



**RAISING THE BAR**  
Actor Disha Patani takes everyone by surprise by lifting 80 kilograms in the gymnasium **P2**



**SHOBHA'S SHOCKING MOVE**  
Shobha Karandlaje deletes her Twitter account hours before taking charge as MoS in the Agriculture Ministry **P8**



**ENGLAND MAKE HISTORY**  
England reach their first final at European Championship after beating Denmark 2-1 at Wembley Stadium **P12**



**PLETHORA OF COLOURS**: A guest in a floral dress poses for photographers ahead of the screening of the movie 'Annette' at the Cannes film festival. **REUTERS PHOTO**

## No relief in fuel prices despite change of guard

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
New Delhi, July 8: Even though there was a change of guard at the top with Hardeep Singh Puri replacing Dharmendra Pradhan as Petroleum Minister, there was no let up on fuel prices, Thursday. Petrol price was hiked by 35 paise per litre and diesel by nine paise, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. This new increase took fuel prices across India to a fresh high.

**CITY FUEL PRICES**

PETROL	₹101.43 (+0.36)
DIESEL	₹97.73 (+0.10)

1800 266 266 1 (toll free)

## Pregnant women to get vax July 16

*State expecting fresh consignment July 15*  
**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**FATALITY RATE REMAINS HIGH**  
**BHUBANESWAR**: Even though there was a slight decrease in the daily new Covid-19 infection rate, the fatality rate continued to remain very high in Odisha. The state reported 57 fresh fatalities Thursday taking the total tally to 4,415, a Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said. This is the fourth day in succession that the fatality rate has remained above the 50-mark. A total of 2,542 people tested positive for the disease in Odisha in the last 24 hours taking the total tally in the state to 9,32,330. The active caseload in the state stands at 27,580, while 9,00,282 people have recovered from the disease so far, including 2,920 in the last 24 hours.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

The day I was told to quit Cabinet was the biggest day in my life. The public came to know that I was a minister!

# ₹23K cr to fight Covid

**AMOUNT TO BE UTILISED IN THE NEXT 9 MONTHS TO IMPROVE MEDICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN ALL DISTRICTS**

**AGENCIES**  
New Delhi, July 8: The Union Cabinet approved Thursday a financial package of ₹23,123 crore for improving the health infrastructure to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. Addressing a press conference here after the first meeting of the Union Cabinet following its reshuffle, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the package will be implemented over the next nine months till March 2022. The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Mandaviya said this is the second phase of the Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package as the Central government had given ₹15,000 crore earlier for setting up Covid-dedicated hospitals and health centres across India.

"We have to collectively fight the Covid pandemic. The limitation period is maximum nine months. We have to get it done quickly," Mandaviya said. "Our duty is to help the states in every possible way," he added. The new health minister said that under the new package, the Centre would provide ₹15,000 crore and states ₹8,000 crore and the plan would be implemented jointly by them across all the 736 districts of India to improve medical infrastructure at primary and district health centres. Around 2.4 lakh normal medical beds and 20,000 ICU beds would be created of which 20 per cent would be specially earmarked for children, stated Mandaviya. He added that storage facilities for oxygen and medicines would also be created at district level under the plan. "This emergency package is de-

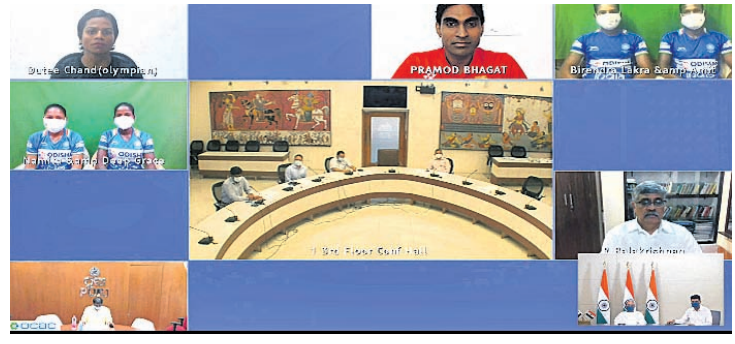
- Oxygen plants to come up in each and every district
- 20% of new beds would be reserved for children
- Centre to spend ₹15,000 crore while the states to contribute ₹8,000 crore

**BOOST FOR MANDIS**  
In a separate development after the meeting, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar once more requested the farmers to end their ongoing agitation against the three controversial farm laws. The agricultural produce market committees (APMC) will be able to use the ₹1 lakh crore fund, the minister said. "In this year's Budget, it was announced that mandis will not be stopped. It was also announced that APMCs will be allowed to use the ₹1 lakh crore fund allocated under Aatmanirbhar Bharat to Farmers Infrastructure Fund. In today's (Thursday) meeting, it has been decided to implement that announcement. All state-centre co-operatives, federations and autonomous federations will be able to utilise this fund," Tomar added.

**Pak allegation trashed**  
New Delhi: India strongly trashed Thursday as 'baseless propaganda' Pakistan's claim that it was behind a bomb blast near the house of JuD chief Hafiz Saeed in Lahore last month. India asked Islamabad to take 'credible and verifiable' action against terrorism emanating from its soil instead. At a media briefing, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi asked Pakistan to focus on setting its own house in order in containing terror.

## Cash incentives for Odia Olympians

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar, July 8:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced Thursday the quantum of cash prizes for sportspersons of the state who will be taking part in the Tokyo Olympics. The Games will start July 23 in Tokyo. Patnaik also wished luck to all the Odia sportspersons taking part in the Olympics over video conferencing. The Odia participants who are representing India are Dutee Chand (athletics), Deep Grace Ekka, Birendra Lakra and Amit Rohidas (all Hockey players and members of the Indian team) and Pramod Bhagat (Paralympian shuttler). Also taking part in the virtual conference was Namita Toppo who missed the Olympics bus by a whisker. The Odisha chief minister, to motivate the athletes declared cash prizes for the medal winners. Gold medal



**Huge cash bonanza announced for Odia sportspersons participating in the Tokyo Olympics**  
**Gold and silver and bronze medal winners to get ₹6 crore, ₹4 crore and ₹2.5 crore respectively**  
winners in Tokyo will get rupees six crore, silver medal winners ₹4 crore and bronze winners will get ₹2.5 crore each, said Patnaik. He added that those representing India in the Olympics will get ₹15 lakh each. Odisha Sports Minister Tusharkanti Behera also wished luck to all the Odia sportspersons taking part in the Olympics. He said that he is expecting all of them to shine at the Olympics.

## Bids invited for e-auction of 11 mineral blocks

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar, July 8:** The Odisha government has issued Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) for online auction of 11 more mining blocks, including seven virgin ones. The seven iron ore blocks are — Nadidih (Bico), Purheibahal, Chandiposhi, Junka Pathriposhi, Dholtapahar, Netrabandha Pahar (West) and Gandhalpada. Similarly, two iron ore and manganese blocks that will be put under the hammer are — Nadidih (Feegrade) and Teherai. Kasia mineral block having both iron ore and dolomite has also been put for the auction. The government has put Karlapat bauxite mineral block, a virgin block, also for auction.

## Vaishnaw cracks whip on Twitter

**AGENCIES**  
New Delhi, July 8: All those who live and work in India will have to abide by the rules of the country, newly sworn-in Information and Technology (IT) Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said Thursday. He was responding on Twitter's stand-off with the central government over new IT rules while talking to reporters. Vaishnaw asserted that no organisation is above the law in India and Twitter cannot be an exception. He made it clear that the microblogging site will have to toe the government line. "Law of the land is supreme, Twitter will have to follow rules," Vaishnaw said on the same platform. Meanwhile in a separate development Thursday the Delhi High Court granted two weeks to Twitter Inc to file an affidavit, notarised in United States, on compliance with the new Information Technology (IT) Rules here. The high court also made it clear that it was not extending any protection to the micro-blogging platform. It said the Central government was free to take action against Twitter Inc in case of any breach of the new IT Rules. "It is made clear that since this court has not passed any interim order; this court has granted time to Respondent No 2 (Twitter Inc) to file affidavit, no protection is granted. It is open to Centre to take action against the Respondent 2 in case of any breach of the Rules," a bench of Justice Rekha Palli said while listing the matter for further hearing July 28. Senior advocate Sajjan Poovayya, representing Twitter, told the court that it was not seeking any protection either. The consequence (of non-compliance) is that the protection to intermediaries falls off. I'm not seeking any protection," he said. "Twitter prays for two weeks' time for filing notarised affidavit of competent official of respondent nos 2 (Twitter Inc). Two weeks time is granted. Scanned copies to be filed by Tuesday, July 13," the high court said after Poovayya submitted that he would get notarised affidavit from the US and the same would require some time.

## 'Delta strain' shadow haunts Tokyo Games

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
Tokyo, July 8: International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach arrived here Thursday just after Japan Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga announced a state of emergency because of rising coronavirus infections in the capital. Suga said the state of emergency would go in effect Monday and last through August 22. This means the Olympics, opening July 23 and running through August 8, will be held entirely under emergency measures. The Paralympics is set to open August 24.

"Taking into consideration the impact of the delta strain, and in order to prevent the resurgence of infections from spreading across the country, we need to step up virus prevention measures," Suga said while announcing the emergency measures. Bach's arrival comes just two weeks before the postponed Tokyo Games are to open. The IOC and local organisers are attempting to hold the Games during the pandemic despite opposition from the Japanese public and medical community. The main focus of the emergency is a request for bars, restaurants and karaoke parlours serving alcohol to remain closed. A ban on serving alcohol is a key step to tone down Olympic-related festivities and keep people from drinking and partying. Tokyo residents are expected to face stay-home orders and watch the Games on TV from home. "How to stop people enjoying the Olympics from going out for drinks is a main issue," Health Minister Norihisa Tamura said. The present state of emergency ends Sunday. Tokyo reported 896 new cases Thursday, up from 673 a week earlier. It's the 19th straight day that cases have topped the mark set seven

**Japanese PM declares state of emergency in capital city till August 22**

# leisure



### ROBERT DOWNEY SR. PASSES AWAY AT 85

Actor-filmmaker Robert Downey Sr., father of Hollywood star Robert Downey Jr., has passed away aged 85. Downey Sr. is best known for films such as *Putney Swope* and *Greaser's Palace*. He died Tuesday night after battling Parkinson's disease, his son Robert Downey Jr. confirmed in a post late Wednesday night.

### FAST AND FURIOUS 9 TO HIT INDIAN BIG SCREENS AUG 5

The ninth installment of the high-octane actioner *Fast & Furious* starring Vin Diesel, John Cena and Cardi B among others is all set to release theatrically in India August 5, it was announced Thursday. The Justin Lin directorial also stars Michelle Rodriguez, Tyrese Gibson, Helen Mirren, and Charlize Theron.



## FORTUNE FORECAST

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

### ARIES

Today, you may get to share your ideas and opinions with like-minded people. Ganesh says you may finally have a heart-to-heart chat with your beloved, and express your deep commitment. You may even talk of your long cherished dreams.

### TAURUS

Logic may be your forte today, but in the game of life, sometimes the heart wins and sometimes the head. Your analytical skills will help you understand things better, in turn, making you wiser. You may feel an urge to spend on music cassettes, CDs and electronic gadgets.

### GEMINI

You will witness a marked improvement in your emotional quotient, says Ganesh. This change may either come through watching a film, listening to a song or just a simple insight. At the workplace, people will be lavishing praise on you for your excellent performance.

### CANCER

There is a fat chance that you will take pleasure in the company of your close friends and relatives, predicts Ganesh. You may have an awesome time with your mate. There may be a few minor problems here and there, but your family will rally behind you and will help you in solving your problems.

### LEO

It may be that the best daffodils bloom early in the morning, but good ideas can come any time of the day, says Ganesh. So spruce up your management skills, as you shall need them to help organise and cash in on the multitude of ideas that will bombard you today.

### VIRGO

Take a little break today, and spend some time looking within. At your office there may be some bitter confrontations, so Ganesh advises you to be very careful and try to prevent things from getting too difficult. In matters of love, a new romance may develop.

### LIBRA

Some days you get the carrot, while on others, it is the stick! Today is going to be one of those 'stick' days when it comes to dealing with your seniors, foresees Ganesh. It would be wise to delay auction bids or sealed tenders. Sometimes, waiting patiently is the best policy, especially if you are a job aspirant.

### SCORPIO

There is a big black hole in your pocket, and it's high time you looked for remedies there. Loved ones will make use of your money as suntan cream - liberally and carelessly. You are most likely to burn the holes larger by spending lavishly, especially to impress a member of the opposite sex.

### SAGITTARIUS

A la a phoenix from the ashes, find yourself reborn as the perfect family person. You are bound to shower love and care on your betrothed. Children, too, will receive your share of love, and they will love it. Enjoy spending quality time with your loved one, says Ganesh.

### CAPRICORN

Work will suck you dry of your energy today, says Ganesh. Business rivals will go out of their way to mar your reputation and project you as incompetent. But to their dismay, you will prove to be way too smart to let them succeed in their sinister motives.

### AQUARIUS

You get a pat on the back due to your brilliant academic standing. People will admire your business acumen and may imitate your choices. But this doesn't mean you become haughty and unapproachable. Carry on the good work with a humble attitude, says Ganesh.

### PISCES

Anticipation is all the fun. Sadly, this only alludes to your months-in-preparation travel plans that are most likely to be delayed today on one count or the other. Though, if this is any consolation, your trip, when it finally occurs, will bring you as much pleasure and satisfaction that you expected out of it, if not more, says Ganesh.



### Yami's Maya to enchant viewers with her charm

**Mumbai:** Actress Yami Gautam offered a glimpse into her character, Maya, in the upcoming horror comedy *Bhoot Police*. Yami shared a photo on Instagram where she can be seen standing in a cave at night holding a torch. Fire from the burning torch lights up her face in the

dark. "To enchant all with her charm arrives MAYA, in *BhootPolice*. Coming soon on @disney-plushotstarvip," the actress captioned the photo. Yami recently tied the knot with *Uri: The Surgical Strike* director Aditya Dhar. *Bhoot Police* will be her first release after wedding. The Pavan Kirpalani directorial also features Saif Ali Khan, Jacqueline Fernandez and Arjun Kapoor in the lead. Produced by Ramesh Taurani, Akshai Puri and co-produced by Jaya Taurani, *Bhoot Police* is slated to release on Disney+ Hotstar.

### Disha ups her fitness level

**Mumbai:** Actress and fitness enthusiast Disha Patani Thursday took everyone by surprise by lifting 80 kilos of weights in the gym. Disha posted a video on Instagram, where she is seen doing weighted squats with 80 kilos of weight. The actress shared that she did one repetition. "80kg 1 rep thank you @rajendradholo," Disha captioned the picture. Krishna Shroff, who is the sister of Disha's beau Tiger Shroff, commented: "Strong." Tiger's mother Ayesha Shroff praised Disha. "This is the same girl who started squats with an empty bar!! Mehnat!!" Ayesha wrote.



### OTT brings regional content into spotlight

Regional languages will account for 60% of television consumption by 2025, up from roughly 55% in 2020, and around 50% of video streaming use in 2019, according to a report released by FICCI



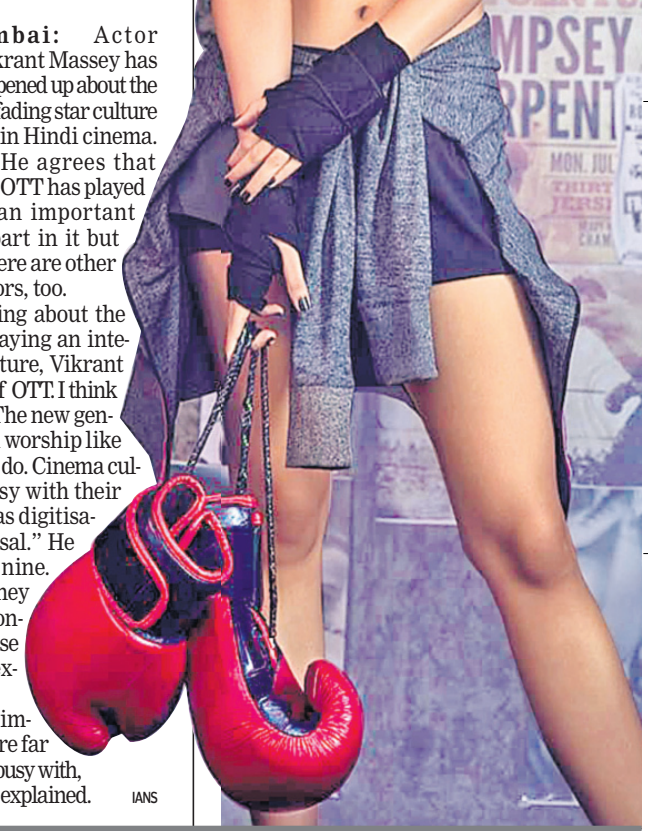
The OTT segment has reached new heights of success as the proliferation of content takes centre stage. The entertainment business, like any other business, witnessed a year of ups and downs around the world but because of the rise in OTT consumption, the sector has somewhat recovered after a period of instability. Studios and platforms are creating storylines based on real life instances and the way of life in a region, thanks to the large number of active online users and rising Internet penetration across the country. Such localised material is extremely popular in the country's original territories, thanks to technological advancements and the affordable availability of cell phones. **Benefits of regional content creation** An immersive plot can be created for 30 to 40 per cent less money with a wider audience. By the next decade, it is predicted that regional content consumption will be doubled thanks to increased smartphone usage which would eventually push the streaming services for more subscribers. Currently, streaming services have

more subscribers than cable connection. Regional languages will account for 60 per cent of television consumption by 2025, up from roughly 55 per cent in 2020, and around 50 per cent of video streaming use in 2019, according to a report released by FICCI. **Growth forecast** Regional markets have significant potential as many of them are underserved, meaning there's room for expansion. With digital platforms making significant progress in terms of content creation as they seek new methods to thrill their audience, local material will receive a significant boost, which is likely to benefit regional cinema greatly. **Regional content - The future of digital era** The consumption of digital content has exponentially expanded over time. People have been glued to their screens riveted by Maharashtra comedy, South action and Bengali crime thrillers, while love story narratives in many languages have kept audiences captivated to their screens thanks to new and snappy writing and settings.

