



PROUD REPRESENTATION

Odia singer Antara Chakraborty represented Odisha in 'Rhythm and Raga', a national level campaign on World Music Day

LEISURE P2



EUROPEANS, US WARN IRAN

Western officials have warned Tehran that negotiations to revive its nuclear deal cannot continue indefinitely

INTERNATIONAL P10



SWITZERLAND WIN

Xherdan Shaqiri scores twice as Switzerland thrash Turkey to show the latter the exit door in Euro 2020

SPORTS P12

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TPR drops below 5% since April 2 in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: Odisha's daily test positivity rate (TPR) for Covid-19 decreased to below five per cent Monday for the first time in 80 days. The state reported 3,021 new Covid-19 cases from 61,000 samples tested in the last 24 hours with a test positivity rate of 4.96 per cent, the first time such a figure has been achieved since April 2.

However, in some districts the situation continues to remain alarming with TPR between June 14 and 20 being more than 10 per cent. Among the districts are Bhubaneswar, Balasore, Khurda, Jajpur and Nuapada. In Bhubaneswar, the weekly TPR was 15.66 per cent followed by Balasore (14.86%), Jajpur (14.44%) and Khurda (10.07%). In Nuapada district, the TPR has been registered at 10.45%.

The state-wide lockdown, which has been extended till June 30, is still in force in all the 30 districts. However, guidelines have been relaxed in 17 districts due to their low TPRs.

June has been the most devastating for Odisha with the state reporting 842 Covid-19 deaths officially. However, by unofficial estimates, the numbers would be at least double. The state reported 43 deaths Monday as per a tweet of the Health and Family Welfare department. The fresh fatalities took the total tally in Odisha to 3,633.

With the addition of 3,031 new Covid-19 cases the active caseload in Odisha now stands at 36,633. Khurda district with 381 new cases topped the list of new infections.

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Odisha logs over 1 crore vax jabs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: Odisha achieved Monday the distinction of administering more than one crore Covid-19 vaccine jabs. The vaccination drive in the state started January 16 along with the rest of India.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed happiness on achieving such a milestone. "Achieving a significant milestone in #COVID19 vaccination, #Odisha has administered 1 crore vaccine doses including vaccination of our frontline warriors. Commend the commitment of our healthcare workers in ensuring a swift inoculation process to save lives," Patnaik tweeted.

As per the data available in the CoWIN portal, 1,01,29,105 persons have been inoculated till Monday evening. While 82,91,032 people have received the first dose, the remaining 18,38,073 have been fully vaccinated.

A total of 21,46,106 people in the age group of 18-44 years have received the Covid-19 shots till now. In the 45-60 age group 33,69,285 persons have got the injection while 27,73,587 beneficiaries aged above 60 years have also got the jabs.

Khurda district has administered 14,14,649 doses, the highest among all districts. It is followed by Ganjam (9,52,561), Cuttack

Record 69L get Covid vaccine

NEW DELHI: More than 69 lakh vaccine doses were administered across India till Monday evening on the first day of the revised guidelines for Covid-19 vaccination coming into effect, the Union Health Ministry said. It is the highest number of doses administered in a day since the vaccination drive started January 16. India's cumulative Covid-19 vaccination coverage is now nearly 28.7 crore. "Central Government is beginning the 'Free Vaccination for All' campaign for every Indian from today. The biggest beneficiary of this phase of India's vaccination drive shall be the poor, the middle class and the youth of the country. All of us should pledge to get ourselves vaccinated. Together we will defeat Covid-19," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

(7,56,645), Balasore (5,59,724), Sundargarh (5,30,566). In all the other districts, the figure is less than five lakh.

Meanwhile, on the first day of free vaccination, Odisha administered 3.32 lakh doses to beneficiaries. The state government had set a target of three lakh or more vaccination Monday and it easily managed to achieve the goal. "The target is to increase the pace of vaccination so that more people benefit," said a source.



STRETCHING THEIR SINEWS: Children pose Monday in various yoga postures at the Khatbin Sahi locality in Cuttack on the occasion of International Yoga Day

OPTIONAL EXAM DATES DECLARED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 21: The CBSE and CISCE boards have told the Supreme Court that Class XII board examination results would be declared by July 31 and the students, desirous of taking up the board examination physically of CBSE can do so from August 15 to September 15, subject to the pandemic situation improving. The CISCE said its students can take improvement examinations which may commence from September 1, subject to the situation remaining conducive.

"I further say that regarding the date before which the optional examination for the candidates who are not satisfied with their assessment with the policy, the examinations for such candidates shall be conducted any time between August 15, 2021 to September 15, 2021, subject to conducive situation," said the affidavit filed by Sanyam Bhardwaj, controller of examinations in CBSE.

The CISCE in its affidavit said, "The CISCE will endeavour to hold the improvement examinations as expeditiously as possible after the declaration of the results. Subject to the situation remaining conducive and stable and declaration of results in a timely fashion, the improvement examinations should commence before September 1, 2021."

Appraisal mode worries students

SC asks CBSE and CISCE boards to clear doubts regarding evaluation method

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 21: The Supreme Court asked Monday both the CBSE and CISCE to respond by Tuesday to the concerns raised by some students and parents on the schemes of both the boards formulated to evaluate Class XII students, whose examinations were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The move came after the Supreme Court was told by both CBSE and CISCE that they have amended their respective evaluation schemes to assess Class XII students and incorporated a dispute resolution mechanism for candidates who have any objections. The CBSE said it has incorporated a clause which said that the dispute with regard to computation of results will be referred to a Committee constituted by the board.

"Examination will be conducted by the board only in the main subjects as and when conditions are conducive for holding the examinations. However, the marks obtained by a candidate

- Both boards informed the SC that dispute resolution panel has been set up
- Students concerned as many clauses are arbitrary for evaluation of Class-XII results

in this examination will be treated as final for those who opt to take this examination," the CBSE said in its affidavit filed in the top court. It said that as per the scheme the results for Class XII board examination 2021 shall be declared by July 31, 2021.

Similarly, CISCE also filed an affidavit in the top court saying that it has complied with the direction and amended its assessment scheme for Class XII students. The CISCE said that in the event of a student having objection(s) regarding computation of marks in the result, she/he may make a written application to the school concerned, stating the objection in detail along with reasons thereof. However, after the submissions of the

two boards, various parents' associations and students flagged several concerns with regard to the CBSE and ICSE schemes for evaluation for Class XII results. They said many clauses are arbitrary and would be detrimental to future prospects of the students. A special bench of Justices AM Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari said that it will hear Tuesday the response of counsels for CBSE and CISCE.

At the outset, senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for intervenor UP Parents Association, Lucknow, said that option to students for external examination as given in the CBSE's scheme will be a 'premium' for those students who could not do well in internal assessment. "This option should be given at the initial stage to both student and school to opt for either external examination or internal assessment. If any school or student does not want to opt for internal assessment then a date may be fixed for external examination in mid of July or any date found conducive for holding of examination," Singh said.

Top LeT militant, 2 others killed in J&K

SRINAGAR: One of the most wanted militants, Mudasar Pandit and a Pakistani ultra were among three terrorists killed in an overnight encounter with security forces in Sopore area of Baramulla district in Jammu and Kashmir, police said Monday. "Top LeT #terrorist Mudasar Pandit who was involved in #killing of 03 policemen, 02 councillors & 02 civilians recently and other several #terror crimes got killed in Sopore #encounter (sic)," the IGP tweeted. The encounter started Sunday night and continued till the wee hours of Monday.

| MARKET WATCH | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| INDEX | VARIATION |
| SENSEX | 52574.46 ↑ 230.01 |
| NIFTY | 15746.50 ↑ 63.10 |
| DOLLAR | 74.46 ↑ ₹0.20 |
| EURO | 88.46 ↑ ₹0.57 |
| GOLD | ₹47,074 ↑ ₹346 |
| SILVER | ₹67,735 ↑ ₹137 |

| WEATHER | | |
|----------|----------------------|--------|
| | BHUB | CTK |
| TEMP MAX | 35.0°C | 36.0°C |
| TEMP MIN | 25.2°C | 26.0°C |
| Humidity | 88% | 92% |
| Rainfall | Nil | 13.4mm |
| Forecast | Generally cloudy sky | |

An Olympics hugely different from others

GAMES VILLAGE LOOKS MORE LIKE A COVID-19 ISOLATION CENTRE WITH VIRUS CLINIC AND ISOLATION ROOMS

AGENCIES

Tokyo, June 21: The organisers of Tokyo Olympics threw open the doors of the Games Village to the media Sunday, showcasing virus upgrades including a fever clinic. The move came with just over a month left for the Games to begin.

Organisers are in the home stretch of preparations before the July 23 opening ceremony. They are trying to build confidence that the mega-event will be safe for athletes and the Japanese public. They unveiled Sunday the dedicated virus clinic in the village, warned that drinking in groups would be prohibited and said a mixed zone for guests had been scrapped. The fever clinic, separate from the



main medical facility, will be used to test and isolate people suspected of virus infection or considered close contacts of those who test positive. "If

there is suspicion of being infected... we should be able to properly isolate this person," said Takashi Kitajima, general manager for the village. "This

is just another example of how we are stringently managing matters about possible Covid infections," he told reporters. Other measures include reduced seating for diners, plexiglass shields between gym equipment, and a kit of hand sanitisers and soap to be handed to village residents.

Opening in just over a fortnight, the village will be particularly important for athletes because they are barred from going anywhere else except training and competition venues. Under strict virus rules, athletes will be tested daily during competition. And there will be no partying, officials warned. "When you drink alcohol, in principle, you are requested to drink alone and not in the company of others," said Kitajima.

Only 10,000 fans allowed in stadia

TOKYO: Tokyo Olympics organisers will allow local fans to attend when the Games open in just over a month, organising committee officials and the IOC said Monday. Organisers set a limit of 50 per cent of capacity up to a maximum of 10,000 fans for all Olympic venues. Fans from abroad have been banned several months ago. Officials said local fans will be under strict rules. They will not be allowed to cheer, must wear masks, and are being told to go straight home afterwards. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, who has favoured allowing fans, said before the official announcement that he would bar fans if conditions change.

16 prisoners set for early freedom

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: The Odisha government Monday ordered the release of 16 prisoners before completion of their prison terms under the policy for premature release of convicts.

The government took the decision to release the convicts on the basis of recommendations by the Sentence Review Committee. Some of these prisoners were recommended for release due to their good conduct. In some cases, the prisoners themselves had applied for early release promising to maintain good conduct.

Among the 16 whose release has been recommended, two each are from the Baripada and Balasore prisons. One person each will be set free from the prisons in Choudwar, Banapur, Sambalpur, Dhenkanal, Puri, Koraput, Bolangir, Kotpad and the Open Air Ashram at Jamujhari.

Three convicts from Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh who have been serving their terms in a prison in Visakhapatnam will also walk free. They were convicted by a court in a case registered at the Paralakhemundi police station. The three were transferred from the prison in Paralakhemundi to

- Among those to be released, 3 are currently lodged in a prison at Visakhapatnam
- Some of the prisoners have been given early release due to good conduct
- The final list of prisoners to be provided amnesty is approved by the Governor

Visakhapatnam jail a few years back.

The members of the Sentence Review Committee are the Principal Secretary of the Odisha Home department who is the chairman of the panel. The others are Principal Secretary of the Law Department, District & Sessions Judge, Khurda, Director of Health Services or his nominee not below the rank of joint director and ADG Crime Branch and DG Prisons.

The committee after receiving requests from the prisoners or recommendations from jail authorities also took suggestions from local police officials on whether the convicts can be freed. After going through all the applications and suggestions, the panel finally recommended the names of the 16 to be released and sent their names to the law department which forwarded those to the Governor for final approval.



I HAVE HAD ONE NOSE JOB DONE: KHLOE KARDASHIAN

American reality TV star Khloe Kardashian has opened up about going under the knife, saying that she has had a nose job once. During part two of the *Keeping Up With The Kardashians* reunion, host Andy Cohen asked Khloe what false claims she has heard the most about herself.

RAJA KUMARI'S LATEST TRACK FOCUSES ON GENDER EQUALITY

Indian-American rapper Raja Kumari released her latest track *The Rani Cypher Monday*, to mark World Music Day. The track highlights its theme of woman power with appearances by female emcees Dee MC, Siri and Meba Ofilia.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You may take a holiday today to be with your family, and perhaps go to meet your relatives who live nearby. It will make your kith and kin very happy. They will be surprised and Ganesh gives you the thumbs-up.

TAURUS
The planets are not well disposed towards you today, fears Ganesh. There are strong chances of crossing swords with someone, getting into a serious personality clash. Not good is come out of it. You may simply end in alienating those who are otherwise well disposed towards you. Later in the day the situation will ease out. Do not, in the evening, miss out on a chance of dining out with friends and family members.

GEMINI
It is the time to indulge in luxury and entertainment. You will pay more attention to household matters and tend to your children's needs. You will be concerned about your diet and other health matters in the evening, however, these worries are only of a temporary nature, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will be ready to understand the meaning of life. You will get new responsibilities in your job or business, which means a promotion and pay hike. You may take an instinctive decision, which you may regret later. Take a calculated and thoughtful step, says Ganesh.

LEO
You will spend time with your friends. You will be helpful to your friends and colleagues. You will work hard according to your capability today. You will experience the satisfaction of a job well done at the end of the day, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Luck will be in your favour as, Ganesh says, nothing will go wrong today, and you will succeed at anything you attempt to do. In certain cases, even without expecting anything, good results will be forthcoming. Bend your back if you must, as being adaptable and flexible will get you a lot of goodwill from others.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that those of you who are working independently or have their own business may have a good day in financial matters today. Those of you who are working professionals will find that your higher officials will be very happy with you and your abilities will be praised. Whether you are independently working or working under someone today is your day.

SCORPIO
The income, which you had written off as bad-debts may be recovered unexpectedly in business, foresees Ganesh. Home and office, both demand your attention equally. And you are just happy that you are able to manage both the places gracefully.

SAGITTARIUS
You are on a creative high today. You may be painting or sketching during the first half of the day. You may even find time to go through your past possessions and treasure. And during the later half of the day, you may be busy in giving your cosy corner and home a new look, a makeover. A pleasant day in store for you, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
You don't experience mood swings everyday. In fact, it is a rarity that you through tantrums. But, today it is one of those rare days. You will get irritated by the smallest of things and feel very disturbed. This will not last for long though. By the end of the day, you will feel energetic and be the first one to take any risks, says Ganesh. You'll have a personality that others wish to have.

AQUARIUS
Normally, it is you who delegates and call the shots, but today situation will be different. You will be overloaded with work and nobody will be able to share it with you. But, don't get disappointed, as your hard work will be paid off very well, assure Ganesh. Your commitment and performance will motivate others to put their best foot forward.

PISCES
Your competitors will find it tough to maintain their footing against your onslaught today. You need not worry about their activities for you will come out with flying colors at the end of it all. You are not by nature ill-tempered, but you will have to encounter situations where you will be opposed needlessly and that could rouse your wrath. It is an opportune time to hammer out solutions to long simmering discords, says Ganesh.

SHILPA'S TIPS FOR COVID RECOVERY

MUMBAI: Actress and yoga enthusiast Shilpa Shetty Kundra took to social media on the International Yoga Day Monday to suggest an asana that helps early recovery from Covid-19. Shilpa shared a video on Instagram where she is seen performing the Bhramari Pranayama. "BREATHE... it's THE most important function that the body performs. Breathing right helps provide oxygen to the organs to perform all the crucial processes, from cognition to digestion to strengthening the immune system. So on World Yoga Day, let's start by practicing the Bhramari Pranayama," she wrote. Sharing the health benefits of the asana, the actress informed, "It helps generate up to 15 per cent more nitric oxide through the vibrations of the humming sound, Aum. This in turn helps early recovery and healing from Covid-19. Spare a few minutes to focus on your breathing today with the Bhramari Pranayama. It relaxes the mind and lowers stress, while improving concentration and alleviating anxiety."

Akshay teams up with Suniel's son

MUMBAI: Actor Akshay Kumar is all set to star with Suniel Shetty's son Ahan Shetty in a new project by producer Sajid Nadiadwala. Ahan already has *Tadap* coming up, with Nadiadwala credited as one of the producers of the film. The Milan Luthria directorial casts Ahan opposite Tara Sutaria and is a remake of the 2018 Telugu hit *RX 100*.

And now, the producer has signed him for a new project with Akshay Kumar. The project is currently at a planning stage, and details will be announced soon.

"The entire team is rooting for this action power-pack of actors, which has Akshay and Ahan together for the first time," said a source. Akshay and Suniel have been great friends for a long time and have done quite a few hit films together including *Mohra*, *Hera Pheri*, *Awara Paagal Deewana* and *Dhadkan*.



Antara on cloud nine



BHUBANESWAR: Mumbai-based media team New Emerging World of Journalism (NEWJ) has brought together singers from different regions under its campaign *Rhythm and Raga* letting singers speak their heart out on World Music Day. Odia playback singer Antara Chakraborty, a household name in the state for her soulful recitals, has represented Odisha in the video and spoken about what music means to her. Apart from Antara, the video has featured legendary musicians such as Suresh Wadkar, Sudha Raghunathan and Raghu Dixit, and new media favorites like Yashraj Mukhate, Nandy Sisters and Asees Kaur. Each of them offered a unique glimpse into their world and narrated how music can capture hearts beyond languages and regions. Antara who is on cloud nine after watching the video, says "It is an honour for me to represent my state in the video where legendary musicians like Suresh Wadkar and YouTube sensations Nandy sisters talked about the significance of music in their lives."

