



## TOP SECRET

Actor Shruti Haasan has revealed what makes her dance secretly to music of the 90s for hours

LEISURE P2



## RUSSIA WARNS UK

Russia warns Britain that it would bomb British naval vessels in the Black Sea if there are any provocations

INTERNATIONAL P10



## RECORD-EQUALLING FEAT

Cristiano Ronaldo scores 109th goal for Portugal to match all-time men's record with Iran's Ali Daei

SPORTS P12

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Of course, I can get you something cheaper. How would you feel about being Hafiz Saeed's neighbour

## SHORT TAKES

### ₹11-crore aid for OMFED farmers

**Bhubaneswar:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced Thursday a Covid-19 relief package of ₹11 crore for OMFED farmers in Odisha to support their livelihood amidst the pandemic. Under the package, each milk farmer will receive financial assistance up to ₹6,000 to meet their expense towards purchasing of fodder. A total of 1.20 lakh farmers will be benefited by this, a statement released by the CMO said. The CM said that OMFED farmers have suffered a lot as demand for milk has slumped due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Thapar under CBI scanner for fraud

**New Delhi:** The CBI carried out Thursday searches at six locations after registering a fresh case of fraud of Rs 2,435 crore in Yes Bank and other consortium banks against former CG Power and Industrial Solutions chairman Gautam Thapar who is already under probe in more such cases, officials said. CG Power and Industrial Solutions was earlier Crompton Greaves Ltd. The searches took place in Mumbai, Delhi and Gurgaon. This is a new case against Thapar, who has been under the scanner for some time now.

## MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	52699.00 ↑ 392.92
NIFTY	15790.50 ↑ 103.50
DOLLAR	74.70 ↓ ₹0.11
EURO	88.44 ↑ ₹0.03
GOLD	₹47,062 ↓ ₹10
SILVER	₹68,012 ↑ ₹80

## WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	33.2°C	33.0°C
TEMP. MIN	24.6°C	24.2°C
Humidity	92%	89%
Rainfall	Nil	7mm
Forecast	Generally cloudy sky	



**TRINITY'S ELEPHANT ATTIRE:** ( From left ) Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath adorned with Gajanana Besha soon after the bathing ritual on Snana Bedi of Srimandir in Puri, Thursday. The festival was organised without the presence of devotees as per Covid-19 norms

PHOTO: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

# Statehood for J&K at right time: Modi

## PM's early delimitation policy faces barrage of criticism

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 24:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Thursday the group of Gupkar leaders from Jammu and Kashmir that Assembly elections will be held there after the completion of the ongoing delimitation exercise, People's Conference leader Muzaffar Hussain Baig said after a crucial meeting to chalk out the future course of action in the Union Territory. During the three-and-a-half-hour-long meeting, almost all the 14 leaders from J&K demanded that its statehood, which was removed in August 2019, should be restored, he said. Modi assured the leaders that statehood would be restored at the appropriate time. According to official sources, the main focus of the meeting was to strengthen the democratic process and the prime minister said that the government was fully committed to it. Even though sources said that the

meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere, it was far from the truth as evident by some of the comments made by leaders after the meeting. This is the first interaction between the central leadership and the mainstream parties of J&K since August 5, 2019, when the Centre revoked J&K's special status under Article 370 of the Constitution and bifurcated it into Union Territories, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah after the meeting clarified that most of the leaders were unhappy about the delimitation policy and expressed it during the meeting. "In other states, delimitation will be taken up in 2026, why has Jammu and Kashmir been singled out? We told the PM delimitation is not needed," the former Chief Minister was quoted as saying by 'NDTV.com'. He added 'trust has broken between the Centre

and Kashmir'. The trust can only be restored if statehood is restored for J&K, Omar said. All through the meeting, the leaders of the various parties attending the meet continued to press forward their demand for statehood. "We will struggle for 370, be it months or years. We didn't get this (special status) from Pakistan, but from India, Nehru. There can be no compromise on this," another former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti said after the meeting. It was clear from the statements of some of the leaders that they were not ready to buy the proposals put forward to them by Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. The four former chief ministers of the erstwhile state who participated in the discussions were Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar (NC), Congress' Ghulam Nabi Azad and PDP chief Mufti.

## FUEL PRICES HIKED AGAIN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 24:** Petrol price in Chennai neared the ₹99-a-litre mark Thursday after fuel prices were increased again on firming international oil rates. The price of petrol was hiked by 26 paise per litre and that of diesel by 27 paise a litre, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

### CITY FUEL PRICES (JUNE 24)

PETROL	₹98.59 (+0.26)
DIESEL	₹96.29 (+0.27)

The increase took rates across the country to fresh highs. In Delhi, petrol hit an all-time high of ₹97.76 a litre, while diesel is now priced at ₹88.30 per litre. Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as value-added tax (VAT). The price of petrol has already crossed the ₹100/litre mark in Rajasthan, MP, Maharashtra, AP, Telangana, Karnataka, Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Among metro cities, petrol is already above ₹100 in Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bangalore. The hike Thursday is the 29th increase in prices since May 4. In 29 hikes, the price of petrol has increased by ₹7.36 per litre and diesel by ₹7.77 a litre.

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# Matric results to be declared today

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** Results of the annual High School Certificate (HSC), State Open School Certificate and Madhyama Examinations 2021 will be published June 25 Friday at 4.00pm, the Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha informed Thursday. According to a notification issued by the BSE, results will be published at 4.00pm June 25 after obtaining approval from the board of the Examination Committee. Results will be published from the head office of BSE in Cuttack and will be available on the board's official websites www.bseodisha.ac.in and www.bseodisha.nic.in from 6.00pm onwards Friday.

In case of non-availability of internet facilities, the results can be received on mobile phones through SMS. For this, one has to type OR1 <Roll Number> and send an SMS to 5678750.

Earlier, School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash had informed that the annual high school certificate (matriculation) examination results would be declared in the last week of June and the board has achieved the target. It should be stated here that Matric examinations were cancelled due to the prevailing Covid-19 situation in the state.

### Class XII results by July 31: SC

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court directed Thursday all the state boards to declare internal assessment results of Class XII examinations by July 31. The apex court also clarified that there can't be a 'fit-all' scheme and each board is autonomous and free to formulate its own evaluation method for students. A bench of Justices AM Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari observed that each board will have to evolve their own scheme. "We direct the boards to ensure that the scheme be formulated at the earliest and not later than 10 days from today (Thursday) and also declare the internal assessment results by July 31, 2021, like the time line specified for CBSE and CISCE," the bench said in its order.

Students will be judged on the basis of their marks obtained in Class IX exams and tests in Class X. The BSE said 40 per cent weightage would be given to highest marks secured in Class IX examinations in each subject, while 60 marks weightage would be given to class X performances. Two highest marks in all subjects out of three practice tests conducted in Class X would be given weightage of 30 per cent each.

## RESHUFFLE OF IPS OFFICERS

# Jethwa appointed new Vig Director

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** In a minor reshuffle among senior IPS officers, the Odisha government Thursday appointed 1994 batch officer Yeshwant Kumar Jethwa as the new Director of Vigilance. At present Jethwa is serving as additional DG of Police, Law & Order. The post of Vigilance director was lying vacant following the demise of IPS officer Debasis Panigrahi who breathed his last due to Covid-19 complications.

Among other changes, ADG (Headquarters) Lalit Das has been made Director (Intelligence) while RK Sharma has been appointed as ADG, Law & Order, as per a notification issued by the state Home Department. Prior to his new appointment, Sharma was working as Director (Intelligence). Transport Commissioner Sanjeeb Panda has been appointed as ADG, Crime Branch. Panda will also hold additional charge of Odisha State Police Housing and Welfare Corporation (OSPHWC).



Yeshwant Kumar Jethwa

Senior IPS officer of 1990 batch and CMD of OS- PHWC Sudhanshu Sarangi has been transferred as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to the Home department. Arun Bothra who is a 1996 batch IPS officer, has been made Transport Commissioner. At present, Bothra is the CMD of Odisha State Road Transport Corporation (OSRTC) and CEO of Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT). Ashet Kumar Panigrahi who was working as IG, Home Guard and Fire Services has been made IG (Vigilance).

# Eccentric hiding behind a genius brain

ANTIVIRUS PIONEER McAfee FOUND DEAD IN SPANISH PRISON

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Madrid, June 24:** John McAfee, the creator of McAfee antivirus software, was found dead in his jail cell near Barcelona in an apparent suicide Wednesday. His demise came hours after a Spanish court approved his extradition to the United States to face tax charges punishable by 30 or more years in prison, authorities said. The eccentric cryptocurrency promoter and tax opponent whose history of legal troubles spanned from Tennessee to Central America to the Caribbean was found dead at the 'Brians 2' penitentiary in northeastern Spain. Security personnel tried to revive him, but the prison's medical team finally certified his death, a statement from the regional Catalan government said. "A judicial delegation has arrived to investigate the causes of death. Everything points to death by

suicide," the statement added. McAfee was arrested at the Barcelona airport in October 2020. The statement didn't identify McAfee by name but said the dead man was a 75-year-old US citizen awaiting extradition to his country. A Catalan government official familiar with the case who was not authorised to be named in media reports, confirmed to this agency that the deceased was McAfee. Tennessee prosecutors had argued that McAfee owed the US government USD 4,214,105 in taxes before fines or interests for undeclared income in the five fiscal years from 2014 to 2018. But in the ruling Monday, the National Court judge agreed to extradite him only to face charges from 2016 to 2018. Nishay Sanan, the Chicago-based attorney defending him said by

phone that McAfee 'will always be remembered as a fighter'. "He tried to love this country but the US government made his existence impossible," Sanan said. "They tried to erase him, but they failed," the attorney added.

Born in England's Gloucestershire in 1945 as John David McAfee, he started McAfee Associates in 1987. However he resigned from the com-

## PROBE ORDERED

**MADRID:** Authorities in Spain have informed that a judge has ordered an autopsy on the remains of John McAfee who died in a cell pending extradition to the United States for allegedly evading millions in unpaid taxes. A court spokeswoman for the Catalonia region said Thursday that a forensic team will perform toxicology tests on McAfee's body to determine the cause of death. She informed results could take 'days or weeks'. Authorities however asserted that "everything at the scene indicated that the 75-year-old tycoon killed himself".





# leisure



## VANESSA 'STILL CANNOT GET OVER' FINDING LOVE ON A DATING APP

Actress Vanessa Hudgens says she never fancied finding love on a dating app, and yet ended up meeting the new man in her life, American baseball star Cole Tucker, over Zoom. "I still cannot get over the fact that it happened," said the *Spring Breakers* actress.

## BRITNEY OPENS UP ABOUT 'ABUSIVE' CONSERVATORSHIP AT COURT HEARING

Pop singer Britney Spears has spoken out against her conservatorship at a court hearing in Los Angeles. She told a judge that she wants to end the conservatorship that has governed her life for the last 13 years. Britney called it 'abusive' and denounced her father for exerting control over her life.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

Today, you feel free and liberated! And in that spirit, you want to travel or do things you loved doing as a child. A good time for a family outing, says Ganesh. Keeping in mind your mood, you may even make plans for the future for your near and dear.

#### TAURUS

You are likely to stick to basics instead of letting your imagination run wild today, says Ganesh. At work, you may feel some pressure from your peers to do things differently. Think things out and be certain before you take any decision, advises Ganesh.

#### GEMINI

An auspicious day awaits you. You will pay more attention to your family than to your career or at the work-front. This will mean the resolution of some long pending issues and projects at home. An enjoyable time with your family and children awaits you, says Ganesh.

#### CANCER

Ganesh says that this is good day to buy new house or car. It is likely that you shift to a new house shortly. So be prepared for a ceremony like housewarming. You will achieve tranquil mind through yoga and meditation. It will radiate a new energy, enthusiasm and optimism in you.

#### LEO

You will be in a very good mood today. You will inspire others to achieve substantial things in life. While you have been looking to take on an extremely challenging project, you have been unable to find the right opening so far. You ought to start such projects today, says Ganesh. The obstacles in your way will fade away on their own and you will be easily able to find the path to success.

#### VIRGO

Today you will find yourself delving deep into your inner self. You will reap a lot of monetary rewards, and will be generous in spending it on your near and dear ones. Ganesh says that you may make up for the pressures at work by entertaining yourself with material pleasures. You will seek the company of someone with whom you can have an intimate chat.

#### LIBRA

It's a spiritual and harmonious mood that grips you today, feels Ganesh. You may want to focus on meditation, as you essentially seek peace. This may have something to do with the fact that at work, your subordinates may attempt to throw around their weight to force you to make drastic changes. But do not let it bother you too much. Just ensure that you consider all things at hand before you take any decision. Tackle things with tact, and remember to be calm. Breathe!

#### SCORPIO

You shall also work like a donkey and yet be smart as hell in what you do today. It is favourable if you engage in household activities - gardening, cooking, cleaning and the likes. Work pressure will be displaced by family pleasure, predicts Ganesh.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Stay stern, says Ganesh, as it might be necessary to exercise your grit to get the desired results today. Your presence may be dominating at the workplace, but your subordinates will find your manner pleasing as you hold them in awe of you. Do not get carried away by your success or the tables may turn, suggests Ganesh.

#### CAPRICORN

You will prioritise your needs, and the most critical would be the need to manage finances to save for the future. Also, the company you choose to keep will reflect the kind of person you are. So, beware of who you befriend, warns Ganesh.

#### AQUARIUS

Planning to buy a house or vehicle? Then today's the day to make the booking. However, don't buy anything in haste. Deliberate, says Ganesh, especially when it involves a huge sum of money. You may even shift residence, or change a job, and it's very likely you will enjoy the whole process.

#### PISCES

Sometimes you are so kind and charitable that you sacrifice your own well-being and happiness for the sake of others. This streak within you may emerge as you engage in a selfless deed. You will have a strong desire to do something for your family and your home. At work or business you will achieve your goals without any opposition, blesses Ganesh.

## Why Shruti secretly dances to 90s music

MUMBAI: Actress Shruti Haasan revealed what she claims is a formula for fitness - she secretly dances to nineties music for hours.

"Back to training hard!!! Loving that burn and glow knowing I'm strengthening my body and my mind - only the toughest steel for the... getting into a double workout today cause like many people this lockdown I took it a little easier than I should have but what counts is getting back on the routine and not punishing yourself mentally but pushing yourself further and rewarding yourself with a new mindset #lets go tell me what work outs you love???" Shruti shared in an Instagram post.

"I'm obsessed with fight training and mixing it up with good old fashioned cardio and most secretly I dance to 90s music for HOURS," she added.

On the work front, the actress will feature alongside Prabhas in the film *Salaar*, which is being shot in Kannada and Telugu languages, and will be dubbed in Hindi, Tamil and Malayalam.



## Nikita files FIR against stalker

MUMBAI: Actress Nikita Rawal has filed an FIR against a stalker who has been following her for a while. The actress mentioned he would be at every event or gathering she attended. Nikita had given a warning to him through the watchman but that didn't deter the stalker, and she was forced to file a complaint. "I had issued multiple warnings through

our watchmen and my driver. But the young boy is not listening to anything. It's hampering my mental peace. I had to take this step and I hope the boy stops this and focuses on what's important," says Nikita, who has been part of films such as *Garam Masala* and *Black & White*. "Anyone who has done it or is doing it is not on. There is more to life than running behind someone. Let's focus on our work and prioritise that. Let's stay safe and get vaccinated whenever we can," Nikita adds.



## SONU SELLS EGGS, BREAD ON CYCLE

MUMBAI: Actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood was seen selling eggs, bread, chips, and daily grocery items on a cycle, calling it 'Sonu Sood ki Supermarket' in his latest video on social media. The gesture was meant to promote small businesses.

Sonu posted a video of him on a cycle with the grocery items on Wednesday night. In the video,

he says "you don't need to go to a mall to buy grocery items", adding that the most important supermarket is ready to deliver your daily items on your doorstep. He stressed the importance of buying from the local vendors as he said: "This market is a hit." He captioned the video, "Free home delivery. 1 bread free with every 10 eggs #supermarket #supportsmallbusiness."



### INT'L HONOURS FOR INDIAN FILMS

## Akriti's debut directorial wins at UK Asian film fest

MUMBAI: Actress Akriti Singh's directorial debut *Toofan Mail* has won an award at the UK Asian Film Festival this year.

"The jury consisted of people from 18 to 25 years. All these young people watched the film and decided that they connect with *Toofan Mail* the best," said Akriti. "This film is a result of team effort and making it was a really challenging journey. But I was always sure about the impact this film would have. I'm proud and overwhelmed that *Toofan Mail* has won an award at the UK Asian Film Festival. The film is based in the 70s and the fact that it connected with the youngsters of today makes me feel accomplished as a writer and director," she added.

The independent film is based on a true incident from 1970s, where a woman arrived at New Delhi railway station, claiming to be the Queen of Awadh and seeking to meet Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.



## Chandan Roy Sanyal's Woh Teen Din bags Best Film award at London

MUMBAI: Actor Chandan Roy Sanyal's recent film *Woh Teen Din* won the award for Best Feature film at the Falcon International Film Festival, London.

Directed by Raaj Ashoo, the film has been travelling to various film festivals, and also features Sanjay Mishra and Rajesh Sharma. Set in a remote village in Uttar Pradesh, the story of the film follows the events that unravel after the characters essayed by Chandan, Mishra and Sharma meet and a comic quest ensues.

"Raaj has put his brilliance into the story of *Woh Teen Din* and I'm very happy that it got its due at the Falcon International Film Festival. A big congratulations to the entire team. It is an honour to be representing Indian cinema in a way with this special film," Chandan shares his excitement.

