via Afghanistan, remain silent when Communist China marches to the same region via Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran?

In view of this, how long peace and tranquility of the region will continue to remain elusive nobody can say now for sure. Therefore, it’s suggested to solve Afghanistan crisis why not try India shown path halting the Western troops’ withdrawal for a few more years?

with China and Pakistan to get rid of Western forces from the region. After that, the fight among them may not be ruled out resulting in expansion of the civil war not only in Afghanistan but also in additional geography in Pakistan. Going by the Soviet Union occupation history in Afghanistan, it’s difficult to predict Chinese success in fighting against Islamists in the rugged territory of Afghanistan and in Western provinces of Pakistan through which much of Chinese BRI project will pass. And, again, will the US and its allies, which entered the region in early 1980s to stop Soviet Russia’s march towards strategically significant Indian Ocean via Afghanistan, remain silent when Communist China marches to the same region via Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran?

The writer is a Honorary Research Fellow in DRaS.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

ORISSA POST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Lessons from Galwan

Sir, This is in reference to the news item “Indian army deploys around 60,000 troops”, Orissa POST, June 15. The day marks a year of the Galwan clash in which 20 Indian armed forces personnel, and an unknown number of People’s Liberation Army (PLA) personnel were killed as India bravely sought to repel Chinese encroachment. In fact, Galwan introduced strategic clarity in India. It wants friendly relations with China, not a conflict. And New Delhi’s establishment is acutely conscious of the power asymmetry that exists between the two countries and has no desire to be a frontline State in a new geopolitical battle. In all-out effort, India attempted a mix of measures – economic restrictions on Chinese companies; international opinion-building and diplomatic mobilisation about China’s actions, including giving momentum to Quad; acquiring a military edge by occupying the Kailash heights (in August 2020); and constant bilateral negotiations with Beijing across the military and diplomatic domain – to drive home the message that restoring status quo ante was essential. This strategy partially succeeded. Furthermore, India lost strategic advantage in Kailash range in exchange for concessions at Pangong Tso. Now, has India been left with no leverage to push the Chinese back from other areas such as Gogra, Hot Springs and Deshpang? However, Galwan is a reminder that India cannot let its guard down on its northern borders.
N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Non-performing MPs

Sir, A glamorous actress from West Bengal who also doubles as the people’s representative in our Parliament has been in the news lately; not for commendable public services rendered but her sordid personal adventures. It’s not that cine artistes who switch over to politics necessarily neglect their parliamentary role, but this particular Member of Parliament has had a dismal performance in the Lok Sabha, both in terms of physical attendance and participation in the proceedings, not to speak about her indifferent role in helping her constituents. Similar is the case of a popular Hindi film actor who has not been seen in his constituency in Punjab since as long as one can remember. There are many such examples, past and present. This further reinforces the fact that electoral ‘winnability’ by any means and not personal capability is the only compelling reason behind selection of candidates by political parties. And platitudes like ‘service to the nation’, proudly mouthed by them during election time, be damned.
Bhaskar Roy, NEW DELHI

Bengal Guv meets Union ministers, TMC cries foul

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, June 16: Soon after West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar met two Central ministers in the national capital Wednesday, the Trinamool Congress and the CPI(M) accused the Governor of overstepping the limits of his constitutional boundary.



He had already written a letter to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Tuesday, urging her to react to the law and order situation in the state and restore the faith of the people in the state administration and the police in general.

Dhankhar, who met Union ministers Pralhad Joshi and Prahlad Singh Patel Wednesday, is also likely to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah during his two-day visit to Delhi.

Taking to Twitter, Dhankhar said: "Had useful interaction with Union Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs of India @JoshiPralhad on varied issues."

Later in another tweet, the Bengal Governor said: "Had useful deliberations with Union Minister for Culture, Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel on issues pertaining to Victoria Memorial, Indian Museum and Asiatic Society aimed at enhancing the impact of these bodies."

Dhankhar, who is expected to meet Modi and Shah Thursday, is likely to brief them on the 'deteriorating' law and order situation in Bengal.

The state government, however, had reacted strongly to the letter, alleging that the Governor made the letter public even before it reached the secretariat.

Dhankhar's meeting with the Union ministers on Wednesday drew strong criticism from the Trinamool Congress and the CPI(M), which accused the Governor of overstepping his constitutional limits.

Speaking to the media, senior Trinamool leader Sougata Roy said, "I don't know what he is doing. He is meet-

ing Central ministers. He is going to places with BJP leaders. He stays in a huge house which he has turned into a party office. He is saying something which he should not have said."

"He is supposed to act on the aid and advice of the council of ministers headed by Chief Minister Banerjee, but he is not doing that. He has nothing to do beyond that. Where is it written in the Constitution that a Governor can do all these things," Roy asked.

Left Front Chairman and veteran CPI(M) leader Biman Bose said, "The Governor is overstepping his constitutional limits. He went to some places even in North Bengal and moved with the BJP leaders. I am not saying that he cannot go to any place on his own, but why should he move only with BJP leaders? He is not a BJP man, but his activities are tantamount to that of a BJP person. This cannot happen. We cannot expect this from a Governor."

I don't know what he is doing. He is meeting Central ministers. He is going to places with BJP leaders. He stays in a huge house which he has turned into a party office. He is saying something which he should not have said

SOUGATA ROY | TMC LEADER

BJP grappling to keep party intact in WB

The long queue in the saffron party to rejoin the Trinamool is worrying the state BJP leaders

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, June 16: Mukul Roy was the first one to leave the BJP and rejoin the Trinamool Congress but he is not the last because several frontline leaders who had joined the BJP before the election are re-establishing contact with the Trinamool top brass, clearly indicating their disillusionment about the saffron brigade and giving it a tough time to stem the impending exodus.

In the last few days, after Roy's switchback, several high-profile leaders including Rajib Banerjee and Sovan Chatterjee, along with Baisakhi Banerjee, have met Trinamool secretary general Partha Chatterjee whose mother died a few days back. Though both of them termed it to be a courtesy visit, insiders in the party indicated that the return of Rajib Banerjee or Sovan Chatterjee is only a matter of time.

Asked about it, Chatterjee said: "Today I came here to express my solidarity with Partha Chatterjee. I came when his wife died. So don't mix it up with politics."

However, he added: "The day I was arrested by CBI... it was black day for me but our Chief Minister despite all the differences called me and stood firmly behind me along with the other three who were also arrested by CBI. I am grateful to her from the core of my heart."

"Our Chief Minister considers him (Sovan) to be a part of her family and so it is hard to understand their relationship. We are grateful to her for her kindness," Baisakhi Banerjee said. "We have

left a place and now we are in the present state. We have neither lost any election nor we were a part of the election campaign," she added.

Interestingly enough a day before the duo met Partha Chatterjee, former Trinamool minister Rajib Banerjee, who had joined the BJP before the election, met Partha Chatterjee. However, both of them were tight-lipped about the meeting but quite some time, Rajib Banerjee came in open protest against BJP's criticism of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and said that the party should accept the mandate and work for the people of the state.

Another turncoat Prabir Ghosal, who went to the BJP along with Rajib Banerjee was in high praise for party supremo Mamata Banerjee and her nephew and new national General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee.

Similarly, several former Trinamool MLAs like Sonali Guha and others have expressed their willingness to return back to the Trinamool. The situation is such that state BJP President Dilip Ghosh had to come out with an open statement. "BJP is the largest party in the world and we have accepted the people who wanted to come to our party. We never insisted them to join and now if they feel that they will leave the party, it is their choice. But one thing everyone should understand, that if you want to stay in this party, you will have to sacrifice. If someone comes only for post and power, they cannot stay," Ghosh said.

But it is true that the long queue in the BJP to rejoin the Trinamool is worrying the state BJP leaders.



"Our party should have been more careful in accepting people from other parties. We don't belong to the same culture. Our ethics and ideology are completely different from other political parties and so it was a mistake to accept them without any kind of orientation. It will create a bad impression on the people. Next time we should be more careful," a senior BJP leader said.

Meanwhile, there have also been protests in several areas against taking back these "traitors" back into

the Trinamool. There were protests in Domjur in Howrah and several areas in Hooghly against Rajib Banerjee and Ghosal, and it is certain that it wouldn't be easy for these leaders to return back to the party.

"The Chief Minister has made it very clear that those who used foul language against the party will not be accepted. She will take the final call but one thing is certain that it will be decided on a case to case basis," Trinamool state general secretary Kunal Ghosh said.

Mithun quizzed by cops for 'inciting violence'



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, June 16: Kolkata Police virtually questioned BJP leader and Mithun Chakraborty on a complaint lodged against him alleging that the actor was responsible for inciting violence through one of his speeches made during a BJP campaign.

A complaint filed in Manikta police station against him, has accused the actor of inciting post-poll violence in West Bengal through his speeches. Chakraborty moved the Calcutta High Court for quashing the case against him.

But the court asked him to appear for questioning through video conferencing. In the complaint it has been mentioned that the popular actor has used phrases like "marbo ekhane lash porbe shoshane (Will hit you here and the body will land in the crematorium)" and "ek chobole chobi (one snake bite and you will turn into a photograph)" at a rally in Kolkata after he joined the BJP March 7. The complaint also mentioned that these dialogues were enough to incite violence.

The national award-winning actor, however, told the court that he had just uttered popular dialogues from his films. The actor claimed that the utterances of such film dialogues were only recreational and that he is innocent and in no way connected with any offence as alleged by the complainant.

After the hearing the Calcutta High Court directed Chakraborty to provide his e-mail address to the state so that he can make himself available for questioning through video conferencing. Kolkata police following the direction of the court have started questioning Chakraborty.

How Mumbai beat the odds & the pandemic

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Mumbai, June 16: When Covid-19 arrived in India, few places looked as vulnerable as Mumbai. But a year on, South Asia's most crowded city has surprised many by tackling a vicious second wave with considerable success.

Gaurav Awasthi even travelled hundreds of kilometres from his home on the outskirts of Delhi to get his ailing wife a hospital bed there, paying an ambulance more than a thousand dollars to drive 24 hours straight. "I cannot ever repay my debt to this city," the 29-year-old told AFP, recounting an ordeal that saw him spend five days fruitlessly searching for a bed across several cities, including Delhi. "I don't know if my wife would be alive today if it weren't for Mumbai's health facilities."

BODIES IN WARDS
The bodies began turning up early in India's financial capital during the first wave of infections last year - a man collapsing on a busy road, a rickshaw driver slumped over the wheel, a corpse lying in the street - in a grim echo of the 1918 flu pandemic.
By May 2020, Abhignya Patra

was working 18-hour days at the massive Lokmanya Tilak Municipal General Hospital, better known as Sion. "It was non-stop," the 27-year-old anaesthesiologist told AFP.

Patients' relatives described distressing scenes inside packed wards, with one man telling AFP he had to change his sick mother's diapers himself because staff were too overworked. A video shot inside Sion and widely shared on social media showed corpses wrapped in black plastic left on beds in a ward where patients were being treated.