Kalki Koechlin misses surfing

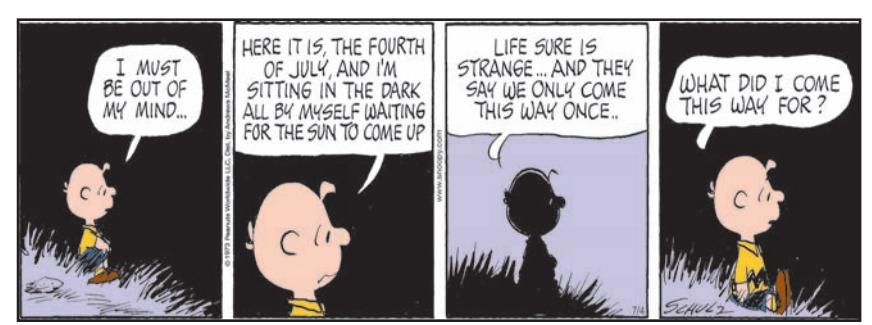
MUMBAI: Actress Kalki Koechlin misses surfing. The actress made the confession with her Instagram picture posted Monday where she is seen surfing in a bright orange t-shirt paired with a black bikini bottom. "March 2021. I miss that feeling," she wrote as caption. Actor Hrithik Roshan was amazed by Kalki's surfing skills and wrote, 'So cool.' Actress Sobhita Dhulipala shared that she wants to go surfing, too. "I've wanted to do this forever! So good," Sobhita wrote. Kalki will next be seen in *Goldfish*, also featuring actors Neena Gupta and Rajit Kapur. The film is about Anamika (played by Kalki), who returns home to her estranged mother Sadhana (Neena Gupta) because she is suffering from the onset of dementia.

Artistes' federation demands approval of indoor shooting

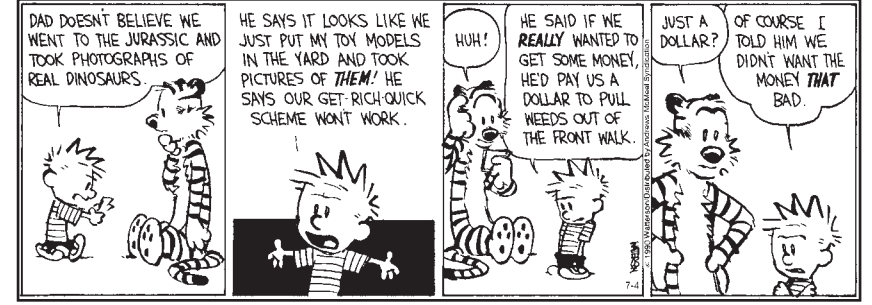


BHUBANESWAR: Several artistes and technicians who work in television, films and other similar mediums Monday demanded before the government to allow them start shooting indoors from July 1, to earn their livelihood. Under the banner of Odisha Artiste's Voice, they threatened to hit the street if their demands were not met. The members said that thousands of artistes are struggling to meet ends after the imposition of lockdown May 16. The government allowed private companies to work with minimal workforce but the same was not applicable for the entertainment industry, lamented film and TV producer Sridhar Martha. Actor Rabi Mishra said the artistes should be allowed to work indoors with performers not exceeding 25 people. "We had written a letter to the government on several occasions but it is yet to be heeded. We are now preparing to come out on the street if the demands are not conceded," threatened actress Bidusmita Mishra.

PEANUTS



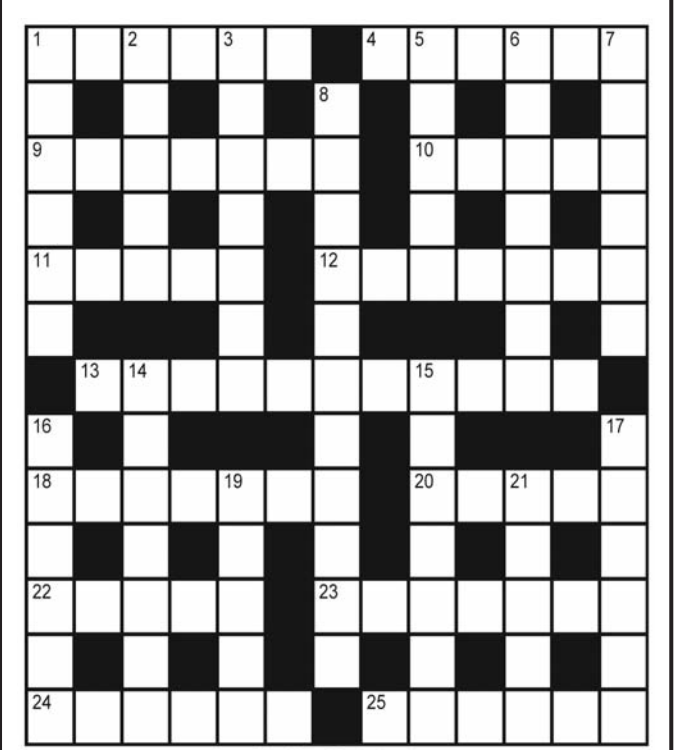
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY

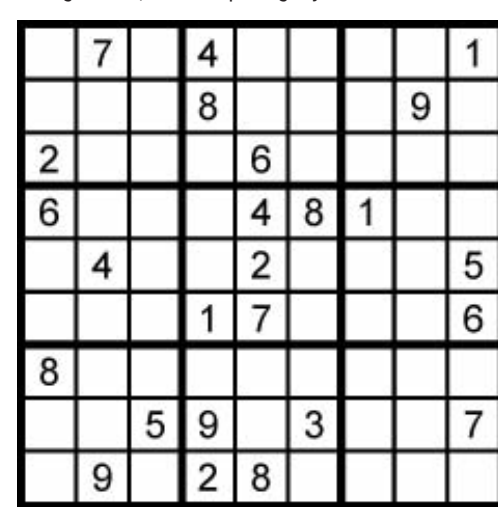


FUN post CROSSWORD

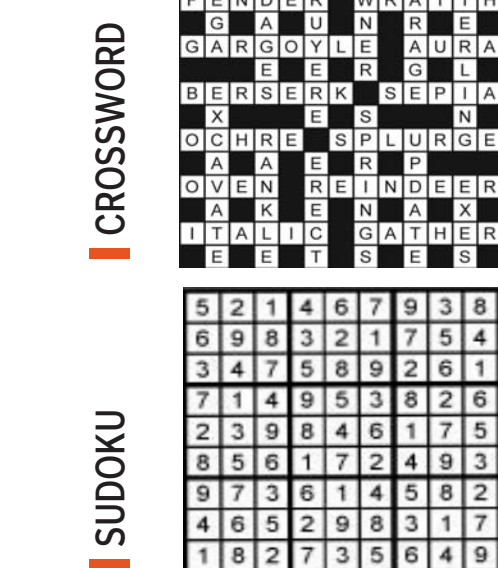


- Across**
- 1 Mountainous region in central Italy
 - 4 Jubilant
 - 9 Hunt cry (5-2)
 - 10 Swelter
 - 11 Inhabit
 - 12 Image copier
 - 13 Demoralised
 - 18 Portable grill
 - 20 Sovereign
 - 22 Scrapbook
 - 23 Indigenous
 - 24 Con game
 - 25 Court contest
 - 6 Neophyte
 - 7 Scares off
 - 8 Dry skin aid
 - 14 Drains the cup
 - 15 Condense
 - 16 Knife holder
 - 17 Building blocks
 - 19 Beast of burden
 - 21 Lime's buddy
- Down**
- 1 Slovenly
 - 2 Swell
 - 3 Perfect
 - 5 Cocoon contents

SUDOKU



SOLUTIONS

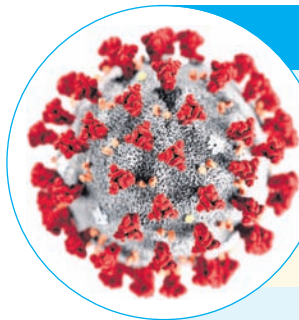


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



FOR LORD'S BATHING RITUAL

Darzi servitors mend an appliqué to be used at the Snaana Mandap ahead of the Debasana Purnima in Puri, Monday



COVID-19 TRACKER

| | INFECTED | RECOVERED | DEAD |
|--------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| World | 17,93,69,956 | 16,39,54,265 | 38,84,375 |
| India | 2,99,35,221 | 2,88,44,199 | 3,88,135 |
| Odisha | 8,80,533 | 8,44,801 | 3,633 |

Spl unit soon for better SDG score

THE PROJECT MONITORING UNIT WILL BE SET UP IN PLANNING & CONVERGENCE DEPARTMENT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: The state government has decided to set up a dedicated project monitoring unit (PMU) for planning, monitoring and coordination of the work plans for achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a time-bound manner.

This was revealed at the consultation meeting of state government with Niti Aayog Advisory Team on SDG Index India 2020-21 held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra here Monday.

The government has taken this decision following Niti Aayog's latest SDG report wherein Odisha slipped to 19th position in 2020-21 from 15th last year.

The special PMU will be set up in the Planning and Convergence department. It was decided at the meeting to form seven thematic groups under the chairmanship of Additional Chief Secretaries (ACSS) and Principal Secretaries that would spearhead the SDG vision and bring synergy in implementation of the work plans.

Considering the data presented



Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra, Development Commissioner PK Jena and other senior officials at the meeting with Niti Aayog Advisory Team

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

NITI AAYOG TEAM URGED TO MEASURE OUTCOMES OF THE STATE SCHEMES IN SDG PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

CHIEF SECRETARY EMPHASISED ON CAPTURING GROUND LEVEL OUTCOMES OF ALL DEVELOPMENTAL INTERVENTIONS

DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER PRADEEP KUMAR JENA SAID ODISHA'S PERFORMANCE IN A NUMBER OF AREAS WAS NOT PROPERLY REFLECTED IN THE SDG REPORT OF 2020

in the meeting with Niti Aayog team led by advisor Sanyukta Samaddar, the Chief Secretary emphasised on capturing ground level outcomes of all developmental inter-

ventions.

During the meeting, Mahapatra said the outcomes of the state schemes like Mamata, Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana, univer-

sal health assurance scheme, rural housing, urban housing, State Food Security scheme, state's performance grading index (PGI) score in education among others should also be taken into account while assessing the SDG performance.

Development Commissioner Pradeep Kumar Jena said that Odisha's performance in a number of areas was not properly reflected in the SDG Report of 2020.

State government officials informed the meeting that had the outcomes of both state and Central schemes been taken into account properly, Odisha's score in Goal-1 would have touched 50 instead of 41. Similarly, Goal-2 and Goal-9 scores of the state would have reached 56 and 48 respectively instead of the present score of 45 and 46 in the report.

The overall SDG performance of Odisha was increased to 61 in the year 2020 from 51 in 2019.

The state ranked No-1 in SDG-13 relating to action on combating climate change and its impacts. The state also ranked No-1 in SDG-14 relating to conservation and sustainability of the use of ocean, sea and marine resources.

3rd wave to be less infectious, says Public Health director

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: The possible third wave of the novel coronavirus which is likely hit children will be less infectious than the second wave, said Public Health director Niranjan Mishra here Monday.

"Many scientists and experts have spoken about a possible third wave of Covid-19 and some countries have also witnessed it. Usually, the intensity of the third wave of a pandemic is less impacting than the second one," Mishra said while talking to reporters here.

Stating that the impact of third wave largely depends on vaccination coverage, he said the state government is now giving full emphasis on vaccination of maximum number of people as soon as possible. The state is well prepared to face another wave of the pandemic, Mishra said.

Speaking on use of steroids in treatment of Covid patients, he said that the drug will be administered in case of mild to critically-ill patients, as per the guidelines issued by the Centre.



Stating that the impact of third wave largely depends on vaccination coverage, Public Health director Niranjan Mishra said the state govt is now giving full emphasis on vaccination of maximum number of people as soon as possible

Similarly, Director of Medical Education and Training (DMET) CBK Mohanty said the countries that have witnessed the third wave found it to be less damaging than the second one.

Mohanty said the Delta-Plus variant of the coronavirus was found in seven samples from Maharashtra. "With such a small number of cases, we can't predict its severity so early. If we detect the cases as early as possible and isolate the patients accordingly, the new

Speaking on use of steroids in treatment of Covid patients, he said the drug will be administered in case of mild to critically-ill patients, as per the guidelines of the Centre

variants can't spread fast and cause much damage," he stated.

PIL in HC seeks probe into Covid mismanagement



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, June 21: A public interest litigation (PIL) was filed in the Orissa High Court (HC) Monday seeking probe into the alleged mismanagement at a Covid hospital in Mayurbhanj and disrespect to the Covid victims in Bolangir districts.

State Chief Secretary, Health Secretary, and Mayurbhanj & Bolangir Collectors have been made parties to the case.

In his PIL, lawyer Bibhuti Bhushan Choudhury has informed the HC that at a time when the state government has been spending crores of rupees to tackle the pandemic, incidents like Covid patients lying naked on the floor of a Covid hospital in tribal-dominated Mayurbhanj district and cremation of at least 10 Covid victims on a pyre in Bolangir district speaks volumes of state's initiatives.

Choudhury has urged the HC for a court-monitored probe into the incidents and stringent action against those found guilty. This apart, the lawyer has also urged the HC to ensure installation of CCTVs and proper treatment of the infected persons at all Covid hospitals in the state.

Politics hots up as BJP, BJD indulge in 'poster war'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: Though there is no election round the corner, BJP and BJD indulged in war of words over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's poster missing at vaccination centres in several districts.

BJP workers staged protests and tore posters of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at a few vaccination centres across the state Monday. The BJP workers raised voice against the non-use of Modi's poster in Balasore, Angul, Rayagada and Koraput districts.

The saffron party workers snapped the ribbon meant for inauguration of a vaccination centre at Gandhi Smriti Bhawan in Balasore district. The women workers of the BJP also indulged in heated arguments with the officials on the issue. They also placed a poster of Modi at the inoculation centre. In Angul, the protesting BJP workers tore the posters of the Chief Minister at the vaccination centre on the stadium premises. "Vaccination for all above 18 years

is being carried out by the Union government free of cost. Having the posters of the CM only at the vaccination centres is not fair," said BJP workers at Angul said.

In Jeypore, the BJP workers staged demonstration before the office of chief district medical officer. The BJP workers also staged similar protests at the vaccination centre at Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Institute of Technology (UGMIT) in Rayagada town.

Union Minister Pratap Sarangi said, "There is no problem in putting CM's posters and banners. However, Modi's photo should also be placed at the sites. They did this fearing that the Union government will take credit for the free vaccination drive which is highly commendable."

Commenting on the issue, BJD legislator Swarup Kumar Das said, "There is no promotional poster of the Chief Minister put up at any vaccination centre. It is awareness message from our CM to the people against Covid-19. There is no political propaganda in this matter."



BJP workers tearing the posters of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at a vaccination centre in Angul



LOCKDOWN & TWIN CITIES

Janpath



Madhupatna overbridge



Bapuji Nagar Market

Even as the state government has extended the lockdown till July 1, the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack witness a usual traffic, a day after the two-day weekend shutdown, Monday

THREE PARKS COMING UP IN CAPITAL CITY

THE PARKS WILL HAVE STATE-OF-ART FACILITIES SUCH AS OPEN GYMNASIUM, JOGGING TRACKS AND RAINWATER HARVESTING FACILITIES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: In a bid to give a boost to the recreational facilities in the Capital city, the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) has decided to construct three new parks with an expenditure of Rs 87 lakh.

As per sources, the BDA has invited tenders from bidders to set up the parks at three locations - Kalinga Nagar, Dumduma Housing Board Colony and Laxmisagar.



Representational image

FILLIP TO RECREATION

BDA has invited tenders from bidders to set up the parks at three locations - Kalinga Nagar, Dumduma Housing Board Colony and Laxmisagar

While construction at Kalinga Nagar is estimated to be Rs 15.42 lakh, the Dumduma and Laxmisagar projects are set to cost the development authority Rs 29.27 lakh and Rs 42.71 lakh respectively

The entire process including the finalisation of tenders is expected to be completed within a year

While construction at Kalinga Nagar is estimated to be Rs 15.42 lakh, the Dumduma and Laxmisagar projects are set to cost the development authority Rs 29.27 lakh and Rs 42.71 lakh respectively. "Tenders have been invited from interested parties for construction

of these three parks. The deadline for completion of the projects is 60 days from the date of commencement of the construction works. The parks will have state-of-art facilities such as open gymnasium, jogging tracks and rainwater harvesting facilities. The entire process

including the finalisation of tenders is expected to be completed within a year," said a BDA official.

It can be mentioned here that there are more than 120 parks in the city. While BDA has about 57 parks under its management, the Bhubaneswar Municipal

Corporation (BMC) takes care of 63 parks. About 10 bigger parks such as Biju Patnaik, Indra Gandhi and Madusudhan Das parks are directly managed by the BDA while BMC handles caretaking of smaller parks in the city.

Sources said that the move has come against the backdrop of city's recent rankings in Most Livable Cities. As per the study by the Centre for Science and Environment, the Smart City which had featured fourth in list was ahead of the cities like Delhi and Mumbai. Amongst different parameters, the study rates cities as per their recreational facilities provided to its citizens.

"We are aiming to further improve our rankings in next round of survey. Thus, we have geared up to enhance the image of the city by providing more space and greenery. While much of our plans are also parts of Smart City initiatives, more such projects will be initiated to create recreational facilities," the official added.

