



**ON EVE OF YATRA:** Chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra parked outside the Lions' Gate of Srimandir on the eve of Rath Yatra festival in Puri, Sunday  
PIC: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

## State's JJM allocation hiked 4 times

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 11:** With an aim to provide clean tap water to every household, the Central grant to Odisha under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) has been increased by four times in the financial year 2021-22.

"Centre allocates ₹3,323 crore grant to #Odisha under #JalJeevanMission. With four-fold increase in allocation, Centre supports Odisha to become 'Har Ghar Jal' State by March, 2024," PIB, Odisha said, in a tweet Sunday.

The Union Jal Shakti Ministry has increased the grant for the state during the financial year 2021-21 to ₹3,323.42 crore from ₹812.15 crore made during the previous year (2020-21).

Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has approved the four-fold increase in allocation to Odisha and assured full assistance to the state for making provision of tap water supply in every rural home by March, 2024.

In a letter to the Chief Minister of Odisha, Shekhawat has emphasised that the work of providing tap connections should start in all the villages so that the state can provide tap water supply to every household by March, 2024.

With unspent balance of ₹10.93 crore and matching the state's share of ₹3,253 crore, in total, ₹6,596 crore is available for water supply work in the state in 2021-22.

On August 15, 2019, at the time of launch of JJM, only 3.10 lakh (3.63 per cent) households had tap water connections. Since then, 22.84 lakh households in the state have been provided with tap water connections. Thus, in Odisha, out of a total of 85.66 lakh households, now 25.95 lakh households (30.3 per cent) have tap water supply, it said.

In 2021-22, the state has planned to provide tap water connections to 21.31 lakh households, 22.53 lakh tap water connections in the year 2022-23 and 18.87 lakh tap water connections in 2023-24 to achieve tap water supply for every rural household.

To enable PRIs to manage water supply and ensure improved sanitation in villages, in 2021-22, ₹1,002 crore has been allocated to Odisha as 15th Finance Commission tied grants for water & sanitation to rural local bodies or Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

There is an assured funding of ₹5,280 crore for the next five years i.e. up to 2025-26. This huge investment in rural areas of Odisha, will accelerate economic activities and also boost the rural economy. It will create new employment opportunities in villages, the ministry said.

The Centre has urged the state government to accord priority to water-scarce areas, quality-affected villages, Aspirational districts, SC/ST majority villages and Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojna (SAGY) villages.

### Twitter names new resident grievance officer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 11:** Amid tensions with the government, Twitter has appointed a Resident Grievance Officer, days after it designated a chief compliance officer, as it also released its first India Transparency Report to meet the new IT rules.

The US social media giant's website has listed Vinay Prakash as the new grievance officer, providing contact details and procedure for users to report potential violations of its rules and terms. Twitter had previously appointed Dharmendra Chatur as its interim grievance officer for India after the new IT rules came into force on May 26. However, Chatur stepped down within weeks of taking over the key role.

California-based Jeremy Kessel was named as India's grievance redressal officer, on the platform's website - although the appointment did not meet the requirements of IT rules.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Till 30 minutes ago he was a corrupt man! Then he joined our party.

## Deities ready for 9-day sojourn

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Gajapati King Dibyasingha Dev is scheduled to perform the Chhera Panhanra ritual by 2 pm. Servitors will start pulling the chariots at 3 pm**

**Puri, July 11:** Lord Jagannath and his siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra are ready to go on a nine-day sojourn to Srigundicha temple on the occasion of Rath Yatra, July 12.

Like last year, the festival is being organised without the presence of devotees due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the three chariots were pulled to the Lions' Gate of Srimandir from the Rath Yard amid tight security Sunday.

"The chariots were pulled to the Lion's Gate of Srimandir after the temple priests placed the presiding deities' Aagyan Mala on their respective chariots. Now, the chariots are ready to carry the deities to Srigundicha temple Monday," said an official of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA). As per tradition, Nadighosa chariot

of Lord Jagannath was the first to be pulled to the Lions' Gate, which was followed by Darpadalan chariot of Devi Subhadra and Taladhwa chariot of Lord Balabhadra.

The district administration has, meanwhile, stepped up security around the 12th century shrine and the Grand Road to ensure a smooth Rath Yatra. Prohibitory orders have been clamped on the city to prevent people's participation in the festival.

As many as 65 platoons of police have been deployed in Puri for the smooth conduct of the festival. Senior officials, including Puri Collector Samarth Verma and SP Kanwar

Vishal Singh, are now supervising the arrangements, sources said.

According to Srimandir sources, the Managalarpan ritual of the deities would be performed at 8.15 am Monday and the Pahandi procession would start at 8.30 am.

The three deities would be placed on their respective chariots by 11.30 am. Gajapati King Dibyasingha Dev is scheduled to perform the Chhera Panhanra ritual by 2 pm. Servitors will start pulling the chariots at 3 pm, said the temple sources.

As per earlier decision, only servitors of the 12th century shrine will pull the chariots. The district administration, meanwhile, has set up drinking water kiosks and rest sheds for the servitors on the Grand Road.

"We have arranged healthcare, transportation and other facilities for the servitors," said an official of the district administration.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
MAX	33.0°C	33.0°C	
MIN	26.9°C	26.0°C	
Humidity	80%	83%	Forecast
Rainfall	12.7mm	10.2mm	Light rain very likely

### India evacuates diplomats from Af

**New Delhi:** Around 50 diplomats and other staff members at the consulate in Afghanistan's Kandahar have been evacuated in view of the "intense fighting near Kandahar city" India has said. The fighting started as the Taliban tries to regain control over the country as the US pulls out its forces after nearly two decades, sources have said.

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# leisure



## I HAD INSECURITY WITH MY LIPS: KYLIE JENNER

Reality TV personality and make-up mogul Kylie Jenner has shared that temporary lip fillers helped her to overcome her deepest insecurities. She shared in a new YouTube video that she wanted to get the procedure done to amp up her confidence as she was insecure about her 'smaller lips'.

## 'MORE OPPORTUNITIES NOW FOR ACTRESSES OF MY AGE'

Actress Michelle Pfeiffer says there are many more 'interesting roles' than there were a few decades ago. "Something is changing; there are more opportunities for actresses of my age and for women above 30," said the 63-year-old actress.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You've finally realised that diet and exercise are a must, and you especially need to take good care. Today, you may wish to eat something different. Tried Mongolian cuisine? Ganesh suggests that you go out with some friends who you've not been paying attention to.

**TAURUS**  
You will spend your day in the company of near and dear ones, says Ganesh. Family and friends might gather at your place and you will leave no stone unturned in welcoming them to your nest. In all probability, home makers will be able to shine in cooking as well as hosting, foresees Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Today, you may be busy purchasing food supplies or penning an inventory. In your spare time, which you are likely to have in plenty today, you will try to befriend strangers or tread into unfamiliar territories. Such activities will not bring you any harm.

**CANCER**  
You are feeling lucky today. The problem is that your feelings have nothing to do with the ground reality. So, while you may get busy trying your luck at risky speculative markets, Ganesh may get increasingly worried about the losses you may incur because of your foolishness.

**LEO**  
Call it an epiphany of sorts, but today promises to be a day of revelations for you. Finally, things fall into place as your Odyssey nears its end, and you come to terms with your hidden talents, says Ganesh. Follow your heart and dive into the bottomless pool of your imagination.

**VIRGO**  
Ganesh predicts that your writing skills will possibly help you vent your feelings without offending others. You will successfully complete your pending assignments. Great success will knock at your door in anything and everything you undertake today, predicts Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
Health is always a key issue, and today, you may have to pay some special attention to the same. It may be some elderly person in the family, or even you. Take the time to give it your full attention in order to avoid any further complications. You may do well to undergo a physical examination yourself.

**SCORPIO**  
The target is locked in and the arrow is shot. It is only a matter of time before Cupid celebrates and hits the bull's eye and you find yourself in the mush of things. Sentiments and romance will be the order of the day.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Appreciation for all that excellent work you have put in is a no-go for you! Yet, you stand to gain nothing by losing heart. While the acknowledgement you look for has been delayed, Ganesh says it has not been denied and is in the offing already.