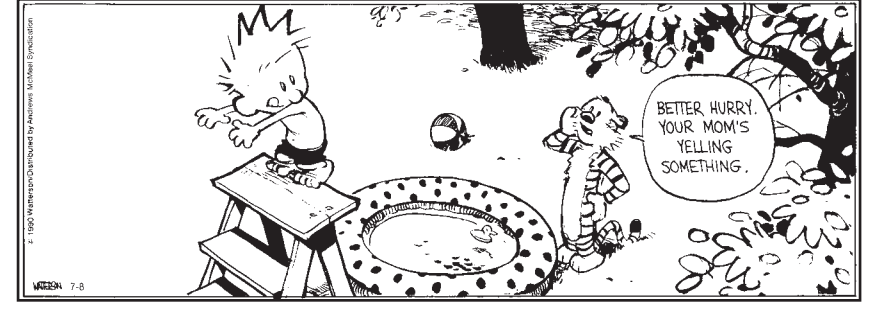
Chandan, who has been part of shows such as *Ashram*, *Kaali* and *Ray*, will soon be seen in *Ashram Season 2*.



### PEANUTS



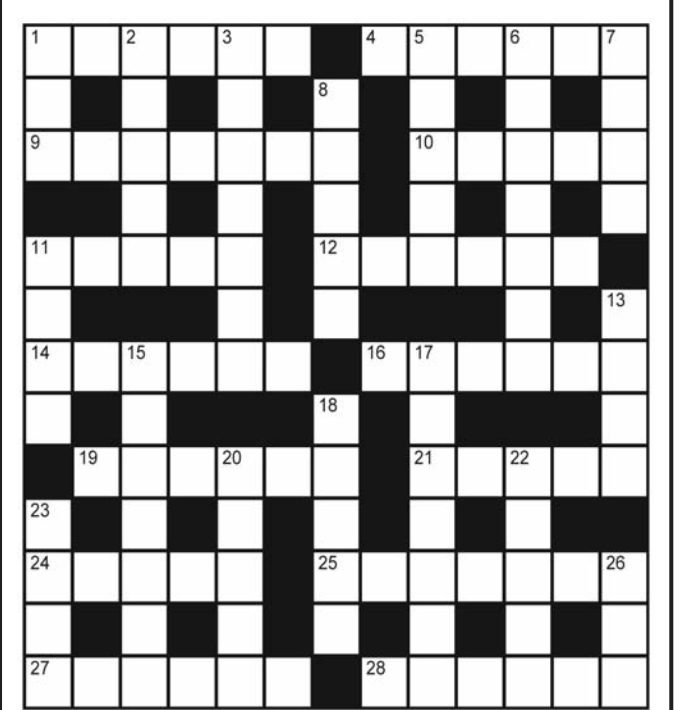
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



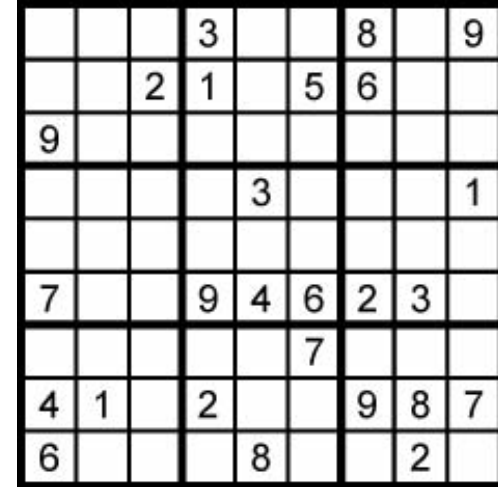
### FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Slip away
  - 4 Piglets
  - 9 Sermon
  - 10 Recess
  - 11 Eucalyptus eater
  - 12 Crown covering
  - 14 Necklace dangler
  - 16 Blue point
  - 19 Fungus
  - 21 Periodic event
  - 24 French pancake
  - 25 Ceramic ware
  - 27 Tease
  - 28 Sweater material
  - 7 Lawn starter
  - 8 Military wear
  - 11 Bagpiper's wear
  - 13 Liberate
  - 15 Checkers type
  - 17 Mexican peninsula
  - 18 Steal
  - 20 Inhabit
  - 22 Doctrine
  - 23 Diagnostic test
  - 26 Roll-call call
- Down
- 1 Unagi, at a sushi bar
  - 2 Après-ski drink
  - 3 Peacock's pride
  - 5 Redhead's dye
  - 6 Antediluvian

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD

S O F A R E V A M P E D  
Q U A T I L I S E T R A I N  
I L D C O I E  
R U S E S T I R F R Y  
R R S I S  
E V E N S O A L L E G E  
L N S A A  
E D U C A T E D A S H  
S L A A B D O  
T R E N D B R E E D E R  
O P E S T E R L T A S  
P E S T E R E D A X L E

#### SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

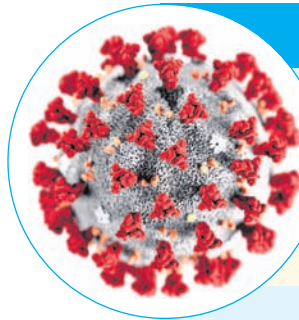


# downtown



## DEMO OVER PRICE RISE

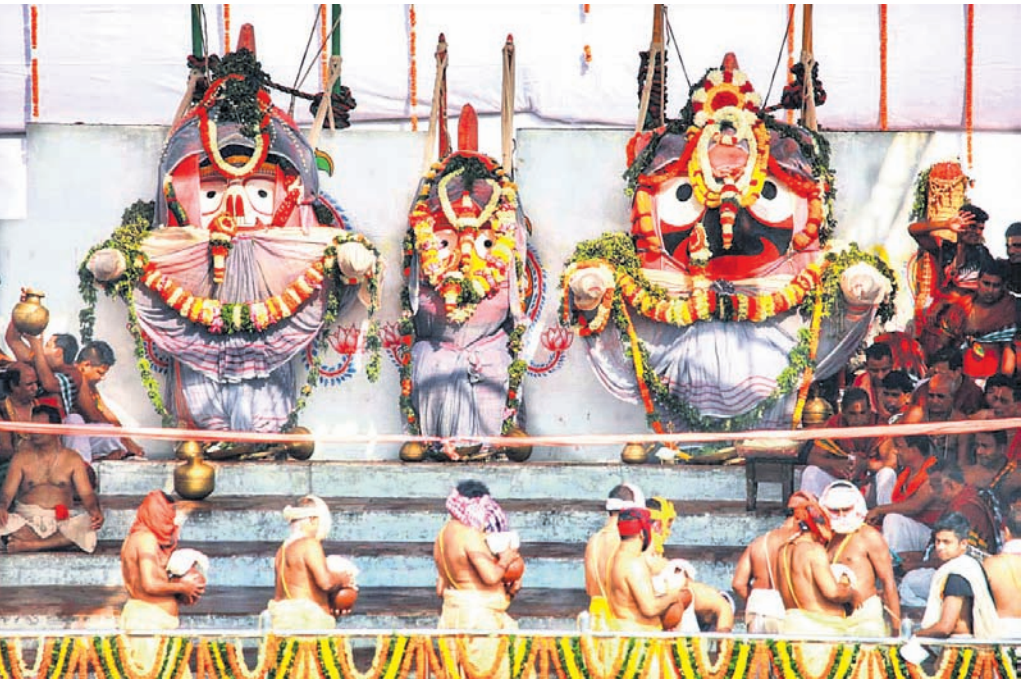
Activists of various Left parties hold a demonstration at Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, to protest against frequent hike in the prices of fuel and essential commodities



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	18,05,40,296	16,52,37,027	39,10,973
India	3,00,82,778	2,90,63,740	3,91,981
Odisha	8,90,596	8,56,498	3,761

# Snana Yatra sans devotees for 2nd straight year



The Snana Yatra of Srimandir deities underway in Puri, Thursday

## BATHING RITUAL

THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION DISALLOWED DEVOTEES FROM WITNESSING THE BATHING RITUAL OF THE TRINITY IN THE WAKE OF THE PANDEMIC

THE ADMINISTRATION TIGHTENED SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AROUND THE 12TH CENTURY SHRINE AND IMPOSED PROHIBITORY ORDERS SINCE WEDNESDAY NIGHT IN ORDER TO CHECK CONGREGATION OF PEOPLE NEAR THE SHRINE, SAID AN OFFICIAL

PURI COLLECTOR SAMARTH VERMA SAID THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAD MADE ELABORATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR LIVE TELECAST OF THE FESTIVAL

view for 15 days, a period in which they are believed to develop fever due to excessive bathing.

The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief Krishan Kumar said the temple will remain out of bounds for devotees till July 25.

The deities will flaunt rejuvenated youthhood after the completion of Anasara rituals and appear in Nabajoubana besha.



Srimandir surroundings look empty due to the prohibitory order

PNN/AGENCIES

**Puri, June 24:** For the second year in a row, the annual bathing ritual of Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath was performed at Srimandir here Thursday without devotees and amid strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols, temple sources said.

As per tradition, the Snana Yatra (bathing ritual) is held on the full-moon day of Hindu month of Jyestha. The festival is prelude to the annual Rath Yatra of Srimandir deities.

The district administration disallowed devotees from witnessing the bathing ritual of the Srimandir Trinity in the wake of the pandemic. The administration tightened security arrangements around the 12th century shrine and im-

posed prohibitory orders since Wednesday night in order to check congregation of people near the shrine, said an official.

Puri District Magistrate-cum-Collector Samarth Verma said the state government had made elaborate arrangements for live telecast of the festival.

Verma said those who took part in the rituals had undergone RT-PCR tests and tested negative for Covid-19, while the servitors who were present during the event were fully vaccinated.

The deities were bathed with 108 pitchers of aromatic water drawn from a well called the 'Suna Kua' in the temple premises. The trinity was then decked up in the Gajanana or Ganesha Besha (elephant attire) on the Snana Bedi (bathing altar) on the temple prem-

ises. The Chhera Panhara (sweeping the bathing platform) was performed by the Mudiratha servitor as Gajapati king Divyasingha Deb skipped the ritual in view of the pandemic.

After the Snana Yatra, the sibling deities are kept away from public

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# Monopoly on pneumonia vaccines to end

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** Odisha government is now all set to roll out pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) under the Universal Immunisation Programme from June 30, the Health department said Thursday.

This comes after the Union Budget talked about inclusion of the vaccine in government health institutions at free of cost. Earlier, the vaccine was available at private clinics and hospitals on payment and was out of ambit of kids in government set-ups.

The vaccine prevents the kids from several strains of pneumonia causing virus besides other diseases affecting the brain cells of the kids.



The department said that the move is likely to aid the vaccination of around 8 lakh children in the state and to reduce child mortality arising out of the pneumococcal infections.

# No vax supply to pvt hosps

**BHUBANESWAR :** The state Health department Thursday issued a notification on cancellation of Covid-19 vaccine supply to private hospitals from the state-procured pool for the 18 to 44 year age group.

The notification said that there would be no supply from the Health department to private hospitals and the available stocks would also be withdrawn from them.

The private hospitals have now been asked to procure the vaccines directly from the manufacturers.

# Cong slams Dharmendra over spiralling fuel prices

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** The state unit of Congress Thursday slammed Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and the BJP for the consistent rise in the fuel prices in the country and misleading the people on the reasons for the skyrocketing prices.

Briefing the media Thursday, state Congress spokesperson Satyaprakash Nayak accused Pradhan and his party members of spreading misinformation about the issue.

"Every day the prices of petrol and diesel are going up. The Union Petroleum and Natural Gas minister has been changing his stance on the skyrocketing fuel prices every week. A few days back, the minister justified the rising petrol prices and cited development works as prime reason for the same," he said.

He also said that earlier when the global crude oil price was lower, he had defended the fuel price hike saying the government was saving the benefit that could later be used when crude oil prices would go up as a compensation mechanism to regulate the fuel prices.

"He also said that revenue earned from fuel price hike could be used in the Covid vaccination programme while on another occasion he said that it could be used in giving free ration to the people. Even financing the hike in paddy MSP was also cited



Every day the prices of petrol and diesel are going up. The Union Petroleum and Natural Gas minister has been changing his stance on the skyrocketing fuel prices every week

SATYAPRAKASH NAYAK | STATE CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON

as one of the prime reasons," he said.

Nayak said that Pradhan had blamed the UPA government for oil bonds and debt while dealing with oil prices on wrong facts while the oil bond was the brainchild of the BJP.

"The minister has been misleading people by vague statements on the issue. In 2002, under the NDA government at Centre, the system of oil bonds started when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the Prime Minister. The whole BJP and their leaders are now misleading the people on the issue of oil bonds. The facts presented by the BJP are manipulated to suit their needs," he said.

# CM lays stones for oxygen plants in 8 dists

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday laid foundation stones for establishment of liquid medical oxygen plants in eight districts on virtual mode.

The Chief Minister laid the stones for oxygen plants of Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) technology in Bargarh, Ganjam, Jajpur, Kandhamal, Kendrapara, Keonjhar, Rayagada and Malkangiri districts.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated a 12-bed newborn child care unit at the Berhampur City Hospital, dialysis unit at Bhanjanagar, a new Primary Health Centre at Kukudakhandi block and a new Community Health Centre at Digapahandi block.

He thanked the doctors, healthcare workers and other Covid warriors for their sacrifice made in fight against Covid-19. Under no circumstances there should be any negligence in the preparedness, Patnaik said at the function. "We can only win this fight with government's preparedness along with alertness and cooperation from the public," he added.

# Pay ₹2L to med negligence victim: NHRC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Odisha Chief Secretary to pay Rs 2 lakh as compensation to a woman who lost her newborn reportedly due to negligence of the staffers at Gurudijhatia Primary Health Centre in Cuttack in September 2019.

While hearing a plea filed by rights activist Himanshu Sekhar Nayak, the commission also asked the Chief Secretary to submit a compliance report following payment of the compensation to the woman within eight weeks.

According to the case details, Kuni Maharana of Khamarnuagaon under Khuntuni police limits was rushed to the nearby healthcare facility after she was in labour September 1, 2019. "As none of the staffers was present at the hospital, Maharana delivered a baby boy in the auto-rickshaw that ferried her to the healthcare facility. The newborn, however, died a few hours later due to lack



THE NEWBORN, HOWEVER, DIED A FEW HOURS LATER DUE TO LACK OF REQUIRED MEDICAL CARE

of required medical care," said the petitioner quoting Maharana.

Earlier, the Health department authorities have also admitted to the death due to medical negligence.

"The report of Health authorities confirmed that it was the doctor's weekly

## CASE DETAILS

KUNI MAHARANA, A RESIDENT OF KHAMARNUGAON UNDER KHUNTUNI POLICE LIMITS, WAS RUSHED TO THE NEARBY HEALTHCARE FACILITY AFTER SHE WAS IN LABOUR SEPTEMBER 1, 2019

AS NONE OF THE STAFFERS WAS PRESENT AT THE HOSPITAL, MAHARANA DELIVERED A BABY BOY IN THE AUTO-RICKSHAW THAT FERRIED HER TO THE HEALTHCARE FACILITY

off, while others, including the pharmacist, attendant and staff nurse who were to attend the outpatient department on the day, failed to turn up," he added. The Health department had transferred the erring staffers of the healthcare facility, said a source.



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## Fake Covid drug: MD of Cuttack pharma co held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** A day after arresting three key officials of Medilloyd Medicament Private Limited (MMPL) in connection with the alleged spurious drug trade in the state, the Special Task Force (STF) of the Crime Branch (CB) Thursday took into custody the managing director (MD) of the dubious pharma company.



Director General of Police Abhay said that MMPL MD Siba Prasanna Jena was arrested and sent to judicial custody after his bail plea was turned down by a local court.

The STF Wednesday arrested the pharma company's director Subhalaxmi Jena and two other key officials of the firm—Satyaprakash Mohanty and Pritiranjana Parida—in connection with the seizure of a huge stock of 'spurious' Favipiravir tablets from the premises of MMPL in Cuttack and a few other districts earlier this month, prompting the state government to order a CB probe.

Of the available stock of 17,400 tablets, 400 were taken for statutory testing and the remaining ones were seized under the provision of the Drugs & Cosmetics Act and Rules.

The investigating agency has frozen ₹50 lakh parked in the bank accounts of the accused and that of the company. The Cuttack-based firm had conspired to procure Favimax tablets from Max Relief Health Care, a non-existent company, at ₹65 per strip of 10 tablets and sell them at ₹1,290 per strip, according to CB ADG YK Jethwa.

The raids followed after the state government received a tip-off from the Food and Drug Administration of Maharashtra that spurious Favipiravir tablets (Favimax-400) allegedly manufactured by Max Relief Health Care, which was claiming to be manufacturing drugs at Solan in Himachal Pradesh, was being purchased by MMPL.

## Two colleges shut

**Bhubaneswar:** The state Higher Education department Thursday directed the Regional Director of Education to close down two colleges in the state with effect from 2021-22 academic year. It has also directed forfeiture of 50 per cent pledge money of the concerned colleges as per the provision by the department. The colleges, Brihaspati Degree College, Joda in Keonjhar and Sharpmind College of Advanced Learning, Azimabad in Balasore have been directed to be closed as per the direction of High Power Committee meeting of the department.

# Proper vigil key to curb black fungus: Public Health director

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** State Public Health Director Niranjana Mishra Thursday said proper surveillance and screening have led to better detection of black fungus cases in Odisha.

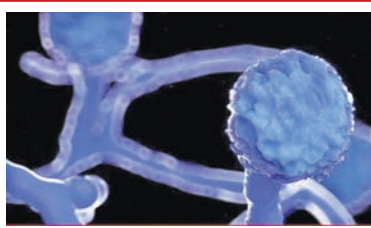
"Due to better surveillance, we were able to detect black fungus cases in the state. However, the number is negligible in comparison with other states. Several states have reported thousands of black fungus cases but Odisha has only a few cases," Mishra said.

Sources said the state has so far reported 109 black fungus cases.