LIVE-STREAMING OF CLASSES BEGIN

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: In the absence of physical classes at schools, the Odisha government Monday kicked off live streaming of classes on YouTube platform for Class I to Class X students.

The School and Mass Education (S&ME) department has prepared a detailed blue print to reach out to students through virtual mode. The department has also prepared the time table for the subjects to be taught every day.

The teaching process for the students of Classes IX and X will continue till July 31 as the two standards assume significance for the career of these students. As many as four periods, from 10:45am to 1pm, will be held for five days from Monday to Friday.

The teaching process for the students of Classes IX and X will continue till July 31 as the two standards assume significance for the career of these students

Similarly, Class I to VIII students will learn through online mode till July 7, reports said. Classes for the students of Class I to III will be held from 9 am to 10 am while Class IV to VIII will be held live from 9 am to 10:30am.

Teachers of the subjects concerned will look after their classes through online mode and clarify doubts of students through WhatsApp and voice calls.

'Missing' gharials trigger concern in Satkosia



river to help preserve the gharials. Six officials are stationed closest to where the hatchlings and the mother gharial are. "We also have solar-powered CCTV cameras to keep a watch and manually update the movement of the reptiles," said Divisional Forest Officer, Satkosia Range, Ravi Meena.

Gharial eggs need incubation for 70 days and the hatchlings stay with their mothers for several weeks or even months.

A team of four persons patrols the main river area in two country boats. With the onset of monsoon, this is crucial since hatchlings can stray into breakaway nullahs or be swept away from their mother in rising waters.

"We have roped in local fishermen, who are aware of the geography. We avoid mechanised boats as their noise may scare or disturb the hatchlings," Meena added. Satkosia Field Director, Pradeep Rajkarat said their main concern was flooding due to the rains.

"Announcements are being made in villages and posters being put up." Rajkarat added that gharials, being different from muggers, do not harm humans. "But many people mistake them for crocodiles and consider them harmful. We are trying to ensure the hatchlings are not harmed."

Earlier this month, the Forest Department announced ₹1,000 award for anyone rescuing a gharial, and compensation for those whose fishing nets are destroyed by the reptiles. "Cash rewards will encourage villagers to protect the hatchlings," said Harsha Bardhan Udgata, Divisional Forest Officer, Mahanadi wildlife division.

The Field Director added that they would be watching the gharials till they are in their natural habitat - the deep waters. Gharials come to the shallow areas to lay eggs. Most of the gharials introduced in Odisha earlier were kept in the Nandankanan zoo before being released into the river.

Lately, the habitats of gharials are under threat due to encroachments and fishing. Those caught in fishing nets are either killed or have their snouts cut off. Gharials are also weaker than crocodiles and muggers, and don't survive a fight between them.

Gharials were granted full protection in the 1970s and later listed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

It is suspected that the gharial hatchlings may have been swept away by the rising water levels in the river or fallen prey to muggers. Forest officials suspect that the gharial hatchlings were just a month-old when they got separated from the mother gharial

With the introduction of gharials in 1975, Odisha had become the only state to have all the three species of the reptile - freshwater gharials, muggers and saltwater crocodiles

As many as 28 hatchlings were spotted towards the end of May in the Mahanadi, in the Baladamara area near Satkosia range, and officials have been monitoring them closely with round-the-clock vigil including using drones

While the Forest Department is still tracking two of them via their radio collars, the other six have moved out of its radar.

With the introduction of gharials in 1975, Odisha had become the only state to have all the three species of the reptile - freshwater gharials, muggers and saltwater crocodiles.

Nearly 50 foresters from six forest divisions are monitoring the hatchlings, camping close to their habitat, patrolling the water bodies and spreading awareness across 300-odd villages located close to the

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bantala, June 21: The freshwater gharial hatchlings which were born in May at Satkosia gorge in Mahanadi have reportedly given a miss to the Forest Department officials as seven to eight out of the 28 reptiles born were found in the river while the rest have gone missing, a report said.

This has sparked concern among the Forest officials as they have started a search operation to trace the missing gharials by involving the local fishermen.

It is suspected that the gharial hatchlings may have been swept away by the rising water levels in the river or fallen prey to muggers. Forest officials suspect that the gharial hatchlings were just a month-old when they got separated from the mother gharial.

Reports said that these gharials, a critically endangered species, were introduced in the rivers back in 1975.

As many as 28 hatchlings were spotted towards the end of May in the Mahanadi, in the Baladamara area near Satkosia range, and officials have been monitoring them closely with round-the-clock vigil including using drones.

All the original gharials introduced over the years in the state are dead now. Having waited for more than 40 years for their numbers to grow naturally and for them to lay eggs, the state has introduced 13 more gharials over the past three years in the Mahanadi.

Only eight of them survived.

BEEKEEPING



BPL women members of self-help groups receiving honey boxes as part of a beekeeping initiative organised by Hariharpur Van Surakshya Samiti at Nagaon panchayat under Athamallik block in Angul district, Monday

19 lawyers in Ganjam succumb to Covid within 45 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, June 21: The Covid-19 pandemic, which is spreading its tentacles far and wide, has destroyed countless families in the state. The virus not only makes people seriously ill but wipes out many members of families.

For many, 2021 is turning out to be much harsher than 2020. At least 19 lawyers of Ganjam Bar Association have succumbed to the deadly virus within 45 days.

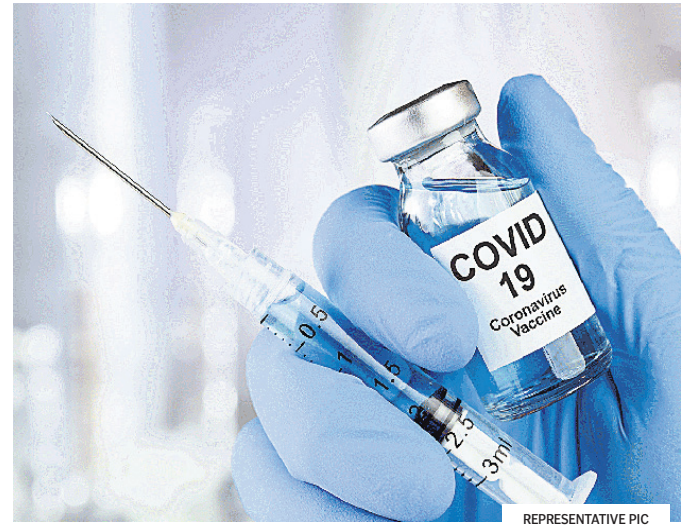
The matter came to the fore at a condolence meeting held for advocate Ashok Kumar Sahu, 36, in the office of the Ganjam Bar Association, Monday. Sahu succumbed to the virus while undergoing treatment for the disease at MKCG Medical College and Hospital, June 17

Advocate Pradeep Kumar Behera, secretary of the bar association, presided in the meeting where the members held two minutes of silence condoling the death of Sahu. The lawyers also expressed their condolence to the bereaved families.

Behera said the pandemic has led to the untimely death of 19 of its members. He said these lawyers have contributed a lot to the legal profession and the loss could never be compensated.

Among others, B Bhagirathi Rao, vice-president Sudhir Kumar Patra, joint secretary, advocates Mohan Singari, Nirmal Sahu, Pradeep Panda, Barun Goud, Prasad Dora, Akshaya Pattnaik, Anil Panda, Raghunath Prasad Panigrahi and Sudhir Mishra attended the meeting. The district judge court and all other lower courts were declared closed for a day.

Man gets 2 Covid jabs in 30 mins, has no adverse effect



REPRESENTATIVE PIC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baripada, June 21: A 51-year-old man was administered two doses of a Covid-19 vaccine within 30 minutes of each other, prompting the authorities to order an inquiry though he suffered no adverse effect, official sources said Monday.

Prasanna Kumar Sahu of Raghupur village in Mayurbhanj district had visited the vaccination camp at Satyasai Government High School at Khuntapur on Saturday for the first dose after booking a slot.

After taking the shot, as he was waiting for the 30-minute observation period to get over, a nurse came in and nonchalantly injected a fresh dose even before he could protest, Sahu claimed.

"I raised an alarm, but by that time the nurse had already ad-

ministered the vaccine," Sahu insisted.

Rajendra Behera, the official observer at the vaccination centre, claimed the gaffe happened as Sahu was present in the vaccination area even after receiving the shot instead of shifting to the observation room. It was by mistake that he was given the second dose, he said.

Dr Sipun Panda, in-charge of the Betanati Community Health Centre, said he was aware of the complaint by Sahu and a committee will go into the entire incident before any action is taken against the nurse.

Behera said Sahu had to be kept under observation for two more hours after the second jab during which he was given an oral rehydration solution (ORS) to drink.

Sahu reported no adverse reaction, Dr Panda said.

Angul: Man dies while rescuing 3-yr-old from well

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhendipada, June 21: A man died while rescuing a three-year-old boy who had fallen into a well at the shrine of Goddess Purihapata in Similipal village under Chhendipada police limits of Angul district Monday. The deceased was identified as Pradip Pradhan from Similipal village.

According to sources, the minor son of Siba Padhan had been playing along with other children near the well at around 8 am and fell into it accidentally. After Pradip noticed the boy falling, he immediately jumped into the well to save the toddler. Two others Sukuru Pradhan and Deepak Dehuri also jumped into the well to rescue the child.

Sukuru and Deepak safely came out of the 25-ft deep well along with the toddler. However, Pradip drowned.



On being informed by locals, a team of fire services personnel from Chhendipada rushed to the spot and fished out Pradip from the water. But, Pradip had died by that time.

Chhendipada police have registered a case in this connection and launched a probe. The body of Pradip was sent for postmortem.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



Members of Horseshoe Crab and Marine Bio-diversity Forum staging an awareness campaign on the protection of horseshoe crab near Balasore railway station on the occasion of International Horseshoe Crab Day, Monday

Procurement woes: Farmers block NH-126

POST NEWS NETWORK

Barpali, June 21: Hundreds of farmers blocked the NH-126 in front of Barpali tehsil office in Bargarh district Monday alleging unusual delay in paddy procurement during the Rabi season.

Vehicular movement on the highway came to a standstill owing to the protest.

"Our produce is not being procured citing alibis such as faulty tokens issued, expiry of tokens, higher moisture levels in paddy and procurement target issues," a farmer said.

According to sources, the farm-



Farmers had been protesting under the banner of 'Barpali Krushak Mancha' for the last few days by dumping paddy-filled sacks on

road. They resorted to road blockade Monday morning after the local administration did not address their concerns.

Later, Barpali tehsildar Akshay Bagh reached out to the agitators and tried to pacify them. The road-block was continuing at the time of filing this report as talks between farmers and the official failed.

Notably, farmers from Salheli area under Bhedon block had protested at the district collectorate June 18 over this issue. Farmers have been bringing their produces to the procurement centres, but the paddy is not being procured on various pretexts, they had alleged.

Keonjhar 'jamun' outshines grapes in other states

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, June 21: Indian blackberry or 'Jamu Koli' grown in Keonjhar district is in high demand in other states like West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand among others. The monsoon fruit has many takers in those states and in some cities in Odisha not because of its tangy taste but because of its medicinal properties to cure diabetes.

This pulpy fruit is available in the month of June. Tribal people, both males and females of all ages, collect them from trees in their backyards, villages, jungles and by roadside. Traders from neighbouring states come to this district to buy these fruits. Tribal people can also be seen selling them in leaf bowls in markets.

PRIZED FRUIT

Keonjhar's blackberries are sold in other states at the price of prized grapes. People suffering from diabetes and stomach problems are the main customers of these fruits

Tribal people, both males and females of all ages, collect them from trees in their backyards, villages, jungles and by roadside. Traders from neighbouring states come to this district to buy these fruits. Tribal people can also be seen selling them in leaf bowls in markets

At the same time, poor tribal people who collect these fruits painstakingly seldom get the price for the labour involved. In the absence of a proper market and storage facility in the district, they are left with no choice but to sell the fruits to traders at whatever price they offer to them

According to traders camping in the district, Keonjhar's blackberries are sold in other states at the price of prized grapes. People suf-

fering from diabetes and stomach problems are the main customers of these fruits.

They buy a basketful or bagful



of these fruits for ₹100 to ₹150. Then they separate the good ones, pack them in containers and send them in trucks to other states. From this,

they earn a huge profit.

"Every year we supply jamuns from this district to other states. But the situation has been different

for two years now because of Covid-19 outbreak. Our collection has come down drastically due to the Covid-19 induced lockdown and shutdown," said Murali Ram, a trader from Jharkhand, presently camping in the district.

At the same time, poor tribal people who collect these fruits painstakingly seldom get the price for the labour involved. In the absence of a proper market and storage facility in the district, they are left with no choice but to sell the fruits to traders at whatever price they offer to them.

Additional district magistrate Santosh Nayak admitted that there was no market facility for this seasonal fruit in the district. Tribal people earn their livelihood by selling minor forest produces and their rights are protected under law.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
e-Tender Notice No. SNTConBBS0T3EI_TB...
Line 18, Dated : 16.06.2021

NAME OF WORK : EXECUTION OF SIGNAL & TELECOM WORKS, SUPPLY OF CRITICAL MATERIALS AND SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, DESIGN & COMMISSIONING OF ELECTRONIC INTERLOCKING AT SAMAL, PARABIL, KHAMAR STATIONS & LEFTOVER WORKS AT SUNAKHANI (SUNK) STATION INCLUDING SUNAKHANI-KHAMAR SECTION IN CONNECTION WITH NEW LINE BETWEEN TALCHER (TLHR)-BILLAGARH (BUP) IN KHURDA ROAD DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY

Approx. Cost of the Work (₹): 12,95,28,956/-, **Completion Period of the Work :** 18 (Eighteen) Months.

Tender Closing Date & Time : At 1200 Hrs. of 19.07.2021.

Tender Opening Date & Time : At 1200 Hrs. of 19.07.2021.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

By: Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer/ PR-26/CE-21-22 Construction/Bhubaneswar

FOCUS ECONOMY

INIQUITOUS TAX SYSTEM



Surely it is possible to reverse the ominous trend, a trend that has allowed the share of indirect taxes to overtake the share of direct taxes

since excise rates in rupee terms were increased both for diesel and petrol. The increased fuel cost will spill over into the general cost of transport and logistics, and may soon affect prices of fruits, vegetables, cement, steel, fertilisers and many other items leading to consumer inflation. Since the price of crude oil internationally has risen by 45 per cent over the previous nine months, that too is causing petrol and diesel to become dearer.

Excise on fuels and GST aggravate the problem of a skewed tax mix and of iniquity. But we must also remember that India has one of the lowest tax to GDP ratios as compared to its peers. The average for OECD is 34 per cent, whereas for India, the Centre's tax collection is barely 10 per cent of GDP. For fiscal year 2019-20 it had slipped to a 10-year low of 9.88 per cent. That was because of the reduction in corporate tax rates to 25 per cent in September 2019. It is imperative to firstly expand the GST net to a much greater share of the economy. It barely covers one third of the GDP. The base rate must be brought down to 15 per cent if not 12 per cent. And the share of direct taxes must go up. This includes all forms of income. We have huge unrealised capital gains sitting in the exuberant stock markets. The booming stock market represents a further worsening of the wealth inequality. But how does one tax unrealised gains? This is a challenge for taxation policy. But surely it is possible to reverse the ominous trend, a trend that has allowed the share of indirect taxes to overtake the share of direct taxes. We need efficiency as well as equity, that is, a higher tax to GDP ratio, with a mix that is definitely aimed more toward collecting direct taxes.

The writer is an economist and Senior Fellow, Takshashila Institution.

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Next month we will celebrate 30 years of the launch of economic reforms. June 21, 1991 Narasimha Rao was sworn in as India's ninth Prime Minister, and his tenure would turn out to be historic in delivering economic reforms to modern India. A month later July 24, 1991 his finance minister Manmohan Singh presented his maiden and landmark budget. Quoting Victor Hugo in Parliament, Singh said, "...no power on earth can stop an idea whose time has come. I suggest to this august House that the emergence of India as a major economic power in the world happens to be one such idea." That budget was revolutionary for many reasons, the foremost being the end of the license permit Raj. It also paved the way for opening up the economy to foreign investment. Many other reforms were indicated, and in the subsequent years, India witnessed reforms and deregulation in banking, trade and capital markets. But an equally important element of the 1991 speech was a shift in the taxation stance. Commenting on the budget, the editorial of The Hindu the next day, i.e. of July 25, 1991 said, "the budget marks a major shift in revenue raising from indirect to direct taxes and should gladden the advocates of equity."

In the past 30 years the mix of tax revenue raising for the Central government has gone away from indirect taxes towards direct taxes. The ratio was 80:20 then and is now roughly 50:50. Indirect taxes such as a consumption tax or import tariffs are regressive and hurt the poor much more than the rich, relatively speaking. GST is an indirect tax, and does not depend on the income of the payer. The tax on a soap, or toothpaste or a dosa is the same whether you are rich or poor. Hence indirect taxes are fundamentally iniquitous and regressive. The maturity of an economy and tax

administration can be measured by how large a share is that of direct taxes. The purists among tax experts say that income is earned by human beings, so the unit of taxation should be human beings, and not inanimate things, like a corporation or a bar of soap. In other words, we should be ideally only taxing income that accrues to each individual, not the price tag of an item, goods or a service. But income of individuals is notoriously difficult to track, and human beings will not voluntarily disclose incomes fully and honestly. Hence indirect taxation is used since it is easier to administer, and more difficult to evade. But the signs of progress are when the share of taxes collected are more from direct taxes, such as income, dividends, capital gains and inheritance. As income tracking becomes more sophisticated, with electronic tagging of PAN numbers, and tax deduction at source, it is now possible to track even dividend payments and capital gains in the stock market. That is why we recently abolished the dividend distribution tax, and now tax the dividend directly in the hands of the receiver. Technology makes it possible to shift from indirect to direct taxes.