Every night, the city helpline fielded thousands of calls from desperate citizens, many with no chance of getting admitted to a publicly-funded hospital. Mumbai had just 80 ambulances and 425 intensive care units for a population of 20 million.

'CHASE THE VIRUS'
Something had to change fast, said Iqbal Chahal, a no-nonsense bureaucrat who took over as Mumbai's municipal commissioner last May. New field hospitals added thousands of beds, private facilities handed over their Covid-19 wards to the government and 800 vehicles were turned into ambulances.



But these efforts could not combat the swift rise in infections. "We needed to chase the virus," Chahal told AFP. A proactive approach focused on 55 slums including India's largest, Dharavi, where a strict lockdown was accompanied by aggressive sanitisation of public toilets, mass coronavirus screening and a huge volunteer effort to ensure that nobody went hungry.

All positive test reports in Mumbai were routed through "war rooms" manned by doctors who would triage cases and decide where to send the

patient, irrespective of "whether he is a minister, a big shot or a slum dweller", Chahal said.

FORWARD THINKING
As 2020 wore on, it looked like India might have miraculously beaten the pandemic and lockdown restrictions were eased. But in Mumbai, authorities didn't dismantle a single bed in the now-deserted field hospitals. This meant that when cases surged in March, the metropolis was much better prepared than many other Indian cities, where the health

care system came close to collapse. In the capital Delhi and elsewhere, patients died outside hospitals and crematoriums were overwhelmed. But not in Mumbai. Despite having a much higher population density than many other cities, Mumbai has seen significantly lower mortality rates. The city still suffered close calls, Chahal said, recalling one night in April when six hospitals faced dire oxygen shortages, putting 168 patients at serious risk unless they were shifted to other facilities. Everyone survived. "We always expected a second wave," Chahal said.

'WAKE-UP CALL'
Patra recalls getting calls from colleagues in Delhi desperately searching for medical equipment. "As doctors, there is very little we can do in the absence of infrastructure," she said. Ruben Mascarenhas, co-founder of Mumbai-based non-profit Khaana Chahiye, said he would get dozens of messages every morning from people begging for oxygen and drugs - but as the pandemic wore on, the requests mostly came from outside the city. "This has been a wake-up call for us," he said.

Probe begins into housing society 'vaccination fraud'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 16: Mumbai Police launched an investigation after a housing society in suburban Kandivali suspected "fraud" by some persons who had organised a COVID-19 vaccination camp for its members by claiming to represent a private hospital and also expressed apprehensions that the vaccine that was administered could be spurious.

A senior officer said Wednesday no FIR has been registered so far but the police will probe the case from different angles. "We have not registered an FIR in this case and not arrested anybody. We have also not detained anybody. We are just investigat-

ing," Deputy Commissioner of Police, zone 11, Vishal Thakur told PTT. In a complaint submitted to the police, the Hiranandani Heritage Residents Welfare Association (HHRWA) had said that a vaccination camp was arranged by the residential complex on May 30. But later it found that the Co-WIN portal did not have any record of the people who participated and they received certificates in the name of different hospitals.

"If the vaccine is found to be spurious, the people who got vaccinated will have a medical emergency to deal with. Therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate the whole episode so that such fraudulent activities are not repeated at other places," the

complaint said. The HHRWA had organised the camp through a person who claimed to be a sales representative of a reputed private hospital in suburban Andheri. As many as 390 members received the jabs at the camp at Rs 1,260 per person, it had said in the complaint which stated that some unscrupulous elements have taken the society for a ride.

They were shocked to receive vaccination certificates in the name of Nanavati Hospital, Lifeline Hospital and NESCO Covid Camp, among others, it said.

Nanavati Hospital had said in a statement that it had not conducted any such vaccination camp. "We have informed the authorities and are lodging a formal complaint," said its spokesperson Tuesday.

The HHRWA also said that none of the people who got vaccinated had the usual after-effects like fever or body ache.

According to the complaint, one Sanjay Gupta was the coordinator for the camp, but he did not give receipts for the payment for vaccines. He had asked the association to make payment to one Mahendra Singh.



ON WARPATH

PMC bank depositors who are trying to get access to their own money, protest outside the Reserve Bank of India office at Bandra, in Mumbai, Wednesday. PTT PHOTO

Sena, BJP workers come to blows over Saamana remarks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 16: Clashes broke out between Shiv Sena and BJP workers in Dadar area here Wednesday after the youth wing of the BJP took out a protest march against 'offensive' remarks in the Sena mouthpiece Saamana about the land deal controversy in Ayodhya.

The police used force to disperse the supporters of the two parties who were once allies. Sena workers assaulted a woman member of the BJP, the latter alleged.

The trouble started after the Bhartiya Janata Yuva Morcha took out a protest march towards Shiv Sena Bhavan in Dadar, the Sena's headquarters, over a Saamana editorial which demanded probe of a "suspicious" land purchase deal by the Ram Mandir trust in Ayodhya. The trust has denied the allegations.

Following the fisticuffs, police took several persons in custody. An FIR was being registered, said an officer of Mahim police station. BJP leaders Ashish Shelar, Mangal Prabhat Lodha, Pravin

Darekar and others reached the police station and demanded action against Shiv Sena activists.

Shelar, an MLA and former Maharashtra minister, warned of strong retaliation in future.

"I warn Shiv Sena workers of retaliation if they again attacked our workers," he said. "The Sena was once proud of the demolition of the Babri mosque, but now for political reasons it is defaming Lord Ram. Sonia or Vadra (Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi-Vadra) have now become the Sena's deities,"

he said, in a swipe at the Sena's alliance with the Congress in Maharashtra.

Sena MLA Sada Sarvankar said, "We were first told that BJP workers were coming to protest, later we learnt that they are coming to vandalise the Sena Bhavan. So we stopped them before they could reach near it."

Akshada Tendulkar, a BJP supporter, alleged when she was returning to her vehicle after the protest, she was suddenly attacked by Sena workers.



of the day quote

All our party workers, Minister and legislators are united, there are no differences of any kind

ARUN SINGH | BJP'S NATIONAL GENERAL SECY IN-CHARGE OF K'TAKA

The Central government is in favour of establishing a petro-chemical corridor in the state

MEKAPATI GOUTHAM REDDY | ANDHRA PRADESH INDUSTRIES MINISTER

I seek the help of each and every Congress worker in the state and please give me your hands and if you give me your hand, I assure you, we will bounce back. At the moment please do not expect to become an office bearer of the party, instead let us all work at the grassroots to build our party

K SUDHAKARAN | NEW PRESIDENT OF THE KERALA PRADESH CONG COMMITTEE

SHORT TAKES

Nine killed in road mishap

Anand: Two children and seven adults were killed in a road accident after the car in which they were travelling collided with a goods-carrying truck near Indranaj village in Gujarat's Anand district Wednesday morning, police said.

Asaram hospitalised

Jodhpur: Controversial self-styled godman Asaram, who is serving a life sentence in connection with a rape case in Jodhpur jail, was shifted to the AIIMS here Wednesday after he complained of breathing issues owing to post-Covid complications.

Elephant rescued

Kochi: A wild elephant that had fallen into an open well in a tribal settlement under Neriamangalam forest limit was rescued Wednesday, forest officials said.

Farmer kills self

Chandigarh: A 58-year-old farmer died allegedly after consuming poison at a site of protest against the Centre's three farm laws in Jind district in Haryana, police said Wednesday.



India needs quick and complete vaccination - not BJP's usual brand of lies and rhyming slogans to cover-up vaccine shortage caused by Modi government's inaction. GOI's (Government of India) constant attempts to save Prime Minister's fake image are facilitating the virus and costing people's lives

RAHUL GANDHI | FORMER CONGRESS PRESIDENT

QUTUB MINAR, RED FORT REOPEN

After the Central government's order allowing reopening of monuments for the general public from Wednesday, tourists are enthusiastically thronging historical sites like Qutub Minar and Red Fort in the national capital



HC BAIL TO RIOTS ACCUSED DELHI POLICE MOVES SC

In May 2020, Narwal, Kalita and Tanha, were arrested for their alleged role in the northeast Delhi riots conspiracy case and later, they were booked under the UAPA. While JNU students Narwal and Kalita are in Tihar Jail, Tanha, a Jamia Millia Islamia student, is out on a two-week interim custody bail to take exams



AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 16: Delhi Police have filed an appeal in the Supreme Court challenging the bail granted by Delhi High Court to activists Asif Iqbal Tanha, Devangana Kalita and Natasha Narwal in a case of the "larger conspiracy" related to the northeast Delhi riots last year, in which 53 people were killed and more than 400 injured.

Questioning the approach adopted by High Court, the police said the three judgments granting bail to three students, Tanha, Kalita and Narwal were "without any foundation and appears to be based more on the social media narrative than the evidence gathered and elaborated in the charge sheet".

"Unfortunately, contrary to the evidence on record and the detailed oral and written submission made/ filed, the High Court has decided the case in hand on a pre-conceived and a completely erroneous illusion, as if, the present case was a simply a case of protest by students," it argued.

The appeal alleged the High Court "has not only conducted a mini-trial but has also recorded perverse finding which are contrary to record, and the arguments made during the hearing of the case to arrive at a finding that case under Sections 15,17 and 18 of the UAPA was prima facie not made out against the accused".

The police alleged the High Court "completely lost sight of the evi-

'Immediate release'

A court here Wednesday deferred its order on the immediate release of JNU students Devangana Kalita and Natasha Narwal, who have been granted bail by the high court in the riots 'conspiracy' case, for Thursday. "Order could not be passed due to the heavy board of bail applications listed before the undersigned. Be put up for orders tomorrow at 11 am," Additional Sessions Judge Revinder Bedi stated.

dence and statements and it also discarded the evidence, which clearly made out a sinister plot of mass-scale riots being hatched by the three accused along with other co-conspirators".

Granting bail to three accused, a bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Anup Jairam Bhambhani had said: "We are constrained to express, that it seems, that in its anxiety to suppress dissent, in the mind of the State, the line between the constitutionally guaranteed right to protest and terrorist activity seems to be getting somewhat blurred. If this mindset gains traction, it would be a sad day for democracy."

Opposing this observation, the police alleged that this is an "unfounded and perverse insinuation" that the present case was registered by the government to suppress dissent.

Chirag vows to fight back

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 16: Lok Janshakti Party leader Chirag Paswan Wednesday blamed Janata Dal (United) for engineering the split in his party and rejected the decisions taken by the faction headed by his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras, saying the party's constitution does not authorise them any such power.