**CAPRICORN**  
The day will be a maze of complex problems and situations, but you will find your way out in no time, says Ganesh. At work, you may love to play the leader, but that makes you accountable, for both the good as well as the poor performance of your subordinates.

**AQUARIUS**  
If Elvis Presley is who you dreamed of being, today may be your day! You seem to impress one and all, and even money flows in! You play smart today and everything seems to work in your favour. Take care, says Ganesh, things may not be as they seem.

**PISCES**  
A hectic day of socialising awaits you. You will discover hidden talents and unnoticed traits about yourself. Either that, or whoever brought them to your notice was only lying to get some socialising action of their own. You are a person of action, as well as of words, and hence, will go on to act on what you have planned, says Ganesh.

## Kangana shows her 'vicious' character

**Mumbai:** Actress Kangana Ranaut has started shooting for her film *Dhaakad* in Budapest and shared a glimpse of her look on social media Sunday.

On her Instagram story she wrote: "Making of the most vicious of them all 'Agent Agni' with my dream team."

Kangana will be seen as Agent Agni in her upcoming movie. The film's first schedule was shot in Madhya Pradesh.

Apart from *Dhaakad*, Kangana also has films such as *Thalavi*, period drama *Manikarnika Returns: The Legend Of Didda* and *Tejas* in the pipeline.

Kangana will also don the Director's hat for the second time for *Emergency*, based on the life of late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

IANS



## Pole dancing works as meditation: Kriti

**Mumbai:** Pole dancing is not just about fitness for actress Kriti Kharbanda. It works as meditation for her, too.

"Today it has become a part of not just my fitness, but also my meditation. Pole dancing is not just a physical act but extremely meditative, because you have to concentrate 100 per cent or else you will fall and injure yourself badly," Kriti said.

Kriti recently stunned netizens with a pole dancing video she shared on Instagram. What motivated her to take it up?

The *Housefull 4* actress replied: "When I signed *Housefull*, I needed to get into shape. The first pole dancing class that I went for, I thought my arm was going to fall off, my legs were bruised. But when I came home, I felt I had achieved something that I never thought would be possible. That feeling drove me back to the pole time and again."

Kriti recently completed 12 years in Hindi film industry. On the work front, Kriti will next be seen in the digital film *14 Phere* slated to release July 23 on Zee5.

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IANS

## Mouni Roy reveals 'way to her heart'

**Mumbai:** Actress Mouni Roy has revealed the way one can win her heart Sunday.

She posted a picture on Instagram. In the image, Mouni is seen dolled up in an all black ensemble sitting on a couch and gorging on some macaroons. She captioned the image: "Ways to my heart 1) get me food 2) make me food 3) be food Ps if dunno my love for food you don't know me at all x"

She then posted a picture of her outfit and called herself a 'black addict'.

Speaking about her upcoming work, Mouni will be seen in Ayan Mukerji's fantasy action adventure *Brahmastra* alongside Amitabh Bachchan, Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt and Nagarjuna, with Shah Rukh Khan in a cameo.

IANS



## Karan, Asif shine at London Indian Film Festival

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London:** Celebrated filmmakers Karan Johar and Asif Kapadia were among those honoured with an Icon Award at the London Indian Film Festival (LIFF) for their contribution to cinema.

Johar, the producer-director of several successful Hindi films, and Kapadia, the Oscar-winning director of the documentary on British singer-songwriter Amy Winehouse, were among those to receive awards at the conclusion of LIFF 2021 last week.

The festival, backed by the



Bagri Foundation and British Film Institute (BFI), was staged in a hybrid form this year amid

the ongoing coronavirus lockdown restrictions.

"It's a testament to a strong

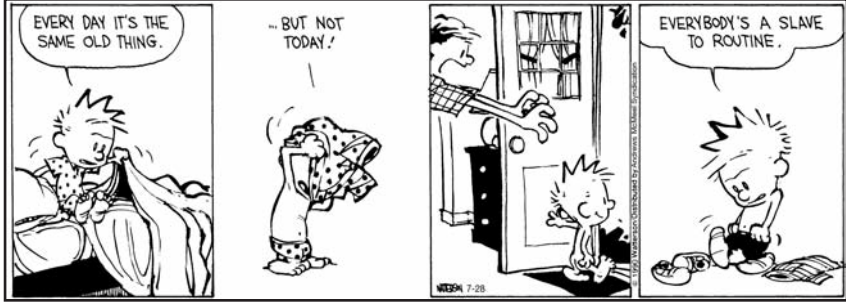
team that we have been able to pull off a dynamic festival online and back in cinemas against considerable challenges and we especially thank the cinemas that have helped us find innovative marketing strategies to attract audiences back," said Cary Rajinder Sawhney, LIFF Executive and Programming Director.

Some of the other awards of the year included Outstanding Achievement Awards for actors Shruti Haasan and Janhvi Kapoor.

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

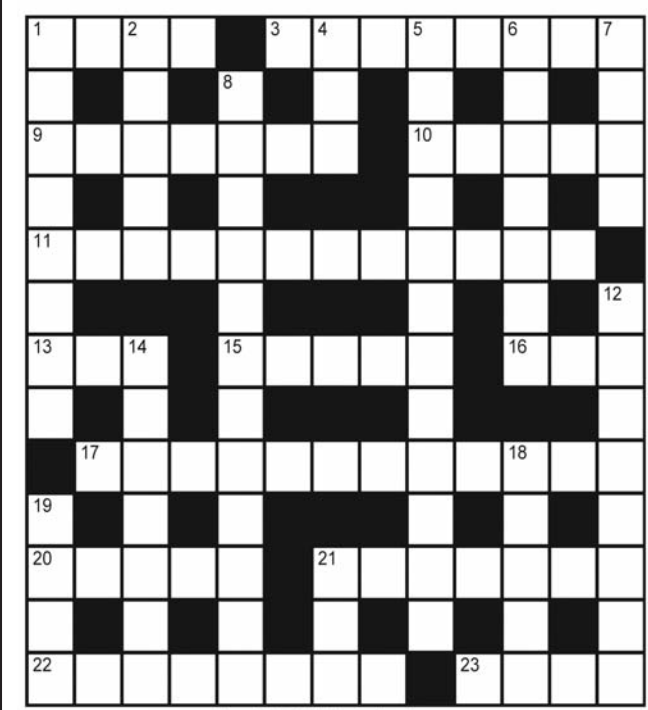


### BREVITY



### FUN post

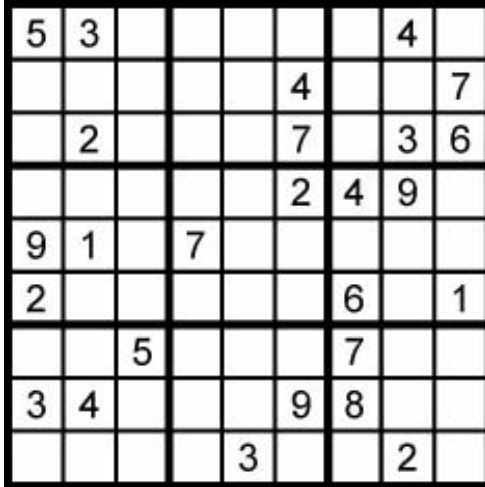
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Adroit
  - 3 Appreciative
  - 9 Got there
  - 10 Summer TV offering
  - 11 C, M or X, e.g. (5,7)
  - 13 Floor cleaner
  - 15 Poverty-stricken
  - 16 Choose
  - 17 Mini-aquarium (8,4)
  - 20 Kind of change
  - 21 Windhoek locale
  - 22 Supervisor
  - 23 Proof word
  - Down**
  - 1 Schematics
  - 2 Group meeting place
  - 4 Secreted
  - 5 Kid's story (7,5)
  - 6 Mixed bag
  - 7 Connect
  - 8 Tuxedo (7,5)
  - 12 Resolute
  - 14 Agitate
  - 18 Elliptical path
  - 19 Nile queen, informally
  - 21 GPS heading

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



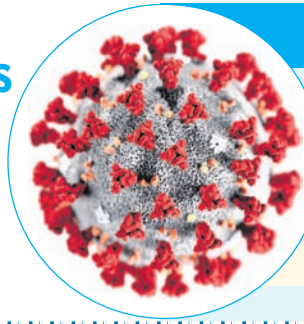
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## SAFETY GOES FOR A TOSS