### Vikrant talks about fading star culture



**Mumbai:** Actor Vikrant Massey has opened up about the fading star culture in Hindi cinema. He agrees that OTT has played an important part in it but there are other factors, too. Talking about the web space playing an integral part in the erosion of star culture, Vikrant said: "I don't think it's (just) because of OTT. I think it is because of society in general. The new generation we see today, they don't idol worship like probably people 20 years ago used to do. Cinema culture was a hit but people are so busy with their own lives. The newer generation has digitisation and technology at their disposal." He added: "My nieces are eight and nine. They don't watch Indian content. They are sitting and watching Korean content, so the world has shrunk because of digitisation. We are far more exposed to international content." "OTT has definitely played an important part but also I think there are far more important things that people are busy with, especially the newer generations," he explained.



### PEANUTS



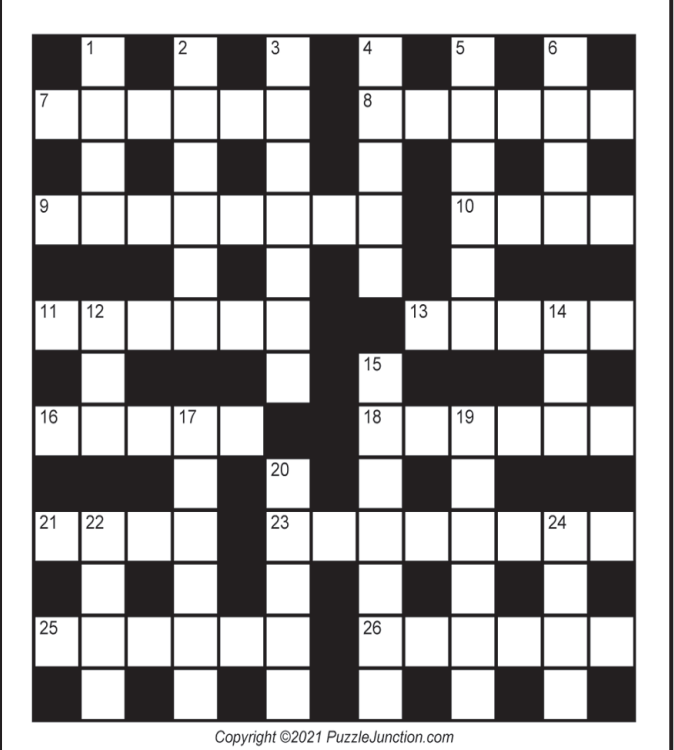
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY

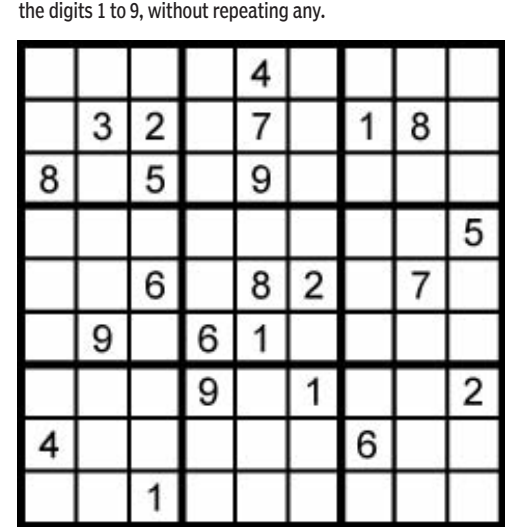


### FUN post CROSSWORD

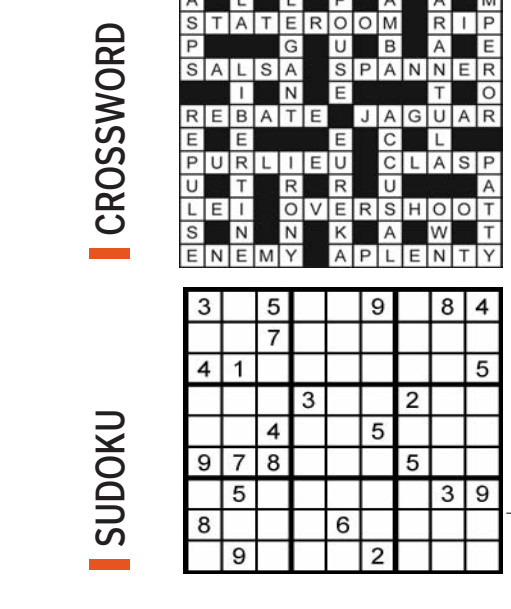


- Across  
7 Agitate  
8 Charging need  
9 Eggplant and ground lamb dish  
10 Nipper  
11 Giant pigfish  
13 Threshold  
16 Some nerve  
18 Soothsayer  
21 Speech problem  
23 Branch  
25 Longing  
26 Hide from view  
Down  
1 Extinct bird  
2 Population count  
3 Soft-shell clam  
4 Deep-six  
5 Pie chart part  
6 Scarf material  
12 Shred  
14 Valueless  
15 Admit a mistake  
17 Damage  
19 Cleave  
20 Small extraterrestrial body  
22 Middle of March  
24 Cross to bear

### SUDOKU



### SOLUTIONS

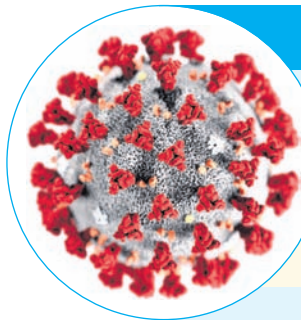


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



FIGHT AGAINST VIRUS

Health Minister Naba Das inaugurates an oxygen concentrator bank at Red Cross Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Thursday



COVID-19 TRACKER

Table with 4 columns: Category, Infected, Recovered, Dead. Data for World, India, and Odisha.

Build houses or face music, BDA tells plot holders in City

Land allottees have been asked to construct the houses or complete the core houses by March 31, 2022 failing which execution of lease deed would not be allowed



ULTIMATUM TO SQUATTERS

It has come to the BDA's notice that many allottees are yet to construct their houses despite multiple warnings and public circulars given through newspaper advertisements since 2012

Some of the allottees are waiting for land prices to soar so that they can sell the landed properties at a higher price to builders which is gross violation of the scheme

to builders which is gross violation of the scheme," said BDA secretary Kabindra Kumar Sahu. He also mentioned that the BDA has allowed one more year for those who are staying abroad and have not been able to construct their houses due to Covid-19 pandemic and yet to register the lease deed of the asset allotted

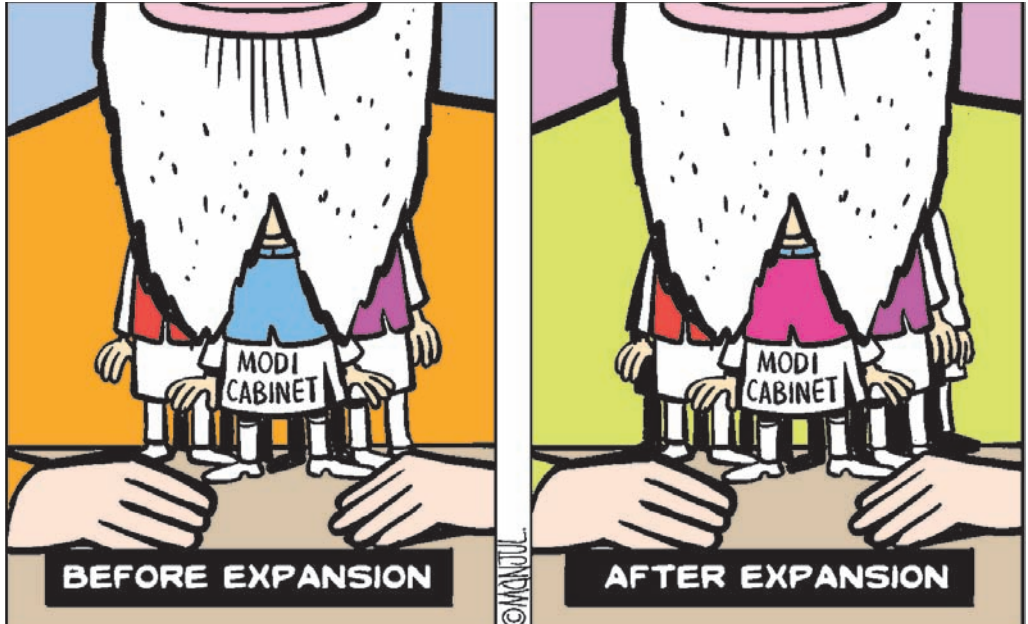
in favour of them. "This is a final warning to all the allottees who are not constructing houses on the allotted plots despite multiple notice and reminders. Upon non-compliance and defiance of the order, we will initiate stringent action against them as per the provisions and act. They will be penalised and if required, their allotment can be revoked," said the BDA secretary. Action will be initiated against the plot owners under the provisions of Property Management Allotment Regulations 2015 and BDA Land (Disposal and Allotment) Regulations 2015. Under the existing system now, allottees of the residential plots in Bhubaneswar (BDA area) are required to construct their houses within five years of the allotment. It is worth mentioning here that the BDA had earlier informed all the allottees who have not constructed houses on their allotted plots to complete their houses through newspaper advertisements in 2009, 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2020.

Rare honey badger spotted in Kujang

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 8: In a rare incident, a honey badger or ratel was spotted in Mahal village under Kujang forest range in Jagatsinghpur district, said a Forest department official Thursday. The villagers spotted the rare honey badger in the morning and were afraid of the creature, the official said. They contacted local forest department staffers. Ratel or honey badger or 'Gadabhalu' in Odia is a small carnivore present in most parts of the country in very low density. It is a schedule 1 animal under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The animal is very rarely sighted in Odisha although often documented in Similipal through camera traps.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



CS: Ramp up digitisation of property rights

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 8: As part of the 5T initiative, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra Thursday directed the Revenue and Disaster Management department to develop a mechanism for end-to-end digitisation of the property registration process in the state. Holding a high-level meeting to review steps taken on timely delivery of public services, Mahapatra directed the department to further simplify the property registration process by adopting an end-to-end digitised system for the entire transaction. He asked the department to ensure that involvement of middlemen in property transactions is done away with and physical presence of buyers and sellers in sub-

5T INITIATIVE



- Uncontested mutation case to be disposed off in a week
Duration for issuance of caste certificates has been reduced from 30 days to 15 days
Timeline for issuance of income certificate has been reduced to 10 days from 15 days

registrars' offices is minimised. The Revenue department officials were asked to adopt the best practices for making the property registration process completely online. "Steps are being taken to make registration and tehsil offices more people centric and automated with user-friendly online systems,"

Revenue and Disaster Management secretary Bishnupada Sethi said. He said the timeline for land property mutation was 90 days, as per the Odisha Right to Public Services Act (ORPS) Act, 2012. Meanwhile, the duration for disposal of uncontested mutation cases has been reduced to seven days, he said.

Similarly, the timeline for issuance of caste certificates has also been reduced from 30 days to 15 days while the deadline for issuance of residence and income certificates was reduced to 10 days from earlier 15 days, Sethi said. The disposal of guardianship certificate application is now 30 days instead of 45 days and the timeline for issuance of income certificate has been reduced to 10 days from 15 days, Sethi further said. According to sources, around 40,000 uncontested mutation cases have been finalised as per the new timeline of seven days. Similarly, around 4.47 lakh various miscellaneous and caste certificates have been issued since the publication of new timeline circular by the Revenue department April 6, 2021.

Vaishnaw, Pradhan, Tudu take charge as Union ministers



Minister of Railways, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan (C) and Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Bishweswar Tudu (L) assume office, Thursday

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, July 8: A day after taking oath as Cabinet ministers, Dharmendra Pradhan Thursday assumed the charge of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship while Ashwini Vaishnaw took charge of the Ministry of Railways, Communications, Electronics & Information Technology. Similarly,

Mayurbhanj Lok Sabha MP Bishweswar Tudu took charge of Tribal Affairs as well as Jal Shakti Ministry as a Minister of State. Pradhan said that he is committed to strengthening the skilling efforts of the ministry and preparing the youth for 'future of work' by creating linkages between skilling and employment. He has been given the Education Ministry and Skill Development and

Vaishnaw said that railways, communications and technology touch the lives of all Indians and that he would work to fulfil the PM's vision. Entrepreneurship ministry. "It is a matter of immense pride

that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has entrusted me and the new team with the important responsibility of working on education, skill development and entrepreneurship landscape as well as on encouraging research and innovation for India's unhindered progress," Pradhan said. Significantly, Vaishnaw, who is a Member of Rajya Sabha from Odisha, said that Railways,

Communication and Technology touch the lives of all Indians and that he will work to fulfil the Prime Minister's vision. Tudu, who was happy about getting the Tribal Affairs portfolio, said, "I feel extremely happy to take the charge of MoS in the ministry of Tribal Affairs. I will be glad to work with Union Minister Arjun Munda ji for discharging the duty."

SC adjourns hearing in Polavaram case

DURING THE HEARING, THE COUNSEL APPEARING FOR ODISHA URGED THE APEX COURT TO ADJOURN THE MATTER BY FOUR WEEKS



POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, July 8: The Supreme Court Thursday adjourned the hearing of a petition pertaining to an order issued by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) regarding Polavaram dam case. Odisha's petition against the NGT order wherein the latter has accepted the recommendations of a committee on Polavaram project without giving notice to the state government was listed for hearing Thursday before the bench of Justices S Abdul Nazeer and Krishna Murari. The Supreme Court Thursday tagged Odisha's petition against NGT order with the original suit filed by the state in 2007 against Polavaram project. The bench also issued notice to the Telangana government and Poguleti Sudhakar Reddy, the original petitioner in NGT.

STATE'S PLEA AGAINST NGT ORDER

Odisha's petition against the NGT order wherein the latter has accepted the recommendations of a committee on Polavaram project without giving notice to the state gov't was listed for hearing Thursday. The SC tagged Odisha's petition against NGT order with the original suit filed by the state in 2007 against Polavaram project. The bench also issued notice to the Telangana government and Poguleti Sudhakar Reddy, the original petitioner in NGT.

2 interstate cyber crooks held, ₹25 lakh seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 8: The Commissionerate Police Thursday claimed to have arrested two interstate cyber fraudsters from Kolkata in connection with a cheating case registered at Jagatpur police station June 4, 2021. The accused have been identified as Anilsh Anand, 23, of Darbhanga area in Bihar and Ankit Roy, 23, of Paschim Bardhaman area of West Bengal. The police seized ₹25,70,300, a Toyota Fortuner SUV, two laptops, three mobile phones, four SIM cards, five ATM cards, seven cheque books and 15 bank pass books from the duo, said twin city Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarshi at a presser here. According to police, Dillip Kumar Sahoo of Najarpur under Jagatpur police limits had received a phone call from an unknown person December 12, 2019. The caller identified himself as the nodal officer for installation of telecom towers of a company. The caller had promised to install a telecom tower on Sahoo's

land and pay the latter a sum of ₹20 lakh as security money for 20 years. He also told Sahoo that the telecom company would pay a monthly rent of ₹20,000 for the tower and provide job to someone from the latter's family for a monthly salary of ₹15,000. Lured by the attractive offers, Sahoo sent the required documents to the caller for the purpose. Sahoo deposited ₹39,01,870 in 25 bank accounts provided by the caller. Later, he realised that he had been cheated by the caller. Soon, he lodged a complaint in this regard with the Cuttack Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP). DCP Prateek Singh had formed a team comprising Cuttack cyber police in-charge Renubala Tripathy, Jagatpur police in-charge Rabinranath Meher and Cantonment police in-charge Dinakrushna Mishra to probe the case. The team found involvement of Anilsh and Ankit in the case and detained the duo from Kolkata a few days ago. Police claimed that the duo along with a few others was operating a fake telecom firm in Kolakata.

WOODEN WONDERS



Chariot construction work enters its last phase in Puri, Thursday

"We are aware that the suit is pending since 2007. It was also part of the bench that heard the matter for a few years. We will tag this petition with the original suit filed by Odisha," Justice S Abdul Nazeer said. During the hearing, the counsel appearing for Odisha urged the apex court to adjourn the matter for four weeks. The counsel also informed the court that an original suit filed by Odisha in 2007 against the Polavaram dam project is pending with the court. Odisha's counsel Shrivani Kumar pleaded the court that the matter should be listed for early hearing. He argued that Polavaram project is going to be completed in a few months. Lakhs of people are going to suffer after the completion of

the project, the advocate submitted to the court. Significantly the SC hasn't heard the original suit filed by Odisha since February 2020. Meanwhile, Odisha contended in the petition filed against NGT order that the tribunal has accepted a committee report with substantial recommendations that are against the interests and rights of the state under existing interstate agreements. It has been mentioned in the plea that Odisha was not made party to the case nor was the state's stance ever elicited. Odisha pleaded the apex court to set aside the NGT order dated September 18, 2020. The state government contended in the petition that the NGT failed to consider the pending issues before the Supreme Court.

# State's nCoV tally mounts to 9,32,330

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 8:** Odisha's Covid-19 tally soared to 9,32,330 Thursday as 2,542 more people tested positive for the infection, while 57 fresh fatalities pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 4,415, a Health official said.

Though there has been a decline in fresh cases, daily coronavirus fatalities continued to remain above the 50-mark since July 5.

The Health department, however, clarified that fresh fatalities include deaths caused earlier which are now being added to the toll after an audit.

The state now has 27,580 active cases, while 9,00,282 people have recovered from the disease so far, including 2,920 in the last 24 hours. As many as 2,542 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 1,084 fresh infections were detected during contact tracing.

Cuttack district registered the highest number of new cases at 428, followed by Khurda (424) and Balasore (221).

Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls, recorded the highest number of fresh fatalities at 10, followed by five each in Bargarh, Ganjam, Nayagarh, Puri



and Sundargarh, and four each in Dhenkanal, Kalahandi and Koraput.

Fifty-three coronavirus patients have died due to comorbidities so far. The state has thus far tested over 1.43 crore samples for Covid-19, including 72,645 Wednesday, while the positivity rate stands at 6.5 per cent.

In a bid to clarify the confusion over the rise in fresh fatalities at a time when daily cases are declining, the Health department tweeted, "This list does not reflect deaths occurring on a particular day. It gives details of past deaths for which the death audit process has

been duly completed and the cause of death has been identified as due to COVID-19 (sic)."