According to the Health department, there is improvement in supply of drugs meant for treatment of mucormycosis (black fungus). The department has opened dedicated wards for black fungus patients at SCB Medical College in Cuttack and VIMSAR at Burla. This apart, a few seats at the District Headquarter Hospitals (DHHs) have been reserved for the treatment

### RELENTLESS FIGHT

ACCORDING TO THE STATE'S HEALTH DEPARTMENT, THERE IS IMPROVEMENT IN SUPPLY OF DRUGS MEANT FOR TREATMENT OF MUCORMYCOSIS



The Public Health director tried to allay the fears regarding new variants of Covid by saying that special techniques like genome sequencing and other studies could reveal more on Delta Plus variant of the novel coronavirus

THE HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT HAS WRITTEN TO THE DISTRICT COLLECTORS TO TAKE PROPER STEPS TO DEAL WITH ANY POSSIBLE RISE IN COVID CASES

of such patients, sources said.

Mishra also tried to allay the fears regarding new variants of Covid-19 by saying that special techniques like genome sequencing and other studies could reveal more on Delta Plus variant of the novel coronavirus. "Most of the talks on Delta Plus variant are speculative in nature. There is very less information on Delta Plus as only a few people were infected with the new variant. With further studies and

genome sequencing, we can know more about the new strain of the virus," he said.

The department has written to the district Collectors to take proper steps to deal with any possible rise in Covid-19 cases.

The Collectors have been asked to arrange essential medicines and beds in hospitals to deal with the situation. The state has asked the Collectors to ensure strict adherence to Covid-19 protocol.

## 274 contracted Covid-19 after both doses: ICMR

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** A study conducted by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Bhubaneswar revealed that 274 people in the state were found to have contracted the novel coronavirus even after taking both the doses of the vaccines.

The study which attempted to record the breakthrough cases (contracting Covid after two weeks of double doses) reported from various healthcare facilities of Odisha observed that out of 361 samples, 274 were found positive for the virus after 14 days of receiving the doses of the vaccines. Out of 361, 87 had not taken both the doses. While 83.2 per cent of the individuals were found to be symptomatic, 9.9 per cent of those required hospitalisation.

"Only 27 (9.9 per cent) of fully vaccinated people required hospitalisation. Moreover, the seropositivity in individuals receiving



Covishield (96.7%) was significantly higher than in Covaxin (77.1%). Hospitalised patients were having less median antibody titers than individual in home isolation," the study said.

The results reported in the study highlighted the need for systematic data capture for the breakthrough infections to monitor the emergence of any vaccine escape variants. While the study has not been peer-reviewed, it aims to plan the next steps in the Covid-19 vaccine development by understanding the link between clinical protection and measured immunity against SARS-CoV-2 infection.

# 44 more succumb to nCoV as state sees rise in cases

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** Odisha Thursday registered 3,650 fresh Covid-19 cases, raising the tally to 8,90,596, while the death toll climbed to 3,761 with 44 more fatalities, a Health department official said.

The coastal state now has 33,770 active cases and 8,83,012 patients have recovered from the disease, he said.

The new infections were reported from all the 30 districts—2,088 cases in quarantine centres and 1,552 local-contact cases.

Khurda district, comprising state capital Bhubaneswar, logged the highest number of 604 fresh infections followed by Cuttack (485), Jajpur (332), Balasore (278) and Puri (187).

Taking to Twitter, the Health and Family Welfare department said, "Regret to inform the demise of forty-four numbers of Covid positive patients while under treat-

## HC seeks district-wise death data

**CUTTACK:** The Orissa High Court Thursday dismissed a PIL seeking an audit to the Covid deaths in the state.

However, a bench of Chief Justice S Muralidhar and Justice SK Panigrahi asked the state government to submit the district-wise data on Covid deaths July 5.

This apart, the bench asked Advocate General Ashok Kumar

Parija to inform the court whether the Additional Chief Secretary (Health department) has looked into the alleged undercounting of Covid deaths for Nayagarh district.

Notably, advocate Nishikanta Mishra had filed a PIL in the HC and urged the court to pass an order for a special audit to the Covid deaths in state.

ment in hospital." The single-day fatalities include nine deaths in Khurda district and five each in Bargarh and Cuttack, the official said.

A total of 53 other Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities, he added.

Odisha has thus far conducted over 1.33 crore sample tests, including 69,480 since Wednesday. The positivity rate stands at 6.66 per cent. Meanwhile, the state govern-

ment has cancelled the global tender for procurement of Covid-19 vaccines in the wake of the Centre's revised inoculation policy, official sources said. The Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited had May 14 floated the global tender for 3.8 crore doses.

The move to scrap the tender comes in the wake of the Centre's announcement that people above the age of 18 will be provided vaccines free of cost from June 21.

## ULBs told to spend 25% of capex on slum devt

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** The state government has once again directed all the urban local bodies (ULBs) to spend at least 25 per cent of their annual capital expenditure for development in slum areas.

Director Municipal Administration (DMA) Sangramjit Nayak has written to all municipal commissioners and executive officers of all municipalities & NACs in this regard.

The state government had amended the Odisha Municipal Act, 1950 and Odisha Municipal Corporation Act, 2003 in August last year making it mandatory for the civic bodies to spend 25 per cent of annual budget of capital expenditure on basic services and infrastructure facilities in slum areas.

Nayak asked the ULB authorities to execute the amended laws and prepare their annual budgets accordingly. The officials were further

instructed to regularly monitor the expenditure for the purpose by assigning quarterly target.

As per an estimation made by Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department, ₹2,895 crore is supposed to be allocated (excluding salaries) to 114 ULBs of the state during the financial years 2020-21 and 2021-22. Therefore, ₹723.75 crore (25 per cent) must be spent on the development of slum areas, the DMA mentioned in his letter.

## Aspiring journo dies of snakebite

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** A student of journalism and mass communication Thursday died of snakebite while undergoing treatment at Capital Hospital here.

The deceased was identified as Sumitra Chauhari of Thanana village under Pipili block of Puri. She was pursuing Master of Journalism and Mass Communication (MJMC) at a private college on the outskirts of the city. According to sources, Sumitra



was staying along within her parents in her native village due to the suspension of classes in the wake of Covid-induced lockdown. A poisonous snake bit Sumitra while she was sleeping during the wee hours Thursday. She was rushed to the Capital hospital where she succumbed.

## Digital platform boon for handicrafts artisans

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** Handicrafts artisans are leading a miserable life after losing livelihood to the pandemic and are now unable to procure raw materials for making the products.

Due to non-availability of the government and non-government assistance, their life and livelihood both have come to a standstill. Odisha Rural and Urban Producers Association (ORUPA), a trading organisation which helps the artisans sell their products, is taking the digital route for marketing their crafts. CEO of ORUPA Ashok Kumar Sahu said that digital route is the safest and best mode to sell these artisans' products. Sahu said that many handicraft artisans are able to sell their products like golden grass items, acrylic paintings, traditional pattachitra paintings, sabaigrass items and paper masks through various social media platforms.

"More than 1,000 artisans from districts like Khurda, Balasore, Puri, Mayurbhanj, Jajpur, Keonjhar and others are reaping the benefits of online sale and we are reaching artisans of other districts to facilitate the sale of their products digitally," he added.

## Gold chain snatched

**Bhubaneswar:** Bike-borne miscreants snatched away the gold chain of a woman near Studio Square under Bharatpur police station here Thursday. Sources claimed that Satyanarayan Pattanaik and his wife Sabita were on way to Studio Square when the miscreants snatched away the gold chain of Sabita who was riding pillion.

## IN MEMORIAM



Dignitaries, including deputy speaker Rajanikanta Singh, pay floral tributes to former chief minister Nabakrushna Choudhury on his death anniversary on the premises of state Assembly in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

# Very heavy rainfall warning for 6 districts

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Thursday issued a warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall in six districts of Odisha Friday.

The regional MeT office said that the trough line lies between Jharkhand and south coastal Andhra Pradesh and across interior Odisha. The IMD has also forecasted thunderstorms and lightning in different parts of the state Friday.

Issuing yellow warning for Friday, the IMD said, "Heavy to very heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places in Jajpur, Bhadrak, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur while heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Khurda, Puri, Ganjam and Kandhamal."

It also said, "Thunderstorm with



lightning is very likely to occur at one or two places in Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Angul, Kandhamal and Sundargarh."

According to the weatherman, light to moderate rain or thunder-

shower could also occur in different parts of the state Friday. The department meanwhile said light to moderate rain is also expected to lash different coastal areas of the state Saturday and Sunday.

It said the state capital could also witness cloudy weather Friday while one or two spells of rain or thundershower may also occur.

## Heavy to very heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places in Jajpur, Bhadrak, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur

The maximum temperature in the state capital is expected to be around 31 degree C Friday.

No fresh warning was issued Thursday by the IMD for the fishermen. Nevertheless, the department said that during Thursday the highest 75 mm rainfall was recorded in Nayagarh while Angul saw 26 mm rainfall.

The maximum temperature in the state Thursday was recorded in Chandbali which saw 34.8 degree C while the minimum temperature was recorded in Phulbani at 19.6 degree C.

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# ₹200cr Covid aid siphoned off under NFSA, SFSA

CSOs NOT REPLYING TO OSCSC LETTERS; CASE REGISTERED AT LOKAYUKTA



REPRESENTATIVE PIC

The complaint with the Lokayukta alleged that the state government had supplied five kg of rice or wheat free of cost to 95 lakh families under the NFSA and SFSA during the lockdown necessitated by the pandemic

Besides this, the Centre had supplied five kg of rice or wheat free of cost under the Prime Minister Gariba Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) between April 2020 and June 2020

Chief Minister had announced to pay Rs 1,000 to every ration card holder April 6, 2020. The state government has released Rs 955 crore to 95 lakh ration card holders in the state

It was estimated that Jajpur district has 9,500 bogus ration cards. Similarly, Ganjam has 29,000 bogus ration cards, Bolangir 13,000 and Khurda district has 20,000 bogus ration cards

The complaint with the Lokayukta stated that the state government had supplied five kg of rice or wheat free of cost to 95 lakh families under the NFSA and SFSA during the lockdown necessitated by the pandemic. Besides this, the Centre had supplied five kg of rice or wheat free of cost under the Prime Minister Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) between April 2020 and June 2020.

The Chief Minister had announced to pay ₹1,000 to every ration card holder April 6, 2020. The state government has released ₹955 crore to 95 lakh ration card holders in the state.

However, information received through an RTI revealed that out of the total money received from the government, ₹20,56,38,436 was returned to the government. This had resulted from non-identification of 2,05,638 beneficiaries. An investigation into the matter has revealed that supply departmental officers in cahoots with the dealers have siphoned off food grains

meant for 2,05,638 beneficiaries under the NFSA and SFSA.

The question is if the 2,05,638 beneficiaries could not be identified for payment of ₹1,000 each, how could food grains under NFSA and SFSA be distributed to them? Food grains worth over ₹200 crore could have been returned to the government, which has not been done, the complaint said.

Financial assistance of ₹40,58,122,90 had come to Jajpur. Out of this, utilisation certificates (UCs) of ₹39,63,10,000 have been submitted. The balance ₹95,02,290 was returned to the government. From this, it was estimated that Jajpur district has 9,500 bogus ration cards. Similarly, Ganjam has 29,000 bogus ration cards, Bolangir 13,000 and Khurda district has 20,000 bogus ration cards.

According to the secretary to the Lokayukta, the CSOs are yet to respond to OSCSC letters dated 6/5/2021, 17/05/2021, 2/6/2021, 8/6/2021 and 18/06/2021.

## BEAUTIFICATION DRIVE



A statue of Lord Buddha was unveiled by Berhampur MP Chandra Sekhar Sahu at Gosani Nuagaon Square on the outskirts of Berhampur as part of a beautification drive, Thursday. Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange, MLA Bikram Panda and BeMC Commissioner Siddeshwar Bairam Bondar were also present

OP PHOTO

## As it rains, Polavaram returns to haunt Motu

POST NEWS NETWORK

**MV-79 (Malkangiri), June 24:** Excess water in the Polavaram dam creates havoc in Malkangiri district. Several villages in Motu under Kalimela block of this district and Motu tehsil are inundated by the overflowing waters of the Polavaram dam.

At present, people in Motu are a worried lot. The Indira Sagar Dam being constructed by Andhra Pradesh has caused fresh troubles for the people in Odisha. Even as the construction of this project has reached the final stage, the Andhra Pradesh government has closed all gates of this dam, resulting in a bulge in the Godavari river, which is already brimming with rain water. Kulavar in Andhra and its surrounding areas have already been flooded by ex-



cessive rains in the region.

If the stored water in the Godavari river is not released immediately, large swathes of land in Motu area will be inundated. Water has already reached close to 30 km from Motu. If it rains in the upper catchment areas, besides Motu, Baribancha, Binayakpur,

Alma, Muraliguda and Peta villages will be inundated.

Yet, the district administration and the state government have no information about this disaster in the making. Locals have demanded that the state government speak to its Andhra counterpart without any delay.

The water of the Saveri river in Chhattisgarh which falls in the Godavari is not evacuated properly. This has caused an additional problem for the people of Motu in Odisha and Kont in Chhattisgarh. Water is rising as gates of the Indira Sagar have been shut. The Excise and Commerce Minister and Konta legislator Kabasi Lachhama has sought the immediate intervention of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel in this matter. Lachhama has submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister.

A large number of villages in Chhattisgarh including Konta NAC and four wards will be heavily affected by the man-made flood, Lachhama said. He suggested that the Andhra and Chhattisgarh Chief Ministers sit down together and find a solution to this emerging crisis.

## NIRBHAY CRUISE MISSILE TEST-FIRED OFF ODISHA COAST

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, June 24:** The subsonic cruise missile 'Nirbhay' was test-fired off Odisha coast Thursday, informed the DRDO.

Having a range of 1500 km, the missile was fired at 10.43 a.m. from launch pad No. 3 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur in Balasure district. Nirbhay is a subsonic cruise missile designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) under the Ministry of Defence. The missile is capable of carrying nuclear warheads up to 300 kg and can accurately hit any target.

The DRDO has been carrying out several trials of Nirbhay since October 2014. Last year, the missile had developed a technical snag during a test firing following which the trial process was aborted.

## FARM FRIENDS



Women nominated as 'Krushi Mitra' attending a training programme in Padmapur of Bhadrak district, Thursday. The 'Krushi Mitras' will aid and advice farmers on cultivation

OP PHOTO

## STF seizes brown sugar worth ₹2cr

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, June 24:** A Special Task Force (STF) of the Crime Branch Thursday seized a huge cache of contraband (brown sugar) following a raid at Basta area in Balasure district, an official source informed.

The STF team from Bhubaneswar seized around two kilograms of brown sugar and arrested one person in this connection. "The anti-smuggling squad seized the contraband consignment on the basis of cultivated intelligence," Odisha Police chief Abhay said.

The STF succeeded in arresting one drug peddler, while two others managed to give the



sluths a slip. The arrested accused was identified as Sajit Khan, 20, of Sadanandapur under Basta police limits. Police have launched a manhunt to nab Irfan Khan, 30 and Ajit Khan, 26, who are said to be absconding.

Sajit, during the course of investigation, revealed that they used to procure the contraband from Murshidabad in West Bengal and later supply the same to small-time peddlers in various parts of the state.

Briefing media persons, the DGP added that the market value of the seized narcotics would be over ₹2 crore. A case under Sections 21(C) and 29 of the NDPS Act, 1985 has been registered and further investigation is underway, the DGP further said. Abhay also lauded the efforts of the STF in carrying out successful operations against illegal narcotics trade in the state.

Notably, the STF has seized more than 34 kilograms of brown sugar and 66 quintals of cannabis during the special drive since 2020. As many as 100 drug peddlers have been rounded up in several cases by the STF so far, Abhay said.

## Youth arrested for impregnating minor

**BARIPADA:** A minor girl was allegedly raped and impregnated by a youth in Gorumahisani area in Mayurbhanj district, police said. The accused, identified as Silu Behera of Jamabani village under Gorumahisani police limits in the district, was arrested, Thursday. Reports said that the accused had allegedly raped the minor girl on the pretext of marriage and eloped with her in April this year. He allegedly beat her after she became pregnant. Left with no option, family members of the victim lodged a complaint at Gorumahisani police station, following which police registered a case and arrested the youth.

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## Marketing facilities elude Keonjhar's 'Amba Sadha'



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, June 24:** This tribal-dominated district is synonymous with production of mangoes and traditionally-processed mango pulp. The tribals engaged in preparing mango pulp, locally known as 'Amba Sadha', allege that due to the pandemic situation and absence of storage and marketing facilities, they are forced to sell it at throwaway prices.

Keonjhar district is known for its climate conducive for mango orchards. Varieties of mango trees can be found

**KEONJHAR DISTRICT IS KNOWN FOR ITS CLIMATE CONDUCTIVE FOR MANGO ORCHARDS. VARIETIES OF MANGO TREES CAN BE FOUND ACROSS THE DISTRICT**

**TRIBALS ALSO MAKE BEST USE OF UNSOLD MANGOES BY PREPARING 'AMBA SADHA'. THOUGH THE TRADITIONAL WAY OF PREPARING IT INVOLVES A LOT OF PAIN AND CARE, THEY STILL SWEAR BY IT**

**BESIDES STORAGE AND MARKET FACILITIES, IF THESE TRIBAL PEOPLE ARE GIVEN TRAINING ON HOW VALUES CAN BE ADDED TO THEIR PRODUCE, THEY CAN ALSO GET THE TRUE VALUE FOR THEIR LABOUR**

Odisha and other states buy it from the tribal people at throwaway prices and rake in moolah by selling it at higher prices outside the state. In the absence of storage and proper market facilities, they have no option but to sell them at the price the traders offer as they can't preserve it in their homes for long.

Besides storage and market facilities, if these tribal people are given training on how value can be added to their produce, they can also get the true value for their labour. They prepare it in unhygienic condition. Training should also be given to them on how they can prepare it hygienically.