In his first interaction with media after the split in the party, he struck a combative note by describing himself as "sher ka beta" (lion's son) and asserted that he will fight for the cause of the party founded by his father Ram Vilas Paswan. While blaming the JD(U) for the split, he steered clear of questions regarding the role of the BJP in the development and added that what has happened is also an internal matter of his party for which he will not target others. He, however, replied wryly when asked if "Hanuman" who is in trouble now will seek help from "Ram", a reference to his projection of his relationship with Prime Minister



Narendra Modi during the Bihar assembly polls as that between the two famous characters of epic Ramayan. "If Hanuman has to seek help from Ram, then what good is Hanuman and what good is Ram," he said in Hindi.

It is going to be a long battle, Paswan said, as the group headed by him fights the faction of five other party MPs, led by Paras, to claim ownership of the LJP. The JD(U), he alleged, had been working to cause a split in the party even when his father was alive. Targeting the party, he said it has always worked to divide Dalits and weaken its leaders. The LJP draws its support from

Paswans, the largest Dalit caste in Bihar. "A conspiracy was hatched behind my back while I was ill," Paswan said. He had recently suffered from typhoid.

The 38-year-old MP from Jamui expressed determination to take on the rival group while also taking swipe at his paternal uncle without using any strong words to attack him. Though the LJP played the role of spoiler for the JD(U) in the assembly polls in over 35 seats, it itself won only one seat and the lone MLA later defected to Kumar's party. Paswas, however, asserted that the polls were a "big win" for his party as it got nearly six per cent votes.

Six Maoists gunned down

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Visakhapatnam, June 16: A senior Maoist leader is among 6 naxals killed in an encounter that took place in Wednesday morning in Visakhapatnam district, while some more leaders are believed to have escaped from the spot, sources have said.

Police are continuing search operations in the area where encounter took place. Six Maoists were gunned down by Andhra Pradesh Greyhounds police on Wednesday morning at Theegalametia forest area in Visakhapatnam district.



"Today (Wednesday) in the morning hours, an exchange of fire took place between CPI (Maoist) and Greyhounds parties at Theegalametia forest areas (Koyyuru surrounding areas)," said an official statement. The encounter occurred under the police station limits of Mampa, surrounding the Koyyuru area, even as a search operation is underway.

Among the six dead, police said there were female corpses as well. Andhra Pradesh DGP, Gautam Sawant said that police had launched combing operations in the area after receiving reliable inputs. The Greyhounds police recovered an AK-47 rifle, a self-loading rifle, one carbine and two more guns from the spot.

Drone survey mandatory for all NH projects

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 16: In order to enhance transparency, uniformity and leverage latest technology, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) on Wednesday made use of drones for monthly video recording of national highway projects mandatory during all stages of development, construction, operation and maintenance work.

As per the order, contractors and concessionaires will carry out drone video recording in the presence of the team leader of the supervision consultant and upload comparative project videos on NHAI's portal 'Data Lake', capturing various project related developments during the month.

The supervision consultants will also analyse these videos and provide their comments on the digital monthly progress reports covering various aspects of project development.

These videos will also be used by the NHAI officials during the physical inspection of the projects to check the discrepancies and rectifications made on the basis of the earlier observations. Additionally, the project directors of NHAI will undertake monthly drone survey from the date of signing of contract agreement till the start of construction of the project at site and also on completion of the project.

Fatality rate for pregnant women higher in 2nd wave: ICMR study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jun 16: Pregnant and postpartum women were more severely affected during the second wave of Covid-19 as compared to the first with symptomatic cases and the case fatality rate being significantly higher among this category this year, according to a study by ICMR.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on Wednesday said cases related to pregnant and postpartum women during the first wave (April 1, 2020 - January 31, 2021) and during the second wave (February 1, 2021 to May 14) of the pandemic in India were compared.

"Symptomatic cases were significantly higher at 28.7 per cent in the second wave (111/387), compared to the first wave (162/1143) when the proportion was 14.2 per



cent," the apex research body said. "The case fatality rate (CFR) among pregnant women and postpartum women was 5.7 per cent (22/387) during the second wave, which was significantly higher compared to the scenario encounter in the first wave with CFR 0.7 per

cent (8/1143)," it said.

Total number of maternal deaths during both the waves of pandemic were 2 per cent (30/1530), of which the majority (28/30) were due to COVID-19 pneumonia and respiratory failure. "The study underlines the importance of vaccination of pregnant and lactating women against COVID-19," the ICMR said.

The COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for all lactating women in India. However, the government has still not allowed vaccinating pregnant women citing lack of clinical trial data and the matter is under discussion by the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI).

The WHO last week had recommended vaccinating pregnant women if they face high risk of exposure to Covid, and if they have co-morbid conditions.

'730 docs died of Covid in 2nd wave'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jun 16: As many as 730 doctors died during the second wave of the COVID pandemic, said the Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Wednesday, adding that the maximum fatalities have been reported in Bihar.

Bihar reported 115 doctor deaths, followed by Delhi which recorded 109 fatalities, and Uttar Pradesh with 79. In southern states, Andhra Pradesh reported 38, Telangana 37, Karnataka 9, Kerala 24, and Odisha 31.

Twenty-three doctors died in Maharashtra. Today, India reported 62,224 fresh COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, while the daily positivity rate further dropped to 3.22 per cent, according to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoFHW). The daily positivity rate has been below 5 per cent for



nine consecutive days. The active cases have further declined to 8,65,432. They have gone down to less than 9 lakh for the first time in 70 days. According to the Health Ministry, the national COVID-19 recovery rate has improved to 95.80 per cent. With the new cases, the country's tally has climbed to 2,96,33,105.

The COVID-19 death toll climbed to 3,79,573 with 2,542 fresh fatalities in the last 24 hours. The recoveries continued to outnumber daily new cases for the 34th consecutive day. India witnessed 1,07,628 recoveries in the last 24 hours, taking the recovery tally to 2,83,88,100.

Centre approves project to explore deep ocean for resources

THE PROPOSAL FOR LAUNCHING THE 'DEEP SEA MISSION' CAME FROM THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 16: The Centre Wednesday approved a proposal to roll out a "Deep Ocean Mission" to explore the deep ocean for resources and develop deep-sea technologies for sustainable use of marine resources.

The decision was taken by the Union Cabinet at its meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, minister Prakash Javadekar told a press conference. "This will support the blue economy and take India into a new era," he said. The proposal for launching the "Deep Ocean mission" came from the Ministry of Earth Sciences. Javadekar said under the mis-

sion, a mineral study will be conducted 6,000 metres deep in the ocean. The mission will also study the changes, if any, noticed due to climate change. Under the mission, he said, a study will be conducted on more deep-sea biodiversity.

The minister said an advanced marine station will be set up for ocean biology under the mission. There will also be an offshore thermal energy centre, which will help new emerging sectors.

After the US, Russia, France, Japan and China, India will be the sixth country to have this kind of technology, Javadekar said. "There will be good opportunities for our MSMEs and research. This will



also help in our endeavour and vision towards an Aatmanirbhar

Bharat (self-reliant India)," he added.

The estimated cost of the mission for a period of five years will be ₹4,077 crore and it will be implemented in a phase-wise manner, according to an official statement.

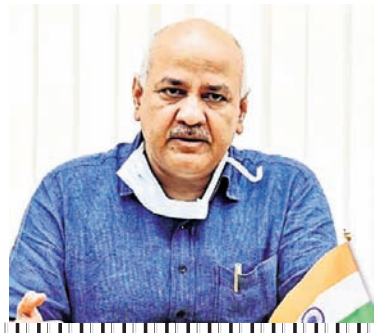
"The estimated cost for the first phase for the three years (2021-2024) would be ₹2,823.4 crore. The Deep Ocean Mission will be a mission-mode project to support the blue economy initiatives of the government. The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) will be the nodal ministry implementing this multi-institutional ambitious mission," the statement said.

The mission consists of six major components - development of technologies for deep-sea mining and manned submersible, development

of ocean climate change advisory services, technological innovations for exploration and conservation of deep-sea biodiversity, a deep-ocean survey and exploration, energy and freshwater from the ocean and an advanced marine station for ocean biology.

"The technologies required for deep-sea mining have strategic implications and are not commercially available. Hence, attempts will be made to indigenise technologies by collaborating with leading institutes and private industries. A research vessel for deep-ocean exploration would be built in an Indian shipyard, which would create employment opportunities," the statement said.

national



The Centre has denied approval to a committee set up by the Delhi government to probe deaths caused by lack of oxygen supply during the second Covid wave and award compensation to families of the deceased
MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

GREAT INITIATIVE

The Lucknow University will take over the responsibility of over 70 Covid orphans who have lost their earning parents in the pandemic



of the day quote

The Prime Minister of India has behaved like a coward. His vast capacity for vanity has been exposed. Indians do not come first for him. Politics does
PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | GENERAL SECY, CONGRESS

The Delhi Police has moved the Supreme Court challenging the HC judgements granting them bail and they are delaying the proceedings so that they can hold these students in prison while hoping for the apex court to overturn the Delhi HC order. The excuses they gave in court were bizarre
BRINDA KARAT | CPI(M) POLITBURO MEMBER

Delhi has received 62,160 doses of Covaxin and 1,73,340 doses of Covishield yesterday (June 15). Adequate vaccine stock is available in Delhi even for the above 45 years age category
ATISHI MARLENA | MEMBER OF DELHI LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

SHORT TAKES

Terrorist killed in encounter

Srinagar: The Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist killed in an encounter in the Wagoora area of Nowgam in Srinagar Wednesday refused to surrender and fired indiscriminately at the security forces, drawing retaliation that led to the encounter, officials said. The police said that on the intervening night of June 15-16, a joint cordon and search operation was launched by the Srinagar police, the army and the CRPF after receiving specific information about the presence of a terrorist in the Wagoora area.

Heavy rains pound K'taka

Bangalore: With the southwest monsoon remaining active, heavy rains pounded Karnataka, causing landslides in hilly regions, inundating low-lying areas and disrupting normal life, officials said Wednesday. According to the Meteorological Department, highest rainfall of 20 cm was recorded at Agumbe in Shivamogga district, followed by 15 cm at Kollur in Udipi district, 14 cm each at Kadra in Uttara Kannada and Kottigehara in Chikkamagalur districts and 13 cm at Bhagamandala in Kodagu district, where the Cauvery originates.

4 held in rape case

Kota (Rajasthan): Four men have been arrested for abducting and raping a 19-year-old girl from their neighbouring village in Rajasthan's Jhalawar district, police said. The four have been identified as Ishwar Singh Sondhya Rajput (23), Balu Singh (28), Meharban Singh (26) - residents of Peepliya Khurd village and and Govind Singh (26) of Pagariya, they said.

Chinese man held

Kolkata: The special task force (STF) of the West Bengal Police is planning to bring arrested Chinese national Han Junwe to Kolkata as a part of their investigation into his intrusion into India, a senior officer said Wednesday. The STF, which took over the investigations Tuesday, got a 10-day remand of Junwe when they produced him at a court in Malda, he said. Unable to unlock Junwe's laptop and iPhone that have passwords in Mandarin, the investigators are looking for an expert in the language, the officer said.