Additional Chief Secretary, Health, PK Mohapatra rejected the opposition's allegation that the state government was hiding Covid-19 deaths.

Even ruling BJD vice-president SR Patnaik alleged that the state government was trying to hide deaths to show its 'efficient' pandemic management.

"Various reports are being published in the media at different times about the Covid deaths. Everyone should know the real-

ity and how it is being reported. Every death is accounted for. No death can be hidden by anybody, whether it is Covid death or non-Covid in any hospital or other places," Mohapatra said.

Stating that the Centre has a specific guideline to ascertain Covid-19 deaths, Mohapatra said the state government has put in place a three-tier mechanism. Hospital, district and state-level committees review each death whether it was due to Covid or not, he said.

"During May and June, the Covid infection was very high. At that time, the hospitals were occupied and our doctors were very busy in treating coronavirus patients and preventing the disease from spreading further. So, they did not have time for this task," said Mohapatra, adding that cyclone Yaas also added to the woes.

Now that the situation has improved and the doctors are free to do this work, the deaths are being reviewed every day, the senior official said.

"During the past few days, we have seen a rise in Covid death cases. All these cases are of May and June. But are being reported now after following due procedure and audit," he further clarified.

# CM seeks cooperation for smooth Rath Yatra

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 8:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday sought cooperation from all stakeholders for smooth conduct of this year's Rath Yatra July 12.

The annual festival would be held without the participation of devotees owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Like last year, the car festival of Lord Jagannath and His siblings is going to be held in an extraordinary situation this year, said the Chief Minister while reviewing preparations for the mega festival through videoconferencing.

"Devotees across the world will witness the festival through television and social media. So, the rituals of the deities need to be completed on time. Besides, the Covid norms must be followed properly during the rituals," the Chief Minister told the officials.

Patnaik complimented all stakeholders for smooth conduct of last year's Rath Yatra. "Although the second wave of the pandemic is wan-



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, along with 5T Secretary VK Pandian, reviews preparations for Rath Yatra through videoconferencing, Thursday

**Like last year, the car festival of Lord Jagannath and His siblings is going to be held in an extraordinary situation this year, said the Chief Minister**

ing, the threat is not over yet. I pray to the Lord for a smooth festival," he said.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Naba Kishore Das said special arrangements have been made

for ensuring proper healthcare for servants and temple employees during the festival. Director General of Police Abhay said all security measures are in place for the mega event.

The state government, meanwhile, has relaxed the weekend shutdown norms for the Holy City ahead of the Rath Yatra. "In view of the imposition of curfew in Puri from 8pm of July 11 to 8pm of July 14 for Rath Yatra, the city has been exempted from the weekend shutdown July 10 (Saturday)," said an order issued by the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC).

## Heavy rain to lash state for 4 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 8:** The regional office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Thursday issued warning of heavy rainfall for next four days.

The IMD said, "Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places in Nabarangpur, Nuapada and Sundargarh districts. Thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at one or two places of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Sonapur, Boudh, Kandhamal, Nayagarh, Khurda and Puri."

The highest temperature in the state was recorded at Cuttack (32.5 degrees C) while the lowest temperature was recorded in Phulbani (16 degree C).

Heavy rain would continue in different parts of the state till Monday while light to moderate rain could also occur in isolated places during these days.

## Expectations from new Edu Minister

**Bhubaneswar:** After the appointment of Dharmendra Pradhan as new Union Minister of Education, the parents and schools of the state expect development of education in the country, especially in the state of Odisha. Organisation of Parent Associations' Forum said that the safety and security of school goers should be ensured by the minister once the schools are ready to reopen. They also demanded that parents' grievance must be prioritised and resolved soon by the minister. He should implement and monitor the policies and guidelines issued by different boards.

## B-Active gets Special Apex Committee nod

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 8:** The fourth Special Apex Committee for validation of Maturation Phase has approved the Bhubaneswar Active (B-Active) Project under City Investments to Innovate Integrate and Sustain (CITIIS). The project is now on its way to the implementation phase.

The Special Apex Committee comprises representatives from Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), French Development Agency (AFD), European Union (EU) and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA).

Presentation for the B-Active project was made under the guidance of Sanjay Kumar Singh, Chief Executive Officer, Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL). Singh said, "With this approval, now BSCL will try to implement all the components of the project with a more structured way in order to achieve the objectives of the B-Active Project."

The Joint Secretary and Mission Director (SCM) MoHUA congratulated Bhubaneswar team for successful preparation of all deliverables of the Maturation Phase and the approach of various components of the project.

The B-Active proposal was submitted by BSCL under the theme



of Public Open Spaces. It was selected as one of the 12 city proposals under CITIIS Challenge Programme in February 2019 at the Second Apex Smart City CEO's conference held in Delhi. Subsequently, a tripartite agreement was signed March 5, 2019 for the CITIIS Programme between MoHUA, Government of Odisha and BSCL. The city will get ₹79.30 crore in grant in phases.

The intention behind B-Active project is to resolve the issues associated with service delivery to improve the quality of public open spaces across 2,470 acres, encompassing parts of the planned area and the Old Town area of Bhubaneswar City.

While addressing the issue of declining levels of physical activity, a Smart Active Living Strategy was proposed to maximize the use of open spaces for different assets (components) in the city, including streets, water, parks & open spaces, sports & playgrounds, and heritage.

## MAN HELD FOR CHEATING

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 8:** Commissionerate Police Thursday arrested a person for marrying multiple women by identifying himself as a realtor. The accused person was identified as Priyabrata Mishra of Surya Nagar area in Capital police limits.

The accused had also allegedly posed as Software engineer and interior designer to target girls from rich families. Two separate cases were registered at Mahila and Capital police stations against the accused around a month ago.

According to sources, he had reportedly received huge amounts of money and luxurious vehicles as dowry from the victims. Later, he would start torturing the victim ladies after few days of marriage under various pretexts. The victim alleged that Mishra committed the above crimes with the connivance of his family members.

One of the complainants from Niali in Cuttack accused Mishra of receiving ₹21 lakh and a luxurious car during their marriage July 15, 2018. She alleged that Mishra with the help of his family members had terminated her pregnancy as well.

Similarly, Mishra had reportedly received ₹24 lakh as dowry from another lady.

However, the man has rubbished all the allegations and said one divorce case is pending in court.

## e-Lectures portal for UG students launched

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 8:** Higher Education Minister Arun Sahoo Thursday launched the e-Lectures portal developed by DDCE, Utkal University. The portal https://vt-putkal.odisha.gov.in provides HD quality recorded lectures of eminent teachers which can be seen and downloaded by students and teachers free of cost.

At present, the e-Lectures of UG 1st and 2nd semesters, exactly as per the choice based credit system (CBCS) syllabus, are available in 11 subjects (one from commerce stream, four from science and six from humanities).

These 11 subjects are physics, chemistry, zoology, botany, political science, odia, history, english, psychology, economics & commerce. Gradually, e-Lectures for other semesters and other subjects will be added to the portal.

"The recording of the lectures for first and second semester have been completed and uploaded on the portal. There are plans to record lecturers for courses of 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th semesters at the earliest," said Sahoo.

The project is being implemented under Rashtriya Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA). The total cost is ₹5 crore which has been given by center and state in 60:40 ratio re-

spectively.

The Directorate of Distance & Continuing Education (DDCE) of Utkal University had planned to implement virtual tutorial (VT) project from January 2020.

The DDCE has been asked to be ready with the semester-wise and subject-wise VT classes. Expert teachers will take the classes at the studio in DDCE here. The recordings will be played in the smart classrooms opened in 101 colleges.

Expert teachers on specific subjects have been chosen and they will be asked to take the classes both in Odia and English.

The DDCE shall give the list of teachers to the HE department in to ensure that the said teachers are spared by the respective colleges for VT classes.

The duration for VT classes will be of 30 minutes each. A summary of what was taught should be shown in PPT format at the end of each class and also in the beginning of the next one.

Earlier, School & Mass Education (S&ME) Minister Samir Ranjan Dash had launched two portals: e-PATHSHALA and e-MULAYANKAN, developed by Odisha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA) for evaluation of teaching imparted to students through online and its fruitfulness.

## Fly-by-night firm dupes lady tutor of ₹23 lakh in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 8:** A lady teacher has lodged a complaint with Badagada police alleging that a real estate firm has duped her of around ₹23 lakh on the pretext of proving her a landed property here.

The victim claimed that she was a home tutor for the accused realtor Parsuram Kandi's son at BJB Nagar. Recently, Kandi and his wife told the victim that many land owners have authorised Kandi to sell their properties located in different parts of the City.

When she asked Kandi to show the power of attorney, the latter instructed other accused to show her the documents. His staffers convinced the victim that Kandi had been very busy and that they would show her the documents later.

The victim transferred ₹10 lakh to the bank account of Kandi January 19, 2021. She again transferred ₹5 lakh and ₹3 lakh to Kandi's account January 29 and February 17 respectively. Later, the accused persons asked her to pay ₹5 lakh more due to some urgent paper work which she did.

Meanwhile, the lady tutor stopped visiting Kandi's residence owing to the second wave of Covid-19. Meanwhile, Kandi and other accused did not respond to her phone calls even though she called them multiple times.

## TOURISM INFRA



A concrete ghat is being constructed at Mahanadi river near Ballyatra ground in Cuttack, Thursday

OP PHOTO

## YEAR-ROUND ECO-COTTAGE SOON AT 6 DESTINATIONS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 8:** If things go well, nature lovers could enjoy year-round eco-cottage facilities at Hirakud, Baliput (Satkoshia), Paradip, Daringbadi, Pati Sonapur and Koraput with the state government Thursday deciding to develop such facilities soon in a public-private partnership (PPP) mode.

Chaired by Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, a high-level meeting on eco-tourism held virtually decided to pilot the project at Hirakud in Sambalpur and Baliput (Satkoshia) in Cuttack.

According to Tourism Principal Secretary Vishal Dev the state government has identified around 6 acre of land at each of the destinations. "Around ₹6.25 crore will be spent on landscaping and setting up ecologically suitable as well as sustainable cottages at each of the destinations," Dev said.

Considering the state's potential for year-round eco-retreat activities, the Chief Secretary directed the officials to design, develop and maintain the cottages on PPP mode with credible private partners having experience in the trade.

The Chief Secretary said the

**The Tourism, Water Resource, and Forest and Environment departments have been asked to identify other such destinations**

government would provide support including facilitating viable gap funding for setting up the cottages and infrastructural support like road, power and water. "The private partner would also be provided handholding support for availing different statutory permissions," Mahapatra said, adding private partners would be picked through open bidding.

The Tourism, Water Resource, and Forest and Environment departments have been asked to identify other such destinations, and protect the government land there for future development.

The Tourism department was also directed to lease out various tourism properties, including Panthanivas and roadside amenity centers, and operationalise those through operation and management (O&M) partners.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, PRADIPTA PANDA aged about 47 years, D/o Ramesh Chandra Panda, W/o Narayan Pani of Vill./P.O.- Kandasar, P.S.- Nalco Nagar, Dist.- Angul. My actual name is Pradipta Panda which is mentioned in my Aadhaar Card but in my Passport No. K0998541 my name wrongly mentioned as Pradipta Pani instead of Pradipta Panda. Both are same and one person. Henceforth, I shall be known as PRADIPTA PANDA for all purpose. Pradipta Panda

## FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

# Ujjwala Yojana goes off in Sambalpur dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, July 8:** The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana which is touted as a people oriented scheme of the Centre has gone haywire in this district as no new consumers have been given connections for last two years, a report said. Similarly, the rate of refilling of the cylinders by the consumers is disappointing. Thousands of people have applied for connections since October 2019 but they are yet to receive the same. No one knows when they will be given new connections. The PMUY was launched May 1, 2016.



LPG distributors taking advantage of the situation have allegedly resorted to irregularities. Many of the distributors are alleged to have kept the LPG books and cards of the consumers with them and black-marketing the cylinders in the open market

The scheme aimed at safeguarding the health of women and children of BPL (Below Poverty Line) families by providing them with clean cooking fuel-LPG, so that they don't have to compromise their health in smoky kitchens or wander in unsafe areas collecting firewood.

The consumers in the district were included in the scheme in 2017 and provided with an LPG connection. Over 1.2 lakh consumers were included in the scheme under 35 distributors of LPG marketing companies in between 2017 and 2019. Central and state level leaders organised meetings in urban and rural areas and gave away LPG connections to the women enlisted in the scheme.

Regular publicity campaigns were carried out to highlight the advantages of the scheme among the

people. Many of the hoardings and posters put up at that time can still be seen at major thoroughfares and vantage points of the district.

People alleged large scale irregularities have taken place in implementation of the scheme. When contacted by this correspondent, a company official refused to give the exact number of consumers who have taken a refill after getting a new connection. A report by the comptroller and auditor general submitted in 2018 was also indicative of such irregularities.

It was found out that a majority of the new consumers have not taken a refill after their first cylinder. An official on the condition of anonymity said that on an average a consumer hardly takes one

or two refills in a year. It is clear that on an average two per cent of the consumers take one to two refills in a year. The main reason behind the lack of interest among the consumers to refill their cylinder is the price rise of LPG cylinders.

The other reasons are like easy availability of firewood and cooking coal in nearby jungles at cheap price in tribal areas, absence of knowledge in use of an LPG stove, non-availability of subsidy money to consumers and lack of money with the consumers to buy a refill. As a result, many of the consumers have now stored their LPG cylinders and stoves in their houses.

The LPG distributors taking advantage of the situation have allegedly resorted to irregularities.

The scheme aimed at safeguarding the health of women and children of BPL (Below Poverty Line) families by providing them with clean cooking fuel-LPG, so that they don't have to compromise their health in smoky kitchens or wander in unsafe areas collecting firewood

Regular publicity campaigns were carried out to highlight the advantages of the scheme among the people. Many of the hoardings and posters put up at that time can still be seen at major thoroughfares and vantage points of the district

Many of the distributors are alleged to have kept the LPG books and cards of the consumers with them and black-marketing the cylinders in the open market. Residents claimed that the truth would be out if the LPG companies conduct a proper probe into the charges.

Ujjwala nodal officer Debesh Bal admitted that no new consumers had been added under the scheme from 2019 and new consumers will be soon added in the scheme. He assured of action if charges of irregularities are brought against any distributor. He, however, said the reason for which consumers do not come for subsequent refilling of cylinders are many.

# NGT asks SPCB to probe BRPL water pollution charge again

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, July 8:** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) in New Delhi has again ordered a detailed probe into alleged water pollution caused by Brahmani River Pellets Limited (BRPL) at Kalinganagar Industrial Complex in Jajpur district, an official source informed Thursday.

Judicial members of NGT B Amit Sthalekar and Saibal Dasgupta have ordered the Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) to conduct reinvestigation at a time when the BRPL plant is open. A report is to be submitted within seven days.

It is pertinent to mention here that, a probe was recently conducted by OSPCB when BRPL plant remained shut, which had raised many eyebrows.

According to sources, the OSPCB had conducted the probe and submitted its report before the NGT July 1. However, an affidavit filed by OSPCB law officer Santosh Kumar Kuanr along with the investigation report allegedly contained inconsistencies, the source stated.

In the B-1 para of the report, it has been cited that the BRPL plant is of 4 metric tonne capacity. It was also mentioned that the plant was lying closed during the probe for plant maintenance purposes.

Notably, the submission has caught the OSPCB in the wrong



**A PROBE WAS RECENTLY CONDUCTED BY OSPCB WHEN BRPL PLANT REMAINED SHUT. IT HAD RAISED MANY EYEBROWS**

foot as an environmental outfit. The Kalinganagar Paribesh Suraksha Samiti, the complainant in the case, has questioned how the SPCB could conduct a probe when the plant was lying closed. As per rules, the plant authorities should inform the OSPCB if they want to shut down

or close operations in the plant for maintenance.

The Kalinganagar Paribesh Suraksha Samiti had filed a petition (149/2017/EZ) in the NGT accusing BRPL of discharging wastewater of the plant into Ganda nullah (a natural creek) and polluting the water body it had sought immediate intervention of NGT in the matter.

Hearing the matter June 15, the NGT had earlier directed the OSPCB to conduct a probe and submit its report before July 5. Accordingly, a team of OSPCB officials including environmental engineer Hiranya Kumar Nayak and regional officer Pramod Kumar Behera visited the plant premises June 24, which was closed for maintenance.

# Balasore admin flouted sand mining norms, NGT told



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 8:** A Joint Inspection Committee formed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has found that the Balasore district administration has not adhered to prescribed sand mining norms before allowing leases to private miners.

The panel in its report told the NGT that District Survey Report (DSR) which comprises details of mineral reserves, local geographies, natural resources and others lacked adequate data as mandated by the Sustainable Sand Mining

Guidelines, 2016 and Enforcement and Monitoring Guidelines for Sand Mining, 2020 issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

The revelation was done while hearing a case of sand mining at Dhitapur Mouza in Balasore district. The petitioner in the case-Haripada Manna and others had claimed that the DSR was interim in nature and did not identify feasible mining sites, deposition sites, erosion prone sites and others in violation of established rules of sand mining.

The NGT had later formed a joint committee comprising mem-

bers from the ministry of forest and environment and other agencies and asked them to report to the tribunal on the issue.

"We find from the committee's report at page no 92 of the paper book that it is unanimously agreed that the district survey report needs to be supplemented with additional information with regard to inclusion of the provisions and inclusion of the guidelines with respect to sustainable sand mining guidelines, 2016 and enforcement & monitoring guidelines for sand mining, 2020," the NGT said in its interim order.

"It also mentions that these principles are to be enforced with the new sand mining leases which are to be auctioned by the District Administration retrospectively," it added. The petitioner in the case argued before the NGT that auction of sand mining leases should not have been granted before the finalisation of the final District Survey Report.

The state government meanwhile told the NGT that the final DSR was uploaded on the district web portal around July 5. The NGT has asked the government to bring the claim on record through an affidavit.