Expressing concern for these tribal people being exploited, Pradeep Rout, a litterateur, said, "The administration should come to their rescue. If steps are taken for selling them directly to companies, these traditional 'Amba Sadha' producers can get the true value for their labour. And the companies, in turn, can earn good profit if they cut them into pieces and sell them in attractive packets."

Notably, this year the frequent spells of low pressure-induced rain have affected the production of 'Amba Sadha'. And the Covid-19-induced lockdown and shutdown restrictions are also taking their toll on the business.

across the district. Tribal people living in forests generally earn their livelihood by selling various kinds of minor forest produces. During mango season, they sell mangoes collected from jungles.

They also make best use of unsold mangoes by preparing 'Amba sadha'. Though the traditional way of preparing it involves a lot of pain and care, they still swear by it.

What they do first is to extract pulp from mangoes. Then they spread a layer of it on a mat to dry it under the sun. When it gets slightly dried up,

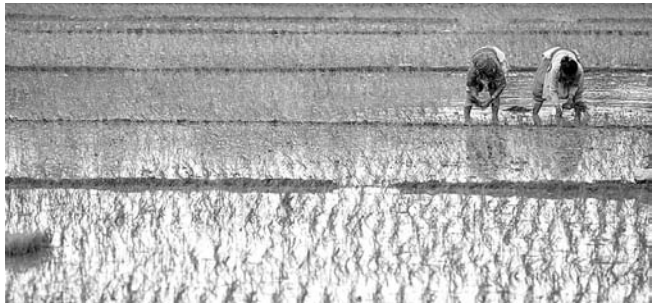
another layer is spread on it. Then another layer is poured on it and the process goes on till several layers. It takes at least 15 days to get fully dried up. Then they cut it length-wise, wrap them in leaves and take them to markets and weekly markets. They generally sell a piece of 'Amba Sadha' (4/5 feet X 1 foot) for anything between ₹120 and ₹150.

Though this traditionally-processed item is in demand locally, traders from



FOCUS FOOD SCARCITY

# HOW TO FEED OURSELVES



**We can build food systems that feed a global population of 9.7 billion. We can build systems that work for those who make them work, from the small-scale farmer to the supermarket employee. And we can build systems that are environmentally sustainable. The sooner we take up the challenge; the sooner humanity can start steering in a safer direction**

rural areas. Booming demand for impact-investment vehicles proves that such solutions can make a difference. At the same time, rural populations need far easier access to targeted financial services, so that they can save, invest, and empower themselves to improve their livelihoods. This will require a major push from financial institutions: as it stands, only about 60% of rural people have access to a bank account, but this doesn't necessarily translate into the use of savings or credit services.

The good news is that the world is waking up to the importance of investing in sustainability. Governments have already begun to "green" their public expenditures, and companies are slowly adjusting their business models – including their sourcing decisions – to align with sustainability imperatives. Now, we must capitalize on these trends to direct far more investment toward building knowledge-based, climate-resilient, diversified, and equitable agricultural systems in developing countries.

The upcoming Food Systems Summit, convened by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, presents a critical opportunity to kick-start this process. For the first time ever, governments, farmers, companies, and civil society from around the world are coming together to discuss ways to transform the way we grow, process, and consume food. At the summit, these discussions should culminate in concrete commitments by all relevant actors in every step of this process, from farm to fork.

We can build food systems that feed a global population of 9.7 billion. We can build systems that work for those who make them work, from the small-scale farmer to the supermarket employee. And we can build systems that are environmentally sustainable. The sooner we take up the challenge; the sooner humanity can start steering in a safer direction.

*The writer is President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development.*  
PROJECT SYNDICATE

decent living now and in the future. Any blueprint for such systems must place sustainability and equity at its foundation and rural populations at its center.

According to the Food and Land Use Coalition, established in 2017 by leading NGOs and advocacy organizations, the world could make considerable progress within just a decade. A concerted reform agenda to transform food systems could deliver up to 30% of the emissions reductions needed to achieve the Paris climate agreement's targets, while largely eliminating under-nutrition, accelerating income growth for the bottom 20% of the rural population, and significantly increasing food security (among many other objectives).

Of course, all of this would cost money – an estimated \$300-350 billion per year until 2030. But there is no doubt that it would be money well spent: an investment of less than 0.5% of global GDP would generate a social return of around \$5.7 trillion annually.

Estimates by Ceres2030, an international research project working to advance progress toward SDG 2, paint a similar picture. They show that ending hunger, doubling the incomes of small-scale farmers, and limiting agri-

cultural emissions in line with the Paris climate agreement will demand that donor governments double the amount they currently provide for food security and nutrition – an additional \$14 billion per year, on average – until 2030. Low and middle-income countries would also have to contribute an additional \$19 billion per year from their own budgets.

To maximize the impact of these funds, they should flow directly to rural populations. And they should be complemented by efforts to enable the rural poor to seize economic opportunities not only in food production, but throughout food value chains, such as in processing, packaging, marketing, and services to the rural economy.

Beyond official assistance, public development banks must better align their financing – which represents 10% of all global investment – with the Paris climate agreement and the SDGs. And the private sector, for its part, must invest more in sustainable and equitable food systems. Meaningful partnerships between small-scale farmers and bigger agribusinesses will be essential.

Innovative financial solutions should also be developed, with the goal of driving investment toward



Gilbert F. Houngbo

**HUMANITY IS DRIFTING INTO INCREASING DANGER. CLIMATE CHANGE IS ACCELERATING; BIODIVERSITY IS PLUMMETING; HUNGER AND EXTREME POVERTY ARE RISING; AND THE GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR IS WIDENING**

Humanity is drifting into increasing danger. Climate change is accelerating; biodiversity is plummeting; hunger and extreme poverty are rising; and the gap between rich and poor is widening. These trends threaten not only human health and livelihoods, but also global peace and stability. Reversing them will require a shared effort to rebuild, and even upgrade, the systems on which we all depend – beginning with the global food system.

Even before the pandemic, our food systems were being disrupted by increasingly severe and frequent extreme weather, such as droughts, and by declining biodiversity. But they were also contributing to these disruptions, because the way we produce and distribute food accounts for more than 30% of global greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions. While the 2015 Paris climate agreement includes targets for reducing these emissions, the world is currently not on track to meet them.

Likewise, in 2015, United Nations member states agreed to the Sustainable Development Goal to end hunger, improve nutrition, and achieve food security (SDG 2) by 2030. Yet hunger has been on the rise for five years – a trend that the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated significantly. In 2019, an estimated 690 million people were hungry, up by ten million from 2018 and by 60 million since SDG 2 was adopted. And at least three billion people cannot afford healthy diets. Today, 41 million people are on the brink of famine.

Rural livelihoods have also been under severe strain. Small-scale farmers generate half of the world's food calories and are critical to household and community food security. Yet millions of small-scale producers and rural workers in the developing world are living in poverty.

The pandemic affords us with a valuable opportunity to rethink the world's food systems so that they can nourish the world's population – which is expected to reach 9.7 billion people in 2050 – and provide smallholder farmers with a

## An inclusive UN

Great power competition, the troubling rise of xenophobic nationalism, existential environmental threats and the ongoing Covid-19 onslaught present major global governance challenges. Against this backdrop, world leaders have tasked United Nations Secretary General António Guterres with recommending steps to advance the far-reaching commitments contained in last year's so-called UN75 Declaration, in which the General Assembly pledged to ensure "the future we want."

The Secretary-General's much-anticipated report, Our Common Agenda, is due this September; and it would benefit from a follow-through vehicle to weigh the report's recommendations and deliberate on and adopt his best ideas. We, therefore, support the proposal for a World Summit on Inclusive Global Governance involving a wide range of participants.

Since Guterres addressed the General Assembly's 75th anniversary meeting last September, he has repeatedly emphasised the need for "networked multilateralism," in which "the United Nations family, international financial institutions, regional organisations, trading blocs, and others work together more closely and more effectively." And on April 24 this year, International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, he called for "inclusive multilateralism that draws on civil society, business, local and regional authorities, and others, and shares power more broadly and fairly."

Given the continued strains on the multilateral system, and the UN's need to tap talent and resources from beyond its 193-member state governments to solve urgent global problems, Guterres' appeal could not be timelier. But despite the newfound hopes of rolling back the Covid-19 pandemic, and growing calls by world leaders to reinvest in the rules-based international order, much remains to be done.

In particular, multilateralism must be embraced widely to counter the impact of some political leaders' exclusionary rhetoric, which amplifies public anxieties and undermines the rules and institutions of global cooperation. These leaders often wrongly exploit public anxieties by blaming others for their countries' troubles, or for their own ineffective, insular approaches to inherently transnational problems. The world cannot reverse these growing stresses placed on the multilateral system with commitments to vague principles, or to policy goals that are then not met.

Fortunately, the Secretary-General's call for a new kind of networked and inclusive multilateralism is thus prompting a healthy and consequential rethink of global governance norms, policies, institutions, and operations. The roadmap for implementing such reforms should include a comprehensive inter-governmental and multi-stakeholder preparatory effort that culminates in the World Summit in 2023. Such a gathering would aim to help the UN system keep pace with current challenges and opportunities regarding peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights.

By drawing on the talents of governments and non-governmental groups around the world, this summit would seek to overhaul the global governance system and usher in a new collaborative compact of institutions, politics, and people. A recent Stimson Center report, Beyond UN75: A Roadmap for Inclusive, Networked & Effective Global Governance, provides further details of this strategy.

Global coalitions of states such as the Alliance for Multilateralism, and civil-society networks including the Coalition for the UN We Need and the Together First campaign, can help provide the leadership, creative ideas, and diplomatic skills needed to fulfill the promise of this much-needed endeavor. Our own organisations, the Group of Women Leaders Voices for Change and Inclusion and Club de Madrid, also remain steadfast in their support of a robust and meaningful agenda to realize the UN75 Declaration follow-through agenda.

In response to the socioeconomic problems triggered by Covid-19, Club de Madrid has proposed that the UN Secretary-General's 'Our Common Agenda' report call for a second World Summit for Social Development to reinvestigate the social components of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Focusing on people's needs and providing a strong, united response on health care, education, social protection, and decent work is more essential than ever to ensuring the UN's continued relevance. Beyond addressing urgent needs, the UN must also continue to safeguard the "equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small," as proclaimed by the Group of Women Leaders in their recent "Multilateralism by Women" statement.

We strongly believe that the UN – the world's only truly universal organisation – has never been more vital to all people and countries. But it needs renewed imagination, vigorous adaptation to changing global circumstances, and emboldened advocates from within and outside governments.

As the world prepares to mark UN Charter Day on June 26, we call upon international leaders gathering at this September's annual high-level General Assembly meetings to heed the recommendation of 50 former government ministers and senior UN officials and support "a dedicated intergovernmental process" to "strengthen and reform the ... institutional machinery of the UN system." By mobilising diverse actors worldwide – including academics, practitioners, activists, and policymakers – the international community can ensure that "the future we want" becomes a reality.



SRI AUROBINDO

The great are strongest when they stand alone; a God-given might of being is their force.

Maria Fernanda Espinosa & Danilo Türk

Multilateralism must be embraced widely to counter the impact of some political leaders' exclusionary rhetoric, which amplifies public anxieties and undermines the rules and institutions of global cooperation

*Maria Fernanda Espinosa, a former President of the UN General Assembly, is a former Foreign Minister and Defense Minister of Ecuador. Danilo Türk, a former President of Slovenia, is President of Club de Madrid.*  
PROJECT SYNDICATE

### WISDOM CORNER

Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.  
BUDDHA

Tomorrow is the most important thing in life. Comes into us at midnight very clean. It's perfect when it arrives and it puts itself in our hands. It hopes we've learned something from yesterday.  
JOHN WAYNE

I've been absolutely terrified every moment of my life - and I've never let it keep me from doing a single thing I wanted to do.  
GEORGIA O'KEEFE

### LOL TAXI FARE

Two Irishmen are traveling to Australia. Before they leave home, one of their dads gives them both a bit of advice: "You watch them, Aussie cab drivers. They'll rob you blind. Don't you go paying them what they ask. You haggle." At the Sydney airport, the Irishmen catch a cab to their hotel. When they reach their destination, the cabbie says, "That'll be twenty dollars, lads." "Oh no you don't! My dad warned me about you. You'll only be getting fifteen dollars from me," says one of the men. "And you'll only be getting fifteen from me too," adds the other.

### SPECTRUM PANDEMIC

## Delta variant may herald third wave



Nikunja Bihari Sahu

**THE DELTA VARIANT IS AROUND 60% MORE TRANSMISSIBLE AND MORE VIRULENT, THAN THE ALPHA VARIANT THAT HAS ALREADY CAUSED HAVOC IN BRITAIN**

While events like electioneering for Assembly polls, Kumbh Mela, Indian Premier League are being blamed for the sudden spurt of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in India, the role of the triple mutant Delta variant of the virus behind the surge cannot be undermined. The strain, first detected in Bengal in last February, has now gone global raising concerns of a resurgence of the pandemic that could overwhelm the existing healthcare systems of the world and even potentially jeopardize the rollout of vaccines. Apart from hitting India, the strain is now poised to take hold of most of Europe and that too when many countries are considering to ease out restrictions on social gatherings and travel.

The Delta variant of Covid-19, scientifically termed as B.1.617.2, refers to an amalgamation of two mutant virus strains to give birth to a third super infectious strain. The Delta variant contains mutations from two separate virus variants, namely E484Q and L452R. What is really worrying is that the E484Q variant has been found to be a major immune escape variant. An RNA virus, such as SARS-CoV-2, is made of nearly 30,000

base pairs of amino acids, placed like bricks adjacent to one another. An alteration in any of these base sequences could cause a sharp replication of the genetic structure leading to a mutation, effectively changing the nature and behaviour of the virus. The Delta variant contains multiple changes in the spike proteins of the original strain. Mutations in viruses are common. Like all viruses, the coronavirus keeps changing in small ways as it passes from one person to another in its transmission chain. However, while most mutations are insignificant, some others are really worrying because of their potential threats. According to a recent study conducted by the Public Health England (PHE), the Delta variant is around 60% more transmissible and likely more virulent, than the Alpha variant that has already caused havoc in Britain.

The World Health Organization (WHO) designated the Delta variant as the 'Variants of Concern' on May 10 due to its higher transmissibility and potential to cause more severe disease and evade antibody immune response system of the body induced by vaccines. The Delta variant was the fourth to be declared as a 'Variant of Concern'

by the WHO; the others being B.1.1.7 first detected in Britain (commonly known as Alpha variant), B.1.351 first detected in South Africa (commonly known as Beta Variant) and P.1 first found in Brazil (commonly known as Gamma variant).

The Delta variant is not only more transmissible, but also more lethal. In India, it has resulted in 1.70 lakh deaths alone, which is nearly half of the total number of casualties in the country due to the pandemic. The variant has shown striking resilience against vaccines and, according to separate studies conducted by AIIMS (Delhi) and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), the Delta variant can escape antibodies created from one or both the doses of the prevailing Covidshield or Covaxin jabs.

In yet another shocking development, the highly infectious Delta variant (B.1.617.2) has also mutated further in the K 417N portion of the spike protein to give birth to a more deadly version called AY.1 or Delta Plus variant. This variant is possibly capable of resisting even the monoclonal antibodies cocktail treatment of Casirivimab and Imdevimab types that recently gained popularity

and received emergency use authorisation in the country as a cure. Similar to the natural antibodies, the monoclonal antibodies are artificially created in a laboratory to be tailor-made to defend the body from the infection of the disease. Although the variant has not been a cause of concern yet in India due to its low infectivity rate, yet it is feared to spark a third wave of the pandemic in many states including Maharashtra.

Understanding the continued evolution of the virus is of great importance in mapping the evolutionary pattern of emerging variants. Over the months, the virus has developed several new incarnations, and will continue to do so in future, by sequential acquisition of new mutations making it more lethal. As long as the virus is circulating in the body, the chance of new mutations is very high. Hence, it is important to break the chain of transmission of the virus in the first place to safeguard the world from the infliction of new lethal variants in coming days.

*The writer is Education Officer, Regional Science Centre, Bhopal. Views are personal.*

### Political defections

Sir, Defections from political parties have become the order of the day. It is not surprising that after serving the party for several years politicians are changing outfits in a jiffy. A person changes his job or profession frequently, if he is not secure about his future or is dissatisfied in some way. Similarly, it is not a sin or immoral to change a party for better future and perspective. If a politician is sidelined and overlooked for long and his grievances are not heard inside the party, then the change of the party is obvious and plausible. A politician's dharma is to serve and render service to the public and party affiliations are immaterial to him. But defections should not take place with the sole motive of personal benefit and self-aggrandizement. Frequent changing of political parties for no reason is both repulsive and creates public indignation. Then it becomes a dirty practice and an act of moral impropriety. It should be done only for public good and for the benefit of the society.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

### Ayodhya Hills in peril

Sir, Human play continues with nature in the name of development. Inhumane atrocity one after another has destroyed the balance of nature – starting from Aaray Forest, Mollem National Park to Bokswaha forest in Chhatrapur, MP, and now the Ayodhya Hills in Purulia district of West Bengal. Ayodhya Hills are contiguous with the Dalma range. The hills have a total forest cover of 10,000 sq km with a majority of it being dry, deciduous forest, housing various exotic species. And nestled in the hills is the slow and languid Ranga Barelahar village, currently simmering with an undercurrent of unrest as an indigenous ethnic tribe resists losing forest land to the Turga hydropower project that threatens to displace both humans and animals who have been dependent on it for centuries. On the one hand, world-class meetings and conferences are being held on climate change, and on the other hand, the capitalist imperialist countries that are organizing these conferences are violating the law and destroying the natural environment in the name of development. India is equally guilty of this, and India is sanctioning projects in the name of development that are endangering the natural environment. If these projects are not stopped, Ayodhya Hills will show its natural calamity, as has been the case with two heartbreaking natural disasters in Uttarakhand. Going against nature means nothing but welcoming death.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

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# Protests against revised coastal highway project



FILE PHOTO

The coastal highway will go through many districts in the state, including 49 km in Kendrapara. The highway will pass through Jambu forest, Gahirmatha range areas, and Satabhaya in the Bhitarkanika national park up to Dhamra in Bhadrak

Bhitarkanika Sanctuary was recognised as a Ramsar site in 2002. Its mangroves, bio-diversity and wildlife have always amused nature lovers

Olive Ridley turtles used to lay eggs across a length of 25 km of the sea beach between Mangala river and Harichandi mouth along the Bay of Bengal under Bramhagiri forest range in Puri district

natural site will destroy the wildlife, marine creatures, and the sea wall.