That progress we made toward a greater share of direct taxes in the total tax kitty has received a setback. The share of direct taxes has fallen below the share of indirect taxes in the fiscal year ending March 2021. This is only the second time it has happened in the past 13 years. And if this trend continues, it means losing the progress we have made in making our tax system less iniquitous. One of the main culprits for the rise in indirect taxes, is the huge increase in excise on petrol and diesel, both by Centre and the States. This is a trend not just of last year, but over a much longer period. The excise collection on petrol and diesel by the Centre since 2014-15 has nearly doubled from ₹1.7 lakh crore to ₹3.4 lakh crore in recent years. For the States too it has gone up by nearly 40 per cent in the past five years. The excise tax collected on petrol products now accounts for one fifth of all gross tax revenue. It was only 11 per cent in the previous fiscal year, and just 8 per cent in 2015. Ironically the consumption of petrol and diesel was down by 10 per cent during 2020-21 thanks to the pandemic enforced lockdown. But excise collection went up hugely by 63 per cent to nearly ₹3.9 lakh crore by the Centre alone,



Ajit Ranade

ONE OF THE MAIN CULPRITS FOR THE RISE IN INDIRECT TAXES IS THE HUGE INCREASE IN EXCISE ON PETROL AND DIESEL, BOTH BY CENTRE AND THE STATES

SPECTRUM DIGITAL DIVIDE

A digital bridge to social support

For all its devastation, the COVID-19 crisis does have a silver lining: it has shone a spotlight on important policy lapses - beginning with the lack of social protection for the world's two billion informal workers. But addressing this failure will require more than social programmes; it will also require governments to bridge the digital divide.

During the pandemic, social programmes supporting the 'missing middle' - informal workers who are excluded from standard employment-linked social security and often do not qualify for social programmes that target the very poor - relied heavily on digital technologies. Registration happened on smartphones. Governments verified beneficiaries using digital identification systems. Payments landed in e-wallets.

This welcome use of digital technology streamlined procedures and enabled workers to avoid face-to-face interactions when they applied for or collected benefits. But this approach also implies an obvious risk: exclusion of those on the wrong side of the digital divide.

The experience of informal waste reclaimers in Johannesburg is instructive. When the South African government introduced the Social Relief of Distress cash grant for adults excluded from other forms of government support during the pandemic, applications were to be submitted by a website form, email,

WhatsApp, or an Unstructured Supplementary Data code.

This promised efficiency, but also kept the application out of reach for many waste reclaimers. According to Steven Leeuw, an active member of the African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO), "90 per cent of the people we work with don't have a cell phone. If they do, it's usually an old one that doesn't really work, or they don't have money for data, or anywhere to access free WiFi."

Fortunately, the ARO stepped in to help members apply. That meant not only filling in and submitting applications, but also performing any additional administrative steps if the initial application was rejected. There are similar stories around the world. In Mexico City, the cash grant offered to non-salaried workers was initially accessible only through an online application. "I went three times to the internet cafe to scan documents and send emails," said one worker. "How are those who don't know how to read and write and who can't pay for the internet cafe going to do it?" After protests by workers' organisations, the government added a manual application option.

Likewise, in Delhi, informal workers struggled with digital applications for the Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (SVANidhi) scheme - a government loan programme designed

to support street vendors. Not only was the application available only online, it was also not written in colloquial Hindi, and the website crashed frequently.

Moreover, applicants were initially required to have an Aadhaar Card linked to a mobile phone number, which created a host of other problems. "Not all workers have an Aadhaar Card," according to Shalini Sinha, Delhi Coordinator for Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising. "Or if they are migrant workers, the card might be back in the village, and then they might not have the same mobile phone number, and have to go through the process of linking a new number to the card."

These are hardly isolated incidents or cherry-picked anecdotes. A 2019 report by the then-United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston, found that the digitisation of welfare often leads to "deep reductions in the overall welfare budget, a narrowing of the beneficiary pool, [and] the elimination of some services." In fact, Alston warned, digital welfare systems often "punish the poorer classes."

Technological solutions cannot be used as a means to slash budgets and shift responsibility from the state to grassroots organisations serving the poor. Governments that apply digital technologies to social-welfare programmes must

also ensure equity in the systems and institutions in which these programmes are embedded.

For starters, as governments invest in the digital transition, they must also support the work of grassroots organisations providing essential last-mile services to connect people to their entitlements. As it stands, few grassroots organisations in the Global South are able to raise the financial resources needed to sustain their work.

Moreover, governments must create mechanisms for meaningful consultation with these organisations, in order to design programmes that meet target groups' needs, monitor and assess progress, and make necessary changes.

Of course, closing the digital divide should also be a high priority. That means expanding access to digital technologies, including mobile phones and broadband internet, and ensuring that people have the knowledge to use them. And grassroots organisations have a vital role to play here as well. But, in the meantime, the digital divide must be bridged to enable the most vulnerable to access crucial government support.

The writer is Director of the Social Protection Programme at Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising.

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We find in others what is in us. If we always find mud around us, it proves that there is mud somewhere in us.

THE MOTHER



Kashmir Quagmire

The Central government's decision to invite 14 key leaders of Jammu and Kashmir to a meeting with the Prime Minister June 24, over 22 months after the abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of the former state is a reflection of the government's desperation to get back its international standing. This comes after international and domestic criticism over a series of actions intended to suppress people's democratic rights in the valley and other parts of Kashmir. The Centre seems to have embarked on a public relations exercise to convince the world that it wants the political process in J&K to begin and an elected government installed following the ongoing delimitation process. The Delimitation Commission, which met February 18, has been studying various aspects related to redrawing of Assembly constituencies. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi has iterated that statehood is the inevitable destination of a political process, a possible roadmap towards that is reportedly on the agenda of the June 24 meeting in Delhi. However, the Centre has not made public any agenda for the meeting.

News leaking out suggests that all the key players in J&K, including the mainstream regional parties - National Conference (NC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) - have started hectic discussions among themselves to devise their strategy for the meeting. The consensus that seems to have arisen is for all parties to demand restoration of full statehood before any discussions. The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), an amalgam of six political parties including the NC, PDP, CPM, Awami National Conference, CPI and JK People's Movement, will obviously face tremendous opposition at the ground level if they are perceived as playing into the hands of the government of India. For example, the people of Kashmir have been under a terrible siege by the Indian army since 5 August 2019. The lockdown that came due to Covid-19 that Indians elsewhere complain about is nothing compared to the harshness of a military clampdown that people of Kashmir have been going through for a long time. All local media sources have been blocked. This has choked off free flow of news within Kashmir. At the same time, news from Kashmir cannot be accessed from anywhere outside. Educational institutions have been shut for over two years and students are helpless since there is no scope of online classes due to blocking of internet services by the government. In today's world, the right to internet access is considered a basic human right. The Indian Supreme Court had, some time back, pulled up the government for denying internet facilities in Kashmir. Tourism, the most important economic activity of that area, has completely dried up during the past many years. The Centre's efforts at helping apple farmers sell their produce also failed miserably during the past two years. This has resulted in complete breakdown of the economic structure and impoverishment of the people. Added to this is the Covid pandemic, where there has reportedly been mismanagement in the health and vaccination fronts. There is no clarity on figures of infected people or deaths as verifiable news sources have been made inoperative.

On the political front, the Centre may stand to gain by this invitation to parley. Government of India will be in a position to claim that they took the initiative for restoration of democratic political process. The catch, however, will be for the regional parties and their leaders. If they decline to participate under whatever circumstances, the Centre may have an opportunity to blame them. On the other hand, if they come forward and participate in the discussions, there is every possibility the political outfits will be viewed as betrayers by the people of Kashmir. With security withdrawn for most of the regional leaders, their very existence could be at stake if they decide to participate. In an area that has been completely deprived of basic amenities required for survival, it would be understandable if the locals have turned against the Indian army and the nation that stands behind it.

There is no doubt that Article 370 needed to be annulled. Unfortunately, that one good act has been confused with the bad handling spread over a long time. A military solution could never have been the way for a long term of the Kashmir problem since that is what has been tried by successive previous Congress governments. While the Congress confused and deepened the crisis, the present dispensation has only helped in lengthening the shadows of alienation for the ordinary Kashmiri. Many observers used to constantly complain about the high level of expenditure that was being incurred for keeping the security forces stationed at Kashmir for decades. Now, with a huge add up of security personnel in Kashmir, the cost to the exchequer would have also grown multiple fold. Eventually, it is the Indian taxpayer paying for decisions which the future alone can decide whether they were appropriate or not.

WISDOM CORNER

- There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it. EDITH WHARTON
- Being in love is the only transcendent experience. ARMISTEAD MAUPIN
- A man is what he thinks about all day long. RALPH WALDO EMERSON

WORDSWORTH

Nocebo

A nocebo is something that induces a feeling of ill-health for no very good medical reason, the opposite of a placebo. (The latter is the medical term for a medication or other treatment which is given to a patient for the psychological benefit it will bring rather than for any likely therapeutic effect) The word is also used to describe dummy drugs given to some patients in clinical trials, because medical researchers have to take into account the positive effect on patients of giving them a medication of any kind, even if it isn't effective. In Latin placebo means literally "I shall be acceptable or pleasing", from the verb placere, to please. It came into medical terminology from liturgical Latin near the end of the eighteenth century.) Nocebo, on the other hand, is a very modern word; it's recorded only from the 1990s and until recently you wouldn't have come across it outside specialist research publications. It's obviously modelled on placebo, but it comes instead from nocere, to harm, and so has a literal meaning of "I shall cause harm or be harmful". The word has come into being because researchers have become aware they also have to take into account factors that might have a negative effect on treatments. These aren't usually medications but influences such as beliefs, attitudes and cultural factors. Research has also shown that the nocebo effect can reverse the body's response to true medical treatment from positive to negative (Robert S and Michèle R Root-Bernstein, Honey, Mud, Maggots and Other Medical Marvels, 1997). He stresses that while most everyone is familiar with the placebo effect, few are aware of the nocebo effect - the ability of negative beliefs and expectations to actually cause harm (Skeptical Inquirer, Sept. 1997).

LOL

In need of food

One afternoon, a man was riding in the back of his limousine when he saw two men eating grass by the road side. He ordered his driver to stop and he got out to investigate. "Why are you eating grass?" he asked one man. "We don't have any money for food," the poor man replied. "Oh, come along with me then." "But sir, I have a wife with two children!" "Bring them along! And you, come with me too!",



he said to the other man. "But sir, I have a wife with six children!" the second man answered. "Bring them as well!" They all climbed into the car, which was no easy task, even for a car as large as the limo. Once underway, one of the poor fellows says "Sir, you are too kind. Thank you for taking all of us with you." The rich man replied "No, you don't understand, the grass at my home is about three feet tall!"



Laura Alfors

GOVERNMENTS THAT APPLY DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES TO SOCIAL-WELFARE PROGRAMMES MUST ALSO ENSURE EQUITY IN THE SYSTEMS

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
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Stop shifting of 'warrior-horse'

Sir, The iconic 'warrior-horse' at Master Canteen Square, Bhubaneswar is the heart and soul of the city. It is a part of the cultural heritage of Odisha. The pride and history of Odisha are reflected in the remarkable sculpture. We must not forget that civilisations, societies, nations are known by their cultural and historical symbols. Preservation of the same will give inspiration to the future generations. BMC and Smart City project officials should rethink and revisit their decision of shifting the iconic warrior-horse. Let it continue to encourage and educate people about the cultural greatness of Odisha and the genius of human creation. Sandipt Mishra, VISAKHAPATNAM

Driving home a point

Sir, Footballer Cristiano Ronaldo's Coca-Cola snub at a European Championship press conference is a symbolic gesture and it drives home a clear message. He indirectly reminded the world how bad carbonated soft drinks like Coca-Cola are for people's health. The market response of this action was quick and Coca-Cola's market value plunged by \$4 billion. Notwithstanding the fact that carbonated soft drinks contain constituents that are harmful to our health, thousands of people use them and a large number of people are addicted to them. Ronaldo has previously done advertisements for Coca-Cola. Just like Ronaldo, veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan has given up endorsing Pepsi. It is a fact that a large number of people are likely to use food products and soft drinks endorsed by celebrities. Similarly, when celebrities desist from endorsing food products and drinks that are harmful to health, people may realise the dangers of using them and they may avoid them. It must be understood that over the years, lifestyle diseases like diabetes, kidney failure, blood pressure, cholesterol and so on have caused serious health concerns. Studies have proved that regular use of soft drinks lead to life style diseases. The only solution to lessen the hazards of using soft drinks is sensitising people about their dangers. Just like awareness advertisements about the dangers of smoking and drinking, there must be awareness advertisements on all media and social media platforms about the dangers of using soft drinks. More and more celebrities must come forward and sensitise people. They must realise that the money they earn through misleading ads will put people in peril. They must give up endorsing such products and win the hearts of people. Venu GS, KOLLAM

State's tussar hub may soon become a thing of past



Weavers at the Jajpur Road railway station

OP PHOTO

Gopalpur is famous for producing intricate designs of tussar textiles and sarees. It's known as a weavers' village and the tussar hub of the state where the traditional occupation of over 1,000 families is weaving

The clothes woven by them are lying unsold as no one comes out to buy them due to Covid restrictions

Cyclonic storm Fani followed by a flood in Brahmani river in August 2020 and now Covid-19 outbreak have completely wrecked their financial standing

Guin echoed Bharat's claim. Cyclonic storm Fani followed by a flood in Brahmani river in August 2020 and now the Covid-19 outbreak have completely wrecked their financial standing.

They failed to repair their looms and arrange raw materials to continue with their traditional occupation, family members of the weavers said. They tried to move ahead with whatever money they were left with.

However, the Covid restrictions spoiled their plans. They have now become penniless and were forced to leave their homes.

Gopalpur village is famous as a hub for intricate designs of tussar textiles and sarees.

The weavers had earlier shared their problems with Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, through a letter, around two months ago. In the letter, they had demanded financial assistance from the state government.

With no help coming from the state government, it is learnt that many more weavers might soon leave for Surat leaving their traditional occupation far behind.

COVID RESTRICTIONS AND LACK OF FINANCIAL AID FROM GOVERNMENT HAVE FORCED WEAVERS OF GOPALPUR TO LEAVE FOR SURAT IN SEARCH OF JOBS

occupation of over 1,000 families is weaving. They slog from morning to evening every day to weave clothes to run their households.

They have now decided to leave for Surat as they find it difficult to eke out their living in the absence of any livelihood opportunities and financial assistance from the state government.

The clothes woven by them are lying unsold as no one comes out to buy them due to Covid restrictions.

As their traditional occupation has been suffering, the weavers had no other option but to leave for Surat, some weavers lamented.

"We will try our luck in Surat. We hope we will find jobs in textile factories there," Bharat Das, one of the migrating weavers, said. Several others including Bankabihari Das, Harihara Guin, Bhramarabar Das, Mayadhar Guin, Jagabandhu Das, Rakesh Das, Batakushna Das and Ramesh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rasulpur, June 21: Weavers from Gopalpur village under Rasulpur block in Jajpur district have turned away from their traditional occupation, a source said.

Gopalpur is famous for producing intricate designs of tussar textiles and sarees. It's known as a weavers' village and the tussar hub of the state where the traditional

Lockdown curbs hit Banki vegetable growers hard

Banki, June 21: Covid-induced lockdown and shutdown restrictions have proved to be a double whammy for the vegetable growers in Banara, Bhagipur, Kusupangi and Pathapur areas under Banki block in Cuttack district. They are also struggling to save their crops from the marauding wild boars and elephants.

These days it is a common to see vegetables being left in the farmlands to rot in these villages. The farmers say they don't have any option but to do this. "Traders are no longer coming to our villages as they used to earlier mainly due to the lockdown and shutdown restrictions."

"To earn some money we are selling our vegetables at roadsides at throwaway prices. Yet, we are not getting customers for our produce."

"Instead of carrying the sacks back home, we are forced to dump the vegetables on the roadside before returning home. We have

now stopped harvesting the crops. Even though it hurts to see our crops rotting in the fields, we are left with no option," some farmers lamented.

They said that they have been under severe mental pressure over how to earn enough to run their families and repay the loans taken from societies.

"The Horticulture Department should have come to our rescue in these trying times. But the Damapada Horticulture officer seems to be maintaining a distance from us," the worried farmers alleged.

They said that if there had been cold storage facility in Banki area it would have been a great relief for them. "If we had a cold storage in our locality we could have saved our crops from rotting on roadsides," they added.

Locals urged the administration and Horticulture Department to come up with a solution so that the farmers' produce get a market and the affected farmers are compensated for their crops.

Two farmers killed in lightning

POST NEWS NETWORK

Patana, June 21: Two farmers were killed after lightning struck them during a thunderstorm on their farmland at Talanga village under this block in Keonjhar district, Monday.

The deceased were identified as Ishwar Chandra Barik, 38, and Chandra sekhar Mohanta, 35, residents of the same village under Khireitangar panchayat.

A pall of gloom descended in the village with people mourning the untimely death of the two farmers.

The farmers were leaving for their homes after sowing seeds on their farmlands in afternoon when lightning occurred during a thunderstorm and snatched away their lives.

Both collapsed on their farmland and died.

Soon after, family members informed the Turumunga police, which sent the bodies for post-mortem and registered a case in this connection, IIC Baidyanath Sahu said.