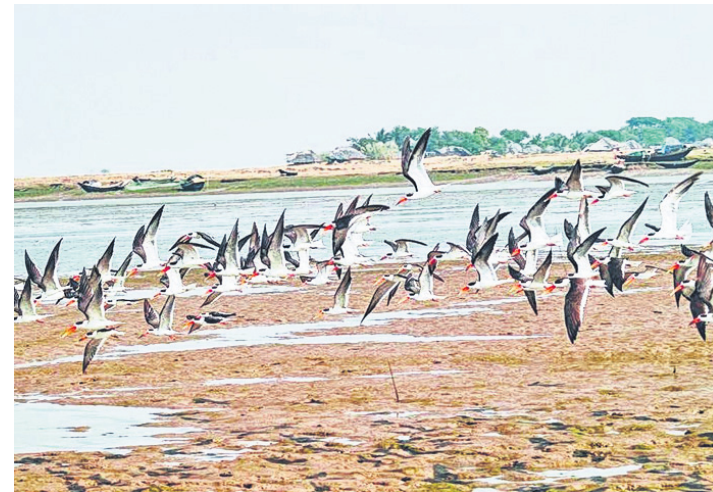
Land measurement work is underway for construction of a cricket academy at Kadam ground in Angul, Thursday

OP PHOTO

## BOOST TO CRICKET

## ANNUAL BREEDING SEASON

# Migratory birds throng Bhitarkanika



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kendrapara, July 8:** With the onset of monsoon, thousands of migratory waterbirds from across the country have made the marshy wetlands of Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara district their temporary home for the annual nesting and breeding season, a senior forest official said Thursday.

The arrival of the local migratory birds has reestablished Bhitarkanika as one of the prominent heronries of Odisha, Rajnagar Mangrove (Wildlife) Forest Division DFO Jagyandatt Pati said.

With the commencement of the rainy season, local migratory species have arrived in batches at the Bagagahan heronry for seasonal nesting. They have built nests and laid eggs atop the mangrove trees. Their sojourn would last for at least three months from now, after which they would start their homeward journey, he said.

There has been a sizable congregation of these monsoon birds

this year. They are still arriving in batches. The headcount of these winged species will be conducted next month. Last year, 97,866 birds were counted nesting at the national park, Pati said.

There is ample food for the birds as the place, crisscrossed by innumerable water inlets and nullahs, is free of human interference, the DFO said.

The absence of human interference, ideal climatic conditions, cool breeze and the river system have all emerged to the liking of these winged species, he said.

Noted ornithologist Dr Salim Ali had made a chance discovery of Bhitarkanika birds' habitat while on a casual visit to the national park in 1981. Over a dozen species of birds congregate at the heronries in the park every year. Some of these species are Open Bill Stork, Little Cormorant, Intermediary Egret, Large Egret, Little Egret, Purple Heron, Grey Heron, Night Heron, Darter, White Ibis and Cattle Egret.

# DA: Ex-OSWC babu caught in Vig net

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bolangir, July 8:** Separate teams of Vigilance officials from four divisions raided the houses of a retired superintendent of Odisha State Warehousing Corporation (OSWC) Thursday.

The accused, identified as Ganapati Purohit, resides at Palace Line area in Bolangir town.

Purohit was earlier working in OSWC Limited. The retired official was accused of amassing as-



sets disproportionate to his known sources of income. "The raids were simultaneously conducted at four different places. The office of Purohit's wife, who works as a teacher at

a school in Bolangir town is also being searched," Vigilance DSP Sadanand Pani said. Vigilance sleuths from Bolangir, Subarnapur, Bargarh and Sambalpur divisions jointly conducted the raids. Cash, gold ornaments, bank deposits including four multi-storied buildings have been detected.

Total valuation of the assets seized can only be ascertained after the raids are over, which are still underway the Vigilance DSP added.

## RAGING PROTEST



Trade union members staging a demonstration at the Badamal ordnance factory against the Centre's Essential Defence Services Ordinance that aims to forestall protests against the ordnance board, Thursday

### PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the General Public that one ID Card of Mr. Alok Kumar Mishra & Ratnakar Gouda issued by ICICI Bank Ltd. having ID Card No. 2133507 & 2133505 has been found missing and/or lost on 11.06.2021. Anyone, who finds the said ID Card, is requested to return the said ID Card to the Manager, Debt Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Limited, OCCF Building, Shriya Square Branch, Unit - 3, Bhubaneswar - 751001. Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorised person holding the said ID Card No. 2133507 & 2133505. Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID Card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and peril and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.

**Date: 30.06.2021** **Sd./-**  
**Place: Bhubaneswar** **For ICICI Bank Limited**

### OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, JODA

Phone No.: 06767-272214, Fax No.: 06767-272214  
E-mail: jodam.hud@nic.in

No. 4558 Dt.: 7.7.2021

### 'e'-Procurement Notice

**Bid Identification No. JM-02/2021-22**

No. C-538: Bid documents consisting of specification, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the Govt. website i.e. [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in).

- Nature of Work : Civil
- No. of Works : 41 Nos.
- Estimated Cost : From Rs.90,537/- to Rs.17,84,554/-
- Bid Identification No. : 2021\_ORULB\_69625\_1 to 2021\_ORULB\_69625\_41
- Date & time of availability of the documents in the portal : From 10.00 A.M. on Dt.08.07.2021 to 5.00 P.M. of Dt.19.07.2021
- Last date/time for receipt of Bids in the portal : On Dt.19.07.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Last date for submission & drop the Bid document in the box : From 10.00 A.M. on Dt.20.07.2021 to Dt.22.07.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Bids received online shall be opened : At 10.00 A.M. on Dt.23.07.2021
- Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Officer, Joda Municipality

Further, the details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal: [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in).  
**Sd./- Executive Officer, Joda Municipality**  
**OIPR-13124/11/0005/2122**

FOCUS WORLD POLITICS

# BIDEN'S NIXON STRATEGY



**Notwithstanding the predictable howls of protest from some Europeans, US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel are right to seek a thawing of ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin. If the main global threat is China, Putin has several compelling reasons to play ball**

The West's imperial predations. With Western imperialism having been largely rolled back, it is Russia's continued occupation of historic Chinese territory that stands out the most to ordinary Chinese observers.

For example, the city of Vladivostok, with its vast naval base, has been a part of Russia only since 1860, when the tsars built a military harbour there. Before that, the city was known by the Manchurian name of Haishenwai. When Russia held celebrations for the city's 160th anniversary last year, hyper-nationalist Chinese internet users exploded in indignation.

There is also a demographic argument for Putin to consider: the six million Russians spread along the Siberian border face 90 million Chinese on the other side. And many of these Chinese regularly cross the border into Russia to trade (and a good number to stay).

Just as Nixon's brokering of relations with Mao was never intended to transform China into a bastion of human rights and democracy, nor is the Biden/Macron/Merkel strategy meant to turn Putin's Russia into a free society overnight. Western leaders are not harbouring any illusions. Despite everything he has to gain from better relations with the West, Putin will not shift away from China if doing so poses any threat to his power or personal safety. The Putin regime is far too brittle and reliant on outright authoritarianism to take any serious risks.

If the West wants Russia to distance itself from China, it will have to accept Putin as he is -warts and all. Though he won't improve his record on human rights, he could at least be convinced to recognise internationally agreed norms in cyberspace, and to stop openly threatening his neighbours. That sort of bargain is more than possible, and it just might be enough to alert a stubborn Xi to the strategic dangers of his own regional and international bullying.

*The author is Professor Emeritus of Economics at New York University.*

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

The strategic imperative behind US President Joe Biden's recent summitry in Europe was to forge a united Western response to China. In the three weeks since those meetings, it has become clear that he succeeded.

The United States, France, and Germany are now essentially on the same page. Each recognises that broad international agreement is necessary to convince China to curtail its aggressive behaviour: The Chinese attitude was laid bare in Chinese President Xi Jinping's remarks this month commemorating the centennial of the Communist Party of China. Any attempt to interfere with his country's ascent, he warned, will lead to "heads bashed bloody against a Great Wall of steel."

In Asia, the Biden administration's strategic imperative has led it to place greater emphasis on the "Quad" of Asia-Pacific democracies: Australia, India, Japan, and the US. Late last month, the US and Japan staged joint naval maneuvers to prepare for any Chinese aggression toward Taiwan. And in Europe, both NATO and the European Union have elevated China to the top of the policy agenda after previously trying to avoid "out-of-region" commitments.

Although Biden has made tangible progress in forging a broad consensus on China, he has only just begun to tackle the hardest element of this policy: convincing Russian President Vladimir Putin that his country has a national-security interest in distancing itself from China. Nonetheless, getting Putin on board is now clearly a high priority. Since their summits with Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel have both called for a reset of EU relations with Russia.

To be sure, the suggestion that the EU might patch up relations with Russia has been met with near-hysterical protests in the Netherlands, the Baltic States, and Poland. Responding to these histrionics, Merkel hastened to make clear "that such talks with the Russian President aren't a kind of reward."

If Merkel was dismissive, that

is because the howls of protest were entirely predictable. Abrupt strategic policy shifts are rarely understood at their outset. When US President Richard Nixon inaugurated relations with Communist China 50 years ago, he set off a firestorm among America's allies, with Japan objecting even more strongly than the Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and Poles are now.

Today, Nixon's diplomatic initiative is remembered as one of the great strategic breakthroughs of the post-war era. The "opening of China" arose from the fact that both Nixon and Mao Zedong had come to view the Soviet Union as the greatest threat to each of their countries. By establishing diplomatic relations, they could force the Soviets (who had recently invaded Czechoslovakia and then waged a short but brutal border war with China) to reconsider their aggressive policies.

It worked. In the years that followed, the Soviets sharply reduced troop deployments along the border with China and entered into major nuclear-arms treaties with the US.

Fast-forward to today. Putin, a man of bloodless realpolitik if ever there was one, has several

reasons to play ball with Biden - many of which are just as compelling as those that motivated Mao and Zhou Enlai to welcome Nixon's overture. For starters, because Russia is more isolated now than the Soviet Union ever was, it has become dangerously dependent on China. But the main beneficiary of Putin's anti-Western antagonism over the past decade has not been Russia but China. By bringing Russia in from the cold in which the West has placed his economy, Putin could reverse its descent into economic sclerosis and stagnation.

In fact, like many in Russia's security establishment, Putin recognises that his country has received scant benefits from its relationship with Xi's China. Although China has been investing massively in firms and infrastructure around the world (much of it through Xi's signature Belt and Road Initiative), only a minuscule amount of Chinese money has made it to Russia, where it has been desperately needed to offset the effects of Western sanctions.

Moreover, while China's leaders never mention it, they are just as embittered over Russia's theft of Chinese territory in the nineteenth century as they are over



Melvyn B. Krauss

**PUTIN, A MAN OF BLOODLESS REALPOLITIK IF EVER THERE WAS ONE, HAS SEVERAL REASONS TO PLAY BALL WITH BIDEN - MANY OF WHICH ARE JUST AS COMPELLING AS THOSE THAT MOTIVATED MAO AND ZHOU ENLAI TO WELCOME NIXON'S OVERTURE**



Daron Acemoglu

**While the risk of [sustained US inflation should not be ignored, neither should it cloud our view of what is really at stake in the current post-pandemic economy**

## Real Inflation Risk

With the annual inflation rate in the United States reaching 5% in May, economists and investors are right to be apprehensive about deficit spending, public debt, and the risk of sustained price growth - which is higher now than it has been for almost four decades. But it would be a mistake to respond to these concerns by pumping the brakes on the economy.

No, the government cannot borrow and spend as much as it likes without paying any costs, as some progressives would have us believe. But nor can those worried about inflation ignore the deeper problem afflicting the US: deep political polarisation, accompanied by an erosion of trust in government. A rapid economic recovery, spearheaded by public policies that encourage employment and wage growth, is the best chance the US has to restore trust in government - and in democracy. The real risk stemming from inflation is that it will distract us from this fundamental issue.

To be sure, there is no silver bullet against political dysfunction. Some commentators are understandably worried that the US has already reached a point of no return. After all, a majority of Republicans cling to the false belief that Donald Trump won the 2020 election, and by some estimates, 15% of the US population is adherents of the pro-Trump QAnon conspiracy theory. These figures point to a difficult road ahead. But we should remember that people tend to trust democracy more when it delivers on its promises of stability, shared prosperity, and effective measures to fight poverty.

For example, those who grow up in stable democracies where there is rapid economic growth and adequate public services are much more likely to oppose autocrats and unaccountable technocrats. By the same token, periods of economic stagnation and soaring inequality tend to fuel polarisation and a loss of public trust, as has happened in the US and many other countries around the world in recent decades.

The US economy used to create good jobs - with decent pay, reasonable levels of security, and career-building opportunities - for workers from all kinds of backgrounds and with all kinds of skills. For 35 years after World War II, workers at both the bottom and the top of the income distribution benefited from robust employment growth and rapid wage increases. But this era came to an end in the 1980s, when median wages stagnated and inequality began to creep up. Rather than enjoying wage gains, men without a college degree started experiencing sharp declines in job options and real (inflation-adjusted) earnings.

The Americans who have been experiencing wage declines and dwindling opportunities are overrepresented among those moving to the extremist fringes of US politics. If you think the economy isn't working and cannot work for you, it is understandable that you might be sympathetic to opportunist politicians and media figures calling for a "rigged" system to be dismantled.

Of course, economic problems are not solely responsible for the sorry state of US politics. The Republican Party, too, has played an outsized role in the dysfunction. Starting with Richard Nixon's "Southern strategy" - which sought to capitalise on white backlash against the Democrats' 1960s civil-rights agenda - the GOP decided that polarisation was good politics. The more the party has shifted to representing white, non-college-educated voters (a shrinking share of the population), the more it has had to rely on voter suppression and other anti-democratic tactics to maintain its position, a trend that has peaked with Trump.

But the Democratic Party is not blameless. The Wall Street bankers who caused the 2008 financial crisis were rescued not just by George W. Bush but also by Barack Obama. It was the Obama administration that ultimately decided to help the banks and the bankers at all costs, and which later chose not to prosecute any of the guilty parties. Voters' suspicions about a too-cozy relationship between government and finance were confirmed, accelerating the loss of trust in institutions and supplying plenty of ammunition to those already inclined to regard government as the problem, not the solution.

If this diagnosis is correct, the first step to reversing America's political dysfunction is to show that both the economy and the government can work for all. Generating jobs and wage growth for Americans of all backgrounds and skills should be a top priority. While we could focus simply on expanding the size of the overall economic pie and then redistributing it, that strategy is unlikely to leave voters feeling invested in the system. Enabling people to contribute meaningfully to the economy and society is a much better way to get them on board.

If infrastructure spending, expansionary fiscal and monetary policies, safety-net enhancements, job-generating investments, and other official measures are seen to be part of a robust recovery, that will further support the idea that government still works. Trust in state institutions cannot be restored simply by extolling their virtues in the abstract. Citizens must see and experience the benefits that come from institutions functioning effectively.

*The writer, Professor of Economics at MIT, is co-author (with James A. Robinson) of Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty and The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty.*

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

### WORDSWORTH

**Caitiff**

A caitiff is a contemptible or cowardly person. It's archaic, so if you say it with a straight face you might even get away with the insult. It's also a word that - like many in the lexicon - has come down in the world. It started out, sometime before 1300, to mean a captive. It came through French from Latin captivum, with the same sense (captive comes from the same Latin word by a later re-borrowing, again through French, so it and caitiff make a doublet). As captives were not in the best of circumstances, caitiff began to mean a wretched or miserable person. Chaucer uses it several times in the Canterbury Tales, as in the Knight's Tale: "And now I am so caitiff and so thrall / That he that is my mortal enemy / I serve him as his squier poorly". The sense then shifted further towards contempt, implying a mixture of misery and wickedness, and then to the sense of cowardly. Later it became a staple of those historical writers seeking to gain some antique credibility through choice of language.

**LOL**

### All are at funeral

It is game 7 of the NBA finals and a man makes his way to his seat at center court. He sits down and notices that the seat next to him is empty. He leans over and asks his neighbor if someone is sitting there. He responds, "No, the seat's empty." "The first man exclaims, "What?!" Who in their right mind would have a seat like this for the NBA finals and



not use it?" The neighbor responds, "Well the seat is mine, but my wife passed away and this is the first NBA finals we haven't been together." The first man responds, "I'm sorry to hear that. Wasn't there anyone else, a friend or relative, who could've taken that seat?" The neighbor responds, "No, they're all at the funeral."

### SPECTRUM VACCINE PATENT

# Why US backs selective patent waiver



Dr Guru Prasad Mohanta

**WHILE INDIA AND SOUTH AFRICA ASK FOR PATENT WAIVER FOR ALL TOOLS FROM DIAGNOSTICS TO VACCINES TO THERAPEUTIC AGENTS, THE US ADMINISTRATION SELECTIVELY OPTED TO SUPPORT ONLY VACCINES**

The US decision in early May 2021 to support patent waiving of Covid-19 vaccines at World Trade Organization (WTO) was a surprise move. India and South Africa had submitted a proposal in October 2020 seeking waiver of certain provisions of Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement for health products and technologies useful for the prevention, treatment and containment of Covid-19. The move by the US has been termed historic, as people thought this would accelerate the process of waiving decision. While India and South Africa ask for patent waiver for all tools from diagnostics to vaccines to therapeutic agents, the US administration selectively opted to support only vaccines.

It is worth looking at the sudden decision of the US to back the Covid-19 vaccine waiver but not on Covid therapeutics or diagnostics. The access to vaccines in other countries is in the interest of the US, as the vaccinated persons would not be carrying the virulent strain of corona causing Covid-19 when they enter the US territory. We have seen the power of isolation and restricted movement of people in-

fect by the virus. On the other hand, there is no direct impact of treatment given in other countries on the US territory. When some countries are unable to vaccinate, it becomes a threat to other countries. Vaccination in other countries protects the US against the Covid-19, but therapeutics help the countries to save lives. Of course, there was a demand from within the US too for vaccine patent waiver.

India and South Africa's joint proposal was gathering dust and for few months there was no discussion. Though many countries have come forward in support, there was stiff opposition from the European Union. Based on the concerns raised by the countries over the original proposal, a revised proposal was submitted clarifying that the period of waiver be restricted to three years. Countries like the UK, Switzerland and even the EU are still blocking the meaningful progress of the revised proposal. They have been advocating that countries seeking waiver should use the compulsory license provision already available under the present WTO provisions and there is no need for waiving patent. Invoking compulsory provision is not easy and has

several legal hurdles. In addition, every country has to invoke and each country has to pass through the legal obstacles. Besides, it may be easy to duplicate a small molecule but is very difficult to develop the procedure of manufacturing complex molecules and biological products like vaccines. By and large, the compulsory licensing is not appropriate, at least during Covid-19.