Acclaimed nature lover Anirudha Rout said vehicular traffic on the proposed coastal highway will endanger the lives of wild animals. He said Olive Ridley turtles will not come to this area because of the noise that will be created by the vehicular traffic on the coastal highway.

Olive Ridley turtles used to lay eggs along a length of 25 km of the sea beach between Mangala river and Harichandi mouth along the Bay of Bengal under Bramhagiri forest range in Puri district. However, this has stopped since 2014. The same may be repeated at Gahirmatha if the coastal highway project comes up, he added.

The coastal highway will go through many districts in the state, including 49 km in Kendrapara. The highway will pass through Jambu forest, Gahirmatha range areas, and Satabhaya in the national park up to Dhamra in Bhadrak. The highway will call for bridges over several villages and join the ports in the state.

Hemant Kumar Rout, Secretary of Marine Turtles and Mangrove Conservation Committee, said they will oppose the proposed coastal highway project. He said, out of 672 sq km area that was declared as Bhitarkanika Sanctuary in 1975, 145 sq km was upgraded as a national park.

Bhitarkanika Sanctuary was recognised as a Ramsar site in 2002. Its mangroves, bio-diversity and wildlife have always amused nature lovers. He feared that the proposed coastal highway along this

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, June 24:** Environmentalists in the district have pressed the alarm button over the proposed coastal highway project in the state. They fear that the revised map of the coastal highway will destroy the sensitive biodiversity of the national park and its natural surroundings in the district.

A state level high-powered committee headed by Chief Secretary Suresh Mohapatra recently held a meeting to study the revised road map of the coastal highway in Bhubaneswar. Additional CS Pradeep Jena, Additional CS (Forest and Environment) Mona Sharma, Principal Secretary (Finance) Ashok Meena, Principal Secretary (Revenue) Bishnupad Sethi, the state head of the NHA Ram Prasad Panda took part in the deliberations.

## NORM VIOLATIONS



Youths standing in a long queue in violation of Covid norms outside the employment exchange in Chhatrapur for registration of their names, Thursday OP PHOTO

# Much-awaited Kochila barrage to come up soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhadrak, June 24:** Construction of the much-awaited Kochila barrage across Kochila river, a distributary river of the Baitarani river, in this district will be taken up soon at a cost of ₹359.28 crore, according to Engineer-in-Chief, Water Resource department, Jyotirmaya Rath.

Rath informed that the tender process for the project will be started soon.

According to a source, a high-level meeting was held at Seccha Sadan in Bhubaneswar recently to review plans for flood mitigation in the Baitarani river and its distributary Kochila river.



Bhadrak MP Majulata Mandal, ex-MLA of Dhamnagar Mukhtikanta Mandal, Engineer-in-Chief, Water Resource department, Jyotirmaya Rath and executive engineer of Jajpur Irrigation department discussed the proposed barrage across Kochila river, repair and strengthening of river embankments and early resurrection of drainages.

Notably, ex-MLA of Dhamnagar Mandal had started the initiative for the construction of the barrage. He had taken committees of Odisha Legislative Assembly on field visits on several occasions

and raised the issue in the Assembly as well. Besides him, MP Manjulata Mandal also wrote a personal letter (Letter No-411/MP) to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik requesting his intervention for the early construction of the proposed barrage. Once the barrage is constructed, it will not only put an end to Dhamnagar's flood problem but also irrigate farmlands.

After coming to know about the proposed barrage construction, Dhamnagar residents expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Water Resources Minister Raghunandan Das, MP Mandal, Jajpur MLA Pranab Prakash Das and ex-MLA Mandal.

## Naba Das reviews stadium construction



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jharsuguda, June 24:** State Health Minister and Jharsuguda MLA Naba Kishore Das Thursday visited a stadium construction site at Malimunda area in this district to review the progress in the construction work.

The minister directed senior officials concerned for early completion of the work which was halted for over last eight years. He reviewed the progress of work and later discussed the matter with Works Department executive engineer Pradeep Kumar Nath, SDO Ashish Kumar Lenka, district sports association secretary Tapas Kumar Ray Choudhury and several others, a senior official informed. Das directed the executive engineer to complete the pending works pertaining to lighting inside the stadium and construction of a swimming pool on its premises on a war-footing.

Notably, the stadium construction in Jharsuguda started in 2013-14 at an estimated cost of ₹8 crore sanctioned by Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) from its CSR funds. Owing to lack of available funds, the project was left halfway.

# NGT detects loopholes in Subarnarekha sand mining

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 24:** The eastern bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), in its latest interim order in a case of illegal sand mining along Subarnarekha river in Balasore district, has found loopholes in the grant of permissions to an alleged erring miner.

During the hearing on allegations of sand mining in excess of what has been permitted, the bench found that contradictory approvals were given by the Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OPCB) and the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA).

The NGT, in its order, said that while the miner was given environmental clearance for only 5,000 cm<sup>3</sup> area, the Consent to Operate by the Odisha Pollution Control Board was given for mining 20,000 cm<sup>3</sup>.

"The question is how the Consent to Operate was granted by the Odisha State Pollution Control Board for 20,000 cm<sup>3</sup> when the Environmental Clearance was only for 5,000 cm<sup>3</sup> per annum," the order said.

Hinting at another irregularity in the case, the tribunal said, "Another question before this tribunal is that when the environmental clearance granted by the SEIAA, Odisha, is only for extraction of 5,000 cm<sup>3</sup> sand annually, how the State Pollution Control



FILE PHOTO

**NGT said that while the miner was given environmental clearance for only 5,000 cm<sup>3</sup> area, the Consent to Operate by the Odisha Pollution Control Board was given for mining 20,000 cm<sup>3</sup>**

Board calculated that only 19,995 cm<sup>3</sup> of sand was illegally mined. Moreover, recovery has been made by the tehsildar only for this excess amount of 19,995 cm<sup>3</sup> of sand."

The NGT has asked the different stakeholders such as SEIAA, OPCB and others to file their responses regarding the matter to clarify their respective stands on the issue. The petitioner in the case,

Laxmidhar Palai, had earlier moved the NGT alleging excessive sand mining along Subarnarekha river in Jaleswar area of the district.

The petitioner had alleged threat to the natural flow of river and threat to the embankment to the river from the alleged illegal sand mining in the area. The NGT in its order has now also asked the Balasore Irrigation Division to report on the steps taken towards river restoration works.

"We, therefore, direct the Executive Engineer, Balasore Irrigation Division, Odisha to file his personal affidavit before the next date of listing, stating as to what action has been taken for restoration of the embankment and removal of the wooden bridge to ensure free flow of river water," the NGT order said.

# Lack of govt assistance hits jute farming hard

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balichandrapur, June 24:** The jute farmers of riparian areas of Birupa, Genguti and Kelua rivers under Barchana Assembly constituency in Jajpur district are starting at an uncertain future as they are constantly being deprived of government support.

According to the aggrieved farmers, jute was cultivated in thousands of hectares in these areas and it helped improve the financial condition of the farmers. Then, thousands of quintals of jute were shifted to the business points in Dhanmandal, Panchupandab and Kendupatna areas. And from there, they would be transported to states like West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu as the jute grown here was in high demand in those states.

With the passage of time, the jute farming took a beating as the government did not come up with

any agricultural law, leading to malfunction of jute cooperative societies and the closure of Dhanmandal jute mill, the only jute mill in Odisha. These factors started taking their toll on the farming and jute farmers turned their faces away from jute farming by 2000.

As of now, a handful of farmers in villages like Anaka, Manduka, Kolangiri, Raipur and Ramdaspur under Barchana block and Talua and Majhipada villages of Saudia panchayat have kept the tradition alive and are cultivating jute.

However, farmers including Hrushikesh Sahu and Prabhakar Senapati have urged the government to buy jute from them. Otherwise, they would have to sell their harvest at throwaway price and thus suffer a huge loss.

Despite repeated attempts, Barchana block agriculture officer Loknath Mishra couldn't be contacted for his comments.



FILE PHOTO

# KALAHANDI COLLECTOR TAKES STOCK OF AGRO INDUSTRY, SCHOOLS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kesinga, June 24:** Kalahandi district Collector Gavali Parag Harshad Wednesday went around the schools, industries and shelter homes in Kesinga block and the notified area committee (NAC) to take stock of their present condition.

After reaching here, he first went to Shri Shyam Industry in Shiroli gram panchayat set up under the 'Mukhya Mantri Krishi Udyog Yojana' where soyabean bari and papad are being manufactured. He then visited some slums under the NAC and held discussions with the beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

Thereafter, he went around the smart school, stadium and park at Vidyaapeeth area in the heart of the town. Before returning to Bhawanipatna, he visited the smart schools at Kasrupada, Tundala and Belakhandi and held discussions with the members of the management committees of the schools regarding various aspects.

Kesinga block development officer (BDO) Prafulla Kumar Adu, executive officer of NAC Siddharth Pattanayak, junior engineer Dillip Kumar Patel, Shiroli sarpanch Hemant Nag and some NAC staff accompanied the district Collector.

# Indigenous community ensures children's education amid pandemic

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar/Malkangiri, June 24:** Members of the Koya community of Kawasiguda village in the state's remotest area in Malkangiri district have ensured providing education to their children during the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to reports, in order to provide necessary education to the children in the absence of online connectivity, the community with help of local civil society opened 'Mo Chatashalee', a remedial education centre in the village where children can continue with their education with the help of trained educated youths.

Kawasiguda is a remote village under Koimeta Gram Panchayat of Kalimela Block - just five km away from the block headquarters.

The Odisha government has started numerous initiatives to provide education to their children amidst the uncertainty of schools reopening again. However, the initiative has failed to have any impact on those not having digital devices.



The school in the village is closed since mid-March 2020 due to the Covid-induced lockdown. The prolonged closure of the school has compelled the children to return to household chores like collecting firewood, forest produce and grazing domestic animals.

'Mo Chatashalee' is a community-based education initiative of CSOs Atmashakti Trust and Shramajeebe Sangathan that aims at providing remedial education to 1 lakh children in 17 districts of the state, including Malkangiri.

"Since the beginning of the second wave of Covid-19, the government declared the closure of schools once again in February 2021. As parents had almost lost hope it was crit-

ical to strike a balance for them to address the learning needs of their children. Therefore, we mobilised them to open 'Mo Chatashalee', a remedial education centre in the village where children can continue their education with the help of a trained volunteer", said Ere Madhi, president of a women-led people's collective in Malkangiri that runs the initiative in their area.

Soon, the villagers decided that they can't do away with the future of their children. They decided to start the centre and ensured that children have all facilities in the centre, such as learning aids, Covid protection kits and drinking water facility by mobilising resources from the locality.

## FAST-UNTO-DEATH STIR



Farmers and members of Barpali Krushak Manch staging a fast-unto-death protest outside the Barpali tehsil office in Bargarh demanding procurement of paddy from the mandis, Thursday OP PHOTO



# 'Don't project me as CM face'

SIDDARAMAIAH TELLS MLAs, AS FISSURES IN K'TAKA CONG WIDEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, June 24:** Senior Congress leader Siddaramaiah Thursday asked MLAs not to project him as the Chief Ministerial face for the 2023 assembly polls, amid widening fissures within the party on the issue, that has triggered a game of one-upmanship between him and state unit President DK Shivakumar.

His statement came amid a growing list of MLAs who openly favoured him as CM face despite diktat from the party leadership, which has irked Shivakumar, who is also nursing Chief Ministerial ambitions.

"I don't know, I don't want to react to that... I have never said that I will become Chief Minister, but I will still request MLAs don't make statements (projecting me as) next Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah said in response to a question on Shivakumar's statement asking him to rein in MLAs projecting him as next CM.

On returning from New Delhi after meeting party's national leaders, Shivakumar Wednesday said Congress legislature party leader Siddaramaiah will look into open statements by some MLAs projecting him.

Party high command has said what it has to, I have also seen



*His statement came amid a growing list of MLAs who openly favoured him as CM face despite diktat from the party leadership, which has irked Shivakumar, who is also nursing Chief Ministerial ambitions*

statements by some MLAs in the media. Legislature Party leader (Siddaramaiah) will look into it. If he does not, the party is there to look into it, he had said, adding that he was in no urgency to become the CM and bringing the party to power was his goal.

Siddaramaiah, who is now the leader of opposition in the Assembly, however, playing down statements by some MLAs projecting him as the next CM and maintaining it as their personal views, Wednesday said, "I can't do anything about it...I'm not con-

cerned about it."

Congress legislators BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan (Chamarajpet), Raghavendra Hitnal (Koppal), JN Ganesh (Kampli) and Bhima Naik (Hagaribommanahalli), S Ramappa (Harihar) and R Akhanda Srinivas Murthy (Pulakeshinagar) have openly expressed their opinion in favour of Siddaramaiah as the next CM.

Their statements had come despite AICC General Secretary in-charge of the State Randeep Singh Surjewala and Shivakumar's diktat to party legislators and leaders not to make such open remarks.

The move by Siddaramaiah's loyalists is said to have gained momentum following a tweet from Karnataka Congress' official Twitter handle, last month, stating that the Covid-19 pandemic would have been under control if Shivakumar was the CM.

The tweet was immediately deleted, but not before enraging the Siddaramaiah camp.

With growing political one-upmanship between the two leaders, the issue may become contentious in the days to come for the Congress, party sources said.

Siddaramaiah had earlier headed the Congress government between 2013-18, in which Shivakumar, who is often referred to as the party's troubleshooter, was a Minister.

# PETROL PRICE IN KERALA CROSSES CENTURY MARK

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN THE SOUTHERNMOST STATE WHERE THE PRICE HAS CROSSED ₹100 A LITRE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, June 24:** Yes, one litre of petrol in Kerala's southernmost town at Parassala, bordering Tamil Nadu in the southern side has crossed ₹100 Thursday morning, after the day's price went up by 26 paise and touched ₹100.04 per litre. This is the first time in the southernmost state where the price has crossed ₹100 a litre.

The price of one litre of petrol shot up from ₹90 to ₹100 a litre in just four months. In the state capital city, one litre of petrol Thursday costs ₹99.27 and the reason why it costs more at Parassala is the cost of transportation.

By now, both the ruling Left and the Congress led UDF have held their customary protests, before the Raj Bhavan, while the BJP, which presently has no representation in the 140 member Kerala Assembly, remains a mute spectator to rising fuel prices.

Incidentally, its party state president K Surendran, whenever the question of increasing fuel prices is put up and when the media reminds him and his top party brass including present union minister of State for external affairs V



Muraleedharan along with others, about the protests against the fuel price hike when they pulled bullock carts and pushed two wheelers, he loses his cool and says, those are all old things, why do you want to rake it up again and again.

And when the question - if the Kerala government is ready to reduce the state's share of taxes, similar to what then chief minister Oommen Chandy did (2015-16), new finance minister KN Balagopal says, in Congress ruled states like Rajasthan and in BJP ruled states, they levy more taxes than Kerala

and hence, it might not be possible. With the pandemic and the rising fuel prices, the worst affected are the auto-rickshaw drivers who are now forced to charge ₹40 as the minimum charge and with that, not many are willing to hire.

Things are really tough for us as we ourselves know that we have nothing else to do but charge more, so we at least have a little amount to take back home. We have to wait for two hours to get a passenger and when we count the money at the end of the day, it's just a pittance, said an auto-rickshaw driver.

## PROJECT SEABIRD

# Rajnath takes stock at Karwar base



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh arrived at Karwar Naval Base and was received by Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar, CinC Western Naval Command along with Rear Adm Mahesh Singh, FOK. Defence Minister will review the progress of ongoing infra development work through Project Seabird

PTI PHOTO

A 3,000 feet long runway, docking space for 30 warships, hangars for aircraft are part of the ₹19,000 crore project spread over 11,000 acres of land

At Kochi, he will review construction of the aircraft carrier INS Vikrant which has faced many delays since work started on it in 2009.

An additional aircraft carrier is key in wake of growing Chinese forays in the Indian Ocean Region. While INS Vikrant awaits completion even after 11 years since work on it started, China's first indigenous carrier was commissioned in 2018 within 3 years of starting construction.

India currently has INS Vikramaditya as the only operational aircraft carrier while INS Vikrant is under construction and the Indian Navy has been pressing for the third one but faces resistance from the government and military planners.

Vikrant is in an advanced stage and is expected to undergo sea trials soon and be fully ready by later 2022 or early 2023.

After Indian Navy's aircraft carrier INS Virat was decommissioned it is left with one functional carrier.

On the other hand the Chinese Navy has two functional aircraft carriers with a third one expected to hit the seas soon but will take a while for it to be fully operational and a fourth one is also in the pipeline.



ities and strategy in future.

The Karwar base visit will give the defence minister a firsthand update of the infrastructure project important for future operations on the western front.

The first phase of the naval base called Operation Seabird was completed in 2005 and the second phase started in 2011. A 3,000 feet long runway, docking space for 30 warships, hangars for aircraft are part of the ₹19,000 crore project spread over 11,000 acres of land.

## SONS OF SOIL



Farmers plough a water-filled field before planting Pokkali paddy crop, at Kadamakkudy in the suburbs of Kochi

PTI PHOTO

# ISRO spy case: CBI FIR against ex-Ker cops

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, June 24:** The CBI Thursday registered an FIR in the infamous ISRO spy case in the Thiruvananthapuram Chief Judicial Magistrates court against 18 people, including two top former Kerala police officers.