AGRI WORKS



A farmer sowing paddy seeds on farmland with onset of monsoon at a Nuapada village

OP PHOTO

WATER WOES



People in Kareiguda village under Gudari block in Rayagada district collecting water from Vamshadhara river due to lack of drinking water facilities in their village

OP PHOTO

Manduka in Jajpur may soon be denuded; action sought



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, June 21: Locals Monday alleged that illegal mining went on at Manduka hill under the Darpan tehsil limits in Jajpur district.

Mining mafias have been smuggling murrum, boulders and other minerals, locals alleged while demanding immediate steps to curb

the wrongful activities.

As the administration does not take action, mineral mafias have unofficially taken control of the Manduka hill. More than 20 mineral-laden trucks transport murrum and boulders every day to different parts of the district and outside. If the prohibited activities continue at this pace, the hill will be denuded of its forest coverage be-

fore long, local residents said.

According to official sources, the state forest department had earlier asked the Jajpur district administration to declare the Manduka hill area as a reserve forest. The hill was then considered part of the Asih mountain range in the district.

Hundreds of saplings planted by the forest department surrounding the hill to increase its forest coverage have gradually disappeared, locals lamented.

Darpan tehsildar Pradeep Kumar Sethi said, "Raids will be conducted in the areas surrounding Manduka hill and actions will be taken against the miscreants."

Goddess Nahakani is worshipped atop the hill while Satyapir is adored on the other side of the temple. The state tourism department had earlier identified Manduka hill as a tourist destination and sanctioned funds for its development and beautification. In addition to this, the hill has a large cashew plantation owned by the forest department.

GMU-Sambalpur to get new utility centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambalpur, June 21: A utility centre will come up on the campus of the Gangadhar Meher University (GMU) in Sambalpur at a cost of ₹4.35 crore, an official said Monday.

The principal's residential quarter will be demolished to make way for the utility centre, which will be a three-storied building, he said. The utility centre will accommodate a bank, ATM, post office, gym, food court and a common room, among others for the students.



The ground floor of the building will be used for parking. The utility centre will have a total area of 10,000 sq. ft., deputy registrar UC Pati said. The Odisha State Police Housing and Welfare Corporation would execute the work, he said.

Scarcity of iron ore worries steel industry in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, June 21: Kalinganagar Industries Association (KNIA) and the Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industries of India have given a proposal to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to take steps to bring the mines that have been auctioned but are yet to be made operational under the Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC).

The present crisis faced by steel plants in the state is due to shortage of raw materials could be solved once the mines are brought under the OMC and made operational.

With the price of iron ores being increased inordinately, steel plants not having their own mines are presently at the receiving end. Their employees are worried thinking about their future.

According to available data, iron ore production in the state was 142MT in the financial year 2019-20. In 2020-21, it reduced by 31MT and stood at 111MT. Similarly, 17.4MT iron ore was exported in the financial year 2019-20. In 2020-21, exports increased to 29MT, resulting in a scarcity of 42MT iron ore and an inordinate increase in its price. While the price of iron ore was

₹2,200 a ton in June 2020, it increased to ₹12,000 in June 2021.

The steel plants that have no mines of their own generally depend on the Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) for iron ores.

Out of the total production of 111MT iron ores in 2020-21, OMC had produced only 13MT. On the other hand, steel plants owning mines like Tata Steel, SAIL, JSW Steel, ArcelorMittal and JSPL had produced 65MT. According to sources, OMC has to increase its production from 13MT annually to 26MT to make up for the scarcity and control the price of iron ores.

Some industrial houses have demanded that OMC produce 11MT iron ores annually from its Jiling and Guali mines and 15MT annually from Daitari, Gandhamardan and Koida mines.

At the same time, the industrial houses have expressed their concern over some industries that have been awarded mines in auctions but are yet to start production. The KNIA and Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industries of India have proposed that these mines should be brought under OMC and production be started to tide over the situation.

Farm ponds a boon for small, marginal farmers in Kalahandi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kesinga, June 21: Kesinga block in Kalahandi district is a drought-prone area due to lack of irrigation projects. However, implementation of farm pond projects has led to an increase in crop pattern by small and marginal farmers.

The farm pond project was launched in 2019-20 and 2020-21 in the block by the Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed on a convergence mode under 5T initiative and rural job scheme the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment and Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

The project was launched with construction of farm ponds on an area of 180 sq. ft. and having a depth 10 sq. ft. on cluster basis in Kokomunda village under Chanher panchayat. The execution of farm ponds resulted in an increase in crop pattern of small and marginal farmers.

These farm ponds helped in cultivation on agricultural land which was lying barren. Even high-yield-



ing paddy could be grown during 2019-20 fiscal. On the bunds of farm ponds, plants like banana, drum sticks, papaya and arhar were grown. Besides, this also helped the farmers take up fish farming in the pond on a small scale.

Satya Narayan Achary, assistant soil conservation officer (ASCO), said construction of around 50 farm ponds was completed in different panchayats in 2019-20 fiscal. Similarly, constructions of 175 farm ponds was completed in 2020-21 fiscal.

Pyarelal Meher, a beneficiary of Kokomunda village, expressed his satisfaction over multiple benefits from the construction of farm pond on his small piece of land. He said he earned above ₹20,000 from paddy, ₹10,000 from arhar and ₹10,000 from fish farming and ₹10,000 from cultivation of pulses on his small pond of 180 sq. mt. that cost around ₹70,000.

These farm ponds were dug by engaging jobless people. Local women self-help groups supervised the works in the same village.

KASHMIR LEADERS TO URGE PM TO RESTORE REGION'S AUTONOMY



AGENCIES

Srinagar, June 21: Kashmiri politicians will urge Prime Minister Narendra Modi to restore Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy when they meet him Thursday for the first talks since the Centre took away the region's special status two years ago, party officials said.

New Delhi has struggled for decades to dampen secessionist sentiments in what had been its only Muslim majority state, blaming neighbouring Pakistan for supporting insurgencies in the Himalayan region.

Reasserting New Delhi's control in August 2019, Modi abolished Article 370 of the Constitution, ending the region's autonomy and removing its statehood by splitting it into the union territories of

Our agenda is restoration of pre-August 5, 2019 status of Jammu and Kashmir

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP LEADER

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Buddhist-dominated Ladakh.

Some of the politicians set to meet Modi Thursday were among the thousands of people detained back then to forestall a backlash against the shock move. The government also imposed months-long communications restrictions in the highly-sensitive Kashmir valley to stifle opposition.

"Our agenda is restoration of pre-August 5, 2019 status of Jammu and Kashmir," People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader Mehbooba Mufti

told her colleagues Sunday, according to two officials who attended the online meeting.

Senior leaders of the National Conference also met over the weekend and backed a decision to push for the restoration of statehood and special status, a party official said.

"We will press for these two demands during the meeting with the prime minister," the official said. All three officials declined to be named because the discussions were private.

Representatives of the PDP and National Conference will meet Tuesday along with other members of an alliance formed last year to seek a peaceful restoration of Kashmir's autonomy to prepare for their talks with the prime minister, PDP spokesman Suhail Bukhari said.

Restoration of J&K statehood won't benefit Centre: Soz

AGENCIES

Srinagar, June 21: Former union minister and senior congress leader Saifuddin Soz said Monday that restoration of statehood for J&K won't yield any advantage to Centre.

In a statement Soz said that if J&K's constitutional relationship with the Union has become sour, it was because of the Central government.

"Central government did not learn from its mistakes. So, it has continued to repeat its mistakes. Now, it's intention to restore the 'Statehood' will not yield any advantage to it because that is a small issue before the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

He said the real issue is the J&K special status enshrined in the now-abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution of India, which the Union Government has to be restored.

"India has earned a great flak at the international level, where the people as well as their governments feel convinced that the people of Jammu and Kashmir are deeply hurt and angry on the erosion of internal autonomy ratified by the people of the state and the then Central government through the Delhi Agreement of 1952."

Soz further said that any move by the central government short of restoring the provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution of India will be rejected by the people of the J&K, outrightly.

Duflo, Rajan in TN panel for economic rebound

AGENCIES

Chennai, June 21: An Economic Advisory Council to the Chief Minister would be constituted with leading experts including Nobel laureate Prof Esther Duflo, Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit said here Monday in his customary address to the Assembly.

The Council is to prepare a roadmap for "rapid" and inclusive economic growth of the state, Purohit said in his first address to the House, which also marks the commencement of the first session after the formation of the DMK government last month.

"In recent years, we have seen a slowdown in Tamil Nadu's economic growth rate. This government will make all out efforts to reverse this trend and usher in a period of rapid economic growth..." he said and announced that the panel would be set up.

Besides Duflo of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology-USA, former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan, former chief economic advisor to the union government, Arvind Subramanian, development economist Prof Jean Dreze and former union finance secretary S Narayan would be part of the Economic Advisory Council, he said.

Based on the council's recommendations the government would take steps to revitalise economy and see that the benefits of growth reached all segments of society, he said.



In recent years, we have seen a slowdown in Tamil Nadu's economic growth rate. This government will make all out efforts to reverse this trend and usher in a period of rapid economic growth

BANWARILAL PUROHIT | GOVERNOR

The fiscal health of the state is a cause for concern and the government would focus on improving it and bringing down debt burden and a white paper on Tamil Nadu's finances would be released in July.

There could be no social justice when there is high economic inequality and stratification. Inclusive growth is government's priority and growth and progress

must benefit all sections of society and not just the top of the economic pyramid, the Governor noted.

Outlining the newly elected DMK government's policy, the Governor said Tamil Nadu is fully committed to achieving greater autonomy for States and at the same time maintain cordial ties with the Centre.

AIADMK co-coordinator and leader of opposition, K Palaniswami, speaking to reporters, expressed disappointment over the address by saying there was no mention of implementing even DMK's important poll assurances.

Purohit, in his address, said the government would take all necessary measures to counter the "possible third wave" of COVID-19 and urged the Centre to increase allocation of vaccines and reject the Mekedatu dam project proposal of Karnataka.

TN announces norms to protect school kids from sexual abuse

AGENCIES

Chennai, Jun 21: The Tamil Nadu government Monday announced guidelines like advisory panel and safety audit for schools to ensure protection of students from sexual violence and protocol for conducting online classes.

Following several complaints that led to arrests of a CBSE school teacher, an international school founder, an athletics coach, and a martial arts instructor over sexual harassment allegations, the government said the norms would be applicable to all types of schools in Tamil Nadu.

Irrespective of the board of education, every school should constitute a "Student Safeguarding Advisory Committee" (SSAC) and the School Education Department would set up a state-level Central Complaint Centre (CCC) for guidance, an official release here said.

Safety boxes should be placed in school campuses to receive both complaints and feedback and it should be reviewed by the SSAC periodically and appropriate action should be taken.

A separate register should be maintained by the SSAC to document all complaints received, both written and oral and all schools should every year observe a "Child Abuse Prevention Week" (from November 15 to 22) by holding awareness programmes.

The SSAC should comprise the principal, two teachers and two parent teacher association members, a management representative, a non-teaching staffer and an external member (optional) to continually review, monitor and recommend measures on all aspects of students' safety.

In a month, the CCC would be functional with a hotline facility, a dedicated e-mail id to receive com-



During virtual classes, both the faculty and students should follow a dress code, appropriate for classroom settings. All online classes should be recorded and a random audit should be undertaken by SSAC periodically.

The SSAC must inform the CCC immediately on receipt of a complaint and trained multidisciplinary team members drawn from different fields would guide complainants from the state-level centre. All interaction between CCC and callers would be documented and kept strictly confidential.

"An orientation programme will be organised for all stakeholders associated with the schools to acquire a comprehensive understanding of provisions in POCSO Act. The School Education Department will provide the orientation module."

A standard, safety self audit tool would be developed by the School Education Department, and it is mandatory for all school managements to comply with the audit norms on an annual basis.

plaints from anyone to inform sexual abuse of students.

People were outraged after allegations of sexual harassment of girl students at a popular CBSE school here by a commerce-accountancy teacher surfaced in social media last month.

This teacher allegedly appeared in inappropriate dress for online classes and against this background authorities have mandated proper dress code for virtual interactions between students and faculty.

The alleged abuse and need for protecting children became a talking point and the teacher of the CBSB school was arrested. Also, it prompted victims who suffered at the hands of others to come forward and lodge police complaints.

Subsequently, an athletics coach and an instructor of martial arts were also arrested for sexual harassment of girls. June 16, founder of an international school near here, who is also a self-styled Godman, was arrested in Delhi and brought to Chennai and remanded to judicial custody.

'Good number of foreign militants present in Valley'

AGENCIES

Srinagar, June 21: Jammu and Kashmir's Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh Monday said a 'good number' of foreign militants are present in the Valley, but they are 'lying low' and 'keeping a distance'.

Addressing a press conference at the Police Control Room (PCR) here, he said only two foreign militants have been killed in Kashmir this year in two encounters.

"Both were killed in Sopore (in north Kashmir's Baramulla district), including one Monday. Both were from the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), which clearly indicates that foreign terrorists are present here. They are lying low and keeping a distance. We have their details, according to which our operations are launched," the DGP said.

One of the most wanted militants, Mudassar Pandit, and a Pakistani ultra were among the three militants killed in an overnight encounter with security forces in Sopore, police said Monday.

The DGP said a strict check on infiltration and the understanding on the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan have had a positive impact on the situation in the Valley.



A strict check on infiltration and the understanding on the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan have had a positive impact on the situation in the Valley

DILBAG SINGH | DGP

"Infiltration has been strictly kept under check this year. The understanding at a high level on the ceasefire pact between the Indian and Pakistani armies has had a positive impact and we welcome that. But it would be wrong to claim that there are no foreign terrorists. They are here in good numbers

and our operations will target them in the coming days," he said.

Asked whether there was any active militant in Srinagar, the DGP said there was 'no big presence' of ultras in the city.

"We have a couple of people who are moving around the city outskirts and also going to the neighbouring districts. We have been tracking their movements. It is a fact that one or two incidents have taken place in Srinagar city. That is possible in the kind of scenario that we have in big cities where a lot of movement takes place. We cannot filter every movement, but I assure you that in the near future, we will launch some more good operations in Srinagar city," he said.

Symbolic Amarnath Yatra this year: J&K Lt Governor

AGENCIES

Srinagar, June 21: In the wake of the Covid pandemic, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has decided that the annual Amarnath Yatra will be kept symbolic, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said Monday.

The 56-day yatra to the 3,880-metre-high Himalayan cave shrine was proposed to start from the twin routes of Pahalgam and Baltal June 28 and culminate August 22. The pilgrimage was cancelled last year too due to the pandemic.

Sinha also directed officials to ensure devotees can virtually attend the morning and evening 'aartis' (prayers) at the shrine. This will allow them to pay their obeisance while also avoiding travel and ex-

posure to the infection, the lieutenant governor (L-G) said.

He said that at the shrine, all traditional and religious rituals shall be performed according to past practice.

"It's important to save people's lives. So, it is not advisable to hold and conduct this year's pilgrimage in the larger public interest. Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) is aware of and respects the sentiments of millions of devotees, and to keep the sentiments alive, the board shall continue the live telecast of morning and evening 'aarti' from the holy cave shrine," Sinha, who is also the board's chairman, said.

The decision to keep the pilgrimage symbolic was taken after discussions with members of the SASB, an official spokesman said.



BJP in wait and watch mode amid AIADMK fight

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, June 21: Even as the AIADMK is training its guns on estranged former interim general secretary of the party, VK Sasikala, its alliance partner BJP is adopting a wait and watch approach in this battle.

Sasikala reached Chennai in a cavalcade of 1,000 cars from Bangalore following her release from the Bangalore Central prison after serving a four-year jail term in the disproportionate assets case. She was in the process of extensively campaigning in the 2021 Tamil Nadu assembly elections for the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK), a political outfit floated by her nephew TTV Dhinakaran and mainly focusing on her caste, the Thevar community, which has a strong presence in south Tamil Nadu.

Political observers are of the opinion that by pitching in with the AMMK and winning a few seats, she was planning to barge into the AIADMK to take control of the party. However, with both Edappadi



K Palaniswami (EPS) and O Panneerselvam (OPS) strongly opposing any patch-up with Sasikala and the AMMK, she announced that she was quitting active politics and would pray for the return of the 'Golden Rule of Amma (Jayalithaa) in Tamil Nadu. That statement was taken with a pinch of salt by political leaders, analysts and journalists.

MK Manoj, a former journalist with a leading Tamil daily in Chennai, said, "Sasikala was in the process of coming back to the

centrestage of Tamil Nadu politics, an arena which she dominated for several years during the Jaya regime. Unfortunately, she failed to read the writing on the wall that she was persona non grata for the AIADMK and didn't have a place in the party."

He said that both EPS and OPS had made good inroads among the party cadres and middle level functionaries while she was in jail. With the party in power, many of the small demands of the cadres were met by these two leaders and their

party colleagues, effectively creating a new support base in the party.

"Sasikala announced her retirement from politics after a message from the BJP central leadership and hence she had kept quiet," said Manoj.

The central BJP leadership did not want her to spoil the party for the AIADMK by splitting votes in the Thevar strongholds. However, the AIADMK and BJP combine lost the assembly elections.

After several days of campaigning, the AMMK had eaten into the vote bank of the AIADMK in several constituencies. Sasikala, according to people close to her, was made certain promises by the BJP in return for maintaining a low profile -- so that there were no hiccups in the AIADMK-BJP election plans. But with the AMMK in the fray, Thevar votes were divided.