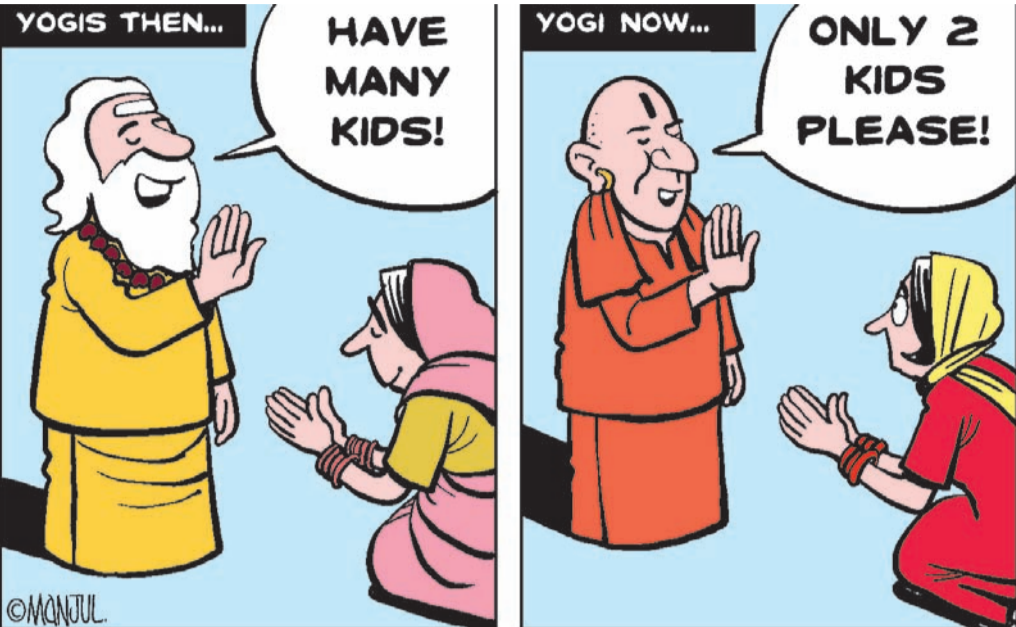
Labourers working atop utility poles without adequate safety gears near College Square in Cuttack, Sunday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	18,73,89,372	17,13,48,174	40,45,347
India	3,08,37,222	2,99,75,064	4,08,040
Odisha	9,39,752	9,12,463	4,599

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Heavy rain likely till July 14

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 11: The regional office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Sunday issued warning of heavy rainfall in different parts of the state till July 14.

The department attributed low pressure areas over west central and adjoining north-west Bay of Bengal off north Andhra Pradesh-Odisha coasts and associated cyclonic circulation as prime reasons for the same.

"Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Koraput, Malkangiri, Rayagada, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur," the department said.

It also added, "Light to moderate rain or thundershower very likely to occur at many places over the districts of south Odisha and at a few places over the districts of north Odisha."

The department said that heavy rains are likely to continue till Wednesday while majority of the heavy rains may remain confined to mostly southern districts of the state like Nabarangpur, Koraput and others.

## ABDUCTED MAN RESCUED FROM KHURDA FARMHOUSE

BHUBANESWAR: Chandaka police Sunday claimed to have rescued a person who had been allegedly kidnapped by two youths over past enmity Friday evening. Police rescued the person from a farmhouse at Khurda and arrested the kidnappers. The arrested were identified as Pramod Kumar Mohanty, 32, of Balanga area in Puri district and Santosh Patnaik alias Kalia, 32, of Nayagarh town. According to sources, victim, Sadananda Behera of Andharua area under Chandaka police limits, had reportedly taken around ₹3.5 lakh from the duo on a promise to arrange jobs for them in Odisha Police. However, Behera neither kept his promise nor returned the money to the duo despite repeated requests in this regard. Subsequently, the duo hatched a plot to abduct Behera and get back the money from him. Meanwhile, police also arrested Behera on charges of cheating Mohanty, Patnaik and their relatives.

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# BDA to make post-allotment formalities online

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 11: In a bid to ensure hassle-free application and allotment of plots, the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) will soon make post-allotment formalities online, ensuring that the process is completed in a time-bound manner.

According to sources, the process will be initiated once an allottee creates its unique account number (UAN) by visiting the BDA website—www.bda.gov.in. An allottee must register for this number as it is mandatory for any kind of online request to be made in its online application through 'Property Allotment Management System (PAMS)'. The UAN is mandatory for utilisation in all online services for any formalities that may be needed in future.



The post-allotment services include transfer of property, obtaining NOC for availing bank loan and mutation of assets upon death of the original allottees

"Execution of lease deed by the allottees with BDA is one of the major post-allotment services which will be automated. The allottees will be required to submit necessary documents along with the requisite fee through online mode. After receipt of the documents and fees, the information will be scrutinised following which the lease of deed execution will be processed. However, the al-

lotment cases which are covered under Task Force Report/Audit Report/Internal Assessment Report or any other litigation will not be taken at the moment," said BDA vice-chairman Sanjay Kumar Singh.

Singh also said that other post-allotment services such as transfer of property, obtaining no objection certificate (NOC) for availing bank loan and mutation of the assets upon the

death of the original allottees will also be made online.

The BDA has set ₹8,000 and ₹12,000 as processing fees for Economically Weaker Section (EWS) and Low Income Group (LIG) category of houses respectively. Meanwhile, the processing fee for houses and apartments for Middle Income Group (MIG) and High Income Group (HIG) have been set as ₹30,000 and ₹60,000 respectively.

Moreover, the processing fee for shops or shops-cum-residence plots having assets up to ₹35,000 is set at ₹15,000. Similarly, for those having assets between ₹35,001 to ₹50,000, the fee is set as ₹20,000. However, for the cost of the assets amounting between ₹50,001 to ₹1.5 lakh and ₹1.5 lakh onwards, the rate of processing fee is ₹40,000 and ₹60,000 respectively.

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# 2,282 fresh cases push Covid tally to 9,39,752

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 11:** Odisha Sunday registered 65 Covid-19 fatalities, the highest-ever reported in a single day, pushing the toll to 4,599, while 2,282 new cases raised the tally to 9,39,752, a Health department official said.

Fourteen fresh fatalities were reported from Khurda district, of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, six each from Puri, Keonjhar and Bargarh, five each from Angul and Mayurbhanj, four from Nayagarh and three from Sundargarh, Kendrapara and Ganjam.

One person each succumbed to the infection in Balasore, Bolangir, Boudh, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Jagatsinghpur, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Kandhamal and Sambalpur.

Taking to Twitter, the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said, "This list does

**Khurda district has so far reported the maximum number of Covid-19 fatalities at 756, while Deogarh in western Odisha registered the minimum of 35 deaths due to the infection**

not reflect deaths occurring on a particular day. It gives details of past deaths for which the audit process has been duly completed and the cause of death has been identified as due to Covid-19."

Khurda district has so far reported the maximum number of Covid-19 fatalities at 756, while Deogarh in western Odisha registered the minimum of 35 deaths

due to the infection, the official said. Fifteen districts in the state have reported 100 or more Covid deaths, he said.

Fifty-three other coronavirus-positive patients have also died due to comorbidities, the official said.

Of the new cases, 1,315 were reported from quarantine centres and the remaining 967 detected during contact tracing.

Khurda district registered the highest number of fresh cases at 592, followed by Cuttack (289) and Balasore (146).

Odisha now has 25,461 active cases, while 3,120 more people were cured of the disease on Saturday, taking the total number of recoveries to 9,09,639.

The state has conducted over 1.44 crore sample tests for Covid-19, including 78,466 Saturday, and the positivity ratio stands at 6.45 per cent.

## Abhay meets injured SOG jawans at AIIMS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 11:** The Director General of Police Sunday met the injured Special Operations Group jawans who are currently being treated at the AIIMS here.

Two jawans had sustained severe bullet injuries during the gun battle with the left wing extremists in Uma forest near Boudh-Kandhamal border Saturday.