Tough negotiations are necessary as the WTO functions not on majority but on consensus. All the 164 member states must agree and a single 'No' means rejection of the proposal. The pharmaceutical companies too are opposing the waiver proposal and lobbying against it. Their fear is that vaccine patent waiver should not become a precedence. Vaccine patent waiver may lead to demand of patent waiver of all medical technologies. The Director Generals of three international bodies: World Health Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization and World Trade Organization have come together for collaboration to tackle the pandemic at the intersection of public health, intellectual property and trade. This trilateral cooperation is needed to find a sus-

tainable and integrated solution to this unprecedented public health challenges faced by the world.

The WTO General Council meeting is scheduled for July 27-28 and hopefully the countries opposing at this moment will come forward for a quick consensus decision, which is needed to end this viral pandemic.

Vaccines are important to protect ourselves from Covid-19. Vaccines alone are not sufficient to save lives worldwide. In WHO chief's words, "Vaccination is the best way to control the pandemic and reboot the global economy". While vaccines are for future protection, diagnostics and therapeutic agents are of current use. The member countries of WTO are at their legal rights to accept or decline the proposal for temporary waiver of patents for all medical products and technology required for Covid-19, but declining the waiver proposal is against humanity. Access to vaccines, test and treatments to everyone who needs them is only way out to save the mankind against the brutal Corona virus.

*The writer is a former Professor and Head of Department of Pharmacy, Annamalai University.*

### Commendable job

Sir, The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has had a difficult time since the academic year 2020-21 as it is obliged to conduct the Class X and XII board exams and declare the results at a time when the country is facing a health crisis. The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the board exams and the CBSE has not published the results of these classes so far. However, the CBSE doesn't want to get into trouble again. It has learnt lessons from the previous academic year and risen to the challenge by evolving a detailed assessment scheme for Classes X and XII for the academic year 2021-22. Given that the CBSE developed the plan at the beginning of the session, it will enable the students and school authorities to prepare for these crucial exams. The CBSE has taken into account the probable scenarios that may emerge due to the pandemic. This decision to adopt modified pattern of assessment may save the current batches of CBSE students from the harrowing time that the students of the previous academic year faced. The boards were criticised for deciding at the last minute not to conduct exams. The CBSE must be commended for introducing a two-term system of marking candidates for half-yearly exams along with regular internal tests.

Venu GS, KOLLAM

### Interim bail

Sir, A Supreme Court bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and Rama Subramanian has granted interim bail to 13 prisoners who were lodged in Agra jail for the last 14-22 years despite the Juvenile Justice Board establishing that they were juveniles at the time when they committed offence. This is in gross violation of the law of the land. There are numerous cases where undertrials languishing in jails are waiting for the disposal of cases for more than a decade or two. It is no secret that a large number of undertrials have completed the maximum terms of jail sentence for the offence they committed. In the end if they are proved innocent, such persons can be deemed to have been held in solitary confinement for no fault of theirs. But keeping them as prisoners without trial for a very long time kills their future which no amount of compensation can mitigate. No doubt, criminals must be punished mercilessly but punishment should be aimed at reforming the criminals. Cases should be disposed of within a reasonable time for delayed delivery of justice makes the prisoners languish in jail endlessly.

KV Seetharamaiah, HASSAN

## 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)

Orissa POST

B-15, Rusulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

PARI CASE

# SC adjourns hearing to next week



POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, July 8: The Supreme Court will next week hear a petition filed by Saudamini Sahu, the mother of a 5-year-old girl who was allegedly kidnapped, raped and murdered in July last year, seeking a CBI inquiry into her daughter's death.

A two-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices AM Khanwilkar and Sanjiv Khanna took up the case for hearing Thursday and adjourned it for next week after the Odisha government counsel sought passover.

During the hearing, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the state government, pleaded the court to take up the matter later, after hearing other cases. The bench, however, adjourned the matter for next week. The apex court will tentatively hear the case July 13.

Significantly, Pari's mother pleaded the court to order an independent inquiry in the alleged rape and murder of Pari July last year in Jadupur, Nayagarh. The petitioner also sought direction to the CBI to investigate all cases related to missing children in the state.

Pari's mother accused Babuli Nayak for the alleged murder and also contended that rampant organ smuggling is behind the murder. Petitioner also contended that police are treating the parents of Pari as criminals and are completely insensitive towards the family members of Pari.

Petitioner submitted that the preliminary investigation undertaken by the police, the Crime Branch and SIT illustrates that all of them have made all attempts to sabotage the investigation process into

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the state government, pleaded the court to take up the matter later, after hearing other cases. The bench, however, adjourned the matter for next week. The apex court will tentatively hear the case July 13

Pari's mother accused Babuli Nayak for the alleged murder and also contended that rampant organ smuggling is behind the murder. Petitioner also contended that police are treating the parents of Pari as criminals and are completely insensitive towards them

Petitioner also contended that the SIT has not investigated the role of local Inspector In-Charge (IIC) who worked hand in glove with the accused and has not interrogated the local MLA

the alleged incident and attempted all kind of subversion tactics to influence the complainant and her relatives to discard the aforesaid allegations as false and frivolous. Petitioner also contended that the SIT has not investigated the role of local Inspector In-Charge (IIC) who worked hand in glove with the accused and was shielding the real culprit. The local MLA has also not been interrogated by the SIT.

COMMUTING WOES



Travelling on National Highway-353 passing through Khariar town in Nuapada district has become a tough job for the commuters as craters have come up on the highway due to monsoonal rainfall

OP PHOTO

# BEO's bid to air online classes on TV

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, July 8: In a bid to bridge the digital divide for students who face connectivity issues and lack smartphones, a block education officer in Ganjam district has taken an initiative to telecast online classes through the local cable network.

The videos modeled on YouTube classes will be encoded by the cable operators and telecast during a scheduled time slot, said Abhinash Satapathy, BEO of Chhatrapur.

It will be accessible to maximum number of students as almost every household has a TV



with cable connection, he said.

We have discussed with local cable operators and sarpanchs in three blocks - Chhatrapur, Khallikote and Ganjam - through the respective block development officers. The classes will start airing in the next three to four days,

Satapathy said.

We have also proposed to the government about conducting classes through the cable TV network so that more and more students can take part, the BEO added.

The slots will be allotted after talking to the parents and based on the convenience of the students. The content will be telecast multiple times to ensure children do not miss out on the classes, he said.

Earlier, the headmaster of Mundamari Primary School in Dharakote block in the district, Surya Narayan Sahoo, had adopted this method in at least seven panchayats, sources said.

# Dhenkanal where 2 Rathas are pulled

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, July 8: The uniqueness of Dhenkanal Rath Yatra is that here two chariots are pulled by devotees.

Two chariots are constructed in Dhenkanal from time immemorial. The idol of Lord Jagannath being worshipped at Shree Balaram Temple mounts on one of the two chariots which is 42-ft high and has 12 wheels.

On the second chariot which is 33-ft high and has eight wheels, the idols worshipped in the temple at the royal palace are placed. It has been a tradition since 1999 that women devotees pull the smaller chariot. However, the outbreak of pandemic has put paid to the tradition of car festival in Dhenkanal that was started way back in 1690 by the erstwhile king. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Rath Yatra has been suspended for two years.

In order to keep the tradition



alive, a chariot of 4-ft high is being constructed on the premises of

The outbreak of pandemic has put paid to the tradition of car festival in Dhenkanal that was started way back in 1690 by the erstwhile king. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Rath Yatra has been suspended for two years

Balaram Temple. On the day of Rath Yatra, a member of the royal fam-

ily will do the 'Chhera Panhara' ritual. The time table for the rituals associated with the festival has already been fixed by the royal priest.

For the smooth conduct of the festival amid Covid-19 times, the district and police administrations have also chalked out strategies. Meanwhile, people have decided to cooperate with the administration. "In order to avoid any untoward situations, Section 144 is going to be clamped in and around the temple. We all should cooperate with the administration," observed Debashis Mishra, a local resident.

Echoing the same feelings, president, Shree Jagannath Chetana Samiti, Pradyumna Rath, said, "There are 125 Jagannath temples in the district. Most of them observe Rath Yatra. However, the festival there has been cancelled for two years now due to the pandemic situation. We hope we will have the opportunity to see the lords on chariots next year."

# Minor boy drowns taking selfie in dam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khaira, July 8: A 16-year old boy was swept away in Shola Bhauni dam and drowned while they were taking a selfie under Oupada police limits in Balasore district, Thursday.

The deceased was identified as Ramakant Jena, 16, a native of Olanga village under Bhadrak police limits and the district. He was taking bath with two of his friends and taking a selfie when the mishap occurred. He slipped his legs and was swept away in the dam.

His friends raised an alarm when the fishermen in the river rescued him in unconscious condition and rushed him to the Khaira community health centre. However, doctors pronounced him brought dead.



Members of All India Kishan Sabha staging demonstration at Paralakhemundi demanding abolition of contract farming law-2020 among others, Thursday

# Elderly couple seeks protection from sons, daughters-in-law

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, July 8: An elderly couple of Basudevpur village of Deula gram panchayat under Baliaipal police limits in this district have sought police intervention to save them from their torture.

Pleading for justice, Umakanta Biswal and his wife Sushila lodged a police complaint alleging their two sons and daughters-in-law are torturing them mentally and physically making their lives no longer worth living.

Narrating how they have made her and her husband's lives not worth living, Sushila alleged their sons and daughters-in-law often beat them up for no good reasons. "They are planning to drive us away from our house," she alleged



with tearful eyes. She said they are forced to seek help from police as they feel their lives are in danger. "Incidents of children forgetting their filial duties and torturing their parents are increasing by the day. The way the two sons are treating their parents is a disgrace to the society," observed some villagers. They urged the administration to give justice to the elderly couple by awarding exemplary punishment to their sons and daughters-in-law.

# Hirakud dam to release 1st floodwater July 11

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, July 8: The first floodwater of the season will be released from Hirakud dam into the Mahanadi river at any time around 11am of July 11, a report said. This was stated Thursday by the additional chief engineer, Hirakud headworks & additional spillway at Burla. The decision was taken after water level of the dam increased following incessant rains in the upper basin of the Mahanadi river.

Officials concerned have been requested to take necessary measures to ensure that riverbed downstream of the Hirakud dam coming under their jurisdiction is cleared as safety measures against life and property, the official said in a letter addressed to Collectors, SPs of 12 districts among others.

The official warned that the water level in the Mahanadi and other rivers will increase due to the release of the water from the reservoir. The dam authorities have also advised people living in the lower area of the Mahanadi to remain alert during the release of the floodwater. People have been asked to take necessary precautions while



venturing into the river.

Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department has predicted formation of a low pressure area over west-central and the adjoining Northwest Bay of Bengal off north Andhra Pradesh - south Odisha coasts around July 11, 2021. Several districts in the state may experience moderate to heavy rainfall at one or two places under the impact of the low pressure.

The monsoons are expected to intensify in the state again from July 11 onwards, so most of the rivers will once more be in spate. Hence with the release of the water from the Hirakud dam, a flood-like situation may arise in some parts of the state.

# Superstitions prove fatal for snakebite victims

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, July 8: Due to people still swearing by traditional healers to cure snakebite patients and taking them to hospitals at the eleventh hour, many such patients who could otherwise have been saved are dying.

According to information available, as many as 500 snakebite patients in serious condition were brought to Angul district headquarters hospital (DHH) in last five years. And of them, 50 succumbed for bringing them late.

Many people, particularly those living in hilly areas, fall prey to snakebite every year. They lose their lives because they are still not aware of the fact that successful treatment for snakebite is available at hospitals. It's time the administration took steps to create awareness among these people living in remotest rural pockets to wean them away from believing in superstitions.

These people are also not aware of which snakes are poisonous and which are nonpoisonous. In most cases, even if they are attacked by nonpoisonous snakes they out of fear suffer cardiac arrest and die. They also don't know

how to keep the reptiles away from entering homes and what steps they should take immediately after being bitten by snake.

According to Aditya Behera, a snake rescuer, the few minutes after snakebite are crucial. But people lose these vital moments by searching for traditional practitioners and quacks and taking their patients to them. The superstitious belief is so deeply rooted that some even engage these healers to cure patients who are already declared dead by doctors. Steps should be taken to free them from superstitions.

As per the information shared by the DHH, 188 snakebite patients were admitted to the DHH in 2017-18. Similarly, 135, 93, 64 and over 20 such patients were admitted to the DHH in the year 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 (till July first week) respectively.

Most of these patients were brought at the eleventh hour which is why they were shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack for better treatment. The DHH authorities don't have any information regarding how many of the referred patients died.

At the same time it is alleged that many people are dying while



FILE PHOTO

undergoing treatment at the hands of traditional healers and black magic practitioners. Their relatives hardly get time to shift them to hospitals as they have already lost the vital moments. The number of such deaths is pegged at over 50.

Expressing concern for people killing these reptiles, Niharika Mohapatra, a snake rescuer, urged people not to kill snakes. They should take help of snake rescuers who in turn release them in their natural habitats. "Incidents of snakes slithering into houses are common in rainy season. It is when

rain water enters into their holes; they while searching for warmer places enter into houses. It is also the season of laying eggs. The smell of rodents and frogs also attracts them. If we keep our surroundings clean, we can keep them at bay," she observed.

Another rescuer, Shibani Shankar Dehury, urged the people to keep their surroundings clean and sprinkle phenyl and bleaching powder regularly to avoid encounter with snakes. In fact, it is snakes that fear people most. They only enter our houses in

search of food and suitable places to lay eggs.

The snake rescuers urged people to take snakebite patients to hospitals only because right treatment at the right time can save their lives.

According to a source, the hospitals across the district have ample antivenom injection stocks. A total of 5,450 antivenom vials have so far been dispatched to various hospitals in the district. Of them, 600 vials have been used up by June end.

In this regard, CDMO, Angul DHH, Dr Trilochan Pradhan said the venom injected by a snake takes time to mix with blood. So if a patient is immediately brought to hospital, s/he can be administered with antivenom injection after a few tests. As a result, the patient's health condition improves and subsequently s/he can be cured fully.

But, if the initial vital moments are lost with sorcerers or traditional practitioners, the doctors can't do anything to save their lives as the venom has already mixed with the blood. "I request people not to fall victim to superstitious beliefs and bring snakebite patients to hospitals without losing a second," he added.

# MEKEDATU DAM PROJECT TURNING INTO A BIG ISSUE

AGENCIES

**Bangalore/Chennai, July 8:** After Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa directed the state water resources department to prepare an action plan to start work on the Mekedatu dam project, speculation is rife that a fresh round of confrontation is on the cards between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Yediyurappa had Wednesday called a meeting of the state water resources department and asked to prepare a road map. The Karnataka Chief Minister contended that Mekedatu dam will in no way harm the interests of Tamil Nadu and instead will help both the states.

Karnataka home minister Basavaraj Bommai told media persons on Wednesday that the chief minister has called a meeting of the legal and technical experts along with the water resources department officials and to immediately finalise a road map for the commencement of work to the Mekedatu dam project.

Bommai said that the next meeting to be held by the chief minister with the legal and technical experts will take a final call on that. On Monday, Tamil Nadu water resources minister and senior DMK leader S. Duraimurugan had



Representative image

a detailed meeting with Union Jal Shakti Minister, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and apprised him of the situation arising out of the Mekedatu dam project in Tamil Nadu.

Duraimurugan after emerging from the meeting told media persons that the union minister had

assured him that no construction would take place in the Mekedatu dam without the consent and knowledge of Tamil Nadu.

It may be noted that after several rounds of confrontation between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka over sharing of Cauvery waters, the union government had constituted

a Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) on June 1, 2018 after direct intervention of the Supreme Court of India. The NDA government had drawn flak for delaying the constitution of the CWMA by the Apex court owing to Karnataka assembly elections.

The CWMA was constituted after

several violent uprisings had taken place in both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu in which people lost their lives. The Supreme Court was approached by both Tamil Nadu and Karnataka regarding the release of water to Tamil Nadu and this has been a thorn in the relationship between the two southern states.

Political observers are worried whether this issue would go forward as one of major confrontation if both the sides stick to their respective antagonistic positions over the Mekedatu dam project.

C. Rajeev, Director of Centre for Policy and Development Studies, a think tank based out of Chennai, while speaking to IANS said, "The CWMA must immediately intervene in the matter and rope in experts from both sides under the supervision of the Supreme Court and bring about an amicable solution at the drawing-room and not allow the issue to go to streets as the days of confrontations are over and states should not lose time over fights and internal bickering.

They should be more focused on the development of Human indices and uplift the life of the common man and not indulge in fighting on the streets."

# Camels take 'schools' to students in Rajasthan

FERRYING TEACHERS AND STATIONERY ON THEIR BACK, THESE CAMELS HAVE BEEN TRAVELLING MILES IN THE INTERIORS OF THE STATE TO DELIVER TEXTBOOKS, NOTES, CONTENT, STATIONERY ETC TO STUDENTS



Representative image

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, July 8:** Camels, also called the ship of the desert, can these days be seen taking 'schools' to the doorsteps of students to ensure their education does not suffer during the pandemic.

The students get guidance from school teachers along with the regular notes, textbooks and stationery at a time when they don't have an internet or mobile connection.

Surprisingly, these teachers can also be seen teaching students sitting in the fields or on the roadside in the hot weather.

Their unique effort is drawing praise from different quarters including locals, public representatives as well as education minister Govind Singh Dotasara.

Appreciating this initiative of the teachers, Dotasara praised their innovative model and said I salute your devotion to duty, being performed while facing all challenges.

The initiative has been taken under the "Aao Ghar se Seekhen" campaign and the Smile 3 project where education is delivered online to students when schools are closed during the pandemic. However, at places where the mobile network is not available, teachers are visiting the remote villages in desert areas on camels to ensure continuation of studies. Camels have been chosen as the medium as there are no smooth roads for vehicles to ply

so a distance of 10-12 kilometre is being covered on camels. As per the schedule, these teachers will ride thrice a day to reach their schools in Barmer district. School principal Room Singh Jakhar said, "A few teachers are really working hard to ensure students get regular notes on time. A few of them are Muknaram Dhaka, Biharilal Dhaka and Birmaram Bana. We have selected 100 students to be reached.