Twitter, others booked for 'communal' video

A DAY AFTER LOSING 'SAFE HARBOUR SHIELD, THE TECH GIANT BOOKED



AGENCIES

Ghaziabad, June 16: It did not take long for the law to initiate action against micro-blogging site Twitter. A day after Twitter lost its 'safe harbour' shield, the UP booked it, a news portal and six persons in connection with the circulation of a video in which an elderly Muslim man narrates his ordeal after he was allegedly attacked by some people in Ghaziabad.

The FIR was lodged at the Loni Border police station here around 11.30pm Tuesday on the basis of a complaint lodged by a local policeman. It alleges that the video was shared with an intention to provoke communal unrest.

In the video clip, which surfaced on social media June 14, the elderly Muslim man, Abdul Shamad Saifi, alleges he was thrashed by some young men and asked to chant 'Jai Shri Ram'.

However, the Ghaziabad police, who have arrested three people for assaulting Saifi, have ruled out a communal angle. They said the accused were unhappy about a 'tabeez' (amulet) he sold to them. A police official said however, informed Wednesday that an FIR was lodged against Twitter Inc, Twitter Communications India, news website 'The Wire', journalists Mohammad Zubair and Rana Ayub, Congress politicians Salman Nizami, Masqoor Usmani, Dr Sama Mohammad and writer Saba Naqvi for sharing the clip.

"These people did not verify the truth of the matter and shared it online with a communal angle with an intention to disrupt public peace and create a divide between religious groups," the FIR states. "Besides this, Twitter Inc and Twitter Communications India also did not take any meas-

IT Minister slams social media site

New Delhi: IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said Wednesday that Twitter failed to comply with intermediary guidelines and has 'deliberately' chosen the path of non-compliance despite being granted multiple opportunities. "There are numerous queries arising as to whether Twitter is entitled to safe harbour provision. However, the simple fact of the matter is that Twitter has failed to comply with the Intermediary Guidelines that came into effect from the May 26," Prasad said in a series of posts on homegrown microblogging platform Koo. "Further, what is perplexing is that Twitter fails to address the grievances of users by refusing to setting up process as mandated by the law of the land. Additionally, it chooses a policy of flagging manipulated media, only when it suits, its likes and dislikes," he added. The Minister said that what happened in Uttar Pradesh was illustrative of Twitter's "arbitrariness" in fighting fake news.

ures to remove their tweets," the FIR added. The FIR has been lodged under Indian Penal Code sections 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot), 153A (promoting enmity between groups on ground of religion, class etc), 295A (Deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious belief), 120B (criminal conspiracy), among others.

'Covishield dose 61% effective against Delta'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 16: Amid a heated debate on the wide gap India is taking between the first and second dosages of the Covishield vaccine, it has been revealed that data from Indian trials suggest the 12-16 weeks interval was medically sound. In comparison, data from the UK, which has been used to suggest otherwise was statistically less relevant to India, according to Dr NK Arora, Chairperson of the Centre's Covid Working Group.

"When we started with the national Covid immunisation programme...we had an interval of four weeks. That was based on the trial showed that, at a four-week interval, the immune response is very good. Although the UK, at that time, had already increased the interval to 12 weeks. That was when they were facing the challenge of the Alpha variant outbreak in December-January," Dr Arora said.

"But we were not convinced and we went ahead with four weeks. Six weeks later the WHO also suggested that 6-8 weeks may be a good idea. We reviewed the data and we had initial experience from the



UK and we thought that it may worthwhile to increase it to 6-8 weeks," he said. However, the working group decided to look at the real-life data coming in from the UK, since that country and India are the largest consumers of the AstraZeneca vaccine - Covishield in India. In April, he said, Public Health England suggested that with a 12-week interval the vaccine efficacy was varying between 65 per cent and 80 per cent. Later, however, statistically significant data from Christian Medical College Vellore's research -- based on a sample size of several thousand - amid the Delta surge showed that a single dose had a 61 per cent vaccine effectiveness which increased to 65 per cent with two, he said.

'Firms owned by Choksi siphoned off over ₹6,344.96 cr from PNB'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Junu 16: Companies owned by fugitive diamantaire Mehul Choksi have allegedly siphoned off over Rs 6,344.96 crore from the Punjab National Bank (PNB) using fraudulent letters of undertaking and foreign letters of credit, the CBI has alleged in its supplementary chargesheet, detailing the agency's three-year-long investigation.

The findings were submitted by the CBI in a supplementary chargesheet filed before a special court in Mumbai last week, where it alleged that the PNB was conned by its employees who were hand in gloves with Choksi and his company executives and who facilitated the scam as part of a criminal conspiracy. The PNB officials at the bank's Brady House branch in Mumbai issued 165 letters of undertaking (LoUs) and 58 foreign letters of credit (FLCs) during March-April 2017, against which 311 bills were discounted. These LoUs and FLCs were allegedly issued to Choksi's firms without any sanctioned limit or cash margin and without making entries in the bank's



central banking system to evade any scrutiny in case of a default.

LoUs are a guarantee given by a bank on behalf of its client to a foreign bank. If the client does not repay to the foreign bank, the liability falls on the guarantor bank. Based on these LoUs, SBI-Mauritius, Allahabad Bank-Hong Kong, Axis Bank-Hong Kong, Bank of India-Antwerp, Canara Bank-Mamana and SBI-Frankfurt lent money.

"Since the accused companies did not repay the amount availed against the said fraudulent LoUs and FLCs, the PNB made the payment of Rs 6,344.97 crore (\$965.18 million), including the overdue interest, to the overseas banks, which had advanced buyer's credit and dis-

FB begins 3rd-party health fact checks

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 16: Facebook Wednesday joined hands with The Healthy Indian Project (THIP) - a health specialised fact-checking site - as part of its third-party fact-checking programme in India to combat Covid-19 and all other health related misinformation on the social media platform.

During the pandemic, Facebook removed more than 18 million pieces of harmful misinformation across its platform and Instagram and labelled over 167 million fake news posts on Covid-19 with the help of third-party fact-checkers.

The partnership with THIP "will enhance its capabilities to understand and curb health-related misinformation on the platform", the

social media giant said in a statement. THIP Media works with verified medical professionals to fact check misleading news and claims about health, medicines, diet and treatment in English, Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi and Gujarati.

Globally, Facebook is working with 80 fact-checking partners that help in content monitoring in more than 60 languages. Facebook's fact-checking partners have been certified through the independent, non-partisan International Fact-Checking Network. In India, Facebook has 10 fact-checking partners, one of the largest after the US. This includes India Today Group, Vishvas News (Dainik Jagran), Factly, Newsmobile, Fact Crescendo,

BOOM Live, AFP, NewsChecker and Quint who fact-check in 11 Indian languages along with English. The Indian languages include Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Malayalam, Tamil, Marathi, Punjabi, Urdu, Gujarati, Assamese and Kamada. "Third-party fact-checkers evaluate stories, check if the stories are factual, and rate their accuracy. When a fact-checker rates a story as false, Facebook shows it lower in News Feed, significantly reducing its dissemination and reducing the number of people who view it," the company said.

Pages and domains that repeatedly share false news will also see their distribution reduced and their ability to monetise and advertise temporarily removed.

'Monsoon in northern states to be delayed'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 16: Atmospheric conditions are still not favourable for further advance of monsoon into Rajasthan, remaining parts of Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana and Delhi, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Wednesday.

It said a cyclonic circulation lies over east Uttar Pradesh and neighbourhood and there is also a western disturbance. These conditions are not favourable for the advance of monsoon, IMD Director General M Mohapatra said.

"Large-scale atmospheric conditions are not favourable for further advance of monsoon into Rajasthan, remaining parts of Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana and Delhi," the IMD said. However, there could be a slow progress of monsoon into some more parts of Uttar Pradesh during the next five days in association with the existing cyclonic circulation over east Uttar Pradesh, the IMD added.

The Northern Limit of Monsoon (NLM) continues to pass through Diu, Surat, Nandurbar, Bhopal, Nowgong, Hamirpur, Barabanki, Bareilly, Saharanpur, Ambala and Amritsar, it added.

Pak-linked charities collected funds in the name of helping India

AFTER COLLECTING MILLIONS OF DOLLARS, FEW OF THEM CAME TOGETHER AND SENT PEANUTS IN THE NAME OF HELP. ALL OF THEM CLAIMED THE CREDITS SO THAT THEIR DONORS WOULD THINK THAT MONEY WAS WELL SPENT, ACCORDING TO THE REPORT BY DISINFOLAB

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 16: US based 'charity organisations linked to Pakistan had started collecting funds in the name of helping India during the Covid crisis, according to a report.

After collecting millions of dollars, few of them came together and sent peanuts in the name of help. All of them claimed the credits so that their donors would think that money was well spent, according to the report by DisinfoLab. "The money collected could go from terror finance to Pakistan army to Islamists to Hamas - apart from the pocket money to the charities," DisinfoLab said in its disclosure.

This is what is being called the 'CovidAidScam2021'. While on one hand, there were several stories



of individuals and group heroes, there were far bigger vultures who were smelling blood and taking advantage of a colossal humanitarian crisis, the report said. They went on to steal money in

organisations would be shocked to learn that not only their contributions did not reach their destination, but they are also likely to be used for far worse activities - ranging from fomenting protests and social disturbances to sponsoring outright terror attacks, it added. Several fund-raisers were set up April 27 and 28 in the US by Islamist organisations being run from Pakistan, it said.

One of the organizations, which was very aggressive in fund collections, was IMANA, which was running an aid campaign on Instagram, and one of the fastest to receive funds.

The fund collection was so good that IMANA was also frequently revising its target amount, once the previous one was met. But it was one of the least transparent in terms of providing updates.

As per the document, it also turned out that there were not one or two but hundreds of fund collections going on in India to help in Covid times. And there were several platforms being used for these - from social media to dedicated fund-raising platforms.

Among the social media platforms, the least transparent was Instagram, which was also one of the most used platforms. Among the fund-raiser platforms, one with maximum number of fund-raisers and with minimum transparency was Launch Good.

IMANA - Islamic Medical Association of North America - is an Illinois-based medical relief organisation that was formerly established as Islamic Medical Association (IMA) in 1967, and was subsequently renamed to IMANA.

international

of the day quote

The people's food situation is now getting tense as the agricultural sector failed to fulfil its grain production plan due to the damage by typhoon last year

KIM JONG UN | NORTH KOREAN LEADER

Within a matter of a few days, it is likely that the number of new cases in Gauteng will surpass the peak of the second wave. We must act decisively and act quickly to save lives

CYRIL RAMAPHOSA | PRESIDENT, SOUTH AFRICA

We're almost at the final hurdle of offering lifesaving jabs to all UK adults, with both vaccines providing the fullest possible protection against symptoms, serious illness and hospitalisation from this awful virus and moving us a step closer to beating this pandemic

MATT HANCOCK | HEALTH SECRETARY, UK

SHORT TAKES

Bill introduced to fire Anthony Fauci

Washington: Several Republican lawmakers, eager to blame a US government official for the response to the Coronavirus pandemic, introduced a bill Tuesday to fire Anthony Fauci, the face of American efforts to combat Covid-19. Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene led a handful of colleagues in announcing the so-called Fire Fauci Act, which would reduce the famed infectious disease expert's government salary to zero and require the Senate to confirm someone to fill his position.