DGP Abhay enquired about their health status. He also expressed his happiness as condition of the jawans is stable now. He also held discussions

**Two jawans had sustained bullet injuries during the gun battle with Reds in Uma forest Saturday**

with the doctors at the AIIMS about the health condition of the jawans.

Sources claimed that the combing operation in the jungle by security forces is likely to end soon.

# NGT notice on 'polluting' Kalinganagar rly siding

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 11:** The eastern bench of National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued notices to two industries and related government agencies. The notice demands their response to the allegations of illegal use of a railway siding in ferrying industrial products for a private cement project.

This comes after a petitioner Pratap Kumar Jena moved the NGT alleging usage of a railway siding on the premises of a defunct enterprise by another major cement industry, grossly violating environmental laws. The petitioner also accused the office of the State Pollution Control Board of remaining mum on the issue.

The NGT has asked the two firms to respond to the allegations within next four weeks. It has also asked Jajpur Collector, State Pollution



Control Board, Central Pollution Control Board, and Ministry of Environment and Forest to respond on the issue.

The petitioner told the NGT that a steel plant, closed since January 2020, hosts a railway siding. However, local officials, including the Additional District Collector of Kalinganagar, were allegedly facilitating illegal operation by presiding over the meeting to run the railway siding there.

It said that unloading of fly ash, slag, clinker, coal and gypsum was

done illegally from the railway siding with the patronage of government officials. Populated villages such as Khurunti, Manpur, Nilabasti and others are said to be within one km of that area where around 1,000 persons reside and the plant was said to be causing severe pollution, risking lives of the locals.

The petition claimed that runoff water from the area was directly discharged to the Gandanalla without treatment while effluent treatment plant was not installed and materials were stored in open area without any shed besides other violations of green norms.

Shankar Prasad Pani, the lawyer for the petitioner, in his argument before the NGT, alleged violation of norms of environmental management in mineral stack yards and railway sidings, and lack of consent to establish (CTE) and consent to operate (CTO) in the case.

## Motor mechanic makes mini chariots using food grains

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, July 11:** A motor mechanic in the Silk City here has made mini chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra by using three different food grains.

The chariots which adorn the miniatures of deities were made in tulsi wood and the ornaments by the same food grains displayed at Sriram Nagar Street here Saturday.

"Since Rath Yatra is restricted this year by the government due to Covid-19, we only display these for public view at our house only," said 51-year-old Hara Gobinda Maharana.

He has used the grains of wheat to make an eight-inch height and five-inch width chariot of Lord Jagannath, while fine quality paddy and rice for the chariots of Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra. The weight of each of the chariots is less than 100 gram, he said.

The chariots are made by connecting the food grains using the babul paste, he said, adding there was no iron nail or other chemical items used in the chariot.

"It's very difficult to connect the individual grains and takes a lot of time. It took around two to three months to make all these chariots in leisure hours, while his family members helped him in his effort," Maharana said, pointing out, "After garage work, I work for about two hours daily to make these chariots."

Maharana said it was his hobby to make something innovative on different occasions like Rath Yatra. After his first such innovation, people from all sections appreciated the work. Since then, I used to do some new innovations on different occasions, including Rath Yatra, he said, adding he gets self satisfaction after finishing the chariots.

Three years ago, Maharana said he had made the chariots of the three deities by using as many as 51 different grains, spices and seeds of various vegetables on the occasion of Rath Yatra, while last year he made the same chariots by using turmeric, betel nut and nutmeg on the same occasion, he added.

## Cong MLA criticises Rath Yatra curbs for Puri citizens

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 11:** Congress leader Suresh Routray Sunday attacked the state government and accused it of imposing excessive restrictions on citizens of Puri city during the Rath Yatra.

He castigated the government for the curbs put on local residents and compared the state government rules with the governance of Hitler. "What kind of excessive



curbs have been put on the local residents of people? Although barring crowd at Badadanda could

be tolerated, how can the government bar people from viewing Rath Yatra from their rooftops and houses?" he asked.

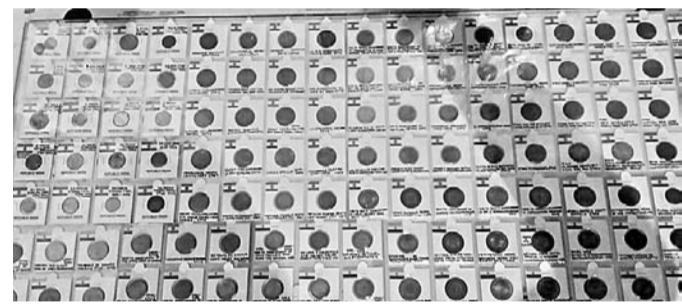
He said that restrictions on people of Puri in terms of their movement in the city, colonies and bar on viewing the religious procession from their roofs were not good and urged the government to reconsider their decision.

"Do the roofs of people belong to the Odisha government? I want to

request the state government, Puri Collector and others not to behave like Hitler and consider giving some liberty to local people. Many of them will have some medical emergencies or other important work to attend," he said.

The Congress leader also criticized the government for lack of beds in government hospitals amid the pandemic and also raked up the issue of shortage of beds at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar.

## Numismatist uses lockdown to boost his collection



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 11:** The pandemic-induced restrictions have forced the people to spend more time inside their houses. A few of them have turned this extraordinary situation into an opportunity to do creative as well as unique things.

Samaranjan Mohanty, a 41-year-old man from VSS Nagar in Bhubaneswar, has collected hundreds of stamps, coins, notes, plastic cards, tickets, matchboxes amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mohanty had started collecting stamps, notes and other things in 2010. But, the pandemic-induced lockdowns and shutdowns have enabled him to spare more time to his hobby of collecting rare things.

Mohanty claimed that he has so far collected coins, notes and stamps from around 200 countries for his personal museum.

"I have a hobby of collecting rare things since my childhood. My passion for collecting coins, stamps, tickets from different spots tournaments and other things got an impetus in 2010. However, the pandemic-induced lockdown en-

abled me to spare more time to collect things," said Mohanty, a marketing coordinator in a private entertainment company.

Mohanty's collection includes British-era coins and notes and stamps on eminent personalities like Biju Patnaik, Madhusudhan Das, Gopabandhu Das, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Veer Surendra Sai and others. He has also collected stamps on Puri Rath Yatra and the Olympic games.

Mohanty's family members, including his parents, wife and son, assist him in collecting things. "I have collected things from various places and people. Many of my friends and relatives have helped me a lot in this regard. Some of my relatives are abroad and they extend their full support to me," Mohanty said.

The 41-year-old claimed that his personal museum has helped his son and other kids in the locality to know about the outer world during the pandemic. "Collection of coins, notes, stamps and other things help us in enriching our knowledge. This is more important for kids who are now facing difficulties to attend schools due to the pandemic," Mohanty said.



GUSHING GALLONS

With the release of floodwater from Hirakud dam, water level in Mahanadi river goes up at Jobra anicut in Cuttack, Sunday

OP PHOTO

## Social media campaign for central varsity tag to Utkal

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 11:** Several students of Utkal University have started campaign on social media with a tagline #isupportUtkalUniversityForCentralUniversity demanding central university status for the university from new union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Both of the university are using social media to appeal the government for giving the status of central university who said that students are making their profile picture with frame of I support Utkal University For Central University. More than 1,000 former and current students have participated in the campaign and more will follow in coming days, said Mans Kumar Sahu, a student.

Earlier, the Utkal University Teachers' Association (UUTA) had written to the new Education Minister regarding turning the university into the second Central university of the coastal state.



**State Congress had also reiterated the demand of granting Central university tag to Utkal University**

While Bihar has four Central universities and Andhra Pradesh has three, Odisha has only one in Koraput district, which caters to needs of students in southern parts of the state.

State Congress had also reiterated the demand of granting central university tag to Utkal University.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 11:** Environmentalists of the coastal state Sunday requested the government to pay attention to a number of important environmental issues before finalising the site for construction of the airport at Puri.