The charges that have been listed against the ex-officers include conspiracy and fabrication of documents.

Things changed for the main victim S Nambinarayanan, then a top ISRO scientist, after numerous long drawn court battles when the Supreme Court last year appointed a three-member committee headed by retired judge Justice DK Jain to probe if there was a conspiracy



among then police officials to falsely implicate Nambinarayanan.

The apex court which went through the report ordered the CBI to conduct a new probe. Based on this directive, the CBI in April this year began the probe and Thursday filed the FIR which implicates former Kerala DGP Siby Mathews who led the Kerala Police probe.

The list of accused includes former Gujarat DGP and then IB Deputy Director RB Sreekumar besides other police officials including S Vijayan, Thampi S Durgadutt, KK Joshua, who were all from the local police, which first registered the case.

The ISRO spy case surfaced in 1994 when Nambinarayanan was arrested on charges of espionage along with another senior official of ISRO, two Maldivian women and a businessman.

The CBI cleared him in 1995 and since then he has been fighting a legal battle against Siby Mathews, Vijayan and Joshua who probed the case and falsely implicated Nambinarayanan.

Siby Mathews took VRS, months before he was to have superannuated and became the Chief Information Officer of Kerala and has since retired from the post, is now settled in the state capital.

Incidentally the case emerged amid a factional feud in the Congress party between then CM K Karunakaran's faction and the AK Antony faction that was at its zenith and Karunakaran had to quit office in 1995 after it was found that he was shielding his close aide and senior police officer Raman Srivastava who later became the state police chief and after retirement, he till recently was the advisor to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

## LAKSHADWEEP ISSUE

# Scientists seek Prez intervention to withdraw proposed LDAR

*Noting that Lakshadweep is a coral atoll, which means the islands are part of a living coral system, the scientists said this island system is facing the impacts of climate change*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kochi, June 24:** The proposed Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation of 2021 (LDAR) is highly problematic and will work against existing legal provisions that safeguard the resilience of Lakshadweep's ecology, livelihood and culture, say a

group of scientists from different institutions who have worked on the islands for years.

In a statement issued Thursday, the Lakshadweep Research Collective said it along with 60 other signatories from the scientific community have written to President Ram Nath Kovind seeking his intervention to withdraw the incautious draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation of 2021.

A collective of scientists and citizens, the Lakshadweep Research Collective, said they have done a thorough review of the implications of the LDAR.

In enabling take-over of local land, we find this draft regulation is not in consonance with existing laws, such as the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, the Biological Diversity Act 2002, The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the statement said.

It is also against the suggestions

of the Justice Raveendran Committee recommendations set up by the Supreme Court (as approved and notified by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Lakshadweep Panchayats Regulation 1994), the collective said.

The LDAR does not address India's commitments towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, marine protection goals under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Ecotourism Guidelines 2019, it said.

Noting that Lakshadweep is a coral atoll, which means the islands are part of a living coral system, the scientists said this island system is facing the impacts of climate change.

Lakshadweep has experienced catastrophic climate change-related coral mass mortality events, straining the accretion and buffer capacity of the reefs. As just one example, the reefs of the capital,



Kavaratti, are already eroding more than they are growing. Lakshadweep is not just ecologically fragile but also socially progressive, and it needs a sustainable development framework, it said.

They said anyone who has lived or worked in Lakshadweep for any length of time will be aware of its special vulnerability.

Surrounded by the ocean, barely a few metres above sea level, and with only the reef to protect it, it is clear that all development on these islands needs to be very carefully managed. Over the last two decades we have personally witnessed the reefs being battered by repeated bleaching events and intense storms.

How long it will take for these ecosystems to recover is anyone's guess. Given how linked land, lagoon and reef are in Lakshadweep, the development envisioned in the draft LDAR would be nothing short of disastrous, says Rohan Arthur, Senior Scientist, Nature Conservation Foundation.

In its current form, the LDAR keeps local islanders out of decision-making processes.

The LDAR embraces a questionable vision of development that is neither sustainable in design nor likely to improve local well-being or safeguard the future habitability of the archipelago.

Dr Naveen Namboothiri, Director, Dakshin Foundation said the communities of the Lakshadweep Islands practise forms of social living and collective action that has served them well against external adversity.

It is materially evident in their stewardship of the pole-and-line tuna fishing and coconut farming

industry that provide livelihood support for more than half the population.

Islanders' historical relations with land and lagoon commons are closely tied to their identity and cultural practises.

Development on the islands needs to see people and these ecological spaces as one unit, rather than severing their fragile ties, Namboothiri said.

The Collective appealed to the President to restore and reinvigorate the Justice Raveendran Committee recommendations set up by the Supreme Court and ensure that they are robustly implemented and monitored.

It also appealed to establish a committee of scientists, policy makers and local representatives to re-evaluate the broader development plans and directions of which the LDAR is a part, in the context of Lakshadweep's unique culture, ecological fragility and climate vulnerability.



## of the day quote

The short-sighted policies of the BJP is responsible for the rising unemployment. The claim of UP CM to provide lakhs of jobs has come to the fore now. The BJP is responsible for ruining the economy



**AKHILESH YADAV** | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

Today, MSME sector employers are themselves facing unemployment. PM is distracting India's present with theatrics and toying with the future



**RAHUL GANDHI** | CONGRESS LEADER

The state government will set up Post Covid Clinics to attend to complications that may arise in patients who had suffered the disease



**MK STALIN** | TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Thousands stage protest

**Mumbai:** Thousands of people from Raigad, Thane and Palghar districts of Maharashtra staged a protest in CBD Belapur area Thursday demanding that the under-construction Navi Mumbai international airport be named after late D B Patil, a local leader, by August 15. The protesters, numbering around 10,000, shouted slogans against the state-run City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO), which is executing the project, and asked for nixing of the decision to name the airport after late Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray.

### Dalit boys beaten up for jamun

**Lakhimpur Kheri:** Two Dalit boys, aged 10 and 11, were allegedly tied to a tree and mercilessly thrashed for hours by the owner of an orchard in Uttar Pradesh for having plucked 'jamun' from his plantation. The incident took place in Gehua village. When their mothers went looking for them, they found them still tied to the tree and unconscious. They informed the Mohammadi police station personnment but an FIR was registered only after photographs of the children were shared on social media Wednesday.

### Five jump off moving train

**Jhansi (UP):** Panicked over boarding the wrong train, five people jumped off a moving train in Jhansi district which killed one of them while four others were injured, officials said Thursday. The deceased, Ajay Kumar (35), a resident of Devkali village in Gorakhpur, had come to Jhansi along with his brother Vijay, uncle Jagmohan and his companions Sandeep and Sanjay to go to Andhra Pradesh, Government Railway Police sources said.

### CISF rescues 15 kids

**New Delhi:** Alert Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) troops Thursday rescued 15 children from the clutches of a child-trafficking gang by arresting a couple from the Ranchi Airport. Sub-Inspector Panna Lal Thakur of the CISF noticed suspicious activities of a passenger accompanied by a lady and 18 children -- all minors -- at about 8.40 a.m. Thursday while checking their tickets at the departure gate of the airport. They were to catch a Delhi bound GoAir flight (No. G8-146) at 11.15 a.m. On enquiry, the passenger revealed his identity as Raju Ganju and said that he was accompanied by his wife, three wards and 15 other children who were supposed to travel to Delhi.



**We will do anything to deal effectively with the third wave. I am also preparing the CM residence to accommodate Covid patients during the third wave**

**TIRATH SINGH RAWAT** | UTTARAKHAND CHIEF MINISTER

## ISRAEL EMBASSY BLAST CASE: 4 KASHMIRI STUDENTS HELD

The Special Cell of Delhi Police Thursday arrested four students hailing from Jammu and Kashmir in connection with its probe into the blast near the Israeli Embassy January 29



## CANCELLATION OF CLASS XII EXAMINATIONS

# 'Notify assessment scheme in 10 days'



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 24:** The Supreme Court Thursday directed all the state boards to declare results of internal assessment of Class 12 examination by July 31, making it clear that each board is free to formulate its own evaluation method for students and there can't be a "fit-all" scheme.

The apex court, which said it would not pass any direction for a uniform assessment scheme across the country for students whose board exams have been cancelled amid the Covid-19 pandemic, directed the state boards to ensure that schemes are formulated and notified at the earliest and not later than 10 days from Thursday.

A bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari observed that each board is autonomous and they will have to evolve their own scheme for assessment.

"We direct all the state boards to ensure that the schemes are formulated and notified at the earliest and not later than 10 days from today and also declare the results of internal assessment by July 31, 2021, which is the time-line speci-

fied for CBSE and ICSE boards in terms of our order dated June 22," the bench said in its order.

The top court was hearing a plea which has sought directions to the states not to hold board exams because of the pandemic.

The bench noted in its order that counsel appearing for Haryana has submitted that a clarification be issued that respective boards were free to formulate their own schemes being autonomous and independent bodies.

"We have no difficulty in acceding to this submission," the bench said, adding, "In other words, we make it clear that each board may formulate its own scheme. However, we further make it clear that we are not endorsing the correctness and validity of the proposed schemes, to be so formulated by the concerned boards. That will be considered on its own merits, if and when occasion arises." It noted that Assam has filed an affidavit saying that Class 10 and 12 examinations have been cancelled and the scheme is being formulated by the concerned boards for allocation of internal assessment marks. "That be done expeditiously. In addition, the scheme must pro-

vide for a proper mechanism for redressal of dispute or grievance of the students after declaration of results, as has been done in the case of CBSE and ICSE boards," the bench said. It also noted that National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has cancelled the board exams and is in the process of formulating the scheme for assessment.

During the hearing conducted through video-conferencing, the bench was informed by an advocate appearing in the matter that state boards which have cancelled the Class 12 exams may be asked to have a uniform scheme for assessing students.

"That may not be acceptable because every state board has their own scheme. It cannot be uniform. We are not going to direct for uniform scheme. Each board will have to evolve their own scheme," the bench said. It said state boards have experts to advise them and there cannot be a uniform all India scheme for this.

"There cannot be a fit-all scheme," the bench observed, adding, "We have made it clear that each board is autonomous and they will have their own scheme". The counsel appearing for Haryana school education board told the bench that the petitioner is seeking a uniform formula for assessment. "That we have already made it clear that each board can have their own scheme," the bench said. On June 22, the apex court had refused to interfere with the assessment scheme propounded by both the CBSE and ICSE for evaluation of Class 12 students, whose board examinations have been cancelled due to the pandemic.

## WATER, WATER EVERY WHERE



Girls play at a flooded neighbourhood during Covid-induced lockdown in Kolkata

PTI PHOTO

# Chinese actions responsible for LAC row: India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 24:** India Thursday said China's amassing of a large number of troops close to the border last year and attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo seriously disturbed peace and tranquillity in the region.

India's comments on the matter came a day after China said its military deployment in the region is a normal "defence arrangement" aimed to respond to actions by the "relevant" country.

"It is well recognised that it has been the Chinese actions over the last year, including amassing of a large number of troops close to border areas in the western sector and trying to unilaterally alter the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), which have seriously disturbed peace and tranquillity in the border areas," external affairs ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said. He was responding to a question on the standoff at a



media briefing. "These acts are in violation of our bilateral agreements, including the 1993 and 1996 agreements that mandate that the two sides shall strictly respect and observe the Line of Actual Control and that two sides will keep their military forces in the areas along the LAC to a minimum level," Bagchi said.

## YES BANK CASE CBI books ex-CG chairman, others

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 24:** The CBI Thursday carried out searches at six locations after registering a fresh case of fraud of Rs 2,435 crore in Yes Bank and other consortium banks against former CG Power and Industrial Solutions chairman Gautam Thapar who is already under probe in more such cases, officials said.

CG Power and Industrial Solutions was earlier Crompton Greaves Ltd. The searches took place at locations in Mumbai, Delhi and Gurgaon.

This is a new case against Thapar, who was booked recently in Rs 466 crore fraud case in Yes Bank, the officials said. Thapar faces multiple Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) FIRs for alleged bank fraud and corruption, they said.

The present case is based on a complaint from the State Bank of India on behalf of the consortium of 11 other lender banks, including Yes Bank. Besides Thapar, the CBI has also booked CG Power and Industrial Solutions, erstwhile Crompton Greaves Ltd, and the then executives.

## DEFAMATION CASE

# Rahul denies charges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Surat, June 24:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi appeared before a magistrate's court in Surat Thursday to record his statement in a criminal defamation suit filed by a Gujarat MLA, and denied making any defamatory remarks on people with 'Modi' surname.

The suit was filed by Surat BJP MLA Purnesh Modi over Gandhi's alleged remark on the 'Modi' surname. In his statement before Surat's Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) A N Dave, Gandhi denied making any defamatory remarks on people with Modi surname during a rally at Kolar in Karnataka ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

When the magistrate asked Gandhi if he had said Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave Rs 30 crore to an industrialist, Gandhi told the court that being a national leader, he keeps raising issues of corruption and unemployment in his addresses in the interest of the nation, and it is his right to raise do so. When the court asked if he had said all people with Modi surname are thieves, Gandhi claimed he never said such words.

Besides, to most of the remaining questions related to the ev-

idence and statements of witnesses in the case, Gandhi said "I don't know".

After recording the statement, the magistrate kept the case for next hearing on July 12. Earlier, Rahul Gandhi had appeared before the court in October 2019 and pleaded not guilty for his comment.

Legislator Purnesh Modi filed a complaint against Gandhi in April 2019 under Indian Penal Code Sections 499 and 500, that deal with defamation.

A week back, CJM Dave directed Gandhi to remain present on June 24 to record his statement in the case. In his complaint, the MLA had alleged that Gandhi defamed the entire Modi community by saying "How come all the thieves have Modi as the common surname?" while addressing a poll rally in 2019. During an election rally held at Kolar in Karnataka on April 13, 2019, Rahul Gandhi had reportedly asked, "Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi, Narendra Modi. How come they all have Modi as the common surname? How come all the thieves have Modi as the common surname?"

He was the Congress president when he had made this alleged remark.

## Be vocal for local toys: PM urges people

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 24:** Calling on people to be "vocal for local toys", Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday said about 80 per cent of the toys were being imported by India with crores of rupees going abroad and asserted that it was very important to change this situation.

Noting that India's share is only about 1.5 billion dollars (over Rs 11,000 crore) in the global toy market of approximately 100 billion dollars (Rs. 7.5 lakh crore), Modi pitched for improving the country's standing in what he called 'Toyonomy' or the economic aspects of the toys and gaming industry.

Prime Minister Modi made the remarks after interacting with participants of Toycation-2021 via video conferencing. Toycation-2021 was jointly launched by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium



Prime Minister Modi made the remarks after interacting with participants of Toycation-2021 via video conferencing

Enterprises, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Textile Ministry, Information and Broadcasting Ministry and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) January 5, 2021 to crowd-source innovative toys and games ideas. "Today, we import around 80 per cent of our toys from abroad. Which means crores of rupees of the country are going abroad on them. It is very important to change this situation," Modi said.

He underlined that beyond numbers, the toy sector has the capac-

ity to bring progress and growth to the neediest segments of society. Toy sector has its own small-scale industry, artisans comprising rural population, Dalits, poor people and tribal population, he noted and also talked about the contribution of women in the sector. "In order to take the benefits to these segments, we need to be vocal for local toys," Modi asserted.

In his remarks, the Prime Minister underlined the need to create interesting and interactive games that "engage, entertain and educate".

## CAREGIVERS IN CRISIS

# Pandemic begins to ebb but trauma persists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 24:** Caregiving is never easy. And when it's a pandemic and caregivers themselves are either unwell or at risk of contracting the infection, the stress and strain is not just compounded but also complicated in many different ways.

As the devastating second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic dips in several parts of the country, those tasked with looking after the ill, often spouses, children or parents, are still grappling with the physical, emotional and mental

strain. In many cases, Covid patients were forced to turn caregivers for the more critical members of their family as the health infrastructure crumbled with no hospital beds, medicines or even life-saving oxygen.

Notwithstanding their rising temperatures, and mind numbing head and body aches, for weeks on end they cooked and cleaned, fed their 'patient' and took them to the washroom. And most of all stayed alert in case things went south. "The biggest challenge of being a Covid-19 positive caregiver was staying sane in the chaos,"



Representative image

said 34-year-old Bhushan Shinde whose father Madhukar tested positive less than a week after him.

The isolation due to the infectious nature of the disease and the fact that no friend or extended family

could help only added to the burden. While both started with mild symptoms like low grade fever, cough and body ache, his 65-year-old father's condition deteriorated soon after, said the Mumbai-based Bhushan.

"Initially his CT score was in the mild category, but when it increased, we decided to get him hospitalised," he said. The most stressful period was when he had to scramble for remdesivir injections, not just for his father's treatment but also for his 83-year-old uncle and his cousin who too fell sick around the same time. Running around frantically

at a time when his body needed complete rest did not help, he said.

"With the whole rush for remdesivir, I had to keep aside my physical and mental condition and it took a toll on my body." It's been over two months since Covid panic took over the Shinde household, but the struggle is far from over. Bhushan and Madhukar are still dealing with the challenges of post Covid-19 symptoms.

The pandemic also brought to the fore the challenge of isolating in most Indian homes that are small, the trauma of the disease and its aftermath straining the family fabric.