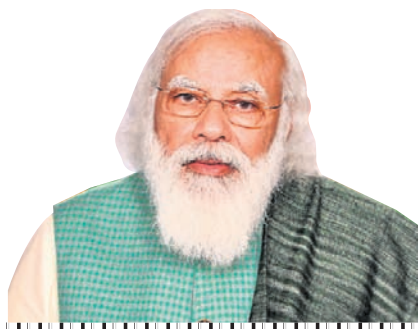
Days after the DMK government assumed office and reports of differences of opinion between EPS and OPS became frequent, Sasikala began renewing her old AIADMK contacts across the state.

She allegedly commenced selective leaks of her phone calls to certain AIADMK leaders, in the middle and lower level as well as party cadres.

She said that she would return to the AIADMK and control the party, but the AIADMK state leadership was prepared with party district committees passing resolutions against her entry into the party. Almost all the party district committees have passed resolutions against Sasikala's return to the party and many leaders said that the joint leadership of EPS and OPS was successfully handling the tough situations.

Meanwhile, the BJP has kept a studied silence through all these developments. BJP leaders are of the opinion that the party must not take any stand in haste and maintain a very low profile for the time being.

As the face-off between Sasikala and the present AIADMK leadership continues, the BJP leadership, according to party insiders, is adopting a policy of wait and watch -- perhaps to strike at the opportune moment.



At times, the lives of people exist in silos. These divisions reflect in the overall personality as well. The shift from silos to union is yoga. A proven way to experience a realisation of oneness is yoga
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

WHO M-YOGA APP LAUNCHED

Termed as a 'great example' of the fusion of modern technology and ancient wisdom, the 'WHO M-Yoga' app launched by PM Modi on the occasion of International Day of Yoga aims to help spread yoga around the world and contribute to the efforts of the 'One World, One Health' motto



of the day quote

A conscientious chief minister would have applied herself to ensuring justice. But I have always said that political torture, murder and rape are political weapons of the TMC and the post-poll violence being witnessed in Bengal reaffirms my position against her
SMRITI IRANI | UNION MINISTER

I assure you that if AAP gets majority in Punjab Assembly elections, the chief minister would be from the Sikh community
ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

It is impossible to value life, government's compensation is only a small help, but the Modi government is not ready to even do that
RAHUL GANDHI | CONG LEADER

India hits record with free vax

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 21: Over 82.7 lakh vaccine doses, the highest in a single day, were administered across the country Monday as the revised guidelines for Covid-19 vaccination came into effect, the Union Health Ministry said.

India's cumulative Covid-19 vaccination coverage was recorded at over 28.33 crore since January 16, according to the data from the CoWIN portal.

"Today's record-breaking vaccination numbers are gladdening. The vaccine remains our strongest weapon to fight Covid-19. Congratulations to those who got vaccinated and kudos to all the front-line warriors working hard to ensure so many citizens got the vaccine. Well done India!" Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

The previous single-day record was of over 48 lakh doses April 1. In June so far, India saw an average vaccination of over 31 lakh per day. The average single-day



vaccinations fell to as low as around 16 lakh in the first week of May when the country was at the peak of the second wave.

Madhya Pradesh saw the maximum vaccinations Monday followed by Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Modi said that the central government is beginning the 'Free Vaccination For All campaign' for every Indian from today.

"The biggest beneficiary of this phase of India's vaccination drive

shall be the poor, the middle class and the youth of the country. All of us should pledge to get ourselves vaccinated. Together we will defeat Covid-19," he said.

The present phase of vaccination was announced by the Prime Minister June 7. "Today's achievement showcases the trust placed by the people of India in the Government in its fight against the Covid-19 pandemic," the health ministry said in a statement.

The Union Government is com-

Campaign to allay vaccination fear

With increasing hesitancy among people towards Covid-19 vaccination in remote and rural areas of the country, the Central government Monday started a campaign to make aware people and assuage rumours being spread about the ongoing vaccination exercise against the deadly pandemic. Ministry of Minority Affairs along with various socio-educational organisations, NGOs and Women Self Help Groups have launched the campaign which will be organised across the country in the coming days. The nationwide 'Jaan Hai To Jahaan Hai' campaign aims to create awareness on corona vaccination in rural and remote areas and also to 'crush and curb' the rumours and apprehensions, being spread by some vested interests regarding the on-going vaccination drive.

mitted to accelerating the pace and expanding scope of the nationwide Covid-19 vaccination drive.

WB POST-POLL VIOLENCE

HC refuses to stay NHRC probe order



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, June 21: The Calcutta High Court Monday dismissed the West Bengal government's plea for recalling its order that directed the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to examine all cases of alleged human rights violations in post-poll violence in the state.

A five-judge bench of the high court dismissed the prayer of the West Bengal government for recalling the order passed in respect of a bunch of PILs alleging displacement of people from their residences, physical assault, destruction of property and ransacking of places of business owing to post-poll violence in the state.

The bench had passed the order June 18, taking note of a report submitted by the Member Secretary of West Bengal State Legal Services Authority which said that 3,243 persons were reported to be affected till noon of June 10.

The Member Secretary of WB-SLSA further mentioned that in a number of cases the complaints were referred to the superintendents of police or the police stations concerned but no response was received.

The five-judge bench, compris-

NHRC panel formed

New Delhi: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has constituted a committee to inquire into the complaints of post-poll violence in West Bengal following a Calcutta High Court order in the matter, officials said Monday. In a statement, the NHRC said Monday its chairman Justice (retd) Arun Mishra has constituted a committee to inquire into the complaints of post-poll violence in West Bengal, in accordance with the orders of the Calcutta High Court. The committee, which will start functioning immediately, will be headed by NHRC Member Rajeev Jain. It will examine the complaints which have already been received by the NHRC or which may be received, the officials said. The panel shall also point out the persons, prima-facie, responsible for crime and the officers who maintained calculated silence on the issue, the statement said.

ing acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal and justices IP Mukerji, Harish Tandon, Soumen Sen and Subrata Talukdar, had in its order directed the chairperson of the NHRC to constitute a committee to examine the matter.

Unable to get phone for online classes, teen girl hangs self

AGENCIES

Aurangabad, June 21: A 17-year-old girl in Maharashtra's Nanded district allegedly committed suicide as she did not have a mobile phone to attend online classes and her parents' financial condition did not permit them to buy her one, police said Monday.

The girl, a resident of Naygaon, hanged herself in her home June 16. "She is a Class XI student. Her parents are daily wage workers. She wanted a phone to attend online classes but her parents were unable to arrange money to buy a device. This made the girl take the extreme step. A suicide note has been found, and the parents of the deceased have also confirmed the lack of a phone as the reason for the act," the Naygaon police station official said.

REACHING THE REMOTE



A health worker administers a dose of a Covid-19 vaccine to a woman belonging to Gujar community during door to door inoculation drive, at Tosamaidan in Budgam district, Monday

Delhi Metro moots SOPs as monkey enters train

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 21: Days after a monkey wandered into a Delhi Metro train, the DMRC Monday said it plans to work out a standard operating procedure to tackle such issues in future.

The primate cavorted and roamed around in coaches of the train on the Blue Line before settling on a seat, leaving some passengers amused, and some others scared.

The video of the incident was widely shared on the social media.

The monkey had sneaked into the train at the Akshardham Metro Station and remained in the system for 3-4 minutes. DMRC staff acted swiftly after getting information on the issue and the train was evacuated at the next station, the DMRC had said in a statement Monday.

The simian ambled around in the coach and did playful antics much to the surprise of the commuters.

The video which had surfaced on the social media Saturday showed



the monkey roaming around and then climbing onto the handrail bar before traipsing to the neighbouring coach.

The DMRC in consultation with the forest department plans to work out a standard operating procedure to deal with such unexpected situations arising out of their entry into metro premises for passengers' safety, the statement said.

In this connection, DMRC would also like to appeal and advise passengers to refrain from encouraging, feeding (animals) or indulging in any activity which may endanger them in such a situation, it added.

8 BJP LEADERS REJOIN TMC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, June 21: In yet another jolt to the BJP, the party's Alipurdar district president, Ganga Prasad Sharma, joined the TMC Monday as senior leader of the state's ruling party Mukul Roy, who also switched sides two weeks ago, claimed that this was the beginning of the saffron party's end in the state.

Seven other BJP leaders from the region, too, followed in Sharma's footsteps and joined the Mamata Banerjee camp. Roy, addressing a press meet here, said the BJP's rise in the state began with the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, when it managed to bag several seats in north Bengal, and its downfall, too, will start from the region.

This is just a glimpse of what lies ahead... The BJP's fall in the state is imminent, Roy, who was the saffron party's national vice president until recently, underlined.

PUT UP BANNERS THANKING PM FOR FREE VACCINE: UGC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 21: The University Grants Commission (UGC) has asked all universities, colleges and technical institutions to put up banners thanking Prime Minister Modi for starting free vaccination for 18 years and above age group, sources said Monday.

The revised guidelines for COVID-19 vaccination announced by the Prime Minister earlier this month came into effect on Monday. Under these guidelines, those aged 18 and above are eligible for free vaccination.

In a WhatsApp message sent to various university officials Sunday, UGC Secretary Rajnish Jain also asked the institutions to share the banners on their social media pages.

While he did not respond to calls seeking his comments, officials of at least three universities confirmed having received the directive. The Government of India is



starting free vaccination for 18 years and above age group from tomorrow-21st June, 2021. In this regard, universities and colleges are requested to kindly display these hoardings and banners in their institutions.

The approved design (creatives) of hoardings and banners in Hindi and English, as provided by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, are attached for your ready reference, reads Jain's purported text message.

The poster has a picture of the Prime Minister with Thank you PM Modi written on it. Institutions such as Delhi University, Hyderabad University, LNCT University in Bhopal, Bennett University, Northcap University in Gurgaon, among others shared the banners on their social media pages with hashtag ThankyouModiji.

The move drew sharp reactions from several quarters including academicians, student bodies and politicians.

'Yoga improves respiratory health, immunity post Covid'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 21: Yoga has long been known as a holistic medium to achieve health and well-being. The Covid-19 pandemic has further put the spotlight on the myriad benefits of yoga.

On the occasion of International Day of Yoga Monday, experts said that practising yoga can boost respiratory health and immunity post Covid.

It has been observed that nearly 10 per cent of people diagnosed with Covid-19 experience prolonged symptoms, including breathing trouble, headaches, blood clots, nausea, fatigue and muscle pain which may last for weeks, months, possibly years even after recovery.

Apart from a healthy diet, yoga can play an important role in the

recovery process post Covid, experts said.

Yoga can help support, balance and boost the immune system and can help fight oxidative stress that poses a risk to the healthy cells. While the novel coronavirus especially attacks the respiratory system, breathing exercise or 'pranayam' can help a lot in strengthening the system if done in a correct way and under good guidance, Ismit Tyagi, Consultant Physiotherapist, Columbia Asia Hospital, Gurugram, told IANS.

Patients who have recovered from Covid-19 can do some easy yoga movements to increase the body's capacity.

Movements like Tadasana, Chakrasana, Trikonasana, Bhujangasana and Pawanmuktasana will not only



help in increasing the capacity of the lungs, but will also increase the amount of oxygenated blood in the body and transfer direct blood to the brain, due to which the body feels strong and young. Yoga also helps to maintain proper alignment of our body besides enhancing

our immunity, said Chitra Kataria, Head-Rehabilitation, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, New Delhi.

Besides physical health, the pandemic has taken a severe toll on the mental health of people - dealing with the deaths of loved ones, loss of jobs, being cooped up at home

and uncertainty of the future. All these can result in feelings of anxiety and despair.

Yoga could be useful during the pandemic in three ways - helping to cope with the stress by alleviating depression and anxiety improving the respiratory system which is mainly damaged by the virus, and boosting immunity. Yoga is a great tool to help improve respiratory health and immunity, both of which are involved in the prevention and healing from Covid-19, said Tilak Suvarna, Senior Interventional Cardiologist, Asian Heart Institute, Mumbai.

While yoga and meditation are known to be beneficial for holistic health, there is no proof that they help the human body to fight coronavirus. However, studies on yoga in managing flu symptoms during an influenza season have shown

promising results, the experts noted.

Regular yoga practice can also help people of all ages prevent and control noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) like cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes - a major risk factor for developing severe Covid-19 symptoms, said Poonam Khetrapal Singh, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia.

NCDs kill 41 million people globally every year, more than a third of them prematurely.

People living with NCDs are at higher risk of developing severe Covid-19 symptoms. They must continue to be provided uninterrupted access to NCD services and encouraged and enabled to take preventive action, for which yoga at home can prove beneficial and safe, Singh said.

international



Regional and missile issues are not negotiable. They (United States) did not comply with the previous agreement, how do they want to enter into new discussions? EBRAHIM RAISI | IRAN PRESIDENT-ELECT

OVER 3,000 PEOPLE PERFORM YOGA AT ICONIC TIMES SQUARE Over 3,000 people spread their mats at the iconic Times Square and performed Yoga asanas keeping in mind social distancing guidelines to celebrate the International Yoga Day as the city opens up following the Covid-19 pandemic



of the day quote

If a woman is wearing very few clothes it will have an impact on the men unless they are robots. It's common sense

IMRAN KHAN | PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER

Travellers would face hassle and delays this year if they sought to go abroad because the priority would be keeping the country safe from the coronavirus

BORIS JOHNSON | BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

We continue to hope that the DPRK will respond positively to our outreach and our offer to meet anywhere, anytime without preconditions

SUNG KIM | US PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL ENVOY TO NORTH KOREA

SHORT TAKES

Swedish PM Stefan Lofven ousted

Stockholm: Sweden's parliament ousted Prime Minister Stefan Lofven in a no-confidence vote Monday, giving the Social Democrat leader a week to resign and hand the speaker the job of finding a new government, or call a snap election. The nationalist Sweden Democrats had seized the chance to call the vote after the former communist Left Party withdrew support for the centre-left government over a plan to ease rent controls for new-build apartments.

Germany arrests Russian scientist

Berlin: German federal prosecutors said Monday they had arrested a Russian scientist accused of passing sensitive information from a German university to Moscow in return for cash. They said in a statement the suspect, identified only as Ilmur N., had been taken into custody Friday on suspicion of "working for a Russian secret service since early October 2020 at the latest". Ilmur N. was employed until the time of his arrest as a research assistant for a natural sciences and technology department at an unnamed German university. He is suspected of accepting cash payments in exchange for his services.

Nigerian cop shoots five people dead

Lagos: A Nigerian police inspector has killed five civilians and injured four in a shooting rampage, police said Monday, in the latest violence in the country's restive southeast. The incident happened on Sunday when the inspector stormed a residential estate in Enugu and opened fire on people there, state police spokesman Daniel Ndukwue said in a statement. The victims were taken to hospital for treatment.

Photo shows Dubai princess in Spain

Madrid: A Dubai princess who has been the subject of concern from a United Nations panel after being seized trying to flee the sheikhdom in 2018 appeared in a social media post early Monday that described her as being in Spain on a "European holiday". An Instagram image published by a woman identified in British media as former Royal Navy member Sioned Taylor shows Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed Al Maktoum at Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport. Taylor's caption, punctuated by a smiley face emoji, read: "Great European holiday with Latifa. We're having fun exploring!"

Europeans, US warn Iran nuclear talks won't be open-ended

Negotiations have been ongoing in Vienna since April to work out how Iran and the US can both return to compliance with the nuclear pact



European External Action Service Deputy Secretary General Enrique Mora and Iranian Deputy at Ministry of Foreign Affairs Abbas Araghchi wait for the start of a meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission in Vienna, Austria, April 17, 2021

REUTERS

Dubai, June 21: Western officials warned Tehran that negotiations to revive its nuclear deal could not continue indefinitely, after the sides announced a break following the election of a new hardline president in Iran.

Negotiations have been ongoing in Vienna since April to work out how Iran and the United States can both return to compliance with the nuclear pact, which Washington abandoned in 2018 under then-President Donald Trump, and Iran subsequently violated.

Sunday's pause in the talks came after Ebrahim Raisi, a hardliner and fierce critic of the West, won Iran's presidential election Friday. Two diplomats said they expected a break of around 10 days.

Raisi will take office in early August, replacing pragmatist

DIFFERENCES NARROWED BUT NOT EASY TO BRIDGE, IRAN SAYS

Iran says onus mainly on U.S. to clinch new agreement

ISRAEL: DON'T TALK TO 'HANGMEN REGIME' UNDER RAISI

Hassan Rouhani, under whom Tehran struck the deal agreeing to curbs to its nuclear programme in return for the lifting of international sanctions.

Iranian and Western officials alike say Raisi's rise is unlikely to alter Iran's negotiating position: Iran's hardline Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei already has final say on all major policy.

Still, some Iranian officials have suggested that Tehran could have

Won't meet with Biden: Raisi

Dubai: Iran's President-elect said Monday he wouldn't meet with President Joe Biden nor negotiate over Tehran's ballistic missile programme and its support of regional militias, sticking to a hard-line position following his landslide victory in last week's election. Judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi also described himself as a "defender of human rights" when asked about his involvement in the 1988 mass execution of some 5,000 people. Raisi made the comments in his first press conference in Tehran. "The US is obliged to lift all oppressive sanctions against Iran," he said.

an interest in pushing through an agreement before the new president takes office in August, to give Raisi a clean slate.

An Iranian government official close to the talks told Reuters that if a deal is finalised before Raisi takes office, the new president will be able to deflect blame for any concessions onto his predecessor: "Rouhani, not Raisi, will be blamed for any future problems regarding the deal," he said.