Sundara Narayana Patro, president of the Orissa Environmental Society said that there is a need for undertaking diverse developmental programmes for the overall prosperity and growth of Odisha. This necessitates the state to be increasingly connected with other states as well as some important cities of the world. For this, the development and enhanced use of both highways and airways is very much essential. The government has recently decided to set up an airport near Puri city, which bears great significance in this regard.

Given the importance of Puri, both as a pilgrimage site and a

## PURI AIRPORT SITE SELECTION

# Consider environmental factors: Experts



tourist destination, and its proximity to the capital city Bhubaneswar and Sun Temple Konark, the government has probably considered the justification for construction of an airport here. After a recent team of central experts visited Puri and explored some possible sites, the focus has now been on an area near the proposed Shamuka project in the Sipasarubali area. However, before the final decision is taken on site selection, it is very pertinent for the government to pay attention to a

number of important environmental issues, Patro opined.

Another environment expert Jaya Krushna Panigrahi said that the sea level is rising steadily consequent to global warming and climate change. Therefore, the likelihood of seawater intruding into many coastal cities and other areas of the world, such as Puri, is also escalating. The Puri coast too has been included under the hazardous zone.

The establishment of an airport needs to be planned keeping in view the next hundred years, and

priority should be given to future security. Taking into account all these environmental aspects, it is necessary to determine the location at a safe distance from the coast, at least ten kilometers away. It is also important to pay attention to the maintenance of the quality of the environment and safety of the biodiversity of the locality. Another issue for consideration is protection of freshwater available areas in Puri, which are scarce and pose a serious problem in the city, Panigrahi stated.

**The establishment of an airport needs to be planned keeping in view the next hundred years, and priority should be given to future security**

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# SHGs to manage micro compost plants

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, July 11:** The Sambalpur Municipal Corporation (SMC) has planned to create scope of income generation for women working in various self-help groups in the town. The civic body has built four micro compost plant centres (MCCs) which will be operationalised by October this year. The civic body authorities have decided to hand over the waste and garbage management to SHGs which will ensure income for them, said

Subhankar Mohanty, the enforcement officer of SMC. He said garbage will be collected from houses and vegetable remains, plastic and other materials will be separated. Bio-compost will be prepared from vegetable remains. The SHG members will earn by selling compost to people. Over 55 tonnes of compost are expected to be produced from the four compost plants. The civic body has mobilised 64 vehicles to collect garbage. The SMC has already executed seven micro compost plants. ₹79 lakh was spent on each of them.

# Here, colour of Subhadra is red

NARESH CHANDRA PATTANAYAK, OP

**Keonjhar, July 11:** Sri Sri Baladev temple in Keonjhar is as old as 400 years. The temple is known for its own peculiarity – the colour of Goddess Subhadra is red while her usual colour elsewhere is yellow.

A legend has it that the deities at Sri Baladev temple were being worshiped as per tantric rituals. It is said that due to tantric system of worship, the colour of Devi Subhadra has turned into crimson red.

The famous temple here is over 90-ft high while the height of its chariot is more than 72-ft. The temple bears its magnificent architectural designs in delicate and floral patterns carved on stones. Adding to its beauty are side deities placed around the temple. The shrine is protected by the Meghanada Prachir (massive stone wall).

The 72-ft high chariot of Lord Baladev in Keonjhar is the tallest in the world. Global Records and Research Foundation (GRRF) has recognised this claim. This chariot is taller than the one in Puri. Asia Pacific and Indian National Records has also recognised the chariot as the tallest in the world.

This mega chariot at Keonjhar has 16 wheels, eight axles, seven floors at different heights and 15 feet long Dhaja Bata. It is said that earlier its height was 74 ft, but due to shortage of wood, it was cut to 72 ft.

Maharaja Laxminarayan Bhanja had dreams about the Lord, His siblings and Sudarshan. Their wooden statues were lying buried deep in the sand on the bank of Baitarani river near Bancho under Anandapur sub-division. Following the instruction of the king, the wooden statues were recovered from under the sand and installed at the temple.

Before they were installed in the temple, they were worshipped as per the tantric tradition. It was said that with tantric system of worship, the Sudarshan was lifted atop the temple.

The system of worship and the rituals followed here are similar to those at the Srikshetra.

Bhaja Khichidi, Khiri Kakara and Manohari are offered as part of bhog to the deities here. Chandan Yatra, Rath Yatra and Dola Yatra are among the major festivals which are celebrated here with religious fervour and gaiety. However, the deities here do not go through Nabakalebara since there is no provision of Nabakalebara in the Record of Rights here.

## Woman, youth tied to tree over illicit affair

**Udala:** Villagers caught a woman and a youth in a compromising position inside an abandoned house in Udala NAC area of Mayurbhanj district. The villagers tied the woman and the youth to a tree. The two were allegedly beaten by the villagers. After a meeting in the village, they handed over the two to police. Police have started an investigation into the matter.

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You have no right to judge a man unless you are capable of doing what he does better than himself.

THE MOTHER

## Ministry Manoeuvre

The creation of the Ministry of Cooperation shortly before the Narendra Modi government's biggest reshuffle July 8 is a shrewd and carefully calculated move by the BJP to tinker with the country's Constitution in order to consolidate its political base at the grassroots, mainly in states such as Maharashtra and Gujarat. The loss of Maharashtra to the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress combine does not augur well for the BJP's electoral arithmetic for the next Lok Sabha polls scheduled in 2024. Maharashtra is known as the money making state. Added to this is the fact that there are 48 seats in Maharashtra which is the second largest number of Lok Sabha seats after UP. If UP too slips out of BJP's grip in the coming Assembly polls, which is within the realm of possibility, the BJP would find it difficult to retain power at the Centre in 2024.

The inept handling of the pandemic and crumbling health facilities coupled with unprecedented economic slowdown have already put a question mark over the efficiency of the Modi government in managing the affairs of the country. It has to be admitted that a government's abilities can only be measured in times of crises. While the desire of the BJP to tighten its grip on every aspect of society and economy was tolerated by the citizens, its failures also looked larger than life due to the very same attitude.

The nervousness of the leadership is becoming more and more palpable with the approaching Assembly election to the biggest and most electorally sensitive state of UP early 2022. One big example of that fear can be observed in the two-child policy announced by UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to mark World Population Day July 11. This announcement seems like a Make or Break step intended as an experiment in a state where the BJP seems to be faltering. The intense violence that happened during local elections this past week and the desire to get its candidates elected unopposed showed weakness on the part of the BJP. However, the family planning move seems to be an experiment that could go either way. After curtain on the Ram Mandir issue has fallen and violence against Muslims and Dalits continues unabated, the state has not been successful in demonstrating positive achievements. Any achievement could have diverted attention from severe failures such as the innumerable bodies found buried on the banks of rivers in the state.

The reshuffle that sent packing a dozen ministers, including Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and articulate Law, IT and Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, could be an admission of failure and course correction for the government. If removal of discredited ministers and infusion of fresh blood is one tactic to win over the people's confidence, the creation of the Cooperation Ministry is an attempt to spread the party's influence to the grassroots. The selection of Union Home Minister Amit Shah as the in-charge of the new ministry shows the seriousness the BJP top leadership attaches to the exercise.

The controversy that surrounds the new move is the constitutional propriety and validity of the Cooperation Ministry itself as the subject of Cooperation and Cooperative Societies is a State subject in the Constitution's Seventh Schedule. The Opposition's charge that it is yet another assault on federalism is not wide off the mark. The real intent, apart from the political calculations, is also suspect, given the fact that cooperative banks across the country control huge money. The combined balance sheet of all state cooperative banks as of March 31, 2015, stood at ₹1.98 lakh crore and that of district central cooperative banks stood at ₹4.06 lakh crore. According to the RBI, their contribution to rural credit increased from 3.1 per cent in 1951 to an impressive 27.3 per cent in 2002.

The formation of the new ministry may open floodgates for loot apart from becoming a political tool for the ruling BJP which has to cover a huge ground to make up for the trust deficit it has suffered due to the raging pandemic and its anti-farmer, anti-people and anti-democratic policies.

### WISDOM CORNER

Our virtues and our failings are inseparable, like force and matter. When they separate, man is no more.

NIKOLA TESLA

Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.

HENRY FORD

Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.