I salute the team of such passionate teachers."

Besides teachers, even this principal is going door-to-door to teach those students without a mobile connection. Distributing free text ma-

terials to needy students following the corona guidelines, the team is also handing out sanitisers, masks, etc. This work was appreciated by the local villagers and public representatives. The Sarpanch of Bhimthal, Ramlal Daukia, says that the team of teachers, including the principal, took a unique initiative. "They are doing a great job of reaching out to the students living on the fringes and teaching them. This team can be called a passionate team of teachers." Banwari Lal Bairwa, District Education Officer Secondary, Barmer said, "Despite the lack of resources in the desert areas, teachers are reaching out to the children, which is a very good and commendable work."

# Karandlaje deletes her Twitter timeline

Her twitter time line had always been flooded with issues that are considered to be close to RSS, such as Cow Terrorism, Love Jihad and several other topics which are considered to be very close to right wing ideologues

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, July 8:** Newly sworn-in union minister of state for agriculture, Shobha Karandlaje, Karnataka's one of the outspoken politician who does not mince words on issues - cow terrorism and love jihad - has reportedly deleted her Twitter time-line just hours before she took charge as minister.

The two-time Lok Sabha member from Udupi-Chikmagalur, which is a hotbed of Sangh Parivar activities in the state, has grown through the party ranks. Apart from being close to Sangh Parivar, Karandlaje is also considered to be a very close confidante of chief minister, BS Yediyurappa.

She has been quite vocal on contemporary issues such as religious extremism, love jihad and alleged killing of Hindu activists.

Karandlaje had never deleted a single tweet even when she had come under flak from Left wing



critics for posting fake videos and messages. "This time it is quite surprising to see her Twitter timeline being wiped off completely except that she re-tweeted her swearing in ceremony pictures from the BJP handle," a senior leader in the BJP told IANS on

condition of anonymity. Karandlaje not only hails from coastal region of the state, but she also belongs to politically-influential Vokkaliga community, to which BJP veteran Sadananda Gowda belongs. Gowda resigned from the union cabinet on

Wednesday just hours before cabinet expansion took place.

Between 2008-12, she was considered as someone who had wielded an enormous amount of influence during the previous BJP rule under Yediyurappa between 2008-12 but after rejoining the BJP along with Yediyurappa, Karandlaje has by and large remained in her constituency. Interestingly, unlike last time, Karandlaje is not visible among the inner circles of Yediyurappa in the present government amid the chief minister's younger son B.Y. Vijayendra's growing influence.

Born October 23, 1966 at Puttur in Dakshina Kannada district, her educational qualification includes MA (Sociology) and Master of Social Work.

Karandlaje was MLC from 2004-2008, MLA from 2008-2013, and served as Minister for Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Power, and Food and Civil Supplies during the previous BJP government headed by Yediyurappa.

# Loyalty bonus to NHM contractual employees in Raj

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, July 8:** The Rajasthan government will give loyalty bonus to contractual workers who have completed three to five years of service in the National Health Mission (NHM).

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has approved a proposal to this effect, according to an official statement.



The loyalty bonus will not be payable to those contractual employees of NHM who have already availed this benefit as March 31, 2017. A total of Rs 987.62 lakh will be spent on the implementation of the proposal, the statement said.

# Well, find the well: Farmer files plaint

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Belagaavi (Karnataka), July 8:** In a rarest of rare event, a farmer had to lodge a complaint to various authorities, including the police, to search out a sanctioned well in his agricultural land, which apparently "very much exists" on paper but is no where to be seen.

Mallappa Ramappa Kalagude, a resident of Maavinahonda village in Rayabagh taluq of north Karnataka has alleged in his complaint lodged July 3, that officers have even sanctioned a bill amount of Rs 77,000 for the construction of the well under the NAREGA scheme in his farmland.

After collecting details and fake

builds on the construction of the well, Mallappa has complained about it to Raibagh police, ZP CEO, Taluq Panchayath CEO and Ombudsmen officer. In his complaint, he has urged them to find out the well constructed by the government.

Mallappa explained that the bill was raised in his name to construct the well and the money was taken between April 0, 2020, and May 13, 2021.

"There is only one well which exists for 40 years in my land. The officers have to find out the well which they constructed now," he adds. When contacted PDO Sadashiva said that he assumed charge only a week back and this incident was not in his knowledge.



Representative image

# K'taka: Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary opens for public

THE SANCTUARY WAS SHUT FOR 3 MONTHS IN THE BACKDROP OF THE COVID CRISIS

AGENCIES

**Mandya (Karnataka), July 8:** The world famous Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary known as 'Pakshi Kaashi' which attracts lakhs of visitors from across the country and the world, opened its doors to bird lovers Wednesday.

The sanctuary was shut for 3 months in the backdrop of the Covid crisis. The Mandya district administration had issued guidelines for entry and stated that in each trip sanitisation of boats and lifejackets will be done and visitors are being asked to keep the visits short. The sanctuary is spread across 40 acres and comprises 6 islets on the banks of Kaveri river. Ranganathittu is located 3 kilo-



metres from the historical town of Srirangapatna. The islets form an important nesting ground for a large variety of birds which migrate from all over the world. The Forest Department has asked visitors to strictly follow Covid-19 Appropriate

Behaviour while touring the sanctuary. The entire sanctuary including the boats and life jackets had been disinfected before the gates were thrown open for visitors. Though the number of visitors were not promising, the sanctu-

ary staff said tourist arrivals may go up with the lifting of curbs for inter-State travellers. As visitors usually take boat rides to get close to the birds roosting on the tall trees at the isles, the boats and life jackets are sanitised after every ride besides disinfecting the park, passageway, information centre and toilets at different intervals. The sanctuary staff had been asked to speak less to the visitors and maintain social distancing. The department has issued guidelines to visitors and the staff had been asked to ensure the SOPs in view of the pandemic situation.

The staff had been asked to deny entry to those having cough, cold and fever and thermal scanning of all visitors was done at the entrance.

# 5 of family mowed down by dumper

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kota (Raj), July 8:** Five members of a family were mowed down by a dumper while asleep outside their house in Rajasthan's Jhalawar; police said Thursday.

The victims included three children. The incident took place Wednesday night at Ghorakhal on the Teen Dhar road under the Mandawar police station area. Police have detained the dumper driver and handed over the bodies to family members after autopsy. According to police, the victims were sleeping on cots outside their "kutcha" house when around 12.30 am, the uncontrolled dumper mowed them down.

Two other children escaped injuries as they were sleeping at a distance, police said.

# Raj farmers get back land stuck at Indo-Pak border

THIS PIECE OF LAND, STRETCHED TO THOUSANDS OF BIGHAS, WAS CLOSED IN 1992 AFTER FENCING WAS SET UP AT THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, July 8:** On the initiatives taken by the BSF, farmers in Rajasthan will be allowed to till their land which was stuck between international zero point and fencing at the India-Pakistan border around 28 years ago.

This piece of land, stretched to thousands of bighas, was closed in 1992 after fencing was set up at the international border.

However now, on the initiative of the BSF, farmers can go to their land and pursue farming. However, they shall be issued a pass to visit their land which will be checked during their entry and exist.

The BSF has made a new gate for successful implementation of the process, which shall be opened and

farmers will be allowed to visit their fields after showing these passes to officials deputed there.

Strict vigil will be kept on these farmers visiting this land for farming. However, visit during night hours shall not be permitted for them.

The permission has been granted after the similar move by Punjab which allowed their farmers to till their lands stuck between zero point and fencing.

Thousands of farmers lost their farming rights on their land when it was stuck between zero point and the fencing.

In 1992, fencing was erected under the international agreement with Pakistan, at a stretch of 150 metres inside the international border, but farmers got just 4 me-



tres of land that came outside the fencing. For the last two decades, the remaining land was in 'Khatadari' of farmers but they could not use it for farming.

BSF DIG Vineet Kumar had a meeting with farmers a few days

back after which he allowed them to till their lands. They were also allowed to irrigate their land. As per the decision, farmers will be given entry at 9 a.m. while they will have to make exit from fields at 5 p.m.

Their passed will have photo IDs too which will be checked every time they exit and enter the fields. Those with tube wells in their fields can irrigate their farms with the help of pipes.

About 11,468 bighas of land was trapped between the Border fencing and the Zero Line. For 28 years, neither compensation was given against this land, nor were farmers able to cultivate it. Surprisingly, even in government records, this land is shown in the name of farmers. In such a situation, the farmers went to the High Court to get the rights on their lands. In 2013, the High Court, while deciding in favour of the farmers, had directed to give back land or compensate the farmers, but the farmers got nothing.



## of the day quote

The students of the school in Malleshwaram will be involved in a programme of launching 75 satellites as part of the 75th Independence day celebrations, which will be held next year

**C N ASHWATH NARAYAN** | KARNATAKA DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

Dilip Kumar was one of the greatest actors in the history of Indian cinema who will remain a 'prince' in the minds of generations of Hindi film lovers

**MANMOHAN SINGH** | FORMER PRIME MINISTER

As you are aware Covid has upset everything. Our effort at the moment is to somehow begin the Char Dham Yatra. A decision on Kanwar Yatra is likely in a day or two

**PUSHKAR SINGH DHAMI** | UTTARAKHAND CHIEF MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Protest over poor water supply

**New Delhi:** Delhi BJP leaders and workers Thursday staged protests against the AAP government at different places across the city over alleged water crisis in the city. At the main protest venue near the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) headquarters at Jhandewalan, partymen led by Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta staged a sit-in alleging lack of water supply in some areas of the city.

### India, Gambia to boost ties

**New Delhi:** India and Gambia Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for strengthening and promoting bilateral cooperation between the two countries in personnel administration and governance reforms. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions signed the pact with the Public Service Commission, Office of the President, Republic of Gambia.

### Heat wave sears North India

**New Delhi:** North India sizzled under heat wave conditions Thursday owing to a delay in the arrival of monsoon with the weather department forecasting rain-laden easterly winds covering the region by July 10. The national capital's fourth "heat wave day" of this month saw the mercury soaring to 41.8 degrees Celsius, five notches above normal. It had reeled under heat wave July 1, July 2 and July 7 also. For the plains, a heat wave is declared when the maximum temperature is more than 40 degrees Celsius and at least 4.5 notches above the normal.

# GANGA IS COVID-FREE: SCIENTISTS

THE FINDING IS ALSO IMPORTANT AS THE RESEARCH HAS BEEN CONDUCTED AMID APPREHENSION THAT WATER OF RIVER GANGA MAY HAVE BEEN CONTAMINATED AFTER SEVERAL BODIES WERE FOUND FLOATING IN RIVERS GANGA AND YAMUNA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, July 8:** The Ganga River has been declared Covid free. The finding bears significance in the backdrop of the fact that BSIP scientists had earlier found traces of the SARS-CoV2 virus in the water of Gomti river in Lucknow.

After a two-month research by medical and genetic experts of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi and Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP), Lucknow, it has been found that the Ganga river has no trace of the pandemic causing coronavirus.

BSIP scientist Niraj Rai, who heads the Covid Lab at the institute, said: "Our team extracted RNA and performed an RT-PCR test for all the samples with a true posi-

# 'Social media platforms may polarise society'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 8:** The Supreme Court Thursday said Facebook has the "power of not simply a hand but a fist, gloved as it may be", as these platforms employ business models having potential to polarise public debates.

A bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Dinesh Maheshwari and Hrishikesh Roy said: "These platforms are by no means altruistic in character but rather employ business models that can be highly privacy-intrusive and have the potential to polarise public debates.

"Facebook has the power of not simply a hand but a fist, gloved as it may be." These platforms have become power centres themselves, having the ability to influence vast sections of opinions, it added.

The bench observed that developments around the world reflect rising concerns across borders. "The concern is whether the liberal



debate which these platforms profess to encourage has itself become a casualty," it said in its 188-page judgment. The bench held that for intermediaries to say that they can sidestep this criticism is a fallacy, as they are right in the centre of these debates.

"It has to be noted that their platform has also hosted disruptive voices replete with misinformation. These have had a direct im-

The ruling BJP has held the law and order of Uttar Pradesh hostage. The people belonging to the ruling party are openly throttling democracy and the police administration is watching this murder of democracy as mute spectators

**AKHILESH YADAV** | SP PRESIDENT

## NOW KERALA REPORTS ZIKA VIRUS CASES TOO

Even as the Covid pandemic continues to rage in Kerala, state Health Minister Veena George Thursday said Zika virus cases have been detected in the state



## Virbhadra Singh passes away

The Himachal Pradesh government Thursday declared a three-day state mourning as a mark of respect to Singh



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Shimla, July 8:** Six-time Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Virbhadra Singh died here early Thursday after prolonged illness. He was 87.

The veteran leader breathed his last at the Indira Gandhi Medical College (IGMC) here at 3.40 am, senior medical superintendent, Dr. Janak Raj, said. Singh suffered from a heart attack Monday and was critical since then. He was put on ventilator support Wednesday after he had breathing problems, doctors said.

The nine-time MLA and five-time MP is survived by wife Pratibha Singh, son Vikramaditya Singh and four daughters.

The cremation will be held at Rampur July 10 at 3 pm, family spokesperson Yashwant Chhajta said. Singh's body has been kept at his residence at Holly Lodge in Jakhu, Shimla.

President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, Congress President Sonia Gandhi and BJP President Jagat Prakash Nadda condoled the demise of Singh. The Himachal Pradesh government on Thursday declared a three-day state mourning as a mark of respect to Singh.

Singh had tested positive for Covid-19 June 11 for the second time in two months. He had earlier tested positive for the disease April 12.

## 2 soldiers, 2 ultras killed as infiltration bid foiled in J&K

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jammu, July 8:** Two Pakistani terrorists were killed and two soldiers martyred after an infiltration bid was foiled by the Indian Army in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district, army officials said Thursday.

"Based on information regarding infiltration and movement of terrorists in the area of Dadal, Sundarbani Sector, district Rajouri, the army had launched extensive search operations with effect from June 29.

"Subsequently, the information was corroborated on July 8 and a search and destroy patrol seeking pro-active engagement with the terrorists, spotted the terrorists in Dadal forest area, and challenged them.

The terrorists opened fire and lobbed hand grenades leading to a fierce encounter in which two foreign terrorists from Pakistan have been killed," an army statement said.

Two AK-47 rifles and ammunition in heavy quantity has been recovered from the killed terrorists, it said.



Farmers plant paddy saplings in a field at a village in Moradabad of Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

## BUNDLES OF HOPE

# NEW MINISTERS TAKE CHARGE

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 8:** Newly appointed Union ministers, including Ashwini Vaishnaw, Anurag Thakur and Mansukh Mandaviya, took charge of their respective ministries Thursday.

Bureaucrat-entrepreneur-turned-politician Vaishnaw, 51, took charge as the country's new Railway Minister, while Thakur who was elevated as Information and Broadcasting Minister also assumed office. Darshana Jardosh took charge as Minister of State for Railways.

Mansukh Mandaviya, a BJP leader from Gujarat, took charge as the new Health Minister amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Mandaviya

## CABINET REVAMP

replaces Harsh Vardhan. Dr Bharati Pravin Pawar, who succeeded Ashwini Kumar Choubey, took charge as the Minister of State (MoS) for Health and Family Welfare.

Ram Chandra Prasad Singh and Kiren Rijiju took charge of Steel and Law Ministries respectively. Singh, a JD(U) leader, is a retired IAS officer.

Bhupender Yadav assumed charge of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. Veteran parliamentarian Virendra Kumar took office as the country's new Social Justice and Empowerment Minister.

Two junior ministers in the

ministry Pratima Bhoumik and A Narayanaswamy also took office.

BJP Rajya Sabha member Yadav has also been given the charge of the Ministry of Labour and Employment amid the pandemic which has hit the working class, especially informal sector workers, hard. Jitendra Singh took charge as the new Union Science and Technology Minister. Singh was on Wednesday allocated two new portfolios -- the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Earth Sciences -- with independent charge after a Union cabinet reshuffle. Minister of Culture, Tourism and DoNER G Kishan

Reddy also assumed charge. Shiv Sena leader Narayan Rane took charge as the new Union MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) Minister.

Rane said the ministry will work in the direction of creating more jobs and promoting GDP growth.

Former Railway Minister Piyush Goyal took charge as the Textile Minister and said that he will ensure improvement of the textile sector and boost exports as it holds huge opportunities.

Minister of State for Textiles Darshana Vikram Jardosh said she will help grow and promote the textile sector and make it a key sector for 'Make in India'. Jardosh also took charge Thursday.

# Covid situation in India vastly improved: MEA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 8:** The Ministry of External Affairs Thursday said it hopes that with the Covid-19 situation in India vastly improved, foreign nations would ease travel restrictions from India, and asserted that it is taking up the issue with partners, including in the Gulf.

MEA Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the government is actively trying to help Indians who need to travel back to various countries across the world.

"As we have said earlier, we hope that with the vastly improved Covid situation in India, countries would ease restrictions for travel from India. We have been taking up this issue with foreign partners wherever possible," Bagchi said when asked about problems being faced by Indians in traveling to other countries, especially Gulf nations.

He also said External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Minister of State for External Affairs V Muralidharan recently held a meeting with Indian Ambassadors in

Gulf countries. "Our Ambassadors were requested to take up with their host countries the issue of resumption of flights with India," he said, referring to the meeting.

The external affairs minister has also raised this issue during bilateral meetings on the margins of the recently held G-20 ministerial meeting in Italy, Bagchi told an online media briefing.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla has also raised with his counterparts the issue of normalisation of travel and mobility of students, professionals and enabling family reunions, he said. "So, in summary, we are actively trying to help Indians who need to travel back to various countries across the world," the MEA spokesperson said.

On a question on the extradition of Mehul Choksi and Nirav Modi from Dominica and the UK respectively, Bagchi said he had no update to share on the legal proceedings underway in the cases and added that the ministry would continue to closely follow developments in this regard.