Britain, France and Germany, the European "E3", have effectively been acting as mediators, shuttling between the Iranian delegation and a US team that - Washington having quit the pact - is not a formal participant.

The Western countries say the longer Iran violates the deal and produces banned nuclear material, the harder it becomes to restore the pact.

END OF A DAY



A view of the skyline and buildings at Shinjuku district during sunset in Tokyo, Japan

REUTERS PHOTO

Pak plans global media outlet funded by China

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 21: Pakistan and China are collaborating to conduct an information war campaign globally - with China providing finances and guidance - through launching an international news media platform, intelligence agencies stated.

The leaked concept paper on Sino-Pak collaboration on building a global narrative was presented during a meeting between Chinese and Pakistan military delegates last month.

The collaborative information war campaign has to be seen in the light of the recent Politburo

meeting in China where President Xi Jinping acknowledged the negative impact of their 'wolf warrior' diplomats' targeted attacks on countries across the globe.

Sources said that Pakistan has already had a failed tryst in creating such a channel last year when it tried to collaborate with Turkey to produce an Islamic channel which will portray 'correct Islamic values' to the world.

That project, unfortunately, has been shelved due to lack of interest and energy from either party. The current project aims to establish a media house on the lines of Al Jazeera and

Russian Television to project the correct image of Pakistan.

Though the documents do not refer to China directly in terms of content, the very fact that financing is provided by China is proof enough that China intends to use this channel as a stepping stone to improve its image, its Unified Front Works department having failed horribly.

The concept paper states: "There is a need for a media house of the stature of Al Jazeera and RT to propel amenable narrative and a media house may be established in Pakistan and funded by China to achieve stipulated objectives."

Biden and Congress face a summer grind

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, June 21: Until recently, the act of governing seemed to happen at the speed of presidential tweets. But now President Joe Biden is settling in for what appears will be a long, summer slog of legislating.

Congress is hunkered down, the House and Senate grinding through a months-long stretch, lawmakers trying to draft Biden's big infrastructure ideas into bills that could actually be signed into law. Perhaps not since the drafting of the Affordable Care Act more than a decade ago has Washington tried a legislative lift as heavy.

It's going to take a while. "Passing legislation is not a made-for-TV movie," said Phil Schilliro, a former legislative affairs director at the Obama White House and veteran of congressional battles, including over the health care law.

Biden appears comfortable in this space, embarked on an agenda in Congress that's rooted in his top legislative priority - the \$4 trillion "build back better" investments now being shaped as his American Jobs and American



Families plans.

To land the Bills on his desk, the President is relying on an old-school legislative process that can feel out of step with today's fast-moving political cycles and hopes for quick payoffs. Democrats are anxious it is taking too long and he is wasting precious time negotiating with Republicans, but Biden seems to like the laborious art of legislating.

On Monday Biden is expected to launch another week of engagement with members of both parties, and the White House is likely at some point to hear from a bipartisan group of senators working on a scaled-back \$1 trillion plan as an alternative.

Debate over Myanmar upends start to UN rights body session

MYANMAR HASN'T BEEN REPRESENTED AT THE UN IN GENEVA SINCE THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT'S AMBASSADOR LEFT AFTER THE JUNTA TOOK OVER

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Geneva, June 21: The UN's top human rights body opened its latest session on Monday and was immediately embroiled in a debate over the representation of Myanmar, where a military takeover toppled the civilian government in February.

Western countries said that two planned debates about the human rights situation in Myanmar at the Human Rights Council's 3-1/2 week session should go forward, even without the country represented. But China, the Philippines and Venezuela insisted it should be on hand.

Myanmar hasn't been repre-



ers against the military takeover who have faced a deadly crackdown.

"We recognise that we are dealing with an unusual set of circumstances that have not arisen before," said Rita French, Britain's international ambassador for human rights. "But we need to be guided by relevant practice of what has happened before."

"The reason why two dialogues were mandated just a few months ago is because there is a human rights crisis in Myanmar," she said.

Envoy's agreed to maintain the council's schedule that includes the two debates on Myanmar. But the council president, Ambassador Nazhat Shameem Khan of Fiji, acknowledged her office would continue to assess whether they would proceed, and said the plans could still change.

Pressure has been growing against Myanmar's military. In a rare move, the UN General Assembly Friday condemned the takeover and called for an arms embargo against the country in a resolution that demanded the restoration of the country's democratic transition.

sent at the UN in Geneva since the civilian government's ambassador left after the junta took over. The UN General Assembly's credentials committee is facing a decision about which representation of Myanmar will be recognised. "If we exclude the country concerned, this is not fair," said Ambassador Chen Xu of China, urging the debates on Myanmar to be put off until the council's next session in September.

But Western envoys insisted the rights situation in Myanmar was urgent, notably over alleged rights violations such as those suffered by the Muslim Rohingya minority and - more recently - protest-

Israeli Foreign Minister to make first visit to UAE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, June 21: Israel's new Foreign Minister will head to the United Arab Emirates next week for the first-ever visit by a top Israeli diplomat to the Gulf Arab country, the ministry said Monday.

Foreign Minister Yair Lapid's trip comes after the two countries normalised relations last year in an agreement brokered by the Trump administration, the first of four similar deals with Arab states that had long shunned Israel over its conflict with the Palestinians.

Both Israel's new government and the Biden administration have said they hope to reach similar accords with other Arab states. Israel and the UAE have meanwhile continued working to deepen ties despite last month's Gaza war.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry said Lapid will visit the UAE June 29-30, and will inaugurate an Israeli Embassy in Abu Dhabi and a consulate in Dubai.

"Ties between Israel and the UAE are an important relationship, the fruits of which will be enjoyed not only by the citizens of the two countries, but by the entire Middle East," it said in a statement.

HK pro-democracy tabloid Apple Daily may shut down this week

NEXT DIGITAL'S APPLE DAILY WILL CEASE PUBLICATION JUNE 26 IF ITS BOARD DECIDES IT CANNOT CONTINUE TO OPERATE

REUTERS

Hong Kong, June 21: Next Digital's pro-democracy Hong Kong tabloid newspaper Apple Daily will cease publication June 26 if its board decides at a meeting Friday it cannot continue to operate, the newspaper said in an internal memo seen by Reuters.

Police raided the newspaper last week in a national security investigation, in which senior Apple Daily executives were arrested for alleged "collusion with a foreign country" and assets of three companies linked to the newspaper were frozen.

On Monday, an adviser to the jailed Next Digital owner and staunch Beijing critic Jimmy Lai, told Reuters the newspaper would be forced to shut "in a

matter of days".

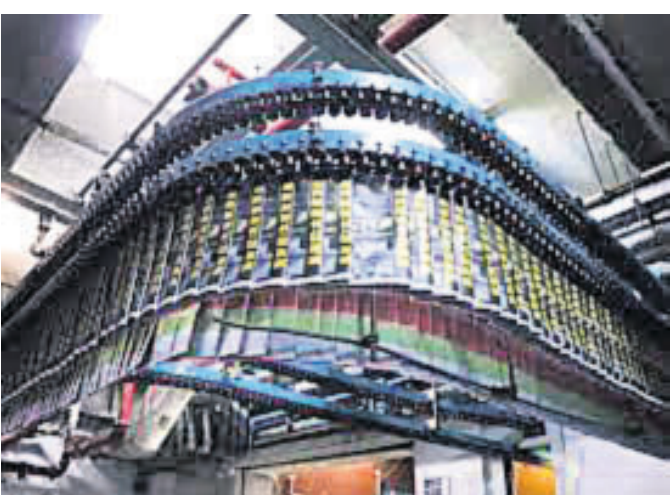
"The Board will decide Friday whether (the company) will continue to operate," the Apple Daily said in its memo to staff, which has not been released publicly.

"If the board decides not to continue to operate Friday online will stop uploading at 23:59 p.m. on the day newspaper will cease operation after publishing the June 26 edition."

The company would "accommodate" any immediate resignations, it said.

Apple Daily and Next Digital management could not be reached for comment.

Police have said dozens of Apple Daily articles were suspected of violating a new national security law in the first case in which authorities have cited media articles



Copies of Apple Daily newspaper are seen at its printing facility after police raided its newsroom and arrested five executives, in Hong Kong, China early June 18, 2021

REUTERS PHOTO

as potentially violating the contentious legislation.

Editor-in-chief Ryan Law and chief executive officer Cheung Kim-hung were charged with collusion with a foreign country and denied bail Saturday. Three other senior executives were also arrested Thursday and released pending further investigation.

Three companies related to Apple Daily are being prosecuted for collusion with a foreign country and authorities have frozen HK\$18 million (\$2.3 million) of their assets.

The company said in the memo the board had sent a letter to Hong Kong's Security Bureau to ask that some assets be unfrozen in order for it to avoid violating labour laws by failing to pay staff. The company asked the Security Bureau to reply by Friday.

'SERIOUS CRIME'

The Bureau said in a statement to Reuters Monday that it would not comment on case details due to ongoing legal proceedings and any application related to the frozen property would be handled "according to the law".

"Endangering national security is a very serious crime," it said.

The newspaper said in a Sunday article that it was considering challenging the decision to freeze assets in courts, should the Security Bureau reject the request.

The office of the city's chief executive did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday. Beijing's chief representative in the city, the Liaison Office, also did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

business

of the day quote

Markets are likely to spend some more time in a range and we expect volatility to remain high due to the scheduled derivatives expiry of June month contracts. With no major event, participants will be closely eyeing the global markets for cues

AJIT MISHRA | VP RESEARCH, RELIGARE BROKING

Our aim is to offer our customers the assurance and services at the comfort of their homes in the new normal. While social distancing and required norms are adhered to on-site, the staff undergoes an additional layer of the check prior to visiting the customers' homes

GAURAV GUPTA | CCO AND SENIOR VP, MG MOTOR INDIA

Industry needs to make pricing transparent whenever you price your services and keep the pricing distinct among multiple services that you are selling

T RABI SANKAR | DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RBI

SHORT TAKES

FB launches podcasts in US

Washington: Facebook is launching podcasts and live audio streams in the US Monday to keep users engaged on its platform and to compete with emerging rivals. Facebook says it is allowing public figures with verified accounts to start live audio rooms and invite anyone else to speak. A handful of podcasts will be available to people in the US. At first and the company plans to add more down the line.

CCI nods Heineken's stake acquisition

New Delhi: Fair trade regulator CCI Monday said it has approved Heineken International BV's proposed acquisition of an additional equity stake in United Breweries Ltd (UBL). This, however, is subject to the outcome of certain court proceedings, a combination notice filed with the Competition Commission of India (CCI) noted. "The proposed transaction relates to HIBV's potential acquisition of additional equity stake in UBL," it said.

Hyundai buys Boston Dynamics

Seoul: Hyundai Motor Group said Monday its three affiliates and its chief have acquired a controlling stake in US-based robotics firm Boston Dynamics for \$880 million. The investment is part of the South Korean auto-making group's broader plans to strengthen its competitiveness in future mobility solutions. In December, the board of directors at the three affiliates: Hyundai Motor, Hyundai Mobis and Hyundai Glovis, approved the plan to acquire a combined 80% stake in Boston Dynamics whose value is estimated at \$1.1 billion.

'TN to focus on industrial policy'

Chennai: The Tamil Nadu government will focus its industrial policy on diversification of its industrial base and an expert committee will be set up to suggest schemes for MSME revival, Governor Banwarilal Purohit said Monday. In his customary address to the newly constituted 16th Legislative Assembly, Purohit said, "The focus of the industrial policy will be on further diversification of the industrial base of Tamil Nadu, both geographically and sectorally."



Calibrated measures are needed to support the country's economic recovery and to diminish the daunting impact caused by the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic on trade and industry

SANJAY AGGARWAL | PRESIDENT, PHDCCI

DOMINO'S PARTNERS WITH SEHWAG'S FOUNDATION

Jubilant FoodWorks, the master franchisee of Domino's Pizza has partnered with cricketer Virender Sehwag's Foundation as a delivery partner to provide free meals to Covid patients in Delhi-NCR



IKEA, Rockefeller pledge \$1bn in clean energy push

AGENCIES

Mumbai, June 21: The IKEA Foundation and The Rockefeller Foundation Monday announced that they will join forces to set up a \$1 billion global platform to fight climate change and energy poverty.

The platform, launching this year, aims to empower 1 billion people with distributed renewable energy (DRE). This is renewable energy generated from sources such as mini-grid and off-grid solutions, located near the point of use, rather than centralized sources like power plants. The new global platform will oversee the organisations' combined matching funds.

It aims to deliver clean and reliable power to the 800 million people worldwide who lack electricity, and a further 2.8 billion who have unreliable access. It will be run as a public charity to manage a concerted effort to rapidly channel development funds to life-changing projects on the ground.

While funding to support energy transition has increased at a global level, many organisations struggle to identify viable, investment-ready projects. As a result, many emerging economies still depend on unreliable and polluting energy sources. By creating a platform to deploy catalytic capital more efficiently, and at scale that supports the expansion of local renewable energy projects, governments will be better able to achieve renewable electrification and development targets.

"If global energy consumption doesn't change from fossil fuels to renewable energy, we will not meet the Paris Agreement ambitions and millions of families will be left behind in poverty. We need to



FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

THE PARTNERSHIP WILL UNLOCK THE FINANCING AND RESOURCES THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO PROVIDE CLEAN, RELIABLE ELECTRICITY THAT IMPROVES THE LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS OF PEOPLE EVERYWHERE

IT AIMS TO DELIVER CLEAN AND RELIABLE POWER TO THE 800 MILLION PEOPLE WORLDWIDE WHO LACK ELECTRICITY, AND A FURTHER 2.8 BILLION WHO HAVE UNRELIABLE ACCESS

THE NEW GLOBAL PLATFORM WILL OVERSEE THE ORGANISATIONS' COMBINED MATCHING FUNDS

be honest and recognize that the current approach is not delivering the impact the world needs in the time that we have," said Per Heggnes, CEO of the IKEA Foundation.

"Our collective ambition is to create a platform that supports renewable energy programmes which can deliver greenhouse gas reductions fast and efficiently and accelerate the energy transition.

We need to replace polluting sources of energy with renewable ones, provide access to energy to communities and unlock further funding for sustainable models. Ultimately, we aim to unite countries and communities in urgent action to tackle the climate crisis and, by doing so, we hope to positively impact the lives of 1 billion people."

lion people."

"Millions of lives and trillions of dollars have been lost to Covid-19, forcing people back into poverty after decades of progress. The effects of the climate crisis will make this even worse, which is why we must invest now to reverse this downward spiral," said Rajiv J Shah, President of The Rockefeller Foundation.

"Big, bold, and pioneering collaboration and investment is required not only for the short term, but also the long term, to galvanize a better future.

That is why we are announcing our largest commitment to date and joining forces with IKEA Foundation to double that investment."

SAT sets aside Sebi direction; allows PNB Housing Fin to hold EGM today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 21: Setting aside Sebi's direction, the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) on Monday allowed PNB Housing Finance to go ahead with the shareholders' meeting on Tuesday to consider the proposed ₹4,000 crore investment by private equity firm Carlyle and others in the mortgage firm. However, results of the shareholders' voting will not be disclosed till further directions from the tribunal.

CARLYLE DEAL



The ruling comes hours after PNB Housing Finance informed stock exchanges that it has appealed against Sebi's direction on June 18 wherein it was asked to defer consideration of the proposed capital infusion proposal till a valuation of the company's shares is done by a registered independent valuer.

The Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) is scheduled for Tuesday (June 22).

In a not-so-often seen move, Sebi not only restrained PNB Housing Finance from going ahead with voting on the proposal but also directed that the matter should be placed afresh before the company's board of directors and then a decision be taken on the basis of the independent valuation.

Retail to be next growth engine for RIL: Goldman Sachs



AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 21: With a potential for a 10x growth in pre-tax profit from the business over the next decade, retail including e-commerce will be the next growth engine for Reliance Industries Ltd, Goldman Sachs said in a report.

After growing 5x over FY16-FY20, RIL's core retail revenue growth has taken a pause in FY21 (April 2020 to March 2021) due to Covid related macro headwinds including lower footfalls.

The oil-to-telecom conglomerate run by billionaire Mukesh Ambani used the period to build strong digital capabilities of the retail business while continuing to expand its physical reach.

"We believe retail business (including e-commerce) is set to be the next growth engine for RIL, with potential for retail EBITDA to grow 10x over the next 10 years," the brokerage said.

During the macro downturn, RIL has focused on building strong digital capabilities and the scale-up in omnichannel offering is driving sizeable market share wins.

"We see a six-fold increase in grocery organised retail penetra-

tion in India by FY30, coupled with 15 per cent market share gain for RIL. "We expect RIL core retail revenue to grow at a 36 per cent CAGR over the next four years to USD 44 billion and e-commerce revenues to be 35 per cent of total retail revenues in FY25, at USD 15 billion," it said.

It forecast a 50 per cent market share for RIL in online grocery by FY25, with a 30 per cent market share in overall e-commerce. This translates into USD 35 billion e-commerce GMV for RIL by FY25, with USD 19 billion in grocery.

Goldman Sachs valued RIL's retail business at USD 88 billion in the base case and at USD 120 billion bull case valuation based on stronger than expected macro growth and market share wins.

Airtel, Tata Group tie up to deploy 5G network solutions



AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 21: Bharti Airtel and the Tata Group Monday announced a strategic partnership for implementing 5G networks solutions for India. Tata Group has developed a 'state of the art' O-RAN based Radio & NSA/SA Core and has integrated a totally indigenous telecom stack, leveraging the group capabilities and that of its partners. This will be available for commercial development starting January 2022, said a statement.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) brings its global system integration expertise and helps align the end-to-end solution to both 3GPP and O-RAN standards, as the network and equipment are increasingly embedded into software, it said. Airtel will pilot and deploy this

indigenous solution as part of its 5G rollout plans in India and start the pilot in January 2022, as per the guidelines formulated by the government.