CARL JUNG

### WORDSWORTH

#### Octothorpe

This word is beginning to appear in a few dictionaries, but still seems mostly to be a jargon term of the North American telephone business for the handset symbol #. It has reached semi-official status by being mentioned in international standards documents but that's no guarantee of a wide circulation any time soon. Octothorpe is just one of a plethora of names for the symbol. In the US it's often called the pound key, because it has long been used to mark numbers related to weight, or for similar reasons the number sign, which is one of its internationally agreed names. Elsewhere it is commonly called hash, a term dating from the 1970s that may have been a popular misunderstanding of hatch. Many humorous or slangy terms have also been recorded, none of them with wide circulation: tic-tac-toe, gate, crunch, and many others. In 1989, one of the international standards bodies settled on square as the official name, seemingly on the grounds that most languages had an equivalent in its vocabulary, so it could be easily translated. As a result, the British Post Office, then responsible for telecommunications, settled on square and it is still used publicly by its successor organisation, British Telecom (BT). With all these terms about, inventing a new one, especially such an odd-ball one as octothorpe, would seem to serve no practical purpose. The evidence suggests that it was originally a joke term among engineers at Bell Labs in the USA. In the early 1960s, the Labs were working on ways to interface telephones to computers and invented what is now called touch-tone dialling. This needed two additional special keys on handsets, both of which have since become standard. One of these is the \* symbol, usually known as the asterisk but which Bell Labs decided to call the star key. The other was the # symbol. The word has appeared in many forms, including octothorn, octalthorp, octothorp, and octathorp as well as octothorpe. There are at least five stories circulating about its source. Nobody is in any doubt about the first part, which is obviously enough from the Latin (or Greek) word for eight, as in octagon for an eight-sided figure, because of the eight points on the symbol. It's the second half that puzzles the experts. The American Heritage Dictionary says that it comes from the family name of James Edward Oglethorpe, the eighteenth-century English philanthropist who secured a charter for the colony of Georgia in 1732 as a refuge for debtors. This is very unlikely as Mr Oglethorpe's name is hardly a household word these days (at least, outside Georgia). A second story says it's a whimsical creation based on the idea that the symbol looks like a village surrounded by eight fields. Thorp is the Old Norse word for a village, which appears in many English place names, such as Scunthorpe or Cleethorpe, though it's not known in North America. This is possible, though perhaps a little stretched. A third story is documented, since Ralph Carlsen of Bell Laboratories wrote a memorandum about it just before his retirement in 1995. He records that in the early 1960s a Bell Labs engineer, Don Macpherson, went to instruct their first client, the Mayo Clinic, in the use of a new telephone system. He felt the need for a fresh and unambiguous name for the # symbol. He was apparently at that time active in a group that was trying to get the Olympic medals of the athlete Jim Thorpe returned from Sweden, so he decided to add thorpe to the end. (Jim Thorpe, a native American who has been described as the greatest athlete of the twentieth century, had won two medals at the 1912 Olympics in Sweden, but had been disqualified because he was found to have accepted money for playing baseball three years earlier, so making him a professional. His medals were finally returned in 1983.) In 2006 Douglas A Kerr documented his memories of the genesis of the term. Though the background facts about the development of the telephone system and the need for the new symbols match those of other sources, his story about the creation of the term is quite different. He says that it was a joke term, originally octathorp, invented by two friends, John C Schaak and Herbert T Uthlaut, who deliberately included the th sound that would be difficult for speakers of some languages to say. Mr Kerr says that he and the others quietly introduced it into various documents until it caught on. Unfortunately, there's no corroborative evidence for any of these stories.

### SPECTRUM EDUCATION

## The snobbery of marks!



Panchanan Dalai

**THE SNOBBERY OF MARKS IS A MENTALITY, A SOCIAL CONDITION, A 'MARKS-ISM' THAT DIVIDES 'HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS' OF CERTIFICATE MARKS**

In his essay "Selected Snobberies", Aldous Huxley opines that there is nothing in the world that modern people are not snobbish of. Had he been alive, he would have certainly incorporated into his list the 'snobbery of marks', which has surreptitiously invaded our modern educational mentality. Students, parents, teachers, institutions, even governments, all have fallen into this alluring trap of marks or grades. The snobbery of marks is a mentality, a social condition, a 'marks-ism' that divides 'haves and have-nots' of certificate marks. It is not only an educational ailment but, more potentially, a deadly manifestation of mere mathematical psyche of our society. The recent viral videos of reactions and protests of students and parents concerning the matriculation results in Odisha are a wake-up call to this snobbery of learning.

What is frightening is to note how this 'marks-ism', the colonial or bourgeois idea of government versus private education, has infected the Odia mentality. The snobbery that private education is better than government education is not only an educational disease but, at the same time, purely antithetical to the long history of Odisha's glorious agrarian background which has produced out-

standing scholars, bureaucrats, doctors, professors, artists, and scientists. I am sure, several best private teachers and students still hail from the same agrarian economy of Odisha. So how is this paradox of government/private hierarchy justified? I think what is best is to work towards a synthetic idea of private and government, rather than promoting a hierarchy of these. This snobbish idea and its epidemic rise in Odisha should, therefore, be seriously probed and mitigated.

It is also a modern hypocrisy to believe that quality education springs from a f(m)ountain of private institutions through the best investment of money. In fact, quality education and capitalism are the antithesis of a sound society and are as different from each other as classical education is different from the modern one. Francis Bacon, one of the founding fathers of modern intellectualism, criticised the rise of uneducated experts in England. "For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned." Our students and parents should be warned of such advancement of learning; that education is not for mastering mere 'ability' to survive in a competitive world! To

privilege the 'ability' of learning is fostering mechanical, slavish, and crude education over the 'light and sweetness' of learning. Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, and Sri Aurobindo, therefore, espoused synthetic education. As parents, educationists, teachers, and institutions, we should train our students to live in education, not to exist in education. I believe many millennials who carry the T-shirt dictum on their chest - "To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all" - could distinguish between living and existing in educational system.

It is also petrifying to take cognisance of the 'insecurity' and 'career consternation' that have engulfed our youngsters. The source of these is as much social as governmental. And learn, how Julius Caesar quit his oratory, when he saw his rivals like Cicero and Catullus excelled in debates than him, and, instead, chose the profession of a soldier and proved himself as an emperor. These examples should nullify the excessive confidence or pessimism that largely define our millennial generation. I believe, it is we, as a community or society, who are responsible for this psychic bombardment on our young minds.

Another fallacy of this snobbery lies in the way young stu-

dents have learnt the hierarchy or futility of subjects and disciplines. That some disciplines are better than other disciplines is a purely utilitarian conception of education, rooted in the divisive idea of 'marks-ism' and monetarism. Snobbery of subjects is yet another blunder meticulously crafted in school classrooms. I think such ideas are not only elitist but also anarchic to our society and culture.

Thirty years ago, it was unimaginable for young learners of Odisha to confront such binary of private and government colleges or universities. How come, then, there is this sudden mushrooming of private institutions and the collateral damage therefrom to Odia mentality? I am sure many, who attended government schools, walked miles of roads on bare feet, studied in makeshift schools, taught by traditional teachers, and, most importantly, considered the next class more important than the past one, would definitely agree with me that the furore over amalgamating more marks is indeed a snobbery of marks! Whether we should accept this snobbery or avoid it is definitely a matter of 'conscience'.

The writer is Associate Professor, Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University.

### FOCUS PLANET

## BEEFATARIANS NOT WANTED

If the sound of beef sizzling on the grill brings tears to your eyes, you're a real beefatarian." That's the opening line of a TV ad produced by a European advertising campaign called Proud of European Beef. Just more advertising silliness? No, because the European Union is paying 80 per cent of the cost of it.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation's 2013 report Tackling Climate Change Through Livestock states that beef contributes 41 per cent of the greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions from the entire livestock sector, and also has the highest emissions intensity - that is, the highest GHG emissions per unit of protein - of any animal products. That is largely because ruminants belch and fart methane, an extremely potent greenhouse gas. As a result, rearing beef cattle brings about, on average, six times the contribution to global warming as non-ruminant animals (for example, pigs) producing the same quantity of protein.