UK lawyer new ICC prosecutor

The Hague: British lawyer Karim Khan was sworn in Wednesday as the new chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Court, pledging to reach out to nations that are not members of the court and to try to hold trials in countries where crimes are committed. Khan, a 51-year-old English lawyer, has years of experience in international lawyer as a prosecutor, investigator and defense attorney. He takes over from Fatou Bensouda of Gambia, whose nine-year term ended Tuesday.

Bomb blast at military base

Bogota: A car bomb explosion at a military base in the Colombian border city of Cucuta injured 36 people Tuesday, the defense minister said, casting blame for the attack on leftist rebels. The explosion took place at a base used by the 30th Army Brigade in the northeastern city near the border with Venezuela. "We reject and repudiate this vile and terrorist act which sought to attack the soldiers of Colombia," Defence Minister Diego Molano told journalists.

Pak court delays Jadhav's case

Islamabad: A Pakistani court has adjourned till October 5 the hearing of a government's plea to appoint a counsel for Indian death-row prisoner Kulbhushan Jadhav on request of the country's top law officer, according to a media report. India approached the International Court of Justice against Pakistan for denial of consular access to Jadhav and challenging the death sentence. The Hague-based ICJ ruled in July 2019 that Pakistan must undertake an "effective review and reconsideration" of the conviction and sentence of Jadhav and also to grant consular access to India without further delay.

PUTIN, BIDEN MEET AMID TENSIONS

AGENCIES

Geneva, June 16: With stern expressions and polite words before the cameras, President Joe Biden and Russia's Vladimir Putin plunged into hours of face-to-face talks Wednesday at a lush lakeside Swiss mansion, a highly anticipated summit at a time when both leaders agree that relations between their countries are at an all-time low.

Biden called it a discussion between "two great powers" and said it was "always better to meet face to face." Putin, for his part, said he hoped the talks would be "productive."

The meeting in a book-lined room had a somewhat awkward beginning — both men appeared to avoid looking directly at each other during a brief and chaotic photo opportunity before a scrum of jostling reporters.

The two leaders did shake hands — Biden extended his hand first and smiled at the stoic Russian leader — moments earlier when they posed with Swiss President Guy Parmelin, who welcomed them to Switzerland for the summit.

For months, they have traded sharp rhetoric. Biden has repeatedly called out Putin for malicious cyberattacks by Russian-



"We should decide where it's in our mutual interest, in the interest of the world, to cooperate, and see if we can do that. And the areas where we don't agree, make it clear what the red lines are"

JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

"Mr President, I'd like to thank you for your initiative to meet today. US and Russian relations have a lot of issues accumulated that require the highest level meeting"

VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

based hackers on US interests, a disregard for democracy with the jailing of Russia's foremost opposition leader and interference in American elections.

Now, the pair are meeting for the first time face-to-face as leaders. In advance, both sides set out

to lower expectations. Even so, Biden said it was an important step if the United States and Russia were able to ultimately find "stability and predictability" in their relationship, a seemingly modest goal from the President for dealing with the per-

AGREEMENTS

US, Russia to replace the New START treaty limiting nuclear weapons after it expires in 2026

The leaders agreed to return their ambassadors to their respective postings

The two sides agreed in principle to begin consultations on cyber security issues

The leaders discussed a possible prisoner swap and that compromises may be possible

DISAGREEMENTS

Putin defended Navalny's prison sentence about mistreatment by highlighting US domestic turmoil, including the Black Lives Matter protests and the Jan 6 Capitol insurrection

Putin dismissed Washington's concern over Arctic by saying Americans have no basis and that his country was "restoring the destroyed infrastructure" in the region

son he sees as one of America's fiercest adversaries.

ANTI-VIRAL THERAPY

UK trial finds Regeneron drugs cut death threat



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, June 16: A new, experimental anti-viral treatment used for some worst-affected Covid-19 patients has been found to save lives, according to the results of a UK trial Wednesday.

In the ongoing Randomised Evaluation of Covid-19 Therapy (RECOVERY) trial, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals' combination of drugs was found to benefit patients with severe symptoms of the virus who had not mounted a natural antibody response of their own.

Sir Peter Horby, Professor of Emerging Infectious Diseases in the Nuffield Department of Medicine, University of Oxford, and Joint Chief Investigator for the RECOVERY trial, declared the results as "very exciting".

"The hope was that by giving a combination of antibodies targeting the SARS-CoV-2 virus we would be able to reduce the worst manifestations of Covid-19. There was, however, great uncertainty about the value of antiviral therapies in late-stage Covid-19 disease," said Horby.

"It is wonderful to learn that even in advanced Covid-19 disease, targeting the virus can reduce mortality in patients who have failed to mount an antibody response of their own," he said.

The treatment uses a combination of two monoclonal antibodies — casirivimab and imdevimab, known as REGEN-COV in the US — that bind specifically to two different sites on the Coronavirus spike protein, neutralising the ability of the virus to infect cells.

It not only cut down the numbers requiring a ventilator, among the 9,875 people who took part in the trial between September 2020 and May this year, but also reduced the duration of their hospital stay

The National Health Service (NHS) is planning to make use of this antibody injection within the community to avoid people having to require hospitalisation at all.

"These encouraging results from this trial carried out in and by the NHS suggest a new treatment option to help save the lives of some patients hospitalised with Covid and are the latest example of research and innovation for patients, which the NHS has played a role in during the pandemic," said Professor Stephen Powis, National Medical Director for NHS England.

Professor Nick Lemoine, Medical Director at the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Clinical Research Network, added: "It is fantastic news that the RECOVERY trial has provided evidence to establish another lifesaving treatment against Covid-19 through this monoclonal antibody combination."

The preliminary results of the evaluation of the monoclonal antibody combination will be available as a pre-print, to then be submitted to a leading peer-reviewed medical journal.

AGAINST LABOUR LAW



University students wearing protective face masks, take part in protest outside the Greek parliament Wednesday PTI PHOTO

Pak Parl bans 7 lawmakers; three from Khan's party

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, June 16: Pakistan's National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser Wednesday barred seven lawmakers, including three from the ruling party, from entering the House, a day after parliamentarians from treasury and opposition benches hurled abuses and threw budget copies at each other.

Speaker Qaiser said that members who disrupted the session during Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif's speech have been barred from entering the House as their behaviour was "unparliamentary" and "inappropriate".

"They violated the rules and, despite the repeated direction of the chair, interrupted House proceedings," he said.



Three lawmakers belonging to the PTI and the PML-N each and one member of Pakistan People's Party have been barred from attending the session. They include Ali Gohar Khan (PML-N), Chaudhary Hamid Hameed (PML-N), Sheikh Rohale Asghar (PML-N), Faheem Khan (PTI), Abdul Majeed Khan (PTI), Ali Nawaz Awan (PTI) and Syed Agha Rafiullah (PPP).

The Speaker said that the conduct of these "was grossly disorderly." He further said that they "have been told to not enter the precinct of the Parliament House till further orders."

RAIN, FLOODS LASH NEPAL; 7 KILLED, SCORES MISSING

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kathmandu, June 16: Floods and landslides have wreaked havoc in Nepal following the incessant rains Tuesday and Wednesday, leaving scores dead and missing.

More than 50 people are missing in a massive flood in Sindhupalchowk district which is located some 70 kilometers north from Capital, Kathmandu that has caused a huge loss of life and property.

Chief District Officer of Sindhupalchowk district, Arun Pokharel said that seven people have died in the floods induced by incessant rains in Helambu rural municipality and six of them were workers in a local fish farm.

Health Minister Sher Bahadur Tamang, who is elected to the House



of Representatives (HoR) from Sindhupalchowk itself, has informed that over 50 people have gone missing and security agencies have started search and rescue operations in the district.

Several rivers in Nepal are flowing above the danger level due to torrential rain and the government has urged the people to shift to safe places.

Israeli airstrikes hit Gaza

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jerusalem, June 16: Israeli aircraft carried out a series of airstrikes at militant sites in the Gaza Strip early Wednesday, the first such raids since a shaky ceasefire ended the war with Hamas last month.

The airstrikes targeted facilities used by Hamas militants for meetings to plan attacks, the Israeli military said, blaming the group for any act of violence emanating from Gaza. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Tuesday, hundreds of Israeli ultranationalists, some chanting "Death to Arabs," paraded in east Jerusalem in a show of force that threatened to spark renewed violence. Palestinians in Gaza responded by launching incendiary balloons that caused at least 10 fires



in southern Israel. The march posed a test for Israel's fragile new government as well as the tenuous truce that ended last month's 11-day war between Israel and Hamas.

At one point during the parade, several dozen youths, jumping and waving their hands in their air, chanted: "Death to Arabs!" In another anti-Arab chant, they yelled: "May your village burn."

In a scathing condemnation on Twitter, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said those shouting racist slogans were "a disgrace to the Israeli people," adding: "The fact that there are radicals for whom the Israeli flag represents hatred and racism is abominable and unforgivable."

Palestinian woman shot dead by troops

The Israeli military Wednesday shot and killed a Palestinian woman who it said tried to ram her car into a group of soldiers guarding a West Bank construction site. In a statement, the army said soldiers opened fire at the woman in Hizmeh, just north of Jerusalem, after she exited the car and pulled out a knife. The statement did not say how close the woman was to the soldiers, and the army did not release any photos or video of the incident.

Alluring prizes offered up in Asia's vaccination lucky draws

Many across Asia have been reluctant to get vaccinated, with widespread disinformation and uncertainty fuelling hesitancy over safety, efficacy and religious concerns

AGENCIES

Washington, June 16: Chickens, cows, paid leave, even a million-dollar apartment, these are the prizes on offer from Thailand to Indonesia to Hong Kong for those who get vaccinated against Covid-19 as nations across Asia combat vaccine hesitancy.

As more transmissible variants of the virus have driven a surge in cases in Southeast Asia in recent weeks, authorities have started offering chances in lucky draws for vaccinations.

In Thailand's Mae Chaem district in northern Chiang Mai, where most residents are cattle farmers, authorities launched a cow raffle this month that is proving to be a hit.

Now in its second week and with 27 cows to award, authorities say



the campaign has prompted more than 50% of the 1,400 residents in the district - many elderly and in high-risk groups - to register for their vaccines.

Out of Thailand's population of 66 million, just 4.76 million have received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine.

In Hong Kong, where the pan-

dem has largely been kept under control so far, authorities are concerned that low rates of vaccination could still leave the Chinese territory susceptible to a virulent outbreak.