As per the statement, these Made in India 5G products and solutions are aligned to global standards, and inter-operate with other products based on standard open interfaces and those defined by the O-RAN Alliance. The 5G solutions, once commercially proven in Airtel's diverse and brownfield network, will open export opportunities for India, which is now the second largest telecom market in the world.

Bharti Airtel's MD & CEO, India and South Asia, Gopal Vittal, said, "We are delighted to join forces with the Tata Group to make India a global hub for 5G and allied technologies."

MSME dept targets to set up small food processing units

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: The state MSME department is targeting to set up numerous 'small food processing' units in various districts to boost the sector. The decision has been made during the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM FME) meeting held Monday. The meeting was presided over by Satyabrata Sahoo, Principal Secretary of the MSME department.

Now, the state government is focusing on the developed food processing sectors to encourage the entrepreneurs. Raman Thapar of Indian Micro Enterprises Development Foundation (IMEDF) presented report on Magic Millet Unit based at Mohanpur under Morada block in Mayurbhanj district.

The cluster has been set up with an amount of ₹430.57 lakh and around 980 farmers (345 female, 635 male) will be benefited under the initiative.

Sahoo also asked APICOL MD



Prabhat Roul to set up small maize cluster in Nuapada, Malkangiri and Nabarangpur. He also directed to its marketing in the country and abroad to Anand Mishra, founder of Grozip. Similarly around ₹435.17 lakh has been invested for groundnut cluster at Chandrasekharpur in Dhenkanal district. Also, around 770 female and 476 male farmers are engaged in the cluster. Moreover, a maize cluster

has been set up in Gajapati district set up with an amount of ₹440.31 lakh. The cluster has been beneficial to 729 female and 196 male farmers.

The committee in the meeting also discussed to set up pineapple cluster in Rayagada and Gajapati district. Biswajit Swain of Haastika said that products made out of banana tree have demand in international market.

India Inc focuses on balanced life, encourages practice of yoga

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 21: India Inc and Monday stressed on the need to have a balanced life and encouraged the practice of yoga in order to maintain physical and mental wellbeing, especially during the ongoing pandemic. Public sector companies too joined in the celebrations with yoga sessions at home and workplace while spreading the message to "embrace yoga for holistic health".

Celebrating the International Yoga Day, Biocon Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw tweeted a picture of herself performing yoga with a caption, "Yoga is all about creating a balance in your life. It is about balancing your senses, balancing your body, soul and mind in order to live a healthy life."

In her tweet she said, "On this #InternationalDayOfYoga let's pledge to integrate #yoga in our

lives to keep us healthy and balanced both physically & mentally."

Similarly, Hiranandani Group Chairman and National President NAREDCO, Niranjan Hiranandani also tweeted, "#yoga plays a vital role in shaping #professional & #personal mindset. It trains not just #body but mind & #soul to #focus #strengthen #teamwork #resilience #vision #growth #Balance #flexibility & #peace #internationalyogaday2021 @hiranandanigrp @h_communities".

IndiGo Senior VP and Head of Human Resources Raj Raghavan said, "Health and wellness has always been an integral part of IndiGo's culture since its inception, and Yoga is certainly a great way to keep both the body and the mind fit."

He said the airlines is running a social media campaign #BendItLike6E to motivate more people to take up Yoga. It has col-



laborated with Infinite Health Studios to organise yoga sessions for its employees and their families.

"We will continue with initiatives to encourage holistic wellness for our employees and their families," Raghavan said.

Like their private sector counterparts, top officials of state run

enterprises also joined in the International Yoga Day celebrations.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) said its chairman S M Vaidya and other directors joined the yoga session. "On this #IDY2021, let us embrace Yoga for holistic health", it said. Likewise, BPCL in a tweet

Health and wellness has always been an integral part of IndiGo's culture since its inception, and yoga is certainly a great way to keep both the body and the mind fit

RAJ RAGHAVAN | SENIOR VP AND HEAD OF HR, INDIGO

said, "On the occasion of #IDY2021, Shri K Padmakar C&MD, Shri Arun Singh Director (Marketing) & Director (Refineries) and Shri N. Vijayagopal Director (Finance), leads the employees of #BPCL at a special virtual session of Yoga".

Another PSU, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) said practicing yoga regularly maintains inner balance, peace

and well-being.

"On the occasion of #InternationalDayOfYoga, our C&MD, Dir-Refineries & Dir-Marketing, along with Yoga guru and #HPCL family joins the celebration of #YogaForWellness from the comfort of our homes," it said.

At Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), chairman Subhash Kumar, director-HR Alka Mittal, director-exploration RK Srivastava, director-technical and field services OP Singh and director-onshore Anurag Sharma attended a yoga session.

Tata Group in a tweet encouraged people to take up yoga while sharing a motivational video that carried the message, "Positive affirmations to get you through life's twists and turns. Yo-gat (sic) it! Today will be aasan. Do the Surya namas-care (sic). Balance your mind, body and to-do list. Don't be a worrier, be a warrior"

WIJNALDUM, DEPAY SHINE

Switzerland seal Turkey exit



TWO SIDES OF EMOTION: Memphis Depay and another Dutch player rejoice with goal scorer Georginio Wijnaldum (C), while North Macedonia goalie lies on the ground hiding his face in disappointment, Monday

Amsterdam, June 21: Georginio Wijnaldum scored twice and Memphis Depay was on target too as the Netherlands thrashed North Macedonia 3-0 Monday to keep their 100 percent record at Euro 2020, but not before surviving some early scares at the Johan Cruyff Arena.

The Dutch had already secured top place in Group C but emphasised their dominance with a full haul of points as North Macedonia exited the tournament with none. Depay opened the scoring in the first half and Wijnaldum added two in the space of seven minutes to go ahead of Marco van Basten on the list of his country's scorers.

The captain now has 25 goals for the Netherlands, who head to Budapest for their last 16 match Sunday against one of the best third-placed finishers from Groups D, E or F. North Macedonia offered plucky intent at creating an upset and had the ball in the Dutch net early, only for Ivan Trickovski to be ruled off side. Aleksandar Trajkovski then

smashed in a powerful shot that had Dutch goalkeeper Marten Stekelenburg beaten and thundered back out off the post.

Instead the home side took the lead in the 24th minute, albeit amid some controversy, as a tackle from Daley Blind on Goran Pandev set up a counter attack, swiftly executed with Donyell Malen and Depay combining before the latter tucked away the ball. A VAR check, however, found Blind's tackle was legal, much to the disgust of the Macedonians.

Straight after halftime, Matthijs de Ligt had a powerful header cleared off the line by Trickovski as the Dutch served notice of a more determined approach. Wijnaldum then doubled the score six minutes into the half as Depay set him up to finish from close range.

In Bucharest, Christoph Baumgartner put Austria into the knockout stage for the first time by scoring the only goal in his team's 1-0 victory over Ukraine.

Baumgartner knocked in a corner from Austria captain David Alaba in the 21st minute, only four minutes after colliding head-to-head with Illia Zabarnyi on the other end of the field. Baumgartner was then substituted in the 32nd minute, holding his head while leaving the field.

Austria finished second in Group C with six points and will next face Italy in London Saturday. Ukraine are third with three points and could still qualify for the round of 16 as one of the four best third-place teams.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Baku, June 21: Switzerland snatched a 3-1 victory and will have to wait if they have done enough for their progression as Xherdan Shaqiri scored twice in the last Euro 2020 Group A game late Sunday.

Both sides needed a victory to maintain their minimum chance and ensured a lively opening period at the Baku Olympic Stadium, reports 'Xinhua'.

It took only six minutes for the opener as Haris Seferovic had enough time and space to drill Steven Zuber's assist past Turkey goalkeeper Ugurcan Cakir.

Turkey responded well and earned their chances through Mert Muldur, whose shot was thwarted by a busy Switzerland goalkeeper Yann Sommer, before Ozan Tufan missed the target from a promising position moments later.

It looked like Turkey would claw their way back into the game as Sommer was the busier goalkeeper. However, Switzerland was ice cold in front of the target and doubled their advantage as Shaqiri collected Zuber's square pass before curling the ball into the top right corner in the 26th minute.

Switzerland should have made it three, four minutes later but for all that Shaqiri wasn't able to beat Cakir in a one-on-one. Turkey remained dangerous and pressed but Sommer drove Senol Gunes' men to despair before the halftime.

After the interval, Turkey was able to overcome Sommer as Irfan Can Kahveci unleashed a 20-metre hammer to catch the Swiss goalkeeper flat-footed in the 62nd minute.

Turkey halved the deficit, yet it was a short-lived joy as Shaqiri wrapped up his brace after striking a one-timer into the roof of the net, following Zuber's third assist, to restore Switzerland's two-goal lead six minutes later.

With the result, Switzerland recorded their first win in their Euro 2020 campaign and could advance from the third spot into the round of 16. Meanwhile,



SILENCE PLEASE: Xherdan Shaqiri gesticulates while celebrating one of his goals against Turkey, Sunday

Turkey crashed out in the group stage with zero points from three games.

"It was important to show a reaction as a unit, as a team. We knew we could create a lot of chances

against this opponent," Switzerland midfielder Shaqiri said.

Italy (9 points) have been confirmed as Group A leaders followed by Wales (4 points), Switzerland (4 points) and Turkey (nil).

Peru stun Colombia to keep Copa hopes alive



Peru players celebrate after one of their goals during their match against Colombia at Copa America, Sunday

Sao Paulo, June 21: Peru beat Colombia 2-1 to keep alive their chances of advancing to the knockout stage of Copa America. Sergio Pena opened the scoring for the Peruvians in the 17th minute Sunday. Miguel Borja equalised from the spot in the 53rd but an own goal 11 minutes later by Colombian defender Yerry Mina decided the match at the Olimpico stadium in Goiania.

Peru is in third position in Group B with three points after two matches. Colombia remains with four points in second spot, but with only two games remaining. Leader Brazil has six points. The top four teams will qualify for the quarter-finals.

Peru lost 0-4 to Brazil in their tournament opener, which raised doubts about coach Ricardo Gareca's team. The 2019 Copa America finalists are also struggling

in South American World Cup qualifiers. Only weeks ago they lost 0-3 to Colombia in Lima. Peru opened the scoring with Pena burying the ball in the back of the net from the edge of the box. Borja's equaliser, after he was brought down in the area, gave the impression Colombia had momentum.

But a set-piece from the right flank ended on Mina's chest and then accidentally past Colombian goalkeeper David Ospina. The Peruvians then managed to defend until the final whistle.

Earlier Sunday, Venezuela and Ecuador drew 2-2. Venezuela are in fourth position in the group with two points after three matches and Ecuador have one point after two games.

The next matches in the group will be played Wednesday. Defending champion Brazil will play against Colombia and Peru will face Ecuador.

Verstappen clinches French GP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Le Castellet, June 21: Max Verstappen of Red Bull pipped Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes to clinch the Formula One (F1) French Grand Prix race here Sunday. This was Red Bull's third consecutive win of the Formula One season.

Verstappen, who won in 1:27:25.770 seconds and collected 26 points, passed Hamilton (+2.904 seconds, 18 points) with two laps to go to register the 13th win of his career. Verstappen now has 131 points to Hamilton's 119 after seven races.

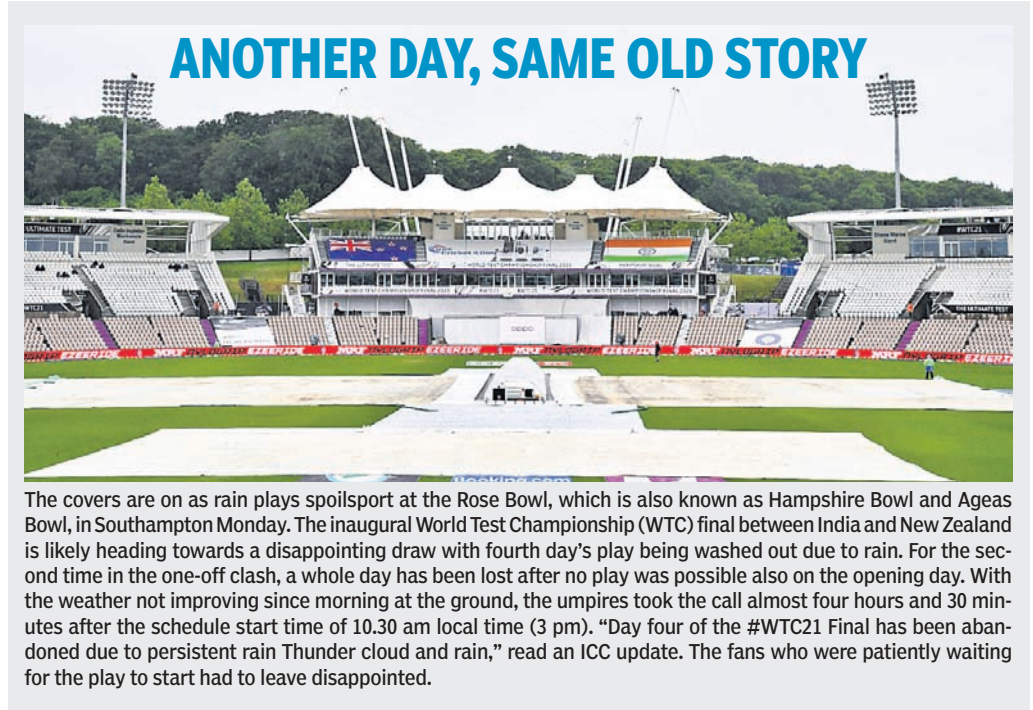
Sergio Perez of Red Bull finished third and Valtteri Bottas of Mercedes ended up fourth. Lando Norris of McLaren finished fifth, ahead of teammate Daniel Ricciardo, who probably ran his best race of the year to take the sixth position.

Verstappen stopped twice to Hamilton's one-stop, with the Dutchman then using his new tyres to close up to the Mercedes, passing on lap number 52 of 53 for his third win of the year.



The victory more than made up for Verstappen losing out to Hamilton from pole at the start of the race. One lap distance at Le Castellet was 5.842 km and a total distance 309.69 km. The race was 53 laps long.

It was the 61st French Grand Prix in the World Championship history, and 17th here at Le Castellet.



ANOTHER DAY, SAME OLD STORY
The covers are on as rain plays spoilsport at the Rose Bowl, which is also known as Hampshire Bowl and Ageas Bowl, in Southampton Monday. The inaugural World Test Championship (WTC) final between India and New Zealand is likely heading towards a disappointing draw with fourth day's play being washed out due to rain. For the second time in the one-off clash, a whole day has been lost after no play was possible also on the opening day. With the weather not improving since morning at the ground, the umpires took the call almost four hours and 30 minutes after the schedule start time of 10.30 am local time (3 pm). "Day four of the #WTC21 Final has been abandoned due to persistent rain Thunder cloud and rain," read an ICC update. The fans who were patiently waiting for the play to start had to leave disappointed.

Dutee shatters own nat'l record in 100m

SHOT-PUTTER TOOR QUALIFIES FOR TOKYO GAMES BREAKING ASIAN RECORD; WOMEN'S RELAY TEAM BETTER NATIONAL RECORD TOO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patiala, June 21: Odisha sprinter Dutee Chand, Monday, shattered a national record in the women's 100m event at the Indian Grand Prix 4 here on a day where shot-putter Tajinder Pal Singh Toor qualified for the Tokyo Olympics with an Asian and national record throw.

The state star completed the race in 11.17 seconds, agonisingly close to the Olympic qualification time 11.15s. The previous record was 11.22 seconds, also in the name of Dutee.

Despite failing to cross the Olympic qualification mark, Dutee is expected to make the Tokyo Games on the basis of world rankings as she is sitting pretty at 42nd spot out of 56 athletes to run in the Olympics 100m race.

The quartet of Dutee, Hima Das, S Dhanalakshmi and Archana Suseendran clocked 43.37 seconds to win the race ahead of India 'B' team (48.02 seconds) and Maldives (50.74) in the three team race.

The Indian team bettered the previous record of 43.42 seconds set in 2016 in Almaty by the quartet of Merlin K Joseph, HM Jyothi, Srabani Nanda and Dutee.

But the quartet failed to clock below 43.05 seconds needed to be among the top 16 teams in the Road to Tokyo list. Sixteen team will run in the women's 4x100m relay race in Tokyo Games. Monday's 43.37 seconds will take India to the 20th spot.

"I am excited to break my own record in 100m clocking 11.17s and create new national record in 4x100m relay clocking 43.37s," wrote Dutee on her Twitter handle.

The 26-year-old Toor, a 2018 Asian Games gold winner, crossed the Olympic qualification mark of 21.10m with a throw of 21.49m, which was his first attempt, and



broke his own national record.

The previous national record, which was also in Toor's name, stood at 20.92m and was set in 2019. He also shattered the 12-year-old Asian record of Saudi Arabia's Sultan Abdulm Al Hebshi (21.13m in 2009).

Olympic-bound Kamalpreet Kaur bettered her earlier national record mark in women's discus throw by hurling the iron disc to a distance of 66.59m. But her performance will not be counted as the new national record as she was the lone competitor in the event.

Kaur had become the country's first woman discus thrower to breach the 65m mark with a national record mark of 65.06m during the Federation Cup here in March, which also booked her a spot in the Tokyo Olympics.