Since that report, the case against beef has strengthened. In 2015, a report from London's Royal Institute of International Affairs pointed out that worldwide, meat and dairy consumption are rising at a rate that, if projected to 2050, would use 87 per cent of the total quantity of emissions that is compatible with the Paris climate agreement's objective of staying below a 2° Celsius increase in temperature. A study published in Science in 2018 indicates that producing protein from soybeans in the form of tofu creates only four per cent of the emissions required to produce the same quantity from beef cattle, while peas and nuts can both produce protein for less than one per cent of emissions from beef cattle.

To meet the 2°C target, the EU is aiming to be carbon neutral by 2050. There is now a solid body of evidence that says this cannot be done without a global shift away



**Eating meat is not just a personal preference. The way that the animals eaten are raised and killed has long made it a legitimate matter of public concern. Now that we can see that eating red meat affects the entire planet in a manner that none of us want, it is time for governments to end their support for it**

from meat. Yet the European Commission spent €252 million (\$298 million) promoting meat and dairy products between 2016 and 2020, compared to €146 million advertising fruit and vegetables.

"If you support sustainable farming by choosing European beef, you are real beefatarians," says the Proud of European Beef advertisement - but without offering any explanation of why European beef is sustainable. The announcement of the funding for the advertisements says: "The aim of this campaign is to incite the consumers not to have a stereotyped idea about red meat and to enable them to be again confident about their consumption decision." Here, however, the "stereotyped idea" that is being combated is true, and the advertisement is inciting consumers to be confident about a consumption decision that should give them serious misgivings.

Not only climate targets are being undermined by the EU's beef promotion. Its Beating Cancer Plan acknowledges that red and processed meats have been linked

to higher risks of cancer. That view is shared by the World Health Organisation, which lists processed meats, such as meats treated with salt, as Group 1 carcinogens, that is, products known to cause cancer, and red meat - beef, lamb, and pork - as Group 2A carcinogens, indicating that they probably cause cancer. In 2019 the EAT-Lancet Commission on Food, Planet, Health, an expert body set up by one of the world's leading medical journals, recommended a diet that "largely consists of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and unsaturated oils" with some seafood and poultry, but "no or a low quantity" of red or processed meat.

This month, the European Commission has said it "will review, and where necessary propose to revise, all relevant policy instruments to deliver the additional emission reductions." An international group of more than 60 scientists, including Jane Goodall and Bill McKibben, has called on the Commission to align its promotion of agricultural products

with the goals of avoiding catastrophic climate change and improving public health.

Arguably, beef advertising should go the same way as tobacco advertising. Before we get to that point, the least governments could do is avoid paying for it. But the EU is not alone in failing to stand up to the meat industry. Americans eat four times as much beef as the world average, and beef production alone is responsible for more than 3 per cent of US GHG emissions. US beef, dairy, and pork producers are heavily subsidised, both directly and by agricultural support that makes animal feed extremely cheap.

As a candidate for the US presidency, Joe Biden called climate change "the number one issue facing humanity" and "the number one issue for me." Within days of taking office, he appeared to live up to that statement by placing a moratorium on oil and gas leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, scrapping the Keystone XL pipeline, and announcing that the US would rejoin the Paris agreement. But when it comes to reducing emissions from agriculture, Biden's announced plans do not go beyond incentives for sequestering more carbon in the soil, and encouraging the use of additives to cattle feed to reduce methane emissions - a nice idea, but likely to take many years before it is used on a scale that would have a significant impact.

Eating meat is not just a personal preference. The way that the animals eaten are raised and killed has long made it a legitimate matter of public concern. Now that we can see that eating red meat affects the entire planet in a manner that none of us want, it is time for governments to end their support for it.

The writer is Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University and Founder of the non-profit organisation The Life You Can Save.  
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## 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)

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Ravenshaw Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

#### Temple of learning

Sir, The Ravenshaw University in Cuttack is a centre of excellence and a temple of learning. Established in 1868 by TE Ravenshaw, a British administrator; just two years after the tragic famine in 1866 that spelled disaster for our state, the institution is a symbol of nationalism. It produced luminaries such as Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das, Utkala Gourab Madhusudan Das, Biju Patnaik, Dr Harekrushna Mahatab and countless others. An academic hub and a researcher's paradise, Ravenshaw is a premier educational institution of Odisha. Assembly sessions of the Odisha Legislative Assembly were first held on the premises of this prestigious institution. It has also been highly appreciated by the UGC NAAC for its excellent infrastructure and dedicated teaching faculty. If any university in Odisha is fit to be declared a Central University, then it is Ravenshaw. A collective political approach for this is the need of the hour.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

#### End of an era

Sir, In the death of centenarian PK Warrior, India has lost a doyen of Ayurveda and a champion of the poor. Warrior introduced modern practices and methods to Ayurveda and took special care to preserve rare medicinal plants. The Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala Kottakal, which started essentially as a village clinic, flourished under him and became a household name. Kottakal town also became synonymous with this ancient Indian system of medicine. The government recognised his contributions to Ayurveda by decorating him with the Padma Shri in 1999 and Padma Bhushan in 2010. His demise marks the end of an era.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

#### No lessons learnt

Sir, We are like lemmings. We follow the crowd. First we crowded our markets that led to mass hospitalisations during the Covid second wave. Now that the need for hospitals is over, we are crowding hill stations and waterfalls. What is it with us Indians? Just when we are getting out of a deep crisis, why do we tempt fate? Anyways, when the third wave hits us, as it surely will, we will run back to hospitals, spend a crazy amount of money for Remdesivir and oxygen and blame Modi. We have failed to learn our lessons.

CK Subramaniam, MUMBAI

# AP opposes school, temple construction in Kotia

TIMELY ACTION BY THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION FRUSTRATED ANDHRA'S BID TO STOP CONSTRUCTION WORK OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS IN ODISHA TERRITORY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koraput/Pottangi, July 11:** In blatant display of highhandedness, officials of neighbouring Andhra Pradesh opposed construction of a school building and a Jagannath temple and tried to stall the work at Neredibalsa village in Kotia panchayat under Pottangi block in Koraput district, a report said Sunday.

However, timely action by the district administration foiled Andhra's bid to stop construction work of developmental projects within the Odisha territory. The incident occurred amid ongoing dispute between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh to claim territorial jurisdiction over Kotia Gram Panchayat.

On the other hand, Salur MLA Rajanna Dora has expressed displeasure over construction of Patitapaban (Jagannath) temple at Neredibalsa village on the land identified for the purpose. The temple construction is being carried out under the aegis of retired Collector Gadadhar Parida who is now officiating as the secretary of Koraput based-Sabar Srikhetra Temple Managing Committee.

Parida identified the land for the temple which was completed July 9. However, a villager, G Prasad lodged a complaint with the Salur tehsildar following which Salur tehsildar K Srinivas Rao and other officials visited the village and questioned the villagers over the construction. They also stopped construction of a road to the temple. Senior police officials of Andhra Pradesh also rushed to the spot and questioned the villagers over temple construction, Saturday.

Reports said construction of a school building and repairing of an



existing school project was underway by the state government at Tadibalsa village about 50 metres from Neredibalsa village in Kotia at an estimated cost of Rs 88.98,000 under the Samgra Sikshya Abhiyan of the state government, Saturday.

On being informed, administrative officials of Salur block in Andhra Pradesh accompanied by police officials reached the spot and tried to disrupt the construction work. They warned the contractor to stop the construction work and leave the spot claiming that the village falls under Andhra territory.

The concerned contractor informed

the JE who later brought the matter to the notice of Koraput Collector and sought his intervention. Collector Abdaal M Akhtar directed Pottangi tehsildar Haripada Mandal to take action in this regard.

The tehsildar reached the spot with police and talked to the contractor. After being apprised about the development, he informed the Salur block officials that the area where the project site lies is within the Odisha territory and are being implemented by the Odisha government.