# international

## of the day quote

The new data reveals that Dubai's tourism rebound is gathering pace despite the current challenges faced by international markets. Dubai's ability to implement a rigorous precautionary protocol regime has made the city one of the world's safest destinations for travellers

**SHEIKH HAMDAN BIN MOHAMMED BIN RAHSHID AL MAKTOUM** | DUBAI CROWN PRINCE, UAE

China's policy of opening-up and supporting the development of internet platforms remains unchanged. Beijing will continue to encourage relevant enterprises to develop global markets and strengthen international exchanges and cooperation

**WANG WENBIN** | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN, CHINA

The IAEA will play a vital role in monitoring and reviewing Japan's implementation of its plan. As the eyes of the international community, IAEA experts will be able to verify that the water discharge is conducted safely

**RAFAEL GROSSI** | DIRECTOR GENERAL, IAEA

## SHORT TAKES

### Cases surge in Oz despite lockdown

**Sydney:** The Australian city of Sydney has recorded its highest daily rise in Covid-19 cases in months, despite being nearly two weeks into a lockdown. The city in the state of New South Wales reported 38 cases Thursday - taking its outbreak of the Delta variant to about 370 cases, the BBC reported. Authorities say household visits and meet-ups between friends were still driving the virus' spread. They have pleaded with residents to follow the rules more strictly.

### Another Rajapaksa joins Lanka govt

**Colombo:** Basil Rajapaksa, the youngest of the Rajapaksa siblings, was sworn in as Sri Lanka's Finance Minister Thursday, marking the further consolidation of the family's power within the government. Basil, 70, became the fourth Rajapaksa brother after President Gotabaya, Prime Minister Mahinda, Agricultural Minister Chamal to enter the Cabinet. With the entry of Basil in the Cabinet, there are as many as 7 family members in the top echelons of the government.

### Rockets fired at US embassy in Iraq

**Baghdad:** US diplomats and troops in Iraq and Syria were targeted in three rocket and drone attacks in the past 24 hours, US and Iraq officials said Wednesday, including at least 14 rockets hitting an Iraqi air base hosting US forces, wounding two American service members. While there were no immediate claims of responsibility for the attacks - part of a wave targeting US troops or areas where they are based in Iraq and Syria - analysts believed they were part of a campaign by Iranian-backed militias.

### Dubai explosion caused by ship fire

**Dubai:** A container ship anchored in Dubai at one of the world's largest ports caught fire late Wednesday, causing an explosion that sent tremors across the commercial hub of the United Arab Emirates, authorities said. The Twitter post from Dubai's state-run media office said the fire occurred on a ship at the huge Jebel Ali Port, which sits in the Persian Gulf on the eastern side of the Arabian Peninsula.



**“We must be realistic about our ability alone to influence the course of events. It will take combined efforts of many nations, including Afghanistan's neighbors, to help the Afghan people to build their future”**

**BORIS JOHNSON** | PRIME MINISTER, UK

### BOTSWANA UNEARTHS 2ND HUGE DIAMOND IN WEEKS

An exceptionally large and white 1,174-carat diamond stone has been unearthed in Botswana, a mining company announced Wednesday, trumping another huge precious stone found in the country last month



# MIAMI MISHAP Tears, prayers mark end to search for survivors

**Surfside, July 8:** A somber moment of silence marked the end of the two-week search for survivors of a Florida condominium collapse, as rescue workers stood at solemn attention and clergy members hugged a line of local officials while many of them sobbed. The painstaking search for survivors shifted to a recovery effort at midnight Wednesday after au-

thorities said they had come to the agonizing conclusion that there was “no chance of life” in the rubble of the Champlain Towers South condo building in Surfside. “We have all asked God for a miracle, so the decision to transition from rescue to recovery is an extremely difficult one,” Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said at a news conference. The death toll stood at 54 late Wednesday. Officials said 86 peo-



ple were unaccounted for, although detectives were still working to verify that each of those listed as missing was actually in the building when it collapsed. Rescuers had spent two weeks

**Authorities are launching a grand jury investigation into the collapse and at least six lawsuits have been filed by Champlain Towers families**

digging through the rubble, searching in vain for any sign of life, Levine Cava said. Hours before the formal transition from rescue to recovery mission, those emergency workers joined local officials, rabbis and chaplains in a moment of silence. Officials vowed to continue the recovery efforts until they find the remains of every one of the missing.

# UK PM'S NEW COVID GAMBLE WORRISOME

*Rather than shutting the country down Johnson is aiming to live with the virus to test the ability of vaccines*

**London, July 8:** British Prime Minister Boris Johnson plans to re-open England's economy from Coronavirus lockdown July 19, but if he does so, it won't be without disquiet from some of the scientists whose advice he has followed thus far.



London, July 8: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson plans to re-open England's economy from Coronavirus lockdown July 19, but if he does so, it won't be without disquiet from some of the scientists whose advice he has followed thus far. Despite one of the world's highest vaccination rates, Britain is facing a new wave of Covid-19. Johnson is taking a gamble: rather than shutting the country down, he is aiming to live with the virus in what is a world-first test case of the ability of vaccines to protect from the Delta variant. Johnson has already delayed the so-called “freedom day” by four weeks to allow more people to get vaccinated, after warning that thousands more people might die because of the rapid spread of the more infectious variant. But with more than 86% of adults now having received a first dose and nearly two-thirds of adults fully vaccinated, Johnson has set July 19 as a “terminus” date for restrictions. Anne Cori, an Imperial College epidemiologist behind one of the models that informed Johnson's initial decision to delay “freedom day”, said it was pre-

### No quarantine for vaccinated travellers

Fully-vaccinated Britons returning from medium-risk amber list countries will no longer have to quarantine when they arrive home from July 19, transport secretary Grant Shapps said Thursday. The rule change will be a huge boost to airlines and the travel industry which have been brought to their knees by 15 months of restrictions. In Britain, 65% of adults have been fully vaccinated, opening up travel for millions. The need to quarantine on return had prevented a travel recovery. For countries on the UK's high-risk red list, fully-vaccinated Britons will still be required to self-isolate in a hotel.

### Peace and tranquility on the border, for any country, is the foundation of a relationship with a neighbour. So naturally the foundation has got disturbed, so has the relationship

**S JAISHANKAR** | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER, INDIA

# ‘China’s ignorance of border agreements upset bilateral ties’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Moscow, July 8:** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said Thursday that there has been a lot of concern about the India-China relationship since last one year because Beijing has not observed agreements on the border issue which has “disturbed” the foundation of the bilateral relationship. “I would say for the last 40 years we had a very stable relation with China...China emerged as the second largest trade partner. But for the last one year, there has been a lot of concern about the relationship because China has not observed agreements that it had signed up to when it came to our border,” Jaishankar said in response to a question on China-India relations at the Primakov Institute of World Economy & International Relations in Moscow. India has been particularly pressing for disengagement of troops in Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang. According to military officials, each side currently has around 50,000 to 60,000 troops along the LAC in the sensitive high alti-



tude sector. There was no visible forward movement in disengagement of troops in the remaining friction points as the Chinese side did not show flexibility in their approach to this issue at the 11th round of military talks.

# Google faces antitrust lawsuit by 36 US states



PLAY STORE PRACTICES

by the attorneys general of Utah, North Carolina, and Tennessee — also accuse Google of requiring app developers selling in-app digital content through apps purchased via Google's Play Store to use Google Billing as a middleman, forcing app consumers to pay Google's commission — up to 30 percent — indefinitely.

**The lawsuit alleges that Google imposes technical barriers that strongly discourage or completely prevent third-party app developers from distributing apps outside the Google Play Store**

“Google has served as the gatekeeper of the internet for many years, but, more recently, it has also become the gatekeeper of our digital devices — resulting in all of us paying more for the software we use every day,” James alleged.

**Washington, July 8:** As many as 36 US states and Washington DC have filed a lawsuit against Google, alleging that the search engine giant's control over its Android app store violates antitrust laws. The lawsuit alleges that through a series of exclusionary contracts and other anticompetitive conduct in the Google Play Store, Google has deprived Android device users of robust competition that could lead to greater choice and innovation, as well as significantly lower prices for mobile apps. New York Attorney General James and the coalition — co-led

# HUMANITY HUMILIATED



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau lays a teddy bear at a small flag marking one of 751 unmarked graves

# Haiti’s future hazy after Prez’s murder

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Port-au-Prince, July 8:** An already struggling and chaotic Haiti stumbled into an uncertain future Thursday after the assassination of President Jovenel Moise, followed by a gunfight in which authorities said police killed seven suspects, detained six others and freed three officers being held hostage. Officials pledged to find all those responsible for the pre-dawn raid on Moise's home early Wednesday in which the president was shot to death and his wife, Martine, critically wounded. She was flown to Miami for treatment.

“The pursuit of the mercenaries continues,” Léon Charles, director of Haiti's National Police, said Wednesday night in announcing the arrest of suspects. “Their fate is fixed: They will fall in the fighting or will be arrested.” Officials did not provide any details about the suspects, including their nationalities, nor did they address a motive or say what led police to them. They said only that the attack condemned by Haiti's main opposition parties and the international community was carried out by “a highly trained and heavily armed group.” Speaking after the killing, interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph called for calm and declared a nationwide state of emergency. The state of emergency, or “state of siege”, allows for the banning of gatherings and use of the military for police roles, along with other extensions of executive powers. Moise became president of Haiti in 2017, but in recent times faced widespread protests demanding his resignation. Coups, political instability, widespread gang violence and natural disasters have plagued the country for decades and rendered it the poorest nation in the Americas. Joseph said the attackers were “foreigners who spoke English and Spanish”. Haiti's official languages are Creole and French. Some reports spoke of men dressed in black who carried high-powered weapons who may have pretended to be part of a US drug enforcement operation, although no official details have been given.

# Activists vow to resist LGBT law, symbol of EU rift

*The law, which came into effect Thursday, prohibits the display of content depicting homosexuality or sex reassignment to minor*

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Budapest, July 8:** Activists in Hungary erected a 10-meter-high rainbow-colored heart opposite the country's neo-Gothic parliament Thursday, vowing to wage a civil disobedience campaign against a new law that they say discriminates against LGBT people and that has raised questions about what values the European Union stands for. The law, which came into effect Thursday, prohibits the display of content depicting homosexuality or sex reassignment to minors — but critics say its goal is to marginalize and stigmatize the LGBT community as the country marches steadily to the right under Prime Minister Viktor Orban. The law has drawn intense oppo-



sition in Hungary and from the EU and has become a significant battleground in the fight over what the bloc represents. Orban and some other right-wing leaders of member states

have been at the forefront of that fight, challenging the EU's traditional “liberal consensus” by refusing to accept migrants, cracking down on media plurality and limiting the independence of their judiciaries. At the Thursday demonstration, rights groups said the Hungarian law denies thousands of LGBT young people crucial information and support, and violates national and international human rights standards. One provision in the law bans organizations from holding educational programs on sexual orientation in schools unless they are approved by the government. Many European leaders have demanded the law's repeal, saying it violates the bloc's values. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told the

European Parliament in Strasbourg Wednesday that the law was “a disgrace.” EU lawmakers are expected to approve a joint resolution condemning the legislation Thursday and have urged the European Commission to take swift action against Hungary unless it changes tack. The resolution states that the law will “restrict severely and intentionally the rights and freedoms of LGBTIQ persons, as well as children's rights,” and urges the commission to refer the case to the Court of Justice of the European Union. Speaking ahead of a meeting with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic in Belgrade Thursday, Orban characterized the controversy as a “debate about who decides how we will raise our children.”



Our current level of forex reserves at \$609 billion gives us confidence, but we cannot be complacent  
SHAKTIKANTA DAS | RBI GOVERNOR

### EU FINES VOLKSWAGEN, BMW \$1 BLN FOR EMISSIONS CARTEL

The European Commission fined German carmakers Volkswagen and BMW a total of 875 million euros (\$1 billion) Thursday for colluding to curb the use of emissions cleaning technology they had developed



### of the day quote

Textiles is a big sector for employment so this is a big opportunity through this sector. The government will try to give a big support to the income of all the people employed in this sector, especially women  
PIYUSH GOYAL | TEXTILE MINISTER

The focus of the ministry under me will be to increase domestic production of crude oil and natural gas and help country become Atmanirbhar  
HARDEEP SINGH PURI | PETROLEUM MINISTER

This partnership, with J&K Bank, will go a great distance in easing the vehicle financing process for our customers and add impetus to the development of the union territory with Tata Motors' wide range of products in the cargo, passenger, and construction segments  
GIRISH WAGH | TATA MOTORS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & PRESIDENT

### SHORT TAKES

#### Hiring activity jumps 15 per cent

**Mumbai:** Hiring activity in the country, which was hit by the second Covid wave, bounced back with a 15 per cent growth in June compared to May, according to a report. The activity was led by the IT-Software/Software Services sector. The latest Naukri Jobspeak report Thursday said that India's hiring trends grew 15 per cent in June with 2,359 job postings from 2,047 in May.

#### I-T dept issues ₹37K cr refunds

**New Delhi:** The income tax department has issued refunds worth ₹37,050 crore to more than 17.92 lakh taxpayers between April 1 and July 5. Of this, personal income tax refund stood at ₹10,408 crore, while that of corporates was ₹26,642 crore. "CBDT issues refunds of over ₹37,050 crore to more than 17.92 lakh taxpayers between 1st April 2021 and 5th July 2021," the I-T department tweeted.

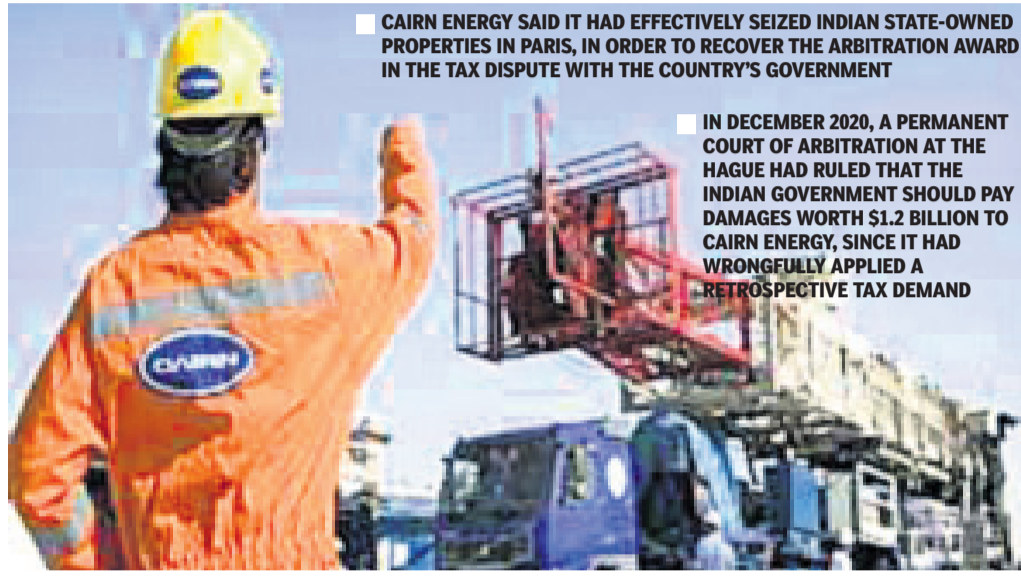
#### Zomato's IPO to open July 14

**New Delhi:** Ant Group-backed food ordering platform Zomato Thursday said it plans to raise ₹9,375 crore through its initial share sale that will open for subscription from July 14 to 16. The price band for the issue has been fixed at ₹72 to 76 per share. The total IPO size is ₹9,375 crore, comprising a fresh issue of equity shares worth ₹9,000 crore and an offer-for-sale to the tune of ₹375 crore by Info Edge (India) Ltd, Zomato said.

# Cairn Energy seizes Indian govt property in Paris: Report

THE GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, SAID IT HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY SUCH ORDER, NOTICE OR COMMUNICATION

**New Delhi, July 8:** Cairn Energy said it had effectively seized Indian state-owned properties in Paris, in order to recover the arbitration award in the tax dispute with the country's government. The Edinburgh-based oil producer has secured French court Tribunal Judiciaire de Paris' permission to seize 20 Indian government properties, valued at over GBP 20 million, Financial Times has reported. "Our strong preference remains an agreed, amicable settlement with the Government of India to draw this matter to a close, and to that end we have submitted a detailed series of proposals to them since February this year. However, in the absence of such a settlement, Cairn Energy must take all necessary legal actions to protect the interests of its international shareholders," a spokesperson for the company told CNBC-TV18. The government, however, said it has not received any such order, notice or communication. "Government is trying to ascertain the facts, and whenever



such an order is received, appropriate legal remedies will be taken, in consultation with its counsels, to protect the interests of India," the statement said. In December 2020, a Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, Netherlands had ruled that the Indian government should pay

damages worth \$1.2 billion to Cairn Energy, since it had wrongfully applied a retrospective tax demand. India has filed an appeal against the tribunal's decision. Meanwhile, Cairn has identified Indian government properties abroad to place pressure and recover their dues. On May 15, the UK's Cairn Energy

Plc sued India's national carrier Air India in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York. News agency PTI has reported that Cairn has identified \$70 billion of Indian assets overseas for potential seizure to collect the amount, which now totals to \$1.72 billion after including interest and penalty.

# Vehicle retail sales rise in June: FADA

**New Delhi, July 8:** India's overall vehicle retail sales rose in both sequential and on year-on-year basis in June 2021. The data released by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) showed a rise of 22.26 per cent during the month under review from the level of June 2020. The vehicle retail sales rose to 12,17,151 units last month from 9,92,610 units sold during June 2020. On sequential basis, FADA had reported an overall vehicle retail sales figure of 5,35,855 units for May 2021. However, last month's overall retail sales figure when compared to June 2019 (per-pandemic) period showed decline of 28.32 per cent. In June 2019, the overall vehicle retail sales stood at 16,98,005 units. Segment wise, retail sales of personal vehicles rose 43.45 per cent on a YoY basis but was down by 10.27 per cent when compared to June 2019 levels to 1,84,134 units. Similarly, two-wheeler registration rose by 16.90 per cent on a YoY basis but was down 30.47 per cent from June 2019 levels to 9,30,324 units. Notably, tractor retail sales rose on both retail and sequential basis. The segment's off-take grew by 14.27 per cent on a sequential basis and 27.66 per cent from June 2019 levels to 52,261 units. The commercial vehicle segment posted a growth of 236.19 per cent on a YoY basis but fell 45.11 per cent to 35,700 units. "The month of June witnessed re-opening for most of the states except the ones in South," said FADA President Vinkesh Gulati. "Due to this, the industry witnessed a high pent up demand which was stuck in the system because of statewide lockdowns." "While all the categories were in green, passenger vehicles maintains seeing good demand as customers continued to show keenness in vehicles for observing social distancing and safety of their families."