Shopping vouchers, flights, and a new apartment worth HK\$10.8 million (\$1.4 million) are among the incentives on offer in lucky draws there for those who have been vaccinated.

Some businesses are taking additional steps, offering paid leave for those who have been inoculated. One private sports club, though, is using punishment instead of rewards, instructing its staff to get vaccinated by the end of June or be denied future bonuses, promotions and pay rises.

Indonesia has officially reported more than 1.9 million coronavirus

infections and 53,280 deaths. Recent studies of blood serum samples, however, show the true spread of COVID-19 could be 30 times higher.

Among Indonesian Muslims - who make up more than 85% of the nation's population - many are worried whether the vaccines are considered halal, or permissible, by Islam.

Cipanas authorities say it has been especially difficult to persuade the elderly that the vaccines are safe and halal. As in Thailand, they have also turned to livestock incentives, offering live chickens for each senior who gets a shot.

Data from Indonesia's ministry of health shows that only 5%, or 8.8 million people, have been fully vaccinated, far fewer than a target of 181.5 million people by the end of the year.

business

of the day quote

Over the past year, our workplace has seen rapid transformation. Young people are resolved to improve the world and create a sense of togetherness. In these testing times, where every action matters, it is very important for companies to have a purpose-driven strategy and create a positive impact

SV NATHAN | PARTNER AND CHIEF TALENT OFFICER, DELOITTE INDIA

With Dynamics 365 Business Central, we aim to empower and strengthen the SMB ecosystem in the country. It offers customers affordable and easily manageable tools that simplify and expedite everyday business processes

HARISH VELLAT | COUNTRY HEAD (SMB), MICROSOFT INDIA

We are committed to the growth of the region and the businesses here by creating conducive policies and providing all possible support for their growth. Flipkart's continued investment is a testament to the enabling environment Bengal has helped create job opportunities

VANDANA YADAV | SECRETARY, INDUSTRY COMMERCE AND ENTERPRISES, WEST BENGAL

SHORT TAKES

'Scale of vax to shape recovery'

Mumbai: Speed and scale of vaccination against Covid-19 will shape the path of economic recovery which has the resilience and the fundamentals to bounce back from the pandemic and unshackle itself from pre-existing cyclical and structural hindrances, said a RBI report. As per the current assessment, the second wave of the pandemic has mainly hit the domestic demand, the RBI said in an article on the 'State of economy' written jointly by RBI Deputy Governor MD Patra and other officials.

'Jalgaon banana exported to Dubai'

New Delhi: India has exported 22 tonnes of Geographical Indications (GI) certified fiber and mineral-rich Jalgaon banana to Dubai, the commerce ministry said Wednesday. The GI tag helps growers get the premium price of the product as no other producer can misuse the name to market similar goods. A geographical indication (GI) tag is used for an agricultural, natural, or a manufactured product (handicraft and industrial goods) originating from a definite geographical territory.

Centre plans to simplify green nod

New Delhi: The Centre Wednesday said the government is planning to simplify the green clearances required for the quick operationalisation of mining projects, including coal. It assumes significance as mining projects in various states face delays in production due to lack of approvals such as forest and environment clearance.

AIF activity picks up steam at GIFT City

New Delhi: At least half a dozen entities have applied to set up alternative investment funds (AIFs) in the international financial services centre (IFSC) at Gujarat GIFT City for catering to investors globally, a top official said. This included Multiples Alternate Asset Management, Kedaara Capital and Avendus Group, Tapan Ray, Managing Director, and Group Chief Executive Officer, GIFT City said Wednesday.



Despite the coronavirus pandemic, the German battery market is on an upward trend. The volume of the market for lithium-ion batteries in particular increased enormously

CHRISTIAN ECKERT | MD (BATTERIES DIVISION), ZVEI

ONEPLUS MERGES WITH OPPO

With an aim to create better products, global smartphone brand OnePlus Wednesday announced that it has decided to further integrate with its sister smartphone brand OPPO. It will also allow them to be more efficient by bringing faster and more stable software updates for OnePlus users, Founder and CEO Pete Lau said



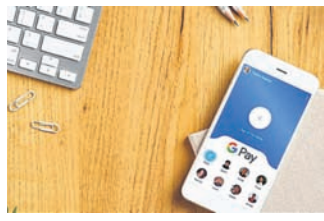
Gpay expands cards tokenisation with new banks

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 16: Google Pay Wednesday said it has expanded its network of bank partners offering cards tokenisation on the Google Pay app and added lenders including SBI, IndusInd Bank, Federal Bank, and HSBC India.

"After successfully rolling out tokenisation with Kotak Mahindra Bank, SBI Cards, and Axis Bank, Google Pay has now added debit cards by SBI, IndusInd Bank, and Federal Bank and credit cards by IndusInd Bank and HSBC India to its slate," a statement said.

Tokenisation is a feature that enables users to make debit or credit card payments through a secure digital token attached to



their phone without having to physically share their credit or debit card details. The feature also works with online merchants, delivering more native and seamless OTP experiences without redirecting users to 3D secure sites.

Google Pay said with tokenisation, it will enable safe and secure omnichannel experiences to help consumers use near-field communication (NFC) capable devices/phones

Tokenisation is a feature that enables users to make debit or credit card payments through a secure digital token attached to their phone without having to physically share their credit or debit card details

to make contactless payments at over 2.5 million visa merchant locations, scan and pay at more than 1.5 million Bharat QR-enabled merchants, and pay bills and recharges

from within their Google Pay app using their credit card.

"We're committed to offering the most secure payments experience to our growing base of users, and tokenisation helps to replace sensitive data such as credit and debit card numbers with tokens, eliminating any chances of fraud. We are hopeful that the tokenisation feature will further encourage users to transact securely and safely in the current times and expand merchant transactions both online and offline," Sajith Sivanandan, Business Head at Google Pay and NBU - APAC, said.

He added that the addition of SBI and Federal debit cards, IndusInd Bank debit and credit cards, and HSBC credit cards helps

extend this offering to millions of card users on the Visa network.

"We are working closely with other banking partners to further expand the adoption of card-based payments with tokenisation in India," he said.

Visa India and South Asia Group Country Manager TR Ramachandran said with tokenised, contactless forms of payment, millions of mobile first users will be able to use their credit and debit cards on Google Pay, bolstering confidence in a large segment that is new to digital.

Visa has already issued over two billion token credentials globally and with Google Pay live in India, these numbers are expected to grow significantly, he added.

'Commercial real estate will continue to face pressure in near term'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 16: The commercial real estate sector will continue to face pressure in the near term due to the Covid-19 pandemic related disruptions in the office and retail leasing segments, according to a report.

With the second wave peaking in the first quarter of FY22, the sector is expected to confront similar challenges as in the previous financial year, Icara Ratings said in the report.

While the retail leasing segment prospects are closely linked to the recovery in retail sales and discretionary consumption spending by the urban population, demand recovery in the office leasing segment is influenced by multiple factors as corporates evaluate the challenges and opportunities created by the pandemic on their real estate resource planning, it added.

"Though cash flows remained materially unimpacted in FY21, we are seeing increasing vacancy levels in the rated portfolio as the pandemic has resulted in deferment of new leasing transactions by tenants, while the available inventory builds up in line with scheduled completions," Icara Group Head and Senior Vice President, Corporate Ratings, Shubham Jain told reporters at a virtual press conference.

Net direct tax collections for FY22 grows over 100%

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 16: The net direct tax collections for the financial year 2021-22 have grown at a robust pace despite the disruptions caused by the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic on the economy.

According to the Finance Ministry, tax collections for FY22 up to June 15 have registered a growth of over 100 per cent at ₹1,85,871 crore, compared to ₹92,762 crore over the corresponding period of the preceding year.

The net direct tax collections include corporation tax (CIT) at ₹74,356 crore (net of refund), and personal income tax (PIT), including security transaction tax (STT), at ₹1,11,043 crore (net of refund).

The gross collection of direct taxes (before adjusting for refunds) for FY22 stands at ₹2,16,602 crore compared to ₹1,37,825 crore in same period of the previous year.

This includes corporation tax at ₹96,923 crore and personal income tax, including security transaction tax, at ₹1,19,197 crore.

Minor head-wise collection comprises advance tax of ₹28,780 crore, tax deducted at source of ₹1,56,824 crore, self-assessment tax of ₹15,343 crore, regular assessment tax of ₹14,079 crore, dividend distribution tax of ₹1,086 crore, and tax under other minor heads of ₹491 crore.



According to the Finance Ministry, tax collections for FY22 up to June 15 have registered a growth of over 100% at ₹1,85,871 crore

The gross collection of direct taxes (before adjusting for refunds) for FY22 stands at ₹2,16,602 crore

The Finance Ministry said that despite the extremely challenging initial months of the new fiscal, the advance tax collections for the first quarter of FY22 stands at ₹28,780 crore against advance tax collections of ₹11,714 crore for the corresponding period of the preceding fiscal, showing a growth of approximately 146 per cent. This comprises corporation tax at ₹18,358 crore and personal income tax at ₹10,422 crore.

This amount is expected to increase as further information is received from the banks, the Finance Ministry statement said. What is encouraging is that the high tax collection numbers have

come even though refunds amounting to ₹30,731 crore have also been issued during the period under review.

The improved performance on direct tax should be encouraging for the government that is looking at various measures to bring the economy back on rails after the adverse impact of the second wave of the pandemic waves.

For the government, indirect tax collections till May this year has already brought cheers as April numbers of GST reached record high levels since the introduction of the new tax system, while May numbers have not been that bad, remaining above the ₹1 lakh crore mark.

Improved revenues are key for the government to maintain fiscal discipline and contain the country's fiscal deficit within manageable limits.

PM calls for 'repair and prepare' of health infra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 16: As India emerges from a devastating second wave of Covid-19 infections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday said the focus must be on repairing and preparing the health infrastructure as well as the economy for future challenges.

To prepare a base for a sustained higher growth rate, the government continues to unleash reforms and has also extended free food distribution schemes to aid the poor hit hard by the pandemic.

"Over the past year, we have witnessed a lot of disruption in different sectors. Much of it is still there," Modi said at the VivaTech Summit. "Yet, disruption does not have to mean despair. Instead, we must keep the focus on the twin foundation of repair and prepare."

This time last year the world was still seeking a vaccine and today two vaccines are being made in India, and more are in the development or trial stages, he said.

"We have to continue repairing health infrastructure and our economies," he said.

"And when I say prepare, I mean insulating our planet against the next pandemic, ensuring we focus on a sustainable lifestyle that stops ecological degradation, strengthening cooperation in furthering research as well as innovation."

Indian economy suffered its worst contraction in four decades



Over the past year, we have witnessed a lot of disruption in different sectors. Much of it is still there. Yet, disruption does not have to mean despair. Instead, we must keep the focus on the twin foundation of repair and prepare

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

as coronavirus-induced lockdowns stalled businesses and economic activity.