# international



**We're vaccinating 200,000 people a day. That's not enough. It's imperative that all care workers and retirement home staff be vaccinated, let's say between now and end-August**  
JEAN CASTEX | PM, FRANCE

**LUXURY IN THE CLOUDS**  
The world's highest luxury hotel, boasting a restaurant on the 120th floor and 24-hour personal butler service, has opened in Shanghai to guests with deep pockets and a head for heights



## of the day quote

The current administration of the US has followed exactly the path of the previous administration, which will result in nothing but a double defeat for Washington

SAEED KHATIBZADEH | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN, IRAN

A large number of sea creatures in the ocean have died as a result of the fire aboard the vessel that was transporting chemicals. Accordingly, investigations were conducted to determine the cause of death and clear signs of acid burns were visible on the Dead Sea Turtle

C B RATHNAYAKE | WILDLIFE AND FOREST CONSERVATION MINISTER, SL

But even though there is reason to be hopeful, the pandemic isn't over, in particular in the world's poor countries. But in Germany and Europe we're also still moving on thin ice

ANGELA MERKEL | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

## SHORT TAKES

### Biden announces infra agreement

**Washington:** President Joe Biden announced Thursday that "we have a deal," signaling a bipartisan agreement on a USD 953 billion infrastructure plan that would achieve his top legislative priority and validate his efforts to reach across the political aisle. Details of the deal were scarce to start, but the pared-down plan, with USD 559 billion in new spending, has rare bipartisan backing and could open the door to the president's more sweeping USD 4 trillion proposals later on.

### Benigno Aquino passes away

**Manila:** Former Philippine President Benigno Aquino III, the son of pro-democracy icons who helped topple dictator Ferdinand Marcos and a defender of good governance who took China's sweeping territorial claims to an international court, has died. He was 61. Aquino's family told a news conference that he died in his sleep early Thursday due to "renal failure secondary to diabetes." A former Cabinet official, Rogelio Singson, said Aquino had been undergoing dialysis and was preparing for a kidney transplant.

### Nawaz sharif's plea dismissed

**Islamabad:** A top Pakistani court Thursday dismissed appeals by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif against his conviction in corruption cases by an accountability court. A bench of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) comprising Justices Aamer Farooq and Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, in its nine-page judgement, said Sharif was a "fugitive from law hence has lost his right of audience before this court and we are left with no choice except to dismiss his appeal".

### Ultras surrender in Afghanistan

**Kabul:** A total of 130 Taliban militants surrendered to the Afghan government in Herat province Thursday, a local government spokesperson confirmed. The former militants surrendered to the personnel of provincial directorate of National Directorate of Security (NDS), the country's national intelligence agency, spokesperson Jilani Farhad told Xinhua news agency.

# WUHAN LAB LEAK THEORY SURFACES AGAIN

AGENCIES

**Washington, June 24:** The Coronavirus has taken more than 3 million lives around the world and the reason behind the source of the virus still remains a mystery. But in recent developments and push by world powers, the origin of the virus from the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) is gaining confidence around the world. The lack of transparency by China into the records of Wuhan lab has shifted the world attention towards it once again. The scientists who dismissed the lab leak theory as tin-hat nonsense are reconsidering their stand. Scientists effort to find the natural source of the virus have failed

continuously. Moreover when the efforts were getting closer to look closely into the Wuhan lab got mixed with the allegations that the virus was deliberately created as a bio-weapon, which agitated China and in response they raised their guards. Sen Tom Cotton was one of the first leaders who raised a red flag, pressuring China to give answers regarding Wuhan lab. The Trump administration also did their bid in highlighting the lab leak scenario but had no real evidence to prove their speculations. That WHO report, which was subsequently criticized by the US, Canada and other governments for the lack of access granted to the investigators, determined that it was



"likely to very likely," the Coronavirus had a zoonotic source and that a laboratory incident was

"extremely unlikely," Akiko Iwasaki, a professor of immunobiology at the Yale School

of Medicine and one of the signatories of the letter, said she doesn't have an opinion one way or the other about the origin of the virus, but that the conclusions reached by the WHO investigation were problematic. "Even though there is very little evidence for any of these possibilities, that report basically said that the lab is extremely unlikely. Whereas the other possibilities are possible to likely," she said. Dr David Fisman, an epidemiologist at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health and the only Canadian scientist to sign the letter, believes the inadequate WHO investigation was a milestone for changing attitudes toward the lab-leak theory.

# 751 BODIES FOUND AT INDIGENOUS SCHOOL IN CANADA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Regina, June 24:** The chief of an Indigenous nation in Canada said Thursday investigators have found 751 unmarked graves at the site of a former residential school for Indigenous children — a discovery that follows last month's report of 215 at another school. Chief Cadmus Delorme of the Cowessess First Nation made the announcement at a news conference. Chief Bobby Cameron of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous First Nations said he expects more graves will be found on residential school grounds across Canada. "This was a crime against humanity, an assault on First Nations," he said.

"We will not stop until we find all the bodies." The bodies were discovered at the Marieval Indian Residential School, which operated from 1899 to 1997 where Cowessess is now located, about 87 miles east of Regina, the capital of Saskatchewan. Delorme said at one time the graves were marked but those who operated the school removed the markers. "We are treating this as a crime," he said. The Cowessess and the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous First Nations, which represents Saskatchewan's First Nations, said a day earlier that "the number of unmarked graves will be the most significantly substantial to date in Canada." Last month the remains of 215 children, some as young as 3 years old, were found buried on the site of what was once Canada's largest Indigenous residential school near Kamloops, British Columbia.

## BLACK SEA INCIDENT

# UK, Russia escalate war of words



AGENCIES

**London, June 24:** Russia warned Britain Thursday that it would bomb British naval vessels in the Black Sea if there were any further provocative actions by the British navy off the coast of Russia-annexed Crimea. Russia summoned the British ambassador in Moscow for a formal diplomatic scolding after the warship breached what the Kremlin says are its territorial waters but which Britain and most of the world say belong to Ukraine. Britain said Russia was giving an inaccurate account of the incident. No warning shots had been fired and no bombs had been dropped in the path of the Royal Navy destroyer Defender, it said.

**We can appeal to common sense, demand respect for international law, and if that doesn't work, we can bomb**  
SERGEI RYABKOV | DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, RUSSIA  
**The Royal Navy will always uphold international law and will not accept unlawful interference with innocent passage**  
BEN WALLACE | DEFENCE MINISTER, UK

In Moscow, Russia summoned Ambassador Deborah Bronnert for a reprimand over what it said were Britain's "dangerous" action in the Black Sea - while foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova accused London of

"barefaced lies". Ryabkov, referring to Moscow's version of events in which a Russian aircraft bombed the path of the British destroyer, said that in future bombs would be sent "not only in its path, but also on target." The Black Sea, which Russia uses to project its power in the Mediterranean, has for centuries been a flashpoint between Russia and its competitors such as Turkey, France, Britain and the United States. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the British warship, which was travelling from the Ukrainian port of Odessa to the Georgian port of Batumi, was acting in accordance with the law and had been in international waters. "These are Ukrainian waters and it was entirely right to use them to go from A to B," Johnson said. British Defence Minister Ben Wallace accused Russian pilots of conducting unsafe aircraft maneuvers 500 feet (152 m) above the warship. "The Royal Navy will always uphold international law and will not accept unlawful interference with innocent passage," Wallace said. Under international law of the sea, innocent passage permits a vessel to pass through another state's territorial waters so long as this does not affect its security.

# Delta variant reported in 85 countries globally: WHO



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**United Nations, June 24:** The Delta variant, the significantly more transmissible strain of Covid-19, is expected to become a "dominant lineage" if current trends continue, the WHO has warned after it was reported in 85 countries and continues to be detected in more places around the world. The Covid-19 Weekly Epidemiological Update released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) said that globally, the variant Alpha has been reported in 170 countries, territories or areas, Beta in 119 countries, Gamma in 71 countries and Delta in 85 countries. "Delta, now reported in 85 countries globally, continues to be reported in new countries across all WHO Regions, 11 of which were newly reported in the past two weeks," the update said. "The Delta variant is signifi-

cantly more transmissible than Alpha variant, and is expected to become a dominant lineage if current trends continue." The update said that India reported the highest numbers of new Covid cases, 441,976 over the past week (June 14-20, 2021), a 30 per cent decrease as compared to the previous week. The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from India (16,329 new deaths; 1.2 new deaths per 100,000; a 31 per cent decrease).

# Lawyers question Prez's impartiality

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kathmandu, June 24:** Questioning the impartiality of President Bidya Devi Bhandari in the May 22 dissolution of the House of Representatives, lawyers representing petitioners against the move have argued that her actions make it clear that she didn't want anybody except K P Sharma Oli as Prime Minister. A five-member Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana Wednesday began the hearing process, starting with the writ jointly filed by 146 lawmakers backing Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba's claim to Prime Ministership. Prime Minister Oli is currently heading a minority government

**NEPAL HOUSE DISSOLUTION CASE**  
after losing a trust vote in the 275-member House. "Bhandari's rejection of Deuba's claim makes it clear that she didn't want anybody except K P Sharma Oli as prime minister," The Kathmandu Post quoted advocate Govinda Bhandi as saying while arguing on behalf of the petitioners against the House dissolution. Six of the lawyers arguing on behalf of the plaintiffs presented their arguments for four hours Wednesday. As many as 30 petitions have been filed at the Supreme Court against the move.

## DEATH OF A DAILY



A supporter gestures while holding the final edition of Apple Daily in Hong Kong

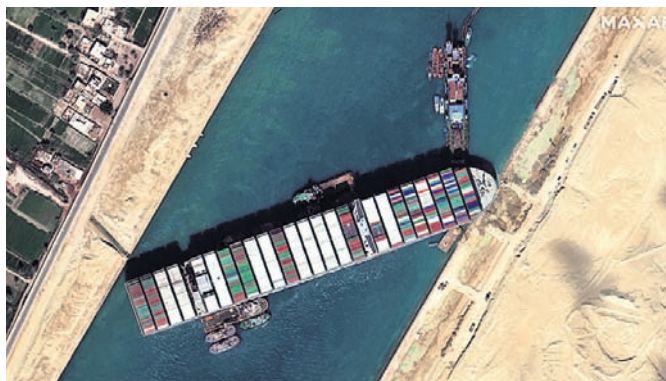
REUTERS

# Inside story of the sideways ship that broke global trade

AGENCIES

**Washington, June 24:** The Ever Given, a Panama-flagged ship that carries cargo between Asia and Europe, ran aground March 23 in the narrow, man-made canal dividing continental Africa from the Sinai Peninsula. Images showed the ship's bow was touching the eastern wall, while its stern looked lodged against the western wall — an extraordinary event that experts said they had never heard of happening before in the canal's 150-year history. The ship's operator and Egyptian officials blamed winds gusting as much as 50 kilometers per hour (30 miles per hour), along with a sandstorm sweeping the area.

Instead, it's likely that "a combination of factors" was at play, said Ian Woods, a marine cargo lawyer and partner with the firm Clyde & Co. "There's the exposure to the elements, potential for a loss of power, potential for steering problems," Woods said. "We'd expect a full investigation." The cargo ship blocking the Suez Canal was holding up traffic that carries nearly \$10 billion worth of goods every day, so a quick clearing of the logjam was needed to limit the economic fallout. Salvage teams finally freed the colossal container ship stuck for nearly a week in the Suez Canal March 29, ending a crisis that had clogged one of the world's most vital waterways and halted billions of



dollars a day in maritime commerce. A flotilla of tugboats, helped by the tides, wrenched the bulbous bow of the skyscraper-sized Ever Given from the canal's sandy bank.

The canal chief and a judicial official announced May 12 that the Egyptian authorities impounded Ever Green amid a financial dispute with its owner.

**The cargo ship blocking the Suez Canal was holding up traffic that carries nearly \$10 billion worth of goods every day**

Lt Gen Osama Rabie said the hulking Ever Given would not be allowed to leave the country until a compensation amount is settled on with the vessel's Japanese owner, Shoen Kisen Kaisha Ltd. Rabie did not say how much money the canal authority was seeking. However, a judicial official said it demanded at least \$900 million. The state-run Ahram daily

also reported the \$900 million figure. May 21, an Egyptian appeals court said it lacks jurisdiction to look into the Suez Canal Authority's demands to uphold financial claims that led to the seizure of the cargo ship that blocked the waterway in March. Finally, June 23 the owners and insurers of Ever Green reached an agreement in principle over their dispute with canal authorities. At first, the Suez Canal Authority demanded \$916 million in compensation, which was later lowered to \$550 million. The money would cover the salvage operation, costs of stalled canal traffic, and lost transit fees for the week the Ever Given blocked the canal said Suez Canal Authority.



# business

# DECODING

# CRYPTOCURRENCY

Sceptics say there is good reason to believe that several countries will eventually ban all cryptocurrencies. They argue that governments and their central banks will not allow the dilution of their monopoly power over money

## What is cryptocurrency?

Cryptocurrency is a form of payment that can be exchanged online for goods and services. Many companies have issued their own currencies, often called tokens, and these can be traded specifically for the good or service that the company provides. Think of them as you would arcade tokens or casino chips. You'll need to exchange real currency for the cryptocurrency to access the good or service. Cryptocurrencies work using a technology called blockchain, which is a decentralised technology spread across many computers that manages and records transactions.

## How many cryptocurrencies are there? What are they worth?

According to market research website CoinMarketCap.com, more than 10,000 different cryptocurrencies are traded publicly. And cryptocurrencies continue to proliferate, raising money through initial coin offerings, or ICOs. The total value of all cryptocurrencies as on May 27, 2021, was more than \$1.7 trillion — down from April high of \$2.2 trillion. The total value of all bitcoins, the most pop-

ular digital currency, was pegged at about \$735 billion — down from April high of \$1.2 trillion.

## What is a Bitcoin? How does it work?

A Bitcoin is a form of electronic money independent of conventional banking, that started circulating in 2009 and has become the most prominent of several fledgling digital currencies. The virtual currency relies on a network of computers that solve complex mathematical problems as part of a process that verifies and permanently records the details of every bitcoin transaction that is made. Unlike traditional currencies, where a central bank decides how much money to print based on goals like controlling inflation, no central authority governs the supply of bitcoins. Like other commodities and currencies, its value depends on peo-

ple's confidence in it. **How are Bitcoins created?**

The system was designed to reward computers that do the crucial work of verifying transactions with the occasional payoff of new bitcoins in a process known as bitcoin mining. The growth in the virtual currency's value has created a market for souped-up computers and chips especially designed for the cryptographic calculations used in bitcoin. About 12.4 million bitcoins, worth \$6.2 billion at recent prices, have been minted since the currency began circulating, according to Blockchain.info.

## How can one buy Bitcoins in India?

In India, one can buy Bitcoin from several online exchanges like BuyUCoin, Coinshare, Unocoin etc. Unocoin is an Indian-based ex-

change. Online exchanges like these will allow you to buy, sell, and hold Bitcoins. One can also do person to person Bitcoin trading using LocalBitcoins — it uses escrow protection to keep the transaction secure. It is generally better to use an exchange that allows its users to also withdraw their Bitcoins to their own personal wallet for safe keeping — there are exchanges that do not allow for this.

## How volatile is it?

Bitcoin's volatility is its main attraction as that is what gives the cryptocurrency its exponential rises, ex-Goldman Sachs bitcoin enthusiast Raoul Pal said. "People have to learn to adapt to an asset that is that volatile...it has such a big upside risk-reward skew," Pal,

founder and CEO of Real Vision, said. The Cayman Islands-based former hedge fund manager said he had a diversified crypto assets portfolio to cover exchanges, decentralised finance and community tokens. "I'm probably right now 50% bitcoin, 30% ethereum and 20% alternative tokens...to try to keep a balance across the whole space, because I don't really know what's going to win in that space and what's not."

**I believe very strongly that countries like the US could and should move to a digital currency, so that you would have the ability to trace this kind of corruption. There are important issues of privacy, cyber-security, but it would certainly have big advantages**

**JOSEPH STIGLITZ | NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING ECONOMIST**



**Bitcoin is a technological tour de force**

**BILL GATES | CO-FOUNDER OF MICROSOFT, INVESTOR, AND PHILANTHROPIST**

## BEST CRYPTOCURRENCIES BY M-CAP

These are the 10 largest trading cryptocurrencies by market capitalisation as tracked by CoinMarketCap, a cryptocurrency data and analytics provider

Cryptocurrency	Market Capitalisation
Bitcoin	\$634 billion
Ethereum	\$228.1 billion
Tether	\$62.6 billion
Binance Coin	\$46.4 billion
Cardano	\$42.8 billion
Dogecoin	\$30.8 billion
XRP	\$29.9 billion
USD Coin	\$25.4 billion
Polkadot	\$15.2 billion
Uniswap	\$9.97 billion

(Data as of June 24, 2021)

With 62 out of 84 in favour, El Salvador creates history



NAYIB BUKELE, PRESIDENT

El Salvador, June 9, became the first country in the world to adopt bitcoin as legal tender after Congress approved President Nayib Bukele's proposal to embrace the cryptocurrency, a move that delighted the currency's supporters.

With 62 out of 84 possible votes, lawmakers voted in favour of the move to create a law to adopt bitcoin, despite concern about the potential impact on El Salvador's program with the International Monetary Fund.

Bukele has touted the use of bitcoin for its potential to help Salvadorans living abroad to send remittances back home, while saying the US dollar will also continue as legal tender. In practice, El Salvador does not have its own currency.

"It will bring financial inclusion, investment, tourism, innovation and economic development for our country," Bukele said in a tweet shortly before the vote in Congress, which is controlled by his party and allies.

In an idea he appeared to have developed overnight, Bukele later said he had instructed state-owned geothermal electric firm LaGeo to develop a plan to offer bitcoin mining facilities using renewable energy from the country's volcanoes.

He said the idea was to build a bitcoin mining hub around the country's geothermal potential. He also said that El Salvador would offer citizenship to people who showed evidence they had invested in at least three bitcoins.

## FACT FILE

### ► The total amount of Bitcoin is limited

Cryptocurrency is a limited resource, like gold or oil, which is why currencies like bitcoin continue to increase in value as the supply goes down. Investors know that somewhere down the road, the number of bitcoins and alt currencies available will come to an end.