# New MSME procurement policy soon

**Bhubaneswar, July 8:** State MSME department Principal Secretary Satyabrata Sahu Thursday said that a new procurement policy will be announced soon for the benefit of local industries. Speaking at a conference of MSME bodies in Odisha, Sahu said, "The new procurement policy is in process. The draft is now with the Finance department for its consent. I may speak to the Finance Secretary in this connection soon." MSME bodies like Orissa Young Entrepreneurs Association (OYEA), Utkal Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association (UPMA),

Orissa Small Scale Industries Association (OSSIA), Orissa Industries Association (OIA) and Odisha Assembly of Small and Medium Enterprises (OASME) have been demanding that the state government introduce a new procurement policy for the benefit of this sector. The MSME bodies insisted on implementation a procurement policy wherein 50 per cent of total materials should be procured from local MMSEs. State government procures around 88 products from thousands of MSME units worth around ₹300 crore, on an average. The associations have also urged state government to convene meet-

ing of the MSEFC Council twice a month to address issues related to delayed payments to MSMEs. "We have also urged the state government to ease the fire safety rules and waive electricity duty considering the pathetic condition of the MSMEs due to the Covid-19 pandemic," said Satwik Swain, OASME secretary general. Addressing the demand of MSMEs bodies, Principal Advisor to Chief Minister Asit Kumar Tripathy directed that the department should respond to the issues raised by the MSMEs within seven days. Tripathy also said that government is coming up with a bigger package for the MSMEs.

# India's power demand surges to all-time high

**New Delhi, July 8:** Power demand in the country touched an all-time high and crossed the 200 GW mark Wednesday amid many states witnessing high temperatures due to delayed monsoon, and easing of coronavirus-related restrictions. According to the latest power ministry data, peak power demand or the highest supply in a day touched an all time high of 200.57 GW Wednesday. On Tuesday, power demand was at a record high of 197.07 GW. Experts opined that high temperatures in many states due to delayed monsoon and easing of restrictions that were in place to curb coronavirus infections have led to a surge in power demand these days.



Last month, peak power demand met or the highest supply in a day witnessed a growth of over 16 per cent at 191.51 GW (recorded June 30)

compared to 164.98 GW recorded in June 2020. The peak power demand was 182.45 GW in June 2019. As per the ministry's data, peak power demand had touched an all-time high of 192.16 GW July 5, 2021. Then, the figure had surpassed the peak power demand of 191.51 GW recorded June 30. "Today, All India peak demand met touched the all time highest level of 197060 MW at 11:43 hrs. Looking forward to the demand touching 200000 MW in the near future," Power Minister RK Singh had said in a tweet Tuesday. In January, Singh had tweeted that the power demand and supply surged to a new high of 1,88,452 MW at 9:42 am on January 28. "The rate at which we are going, we shall cross 2,00,000 MW very soon".

TOP LOSERS	8 JUL
1189.75	Tata Steel -2.30%
667.00	Sun Pharma -1.96%
424.40	SBI -1.88%
641.70	ICICI Bank -1.83%
5469.00	Dr Reddys Labs -1.65%
1732.75	Kotak Mahi -1.64%
2447.05	HUL -1.33%
6118.25	Bajaj Finance -1.30%
1520.10	HDFC Bank -1.24%
754.45	Axis Bank -1.08%
POINTS	BSE SENSEX
-485.82	%

# IFFCO Paradip to set up liquid Nano Urea plant

**Bhubaneswar, July 8:** Odisha Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment, Arun Kumar Sahoo Thursday flagged off a Nano Urea truck for the farmers in the state in a virtual mode. The truck carrying Nano Urea (liquid) was dispatched from the Kalol plant in Gujarat for Bhubaneswar in Odisha. "The use of Nano Urea will help increase farmers' income, reduce input cost and enhance the quality of yield, besides reducing the use of chemical fertilizers," Sahoo said. Indian Farmers' Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) will also set up the biggest Nano Urea plant in Paradip soon. IFFCO Managing Director US Awasthi said, "We will soon set up Nano Urea (liquid) and NANO DAP plants and IFFCO Paradip will have the biggest Nano Urea plant." IFFCO is already in the process of construction of its plants at its Kalol unit in Gujarat and also at Aonla and Phulpur in Uttar Pradesh in Phase-I. The total annual production capacity would be initially 14 crore bottles of 500 ml, which will further be raised to 18 crore. The Kalol plant is currently dispatching one truck with 15,000 bottles of Nano Urea per day and soon the plant will dispatch 10 trucks daily. Kalol plant is producing 6,750 tonnes equivalent of urea per day, which would result in saving ₹35,000 crore of government's subsidy burden and also help farmers earn additional ₹35,000 crore.

# Now, LIC to have CEO, MD

To facilitate the listing of the insurance behemoth, the govt has already approved raising its authorised share capital to ₹25,000cr

**New Delhi, July 8:** The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) will now have the post of Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director instead of the Chairman position, with the government making changes to relevant rules ahead of the insurer's initial public offering this fiscal. The changes have been made by the Department of Financial Services under the finance ministry by amending Life Insurance Corporation of India (Employees) Pension (Amendment) Rules. Besides, some other rules under LIC Act, 1956, have been amended. "Chief Executive and Managing

Director means the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director appointed by the Central Government under Section 4 of the Act (LIC Act 1956)," according to a gazette notification issued July 7. To facilitate the listing of the insurance behemoth, the government has already approved raising its authorised share capital to ₹25,000 crore. Besides, the Department of Economic Affairs under the finance ministry recently amended the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules. Companies that have a market capitalisation of more than ₹1 lakh crore at the time of listing can now sell just five per cent of their shares, with the latest amendment in rules.

**New Delhi, July 8:** Focus on bringing more and more investors especially investors from the bottom of the income pyramid and expanding the reach of the industry to deeper parts of the country continue to be a key agenda for the industry, according to a CII-BCG report on Indian mutual fund industry. Stronger inclusion of investors from deeper geographies and from mass income segments can contribute towards its growth story in coming times, the report said after deliberations of CII Mutual Fund Summit. India has witnessed tremendous growth in its mutual funds industry that has grown from ₹1.13 lakh

crore to ₹31.7 lakh crore in AUM from March 2000 to February 2021. It translates to a strong CAGR of 17% over these 21 years. While

B30 locations have grown at twice the rate of T30 between FY14 and FY20, and accounts for 21% of total AUM as of March 2020. The regulator has well supported this expansion by enabling higher expenditure in smaller cities to develop the market. Further, "retailisation" of investments with SIPs has provided a solid foundation to the industry, with over ₹8000 crore of retail inflows coming every month, owing to simplification and democratisation of equity markets participation with over 3.63 crore SIP accounts in operation currently, the report said. With the exemplary growth and exceptional resilience during pandemic, the growth story of India's asset management industry has only begun. It has barely scratched

the surface when it comes to MF AUM as percentage of GDP, which is 12% for India in comparison to the global average of 63%. Smaller emerging market peers, such as Brazil (68%) and South Africa (48%), boast of a better penetration. India's equity AUM to GDP stands at 5%, compared to global average of 34%. Developed economies like the US and Canada have 75% and 55% as its equity AUM to GDP. Indian Mutual Funds industry evidently has wide grounds. The report said presently, the spectrum of clients within major cities is primarily limited to HNIs and the affluent class. Penetration of mutual funds among the lower income group even within major cities is quite low; consider Dharavi in Mumbai for instance.



urban affluent customers have been the largest contributor to this growth, the industry has also come a long way in penetrating to smaller cities and towns, the report said.



# AND FINALLY... A FINAL!

Three Lions overcome Denmark challenge with a 2-1 victory, including a controversial penalty as Southgate's men reach Euro final for the first time and a major final since 1966 WC triumph

## End of 55-year misery on cards



**NIGHT TO REMEMBER:** England players rejoice after Harry Kane's winner against Denmark, Wednesday

ties. That looked like where the teams were headed until Raheem Sterling wriggled into the area down the right, cut inside and fell under the slightest contact of Mattias Jensen.

Denmark goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel guessed the right way to block Kane's penalty, but the England captain reacted quickly and put the ball into the net from six yards out.

Denmark's players, whose emotionally charged run to the semi-finals was powered by a resolve to win the title for Christian Eriksen after his collapse on the field during the group stage, were almost on

their knees by that point.

And Danish hopes of an equaliser were damaged by having to play with only 10 men for the second half of extra time after Jensen was forced off injured. Denmark had already used up their six substitutes by then.

England showed another side by rallying for victory after conceding a goal for the first time at Euro 2020 when Mikkel Damsgaard curled a free-kick into the top corner in the 30th.

An own-goal by Simon Kjær in the 39th evened the score, and England dominated the second half against a tiring opponent.



**SO NEAR YET SO FAR:** Denmark players applaud their supporters after their match at Wembley

England come from behind 2-1 win over Denmark in extra time in the Euro Championship semi-finals Wednesday at Wembley Stadium.

England will return to their national football stadium Sunday to play Italy and will be competing in their first final since the 1966 World Cup. That remains England's only international title.

In the intervening 55 years, the English have lost in the semi-finals four times in either the World Cup or the European Championship. For that reason, this will go down as one of the most significant victories in English football history.

Three of those — in 1990, 1996 and 2018 — were decided on pen-



**SO NEAR YET SO FAR:** Denmark players applaud their supporters after their match at Wembley

London: All the years of hurt, England fans sing about it. All that sense of entitlement, rival fans are irritated by it. After decades of embarrassment and moaning at tournaments, the English have a chance to finally back up the bravado — just listen to the team anthem, "Football's Coming Home" — with a trophy.

The nation that lays claim to being the inventor of football, but is more fittingly one of the sport's great underachievers, is back in a final — against Italy in the European Championships.

The teams will meet Sunday night at Wembley Stadium in London where England will be going for its first major title since winning the 1966 World Cup on their home field. The Italians are unbeaten in 33 games.

It's been 55 agonizing years for England through 26 World Cups and European Championship tournaments, seven of which they didn't even qualify for.

Even less illustrious national teams like Denmark and Greece have won trophies since then. But England became all about falling short on a world stage it felt it should dominate.

Beating Denmark Wednesday broke through the semifinal obstacle at least in the Euros, prevailing 2-1 in extra time and avoiding the penalty shootouts that have proved to be the team's nemesis through all those near-misses.

No way were the England players missing out on the chance to lap up the acclaim of a crowd waiting for this healing moment, not only to reach a final again but to gather in such big numbers again as the pandemic-restricted capac-

ity swelled to 66,000.

The celebrations were a reflection of the bond the coach has forged between the national team and an English public that seemed disillusioned with the hubris and dreary performances before Southgate's overhaul began in 2016.

Leading England to a final is proving cathartic for the coach who as a player missed the decisive penalty in the Euro 1996 semifinal penalty shootout against Germany. It was that tournament that saw the introduction of the England "Three Lions" song talking of "30 years of hurt."

It's never easy for England. Even when the path to the Euro 2020 semi-finals seemed smooth — even the 2-0 win over archrival Germany — Southgate was prepared for difficulties against Denmark, especially after losing the 2018 World Cup semifinal to Croatia and being beaten in the 2019 Nations League last four by the Netherlands.

Southgate is more than just an orator, though. Only 1966 World Cup winner Alf Ramsey has been a more successful coach of England. The expensive imports at the start of the century — Sven-Goran Eriksson and Fabio Capello — could get no further than quarter-finals. Instead, a manager whose only club job ended in 2009 with relegation from the Premier League with Middlesbrough has led England to a final.

For all his popular support — "Southgate you're the one," fans sing — he resists pandering to fans' demands of selecting players. He ignored calls to drop Raheem Sterling at the start of Euro 2020 and has been rewarded with three goals from the winger.

## England favoured by contentious refereeing

London: Perhaps the first contentious refereeing decision of the European Championship went England's way.

Raheem Sterling burst into the penalty area in extra time of the semifinal match against Denmark and appeared to lose his balance following a challenge by Joakim Maehle. The England winger eventually fell to the ground after a nudge from another Denmark player, Mathias Jensen.

The referee pointed to the penalty spot, the decision stood after a review by the video assistant referee and Harry Kane scored — off the rebound after the penalty was saved — to give England a 2-1 win and a spot in the Euro 2020 final.

Denmark coach Kasper

Hjulmand said he cannot understand how such a big call was made at such a crucial moment. "You can't pass by a decision that has so much influence on the game," Hjulmand said. "I couldn't see that as a penalty. One thing is to lose a game. But this is a disappointment. It's bitter."

Denmark's players were also unhappy, surrounding referee Danny Makkelie after he blew for a penalty. England coach Gareth Southgate said he hadn't seen a replay of the incident. "There is VAR," Southgate said, "so I assume they checked it and stuck with the referee's decision."

The standard of refereeing has been widely praised during Euro 2020.



**MOMENT OF RECKONING:** Raheem Sterling falls inside the Denmark box after challenge from a couple of opposition players, which led to the controversial match-winning penalty

Beating Denmark Wednesday broke through the semifinal obstacle at least in the Euros, prevailing 2-1 in extra time and avoiding the penalty shootouts that have proved to be the team's nemesis through all those near-misses.

No way were the England players missing out on the chance to lap up the acclaim of a crowd waiting for this healing moment, not only to reach a final again but to gather in such big numbers again as the pandemic-restricted capac-

## Barty marches into Wimbledon final Fans await Leo-Ney duel

Wimbledon, July 8: It might have been difficult for Ash Barty to imagine that a trip to her first Wimbledon final was just around the corner when she stopped playing at last month's French Open because of an injured hip.

Or even when she was two points from being pushed to a third set by Angelique Kerber in their semifinal at the All England Club.

Barty does not let obstacles trouble her for too long. She figures out a way. That's why she's ranked No.1 and now stands one win from a second Grand Slam title after beating 2018 champion Kerber 6-3, 7-6(7-3) Thursday.

"I've had ups and downs and everything in between and I wouldn't change one day or one moment or one, kind of, road that we've



taken in my path and my journey," said Barty, who was the 2011 junior champion at the All England Club and stepped away from tennis for almost two years starting in 2014 because of burnout.

"It's been unique. It's been incredible. It's been tough. There have been so many things that led to this point," she told the spectators.

Barty is the first woman from Australia to reach the title match at the grass-court major since Evonne Goolagong in 1980. The opponent Saturday will be No.2 seed Aryna Sabalenka or No.8 Karolina Pliskova. They met in the second semifinal. The 25-year-old Barty won the 2019 French Open for her first Grand Slam title.

Barty will face eighth seed Karolina Pliskova, a 5-7, 6-4, 6-4 winner over second seed Aryna Sabalenka, in the final.

Buenos Aires, July 8: The most improvised Copa America will have the final most of the fans dreamed of. Brazil and Argentina play for the South American title Saturday at the historic Maracana Stadium, one of football's spiritual homes.

It should be a memorable ending to a tournament plagued by setbacks and moved at the last minute to one of the countries hardest-hit by COVID-19.

Neymar's Brazil team, the defending champions, and Lionel Messi's Argentina have won a combined seven World Cups and 23 continental titles.

The Argentine star wants to lift his first major trophy with his country, which hasn't won any since 1983. Messi played and lost the Copa America finals of 2007, 2015 and 2016 and the 2014 World Cup — the latter against Germany at the Maracana.

"What I want the most is to win a title with the national team," captain Messi said after Tuesday's 3-2 penalty shootout victory against Colombia in the semifinal.

Neymar was ruled out of the 2019 Copa due to injury. He said after Brazil's 1-0 win against Peru Monday that he wanted to face Argentina in the decider. He was one of the players who expressed concerns about the late decision to stage the tournament in his country after Argentina and Colombia



were dropped as co-hosts.

Brazil became Copa America host only two weeks before the opener. Messi and Neymar, who won the Champions League together with Barcelona in 2015, are good friends. They were on opposite sides in 2011 when the Catalan giants thrashed Brazil's Santos 4-0 in the Club World Cup final.

Argentina and Brazil have faced off more than 100 times, but only in four deciders. Argentina won the first of them 2-0 in 1937 for the South American championship, the predecessor of the Copa. Brazil won the other three.

Brazil beat Argentina 4-2 on penalties to win the 2004 Copa after the regular time ended at 2-2. One year later, the two arch rivals met for the Confederations Cup title in Germany. The Selecao hammered Argentina 4-1.

Argentina were heavy favourites to win the 2007 Copa, but Brazil crushed Messi's hopes with a 3-0 win in the final. Brazil also beat Argentina in the previous Copa. A 2-0 victory in the semifinal came with goals by Gabriel Jesus and Roberto Firmino.

Argentina hope to win their 15th continental title and equal Uruguay's record tally Brazil seek their 10th South American trophy. The final will be played in an empty Maracana due to health protocols.

## Ganguly steers clear of replacement debate

Kolkata, July 8: BCCI President Sourav Ganguly Thursday tried to steer clear of the controversy surrounding the national selectors' decision to not send a replacement for injured opener Shubman Gill in England, saying it was a matter for the selection committee to consider.

The Indian team management June 28, through administrative

manager Girish Dongre, had requested for two openers as replacement, preferably Prithvi Shaw and Devdutt Padikkal. But chairman of selectors Chetan Sharma, till a couple of days back, hadn't sent any formal reply to that mail as four openers are already in the UK.

When asked about the contentious issue, Ganguly, while addressing reporters on his 49th birthday Thursday, said: "That's selectors'

call." Both Shaw and Padikkal are currently in Sri Lanka with India's white-ball squad under Shikhar Dhawan for a six-match series.

Under regular skipper Virat Kohli, India is set to play a five-match Test series against England, starting August 4. The red-ball battle is also the first series of the second cycle of World Test Championship (WTC) 2021-23.

Ganguly expressed optimism

about hosting the suspended leg of this year's IPL in the UAE in September. "Nothing will happen we will manage. It will start in September we will chalk out the nitty-gritties," he told reporters here.

Ganguly reiterated the BCCI was forced to shift this year's World T20 to the UAE keeping in mind the safety and security of all stakeholders. The WT20 was scheduled to be held in India in October-November this year.