While attempts were made to control the spread of infections and healthcare infrastructure built to treat the ill, the government implemented huge reforms across sectors, from mining to space, from banking to atomic energy.

"This goes on to show that India as a nation is adaptable and agile," he said.

After the brutal second wave in April and May, the Covid case has fallen more than 80% since its peak 5 weeks ago.

Dutee Chand roped in as new face of Senco Gold

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 16: Senco Gold & Diamonds roped in the internationally acclaimed Indian sprinter Dutee Chand as the company's new brand ambassador. She will be promoting 'Everlite' - the light-weight jewellery range from Senco Gold & Diamonds. The brand is also celebrating the PRIDE month and has rolled out a new campaign in honour of the LGBT community #MorePowerToPride#loveislove.

Senco Gold & Diamonds unveiled a new range of Everlite jewellery named Love is Love Collection, Wednesday during a virtual meet. The Love Collection offers a sig-



nature range of rings, ear-studs, chains and pendants in Gold and Diamond, and can be used as part of daily wear as well as for party wear. The price range of the collection starts from ₹12,000 for both Gold and Diamond pieces.

BIZ BUZZ

Samsung launches 'The Frame TV'

BHUBANESWAR: Samsung launched its latest addition television The Frame TV 2021 to its lineup of premium TVs. The 2021 edition TV come in four screen sizes - 43-inch, 50-inch, 55-inch and 65-inch. The new Frame will be available on Amazon, Flipkart and Samsung's official online store Samsung Shop starting at ₹61,990. The Frame TV will get complementary bezel worth up to ₹9,900, from June 12 to June 21. The all-new uber-chic 2021 edition is 46% thinner than the previous mode.

'Microsoft Teams', now available in Odia

BHUBANESWAR: Microsoft Teams, a chat and collaboration platform is already a leading solution for working professionals. Now, it has been made available in the Odia language. The new features are designed to ensure easy and prompt conversations with the people one cared about. Users will have access to all features of Teams, and can any time change the language back to English. The app also allows you to listen to your messages received in Odia. Users can now speak to 300 people for 24 hours.

TOP LOSERS 16 JUN			
52,501.98	242.10	Power Grid Corp	-2.18%
	1013.70	IndusInd Bank	-1.92%
	2211.65	Reliance	-1.69%
	1490.65	L&T	-1.34%
	6083.00	Bajaj Finance	-1.26%
	6585.70	UltraTech Cem	-1.21%
	536.45	Bharti Airtel	-1.13%
	2521.55	HDFC	-0.90%
	425.95	SBI	-0.83%
	639.95	ICICI Bank	-0.79%
	POINTS		0%
	BSE SENSEX		0%
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India may have 330mn 5G subscribers by 2026: Report

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 16: India is likely to have 330 million 5G subscribers by 2026 and the monthly data consumption per smartphone is expected to grow over 3-fold to 40 gigabyte per smartphone, telecom gear maker Ericsson said in a report Wednesday.

Average data consumption per smartphone at 14.6 GB per month in India continues to be the second-highest in the world, according to the Ericsson Mobility Report 2021.

"In the India region, 4G subscriptions are forecast to rise from 680 million in 2020 to 830 million in 2026. 5G will represent around 26 per cent of mobile subscriptions in India at the end of 2026, estimated at about 330 million subscriptions," it added.

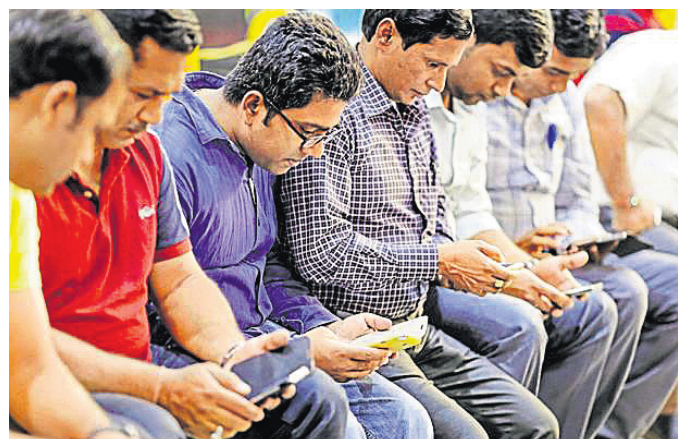
The report projects that 5G sub-

scriptions to reach 3.5 billion, accounting for around 40 per cent of all mobile subscriptions by 2026.

The company in a survey in India found that 42 per cent of users living in mega or metro cities of India who use 4G as the only home internet connection are interested in using 5G fixed wireless access connection, Ericsson India head and chief of Network Solutions for Market Area South East Asia Oceania and India Nitin Bansal said.

"50 per cent consumers in India are willing to pay 50 per cent more for 5G with bundled digital services compared to just 10 per cent premium for 5G connectivity. 40 million users could take up 5G in the first year when it is made available," Bansal noted.

Ericsson mobility report said the number of smartphone subscriptions was 810 million in 2020



and is expected to grow at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7 per cent, reaching over 1.2 billion by 2026.

Smartphone subscriptions accounted for 72 per cent of total mo-

Smartphone subscriptions accounted for 72% of total mobile subscriptions in 2020 and are projected to constitute over 98% in 2026, driven by rapid smartphone adoption in the country

traffic growth can be very volatile between years and can also vary significantly between countries, depending on local market dynamics. "Data consumption in India is very high because people are using smartphone to work from home and also the penetration of smartphone is high in India," Cerwall said.

The report has increased forecasts for South East Asia and Oceania, as well as for India, with India remaining a region with one of the highest monthly usage per smartphone rates, at around 15 GB at the end of 2020.

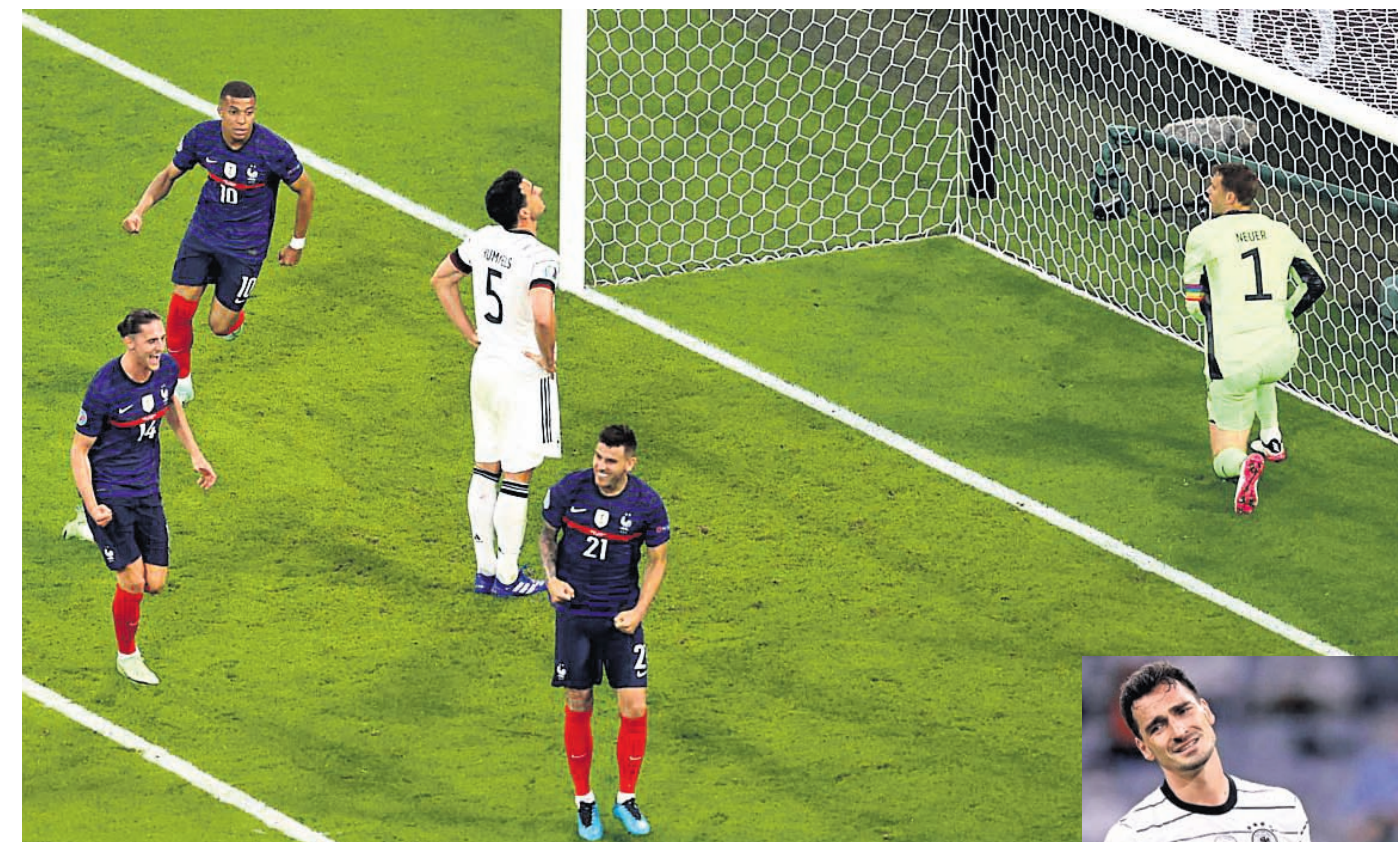
"The average traffic per smartphone in the India region stands second-highest globally and is projected to grow to around 40 GB per month in 2026.

"Competitive pricing by service providers for subscription packages, affordable smartphones and increased time spent online all contribute to monthly usage growth in the region," the report said.

Total mobile data traffic in India has grown from 6.9 exabytes (EB) per month to 9.5 EB per month in 2020 and is projected to increase by more than 4 times to reach 41 EB per month in 2026.

France put Germany on Mats

HUMMELS' OWN-GOAL HELPS WORLD CHAMPIONS OFF TO A WINNING START AT EURO 2020



REACTIONS SAY IT ALL: France players begin celebration after Mats Hummels' (No.5) own-goal as Germany goalie Manuel Neuer looks disappointed, Tuesday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Munich, June 16: Mats Hummels' return to the national team went better for France than it did for Germany. The experienced defender was recalled by Germany coach Joachim Loew for the European Championship for his leadership qualities, but he ended up scoring an own-goal Tuesday to give France a 1-0 victory.

"It was a struggle between ti-

tans," France coach Didier Deschamps said. Hummels was attempting to stop Lucas Hernandez's cross from reaching France forward Kylian Mbappe when he diverted the ball into his own net with his shin in the 20th minute.