### ► No one knows who created bitcoin

No one knows who created this virtual currency market. The most surprising fact about cryptocurrency is the person or organisation who created 'bitcoin' is unknown. However, people refer to the creator of bitcoin as Satoshi Nakamoto. A popular belief is that the name is an acronym for leading tech companies - Samsung-Toshiba-Nakamichi-Motorola.

### ► Cryptocurrency can't be physically banned

Many countries worldwide have discussed banning cryptocurrencies; however, despite their desire to ban them, it's physically impossible. Why? Because anyone can get a crypto wallet. Of course, countries can make regulations, but the cryptocurrency market itself cannot be banned. Some countries that have removed the rights around using cryptocurrencies are Algeria, Cambodia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

### ► There are over 5,000 different currencies

Everyone wants to get in on cryptocurrencies. This is why new currencies are popping up in the industry daily. As of now, there are over 5,000 different currencies in the world. Naturally, most of these currencies aren't worth much, nor will they be. However, there is always a diamond in the rough that people are hoping to grab. In other words, not all altcoins are useless.

### ► China is the biggest cryptocurrency miner

Well, who would have thought that? Mining of cryptocurrency is the process of verifying transactions before they're placed on the Blockchain's ledger. It's an extremely lucrative part of the business, and as of now, China controls around 75% of the mining network.

### ► They're taxable

Of course, depending on what country you live in. But since cryptocurrencies have now entered the mainstream markets, tax agencies worldwide are trying to make sure they get their slice of the virtual pie. Many countries expect one to pay tax on his cryptocurrency profits. In the US, the IRS won a court case against Coinbase, requiring the latter to provide information on over 14,000 users who had annual transactions over \$20,000 between 2013 and 2015.



## SHORT TAKES

### Nag elevated as NTPC Talcher ED

**Bhubaneswar/Kaniha:** Sudip Nag, Chief General Manager (CGM), NTPC Talcher Kaniha has been elevated to the post of Executive Director, Talcher Kaniha. In his career spanning 34 years, Nag has served the Maharatna company with various diverse profiles in the field of Operation, Mechanical Maintenance, EEMG, Operation Services, Business Development and Head of Shared Services Eastern Region-2.

### Sony launches SRS XB13 speaker

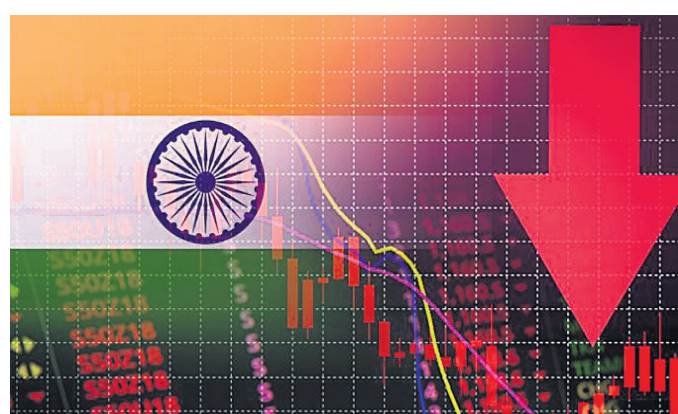
**Bhubaneswar:** Sony India launched SRS-XB13, the popular extra bass compact wireless series of speaker which offers deep and punchy bass sound. The wireless speaker is equipped with the new Sound Diffusion Processor for enhanced beats and a wider sound spread along with many more features like battery life indicator, built-in mic that makes it more interactive than its predecessor.

### Microsoft debuts Windows 11

**Redmond (US):** Microsoft has unveiled the next generation of its Windows software, called Windows 11 that has a new Start Menu and other features. The newest version of Microsoft's flagship operating system announced Thursday will be a successor to today's Windows 10, which the company introduced in 2015. Windows 11 is expected to become available later this year on new computers and other devices.

# Growth rate cut to 9.5% for FY22

SLOW VACCINATION CAN LEAD TO THIRD WAVE



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 24:** S&P Global Ratings cut India's growth forecast Thursday for the current fiscal to 9.5 per cent, from 11% earlier. It warned of risk to the outlook from further waves of Covid-19 pandemic. The agency said that a severe second Covid-19 outbreak in April and May led to lockdowns imposed by states and sharp contraction in economic activity. "We forecast growth of 9.5 per cent this fiscal year from our March forecast of 11 per cent," S&P said in a statement.

Stating that permanent damage to private and public sector balance sheets will constrain growth over the next couple of years, the agency projected India's growth at 7.8 per cent in the next fiscal ending March 31, 2023. "Further pandemic waves are a risk to the outlook given that only about 15 per cent of the population has received at least one vaccine dose so far, although vaccine

**RBI HAS NO ROOM TO CUT INTEREST RATES WITH INFLATION ABOVE 6% SAYS S&P**

**ECONOMY WILL BE AFFECTED AS PEOPLE ARE USING UP SAVINGS TO SUPPORT CONSUMPTION**

supplies are expected to ramp up," S&P said.

Indian economy contracted by 7.3 per cent in fiscal 2020-21 as the country battled the first wave of Covid-19 as against a 4% growth in 2019-20.

GDP growth in the current fiscal was estimated to be in double digits initially, but a severe second wave of pandemic has led to various agencies cut growth projections.

Earlier this month, RBI too cut India's growth forecast to 9.5 per cent for this fiscal, from 10.5% estimated earlier. Another US-based rating agency Moody's has projected India to clock a 9.3% growth in the current fiscal ending March 2022.

## 'Bank credit-to-GDP ratio inches up to 56%'

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, June 24:** Notwithstanding incremental credit growth plunging to a 59-year low at 5.56 per cent in FY21, the bank credit-to-GDP ratio rose to a five-year high of a little over 56 per cent in 2020, but way behind its peers and just half of the G20 average, according to the latest data from the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

At 56.07 per cent credit-to-GDP ratio, total outstanding bank credit stood at USD 1.52 trillion in the country in 2020, according to the BIS data for the year, but this is still the second lowest among all its Asian peers. And when it comes to the emerging market peers, it is 135.5 per cent and at 88.7 per cent in advanced economies.

It can be noted that in spite of the massive credit-driven stimulus that the government tried to push to help tide over the impact of the pandemic in 2020, incremental credit growth inched up only 5.56 per cent (at ₹109.51 lakh crore), which was the lowest recorded growth in 59 years when in FY1962 it was at 5.38 per cent.

# 'India may be world leader in green buildings soon'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, June 24:** As climate concerns take centre stage globally amid the pandemic, the National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) has assured to take steps towards creating awareness and adoption of green buildings across the country, saying that India can be a global leader in this respect by next year.

India is currently placed third after China and Canada in terms of green buildings.

During a webinar on 'India's Leadership Role in Advancing

# Jio to partner Google Cloud for 5G technology

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, June 24:** Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited (Jio), a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), and Google Cloud are embarking on a comprehensive, long-term strategic relationship with a goal of powering 5G in enterprise and consumer segments nationwide.

In addition, Reliance will also take advantage of Google Cloud's scalable infrastructure, thereby enabling its retail business to achieve better operational efficiency, modernisation and scale for growth, and deliver better performance and experiences to the customers.

To further Jio's mission to digitise India with faster and better connectivity, Google Cloud will provide a complete end-to-end Cloud offering for fully-automated lifecycle management of Jio's 5G network and services.

Google Cloud's deep expertise



and innovation, combined with telco-specific capabilities for security, performance and resilience, will help Jio's 5G service to meet the demands of customers, thereby strengthening Jio's position as one of the leading network and largest service providers in the country, Jio said in a statement.

Edge Cloud infrastructure from Google Cloud provides an open, highly scalable and high-performing platform for supporting Jio, which in turn empowers hundreds of millions of Jio subscribers that are expected to use the 5G service, the statement added.

In addition, Jio and Google Cloud

To further Jio's mission to digitise India with better connectivity, Google will provide a complete end-to-end Cloud offering for fully-automated lifecycle management of Jio's 5G network and services

will collaborate to bring a portfolio of 5G edge computing solutions to help industries address real business challenges. Jio will explore building new services across gaming, healthcare, education, and video entertainment sectors.

These services will use Jio's 5G network, software and Google Cloud's innovations in AI/ML, data and analytics, and other cloud-native technologies-delivered by Jio and powered by Google Cloud.



Green Buildings', which was jointly organised by NAREDCO, CII and Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), the apex bodies noted that the developers are firm believers of sustainable development. The sector stakeholders were of

the view that although the cost of green buildings is marginally higher, it is in greater good to go green.

Addressing the webinar, Surendra Kumar Bagde, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, said that a campaign should be launched to spread awareness about the marginal cost difference between green and conventional buildings and the former's benefits. He also said that all the required laws and regulations are in place to help the developers construct green buildings. The official, however, noted that it needs

to be seen whether cities in specific are adopting the norms to support the growth of green buildings.

Chairman of NAREDCO, Rajeev Talwar, stressed on having more greenery in the cities.

"Now city forests are parts of life and that's where the government can step in. In many urban agglomerations it may not be possible, but the more vertical we go, the greater the chance that we can go green," he said.

GS Arora, Vice Chairman, IGBC, noted that India has been a global leader in the green buildings movement over the last two decades,





RONALDO TAKES A STEP CLOSER TO SCORING HISTORY WITH TWO GOALS, GUIDING HIS SIDE TO THE EURO 2020 KNOCKOUTS WITH A 2-2 DRAW WITH FRANCE

# CR7 saves Portugal day



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Budapest, June 24: Cristiano Ronaldo's goals are adding up fast, and they are taking Portugal deeper into yet another tournament. Ronaldo scored two penalties

Wednesday to help the defending champions secure a 2-2 draw with France and give the team a spot in the round of 16 at the European Championship. They also increased his total with the national team to 109 goals, tied for the all-time men's record with former Iran striker Ali Daei. The Portugal great's Euro 2020-leading fourth and fifth goals also extended his overall tournament record to 14. Karim Benzema scored both of France's goals, his first ever at the tournament after failing to find the target at Euro 2008 and 2012. They were also his first goals for the national team since October 2015. Soon after that, he lost his place in the team because of his role in a "sextape" scandal. The Portuguese ended up in third place in the group, one spot behind Germany World Cup champion France, which had already qualified following a 1-1 draw with Hungary, finished first. The French will face Switzerland in the next round while Portugal will take on Belgium. Ronaldo scored the opening goal in the 31st minute after France goalkeeper Hugo Lloris misread a free-kick and punched Danilo's face. Lloris was shown a yellow card by Spanish referee Antonio Mateu Lahoz, who then immediately signaled for medical assistance and awarded a penalty.



Cristiano Ronaldo looks on from centre circle as Karim Benzema points skywards after scoring against Portugal, Wednesday

He then equalised from the spot in the 60th, after Benzema put the French ahead 2-1, when his cross from the left made contact with the hand of Jules Kounde. It was Kounde's second international game and his first start, chosen by Deschamps specifically to stop Ronaldo. Benzema first scored a penalty in first-half injury time after Nelson Semedo cut across Mbappe as he was running to meet a pass from Paul Pogba. The decision stood following a quick video review.

Benzema had missed his previous penalty for Les Bleus in his international comeback in a friendly against Wales earlier this month. Ronaldo went to shake Benzema's hand and even put his arm around him as they walked off smiling at halftime. The former Real Madrid teammates then swapped jerseys as they walked down the tunnel. Benzema's second goal came in the 47th after a run down the right to meet Pogba's pass from midfield. He got in behind the de-

fense and slotted the ball past Portugal goalkeeper Rui Patricio and in off the left post. Pogba almost scored a winner for France midway through the second half, but Patricio made a superb one-handed save to tip the curling shot off the crossbar and then saved Antoine Griezmann's follow up shot. The 36-year-old Ronaldo's historic run began 17 years ago when he scored his first goal for Portugal in a 1-2 loss to Greece during the group stage at Euro 2004.

# Goretzka rescues Loew from a low

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Munich, June 24: The second-half subs saved Germany's day at the European Championship. Leon Goretzka scored in the 84th minute after Timo Werner's shot was blocked following a run through the defense from Jamal Musiala. That gave the Germans a 2-2 draw with Hungary Wednesday, enough for them to finish in second place in the group. A loss would have sent the Hungarians into the next round and sent Germany home early for the second straight major tournament. "That was nothing for weak nerves," said Germany coach Joachim Loew, who is stepping down after Euro 2020 but certainly made the right moves on a rainy night here. Goretzka came off the bench in the 58th minute, Werner followed in the 67th and Musiala came on in the 82nd. Three years after being eliminated from the group stage at the 2018 World Cup, Germany can now look forward to a trip to London to face England Tuesday in the round of 16 at Wembley Stadium. It had looked like Adam Szalai was going to drag Hungary into the round of 16. The team's captain scored an early goal against the run of play and then set up Andras Schafer to make it 2-1 right after Kai Havertz had equalized for Germany. Germany made the better start but trailed early yet again when

Szalai met Roland Sallai's cross with a flying header on a counter-attack in the 11th. On the other end, the home team struggled against Hungary's defensive 5-3-2 formation. Germany had to wait till the 66th when the normally excellent Peter Gulacsi failed to punch away Toni Kroos' free-kick. Mats Hummels headed the ball forward and Havertz made sure from close range. Celebrations were cut short, however, as Hungary replied immediately when Szalai played in Schafer to head the ball past Neuer. It would have been enough to send Hungary through to the next round at Germany's expense, but Loew's substitutes rescued the game and kept him in his job for at least a few more days. Before kickoff, a person with a rainbow flag ran onto the field and held it up in front of the Hungary team as the country's national anthem was being played. The person was quickly tackled by stewards and pinned to the ground, and then led away to cheers and applause.



Leon Goretzka is congratulated by coach Joachim Loew after the match in Munich, Wednesday

# Bizarre own-goal helps Spain outsmart Slovakia

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seville, June 24: A bizarre blunder by the goalkeeper helped Spain find its scoring touch at the Euro 2020. And it also helped them advance to the round of 16. An embarrassing own-goal by goalkeeper Martin Dubravka in the first half put Spain on their way to a 5-0 victory Wednesday, coming only minutes after the hosts had missed another penalty kick and wasted more scoring chances. Dubravka saved that early penalty from Alvaro Morata but then clumsily knocked the ball into his own net after it ricocheted high into the air off a shot by Pablo Sarabia in the 30th minute. Dubravka stood just off his line and waited for the ball to descend. He jumped to swat it over for a corner, but the ball veered to his left and rolled off his right hand and into the net. Desolate, he stood by the goal line as some of his teammates came over to support him. Aymeric Laporte added to Spain's lead before halftime, and Sarabia, Ferran Torres and another own-goal in the second half made it five for "La Roja," which had been facing elimination in front of its own fans.

The victory allowed Spain to advance in second place in Group E with five points. The team will next play Croatia in Copenhagen Monday. Sweden, who defeated Poland 3-2 in the other match, won the group. The result eliminated Slovakia, which needed at least a draw to guarantee their place in the next round. Slovakia, who reached the last 16 at Euro 2016 in France, won their first match this year with the help of an own-goal by Poland goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny. After the own-goal by Dubravka, Laporte added to Spain's lead with a header in first-half injury time after a nice buildup that started with a neat lob pass from youngster Pedri Gonzalez to Gerard Moreno. Sarabia got his goal from inside the area after a cross by Jordi Alba in the 56th, and Torres increased the lead with a nice back-heel flick from close range in the 67th. An own-goal by Juraj Kucka, who found his net while trying to clear a shot by Pau Torres, finished off the rout at La Cartuja Stadium. It was the biggest margin of victory at the European Championship since Sweden defeated Bulgaria 5-0 in 2004. No team have ever won by more than five at the European Championship.

# ARGENTINE REFEREE PASSES IT FOR BRAZIL!

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sao Paulo, June 24: An accidental pass by referee set up Brazil's equaliser during their 2-1 win over Colombia in a tense Copa America match Wednesday that featured a couple of extraordinary goals. Colombia opened the scoring in the 10th minute after Juan Cuadrado crossed from the right and found Luis Diaz all alone in the middle of Brazil's penalty box. The striker shot a powerful volley to the right side of goalkeeper Weverton and scored possibly the best goal of the tournament. Colombia then started defending against a Brazil team that barely stopped surrounding their penalty box. It appeared as if Colombia would be able to hold out, until Argentine referee Nestor Pitana's knee came into play. Pitana accidentally blocked a pass by Neymar about 10 meters in front of the Colombian area in the 78th minute. Colombian defenders momentarily stopped, but Brazil substitute Lucas Paqueta just moved the ball to left-back Renan Lodi and his cross found Roberto Firmino, whose angled header beat Colombian goalkeeper David Ospina. The Colombians initially refused to restart the match but Pitana, the referee of the 2018 World Cup final, confirmed Brazil's goal. Brazil kept pressuring in the final minutes and found its reward. Neymar took a corner and Casemiro netted the winner. Earlier Tuesday, Ecuador and Peru drew 2-2 at the Olimpico stadium in Goiania. The Ecuadorians opened the scoring with an own-goal by Renato Tapia in the 23rd and got their second via Ayrton Preciado in the first-half stoppage time. Peru pulled level in the second half with goals by Gianluca Lapadula in the 49th and Andre Carrillo in the 54th. Both teams retained their chances of advancing to the knockout stage.

# 'NICE GUYS' DON'T ALWAYS FINISH LAST!



The global cricket fraternity was quick to applaud New Zealand after the perennial 'good guys' of the game ended their major title drought with a hard fought win over India in the World Test Championship final. "Turns out the nice guys of world cricket can finish first after all. Until now, it had been a case of close, but no cigar, for the Black Caps, widely dubbed the nice guys of world cricket and everyone's second favourite team," wrote 'stuff.co.nz'. Former India cricketer Gautam Gambhir tweeted, "Nice guys don't always finish last! Congrats NZ. World No.1! WTC2021Final." Former Pakistan captain Ramiz Raja also agreed with the statement saying, "Good things happen to good people. Congrats Kane Williamson."

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