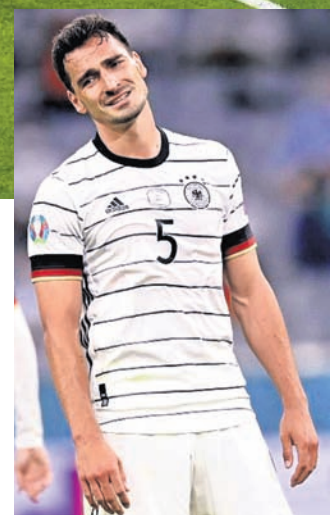
"I can't fault him," Loew said. "It's just bad luck. The ball in was fast. Maybe we should have attacked the throw in quicker. But it was hard for Mats to clear the ball."

There were chances at both ends,

but France looked more likely to score while Germany squandered opportunities. Ilkay Gundogan should have scored in the first half but couldn't direct his shot on target.

France had two goals called back for offside in the second half. Mbappe sent a curling shot inside the far post midway through the half and then set up Karim Benzema for another late in the match.

Benzema was playing in his first competitive game for France since



a World Cup quarterfinal loss to Germany in 2014. Mbappe also had a penalty appeal waved off in between the offside

goals — Hummels had timed his tackle perfectly when the 22-year-old Frenchman would have been through on goal.

Germany had never previously lost an opening game in the group stage at the European Championship. Loew started with the same lineup from the 7-1 rout of Latvia in Germany's final warm-up game, but his team had no answer to Paul Pogba, who disrupted the team's buildup play.

"It was important to start with a win. We were playing Germany, they really riled us. But we wanted this win above all," said Pogba, who also provided incisive passes for France's fearsome forward trio of Mbappe, Benzema and Antoine Griezmann.

Loew, who is stepping down after the tournament, sent on forwards Leroy Sane and Timo Werner late in the match, and then Kevin Volland as a last resort, but none could make a difference.

"We threw everything into it and fought to the end," Loew said. "We were just missing the ability to break through in the final third."

Germany's next coach, Hansi Flick, was among the 14,000 or so spectators in attendance amid strict measures against the coronavirus.

Before the match started, a Greenpeace protester parachuted into the stadium. UEFA said there were some injuries.

Germany next faces Portugal, which defeated Hungary 3-0 with two record-setting goals from Cristiano Ronaldo. France will play the Hungarians in Budapest.

"We have to look forward," Germany midfielder Toni Kroos said. "When you lose the first game and you have three group games, there's a lot of pressure. We don't need to talk about it."

Russia edge past 1-0 Finland at Euro 2020



ASSOCIATED PRESS

St. Petersburg, June 16: With a slick one-two and a beautiful curling shot, Aleksei Miranchuk finally gave Russia something to smile about at the European Championship.

The left-footed playmaker produced the one moment of class in a chaotic game Wednesday to give Russia a 1-0 win over Finland and their first points at Euro 2020.

The pessimism that followed the Russians' 0-3 loss to Belgium in their opening Group B game was replaced by loud cheers and jubilant chants of "ROSS-I-YA" at the final whistle at Saint Petersburg Stadium.

Now Russia are tied on points with the Finns, who missed the chance to reach the last 16 with a game to spare with a second straight victory in their first major football tournament. Their first victory was 1-0 over Denmark in a match marked by Christian Eriksen's collapse.

It came as no surprise that Artem Dzyuba was involved in Miranchuk's superbly taken goal, which wasn't in keeping with the overall standard of a game.

The big center forward was the focal point of all Russia's attacks,

TODAY'S MATCHES

UKR	v	MKD
Time: 06:30 pm		
DEN	v	BEL
Time: 09:30 pm		
NED	v	AUT
Time: 12:30 am (June 18)		
Telecast: Sony TEN Network		

India advance despite draw with Afghanistan

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Doha, June 16: India were lucky to get away with a 1-1 draw against Afghanistan without actually scoring in a Group E match of the World Cup 2022 and Asian Cup China 2023 Qualifiers here Tuesday, and still advanced to the third and final round. The Afghan goalkeeper scored the goal in India's account.

Ovays Azizi scored the own-goal in the 75th minute and Hossein Zamani's 82nd minute strike drew parity at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium here.

Importantly for Sunil Chhetri's team, India entered the third and final round of the qualifiers, along with Afghanistan. Although this is a combined qualification tournament, India are out of contention for the 2022 World Cup.

India finished at the third position in Group E with seven points from eight matches. They won only one match, lost three, and drew four games. They scored six goals

and conceded seven to end up with a negative goal difference.

Afghanistan finished fourth with six points from eight matches. Qatar topped the group with 22 points from eight matches. Oman finished second with 15 points from 7 matches played and one game in hand.

Going into the game against Afghanistan, India needed just a draw to advance to the final round of qualification for the Asian Cup.

India missed a few opportunities to score. They finally got a goal on the scoreboard in the 75th minute when Manvir Singh and Ashique Kuruniyan combined well. Kuruniyan sent a looping cross towards the far post, and a desperate Afghanistan goalkeeper Azizi could only send the ball into his own goal.

However, Afghanistan made amends and drew parity in the 82nd minute when midfielder Noor Husin, on the left flank, did well to find teenager Hossein Zamani, who curled his shot into the far post to beat Gurpreet Singh Sandhu.

Dutch to stick with winning system

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Amsterdam, June 16: The criticism of the Netherlands' 3-5-2 formation has suddenly fallen silent. The attacking play in the team's 3-2 victory over Ukraine Sunday at the European Championship appears to have ended the debate — at least for now — about which system coach Frank de Boer should play.

Thursday, expect the same lineup of three defenders, five midfielders — including wingbacks on each flank — and two attackers against Austria in the team's second Group C match at the Johan Cruyff Arena.

Some Dutch fans want the team to play what they consider to be the more attacking system of 4-3-3 — four defenders, three midfielders and three attackers. One even rented a plane to push home the message before the match against Ukraine.

Both the Dutch and the Austrians won their opening matches at Euro 2020, so both can advance with an-



other victory. The top two teams in each of the six groups advance to the knockout stage, along with the four best third-place teams. Austria leads Group C after beating North Macedonia 3-1 in their opener. It was the country's first win at a major football tournament in 31 years and their first ever at the Euro.

But the celebrations were cut short. The North Macedonian football federation submitted a request

heated words yesterday in the emotions of the game for which I would like to apologize - especially to my friends from North Macedonia and Albania."

UEFA said Tuesday it has appointed a disciplinary inspector to investigate the incident. UEFA disciplinary rules call for a minimum 10-match ban for insults based on race or ethnic origin.

Back on the field, Austria defender Martin Hinteregger said the Netherlands match will be very different from the team's opener.

Netherlands defender Matthijs de Ligt, who missed the first match with a groin injury, should make his return Thursday, at least according to one of his teammates. De Ligt looked relaxed Wednesday as he cycled to training next to former Ajax teammate Frenkie De Jong.

The Dutch have won their last six matches against Austria. The Austrians' last victory over the Netherlands dates back to a friendly in Vienna in 1990 — before many of the current crop of players from both sides were even born.

Bopanna, Sharan beat 2nd seeds; through at Halle

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Halle (Germany), June 16: India's Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan knocked out second seeds Lukasz Kubot and Edouard Roger Vasselin to move to the quarter-finals of the Noventi Open, here Wednesday.

Bopanna and Sharan, who are waiting to know if they will make the cut at the Tokyo Games as a team, beat the Polish-French combination 7-6(13-11), 6-4 in the second round of the Euro 1455925 tournament that marked the beginning of the grass court season.

Bopanna (38) and Sharan (75) ended up with a combined rank of 113 on June 14, the cut-off date for rankings to be considered for entries at the Tokyo Games.

The low combined rank means that the Indian pair needs a lot of withdrawals or pull outs from other nations to make the cut.

Dutee still hopeful for Tokyo berth Spinners restrict England to 269/6

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 16: An Olympic qualifying spot within her grasp, national record-holding sprinter Dutee Chand on Wednesday said her target in the upcoming Tokyo Games is to reach the 100m final with an improved timing.

The Odisha sprint queen is yet to breach the qualification timing of 11.15 seconds but is expected to make it to the Tokyo Games on the basis of world rankings. Out of the 56 athletes to compete, 33 will be those who touch qualification timing and the remaining will be picked on the basis of rankings.

The 25-year-old, who has a personal best of 11.22 sec, is currently 42nd in the World Athletics' Road to Tokyo list, which also includes those who have already qualified on the basis of entry standard timing. The qualification deadline is June 29 and the final list of entries will be published July 1.



"I will try my best to touch the 11.15 sec standard during the Indian Grand Prix 4 June 21 and the National Inter-State Championships (June 25-29). If not, I am expecting qualification on the basis of rankings," Dutee said in a virtual press conference.

"My aim in Tokyo is to run below 11.10 seconds and qualify for the final round. Olympics is the biggest event, there will be a lot of athletes who run around 11 seconds and below that," said the runner who was roped in as brand ambassador of Senco Gold and Diamonds company as part of its initiatives for the LGBTQ community.

Dutee rued missing the World Relay Championships in Poland in May and two competitions in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan this month due to travel restrictions on the Indians in view of the COVID-19 situation in the country.

"There have been a lot of changes in training competition schedule (due to pandemic). I am disappointed to have missed the international events but we can't do anything."

She said the next one month will be crucial for her in terms of training as she aims to improve her timing.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bristol, June 16: Spinners Sneha Rana (3/77) and Deepti Sharma (2/50) fashioned India's comeback by triggering a batting collapse in the final session but England Women still managed a decent 269/6 on the opening day of the one-off Test here, Wednesday.

Playing a Test match after nearly seven years, India were struggling badly but Rana and Sharma brought the side back by accounting for two batters each in the final session. From a comfortable 230/2, England were reeling at 251/6.

For England, Tammy Beaumont (66, 144b, 6x4) looked solid at the top apart from skipper Heather Knight (95, 175b, 9x4). At stumps, Sophie Dunkley (12 batting) and Katherine Brunt (7 batting) were at the crease.

The Indians were sloppy on the field initially as Deepti dropped a straight-forward catch off Natalie Sciver (42, 75b, 6x4) at midwicket off



Indian spinner Sneha Rana and English skipper Heather Knight were the standout performers on Day 1 of the one-off Test, Wednesday

Harmanpreet Kaur's bowling. But she made up for the mistake soon, dismissing Sciver.

Three overs later, Rana sent back Amy Jones. But it was Deepti who got the big breakthrough in the form of Knight. Rana soon picked up her third wicket of the day dismissing Georgia Elwiss as England slumped to 251/6.

Earlier, England lost Beaumont in the second session but managed to consolidate their position by reaching 162/2 at tea. After getting rid of Lauren Winfield-Hill (35) through Pooja Vastrakar in the first session of the day, India toiled hard before Rana picked up her maiden Test wicket.

BRIEF SCORES
ENGLAND WOMEN 269/6 (Heather Knight 95, Tammy Beaumont 66, Natalie Sciver 42, Lauren Winfield-Hill 35; Sneha Rana 3/77, Deepti Sharma 2/50, Pooja Vastrakar 1/43) **VS INDIA WOMEN.** Match to continue.