He also informed that the work is being implemented under the direction of the Koraput Collector and

## BORDER TENSION

COLLECTOR ABDAAL M. AKHTAR DIRECTED POTTANGI TEHSILDAR HARIPADA MANDAL TO VISIT THE SPOT AND TAKE ACTION OVER DISRUPTION OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING WORKS

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS OF SALUR BLOCK IN ANDHRA PRADESH ACCOMPANIED BY POLICE OFFICIALS REACHED THE SPOT AND TRIED TO DISRUPT THE CONSTRUCTION WORK BEING IMPLEMENTED IN THE VILLAGE

SALUR MLA RAJANNA DORA HAS THREATENED TO MOVE THE SUPREME COURT OVER THE ALLEGED UNAUTHORISED CONSTRUCTION BEING CARRIED OUT BY THE ODISHA GOVERNMENT

showed them the records to substantiate the claim. Later, the Andhra officials and their police returned from the spot. Source said the construction work resumed in the village following discussions between Koraput and Vizianagaram Collectors over telephone. According to media, at least 20 construction workers were engaged for the construction at the work site.

Meanwhile, Salur MLA Dora has threatened to move the Supreme Court over the alleged unauthorized construction being carried out by the state government. He said that according to the Supreme Court verdict, nobody has any right to construct permanent constructions in the disputed region of Kotia panchayat and Neredibalsa village which are scheduled areas.

# Tidal waves wash away homes in Rameyapatna



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Gopalpur, July 11:** Tidal waves again crashed into Rameyapatna village under Golanthara police limits in Ganjam district and washed away three houses of fishermen, Sunday.

The affected residents were identified as R Chandrama, R Trinath and L Hemavati in the village. The incident occurred 10 days after tidal waves had crossed the coastline and washed away three houses in the village. The incident has sparked panic in the village. Residents fear that many of

Residents fear that many of the houses are also in the line of danger and they might cave in under the tidal waves

The incident was first reported in 2016 when the wind changed direction and started blowing southwards due to heavy deposit of sand at Bahuda river mouth. As a result, tidal waves crossed the coastline and destroyed many lives and properties in the village. Even a 'Sahi'(street) in the village got submerged under the sea water.

On being informed, Chikiti tehsildar and BDO reached the spot and took stock of the situation. The villagers demanded a permanent solution to the problem as the incident has become routine during the monsoon.

Reports said the village comprises 650 families mainly of fishermen community who eke out their living by fishing from the sea.

## Dowry death: 3 of kin arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, July 11:** The Berhampur Sadar police Sunday arrested three persons of a family in connection with a dowry death case in which a woman was strangled to death at Rohigaon May 27. The accused have been identified as deceased Mandakini Swain's father-in-law Jalandhar Swain, mother-in-law Jhunu Swain and sister-in-law Jitunu Swain. Earlier, police had arrested her husband Mithun Swain May 27.

According to sources, Mithun had married Mandakini, daughter of Surendra Patra, a resident of Baulajholi village under Sadar police limits. On being informed that Mandakini had died May 26 night, her mother Laxmi Patra and brother Prakash Patra reached Rohigaon.

Alleging that Mithun, his parents and sister tortured Mandakini mentally and physically over dowry and strangled her to death, the deceased's mother had lodged a complaint with the police.

On the basis of the complaint, the police registered a case had launched a probe. The three accused were produced in court Sunday.

## First floodwater from Hirakud Dam released

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, July 11:** The Hirakud Dam Reservoir authorities Sunday released the season's first floodwater through gate no-7 of the left spillway. According to the dam authorities, the inflow of water into the reservoir is 64,409 cusecs while the outflow is 23,584 cusecs. The water level at the dam stands at 609.27 ft against the full reservoir level of 630 ft.

The dam authorities are likely to release excess floodwater through another sluice gate apart from the gate number seven later in the day, a senior official said. Meanwhile, Sambalpur district administration has alerted local residents of Hirakud, Sambalpur and Burla areas through a public address systems to take necessary precautions as water level in the Mahanadi is expected to rise.

Notably, the multi-purpose dam's reservoir consists of 64 sluice gates including 24 on its right side and 40 on the left. A sluice gate is capable to discharge 16,440 cusecs of floodwater when FRL reaches 630-ft, which has been marked down as 'danger level'.



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## 'Prajameli' opposing transfer of Malkangiri SP

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, July 11:** Hundreds of residents in Swabhiman Anchal of Malkangiri district Saturday held a 'prajameli' to protest the transfer of district police superintendent Rishikesh Dnyandeo Khilari, a source informed.

According to sources, tribal villagers from three panchayats under Jodamba block gathered in large numbers and staged the prajameli (people's movement) here demanding immediate withdrawal of the transfer order.

"Khilari has contributed significantly to the development of Swabhiman Anchal during his tenure here. He should be allowed to continue as before in the district for a few more years in the better interest of local tribals," a local man from Jodamba block said.

Swabhiman Anchal was earlier infested by Maoists and remained cut off from rest parts of Malkangiri district leading to its name 'cut-off area' by which it was known in the state. It is now being brought to the mainstream because of Khilari's efforts, another local said.

Protesting the the SP's transfer order, locals also observed that road connectivity in Swabhiman Anchal was expedited to a large extent by the police officer. If the SP is transferred to another district, the process of development will slow down in Swabhiman Anchal, they added.



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# RATH YATRA SPECIAL

## DIVINE OUTING

### THE BACKROOM BOYS



Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath and His siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra is the most important ritual of Srimandir in Puri. The deities ride three majestic wooden chariots to reach Srigundicha temple on a nine-day sojourn on the occasion of Rath Yatra.

As per the tradition, the temple administration constructs new chariots for the annual mega festival every year. These wooden structures are admired by all and sundry for their huge size and grandeur. There are certain categories of servitors of the 12th century shrine who diligently work for over a month to build the three wooden chariots.

**BADHEI MAHARANA**  
Badhei Maharana (carpenter) servitors find a record in the service no 105 of the Srimandir Record of Rights (RoR). The primary task of this category servitors is to shape the wooden logs into various sizes and build the three chariots—Nandighosa, Taladhawaja and Darpadalan—by using the simple and traditional tools at the Rath Yard in the Holy Town. Three senior Badhei Maharana servitors are designated as the chief carpenters for the construction of the chariots. They supervise the entire process and ensure that the chariots are ready on time.

**OJHA MAHARANA**  
The service no 101 of the Srimandir RoR describes the responsibilities of Ojha Maharana (blacksmith) servitors. They mould iron into nails, clamps and rings of various sizes for construction of the chariots. Ojha Maharana servitors usually work at a special foundry near the Dolabedi for providing the hardware materials for the chariot work. They also help the carpenters to fix the nails, clamps and rings into the wheels, axles and other structures of the chariots.

**RATH BHOI**  
Rath Bhoi servitors are the main labour force in the chariot construction. They assist the carpenters. Service no. 97 of the Srimandir RoR describes the duties of this category of servitors. Rath Bhoi servitors put up a shed at Rath Yard for chariot work and help in the transportation of logs from one place to another. They also actively participate in chariot pulling during Rath Yatra.

**CHITRAKARA**  
Chitrakara servitors usually paint the wheels, pillars and other chariot parts with their deft hands. They also draw images on the chariots and paint the idols of subsidiary deities and other figurines ahead of the mega festival. Details regarding the Chitrakara servitors find a mention in the service no 87 of the shrine's Record of Rights.

**DARJI**  
The duties of Darji (tailor) servitors are described in service no 95 of the temple RoR. Darji servitors stitch colourful canopies for the chariots. These canopies, enriched with appliqué work, add to the beauty of the chariots.



PHOTO COURTESY YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

**TAMARA BISOIYI**  
As per service no 90 of the shrine RoR, Tamara Bisoiy servitors help in the making of Bahuta and Senapata for Pahandi procession of the deities during Rath Yatra and Bahuda Yatra (Return Car Festival).

**KARATIA**  
Traditionally, Karatia servitors saw logs into hubs and other parts of the chariots. They help the carpenters to slash the wooden logs into various shapes. Service no 91 of the temple RoR describes the duties and responsibilities of the Karatia servitors.

**ROOPAKAR**  
The duties and responsibilities of Roopakar servitors are mentioned in service no 88 of the temple RoR. Roopakar servitors engrave figures on various parts of the chariots. They shape wooden idols of the subsidiary deities and figures of charioteers, horses and birds for the chariots during the Nabakalebara ritual of the presiding deities. They repair the wooden idols and figurines ahead of the Rath Yatra.

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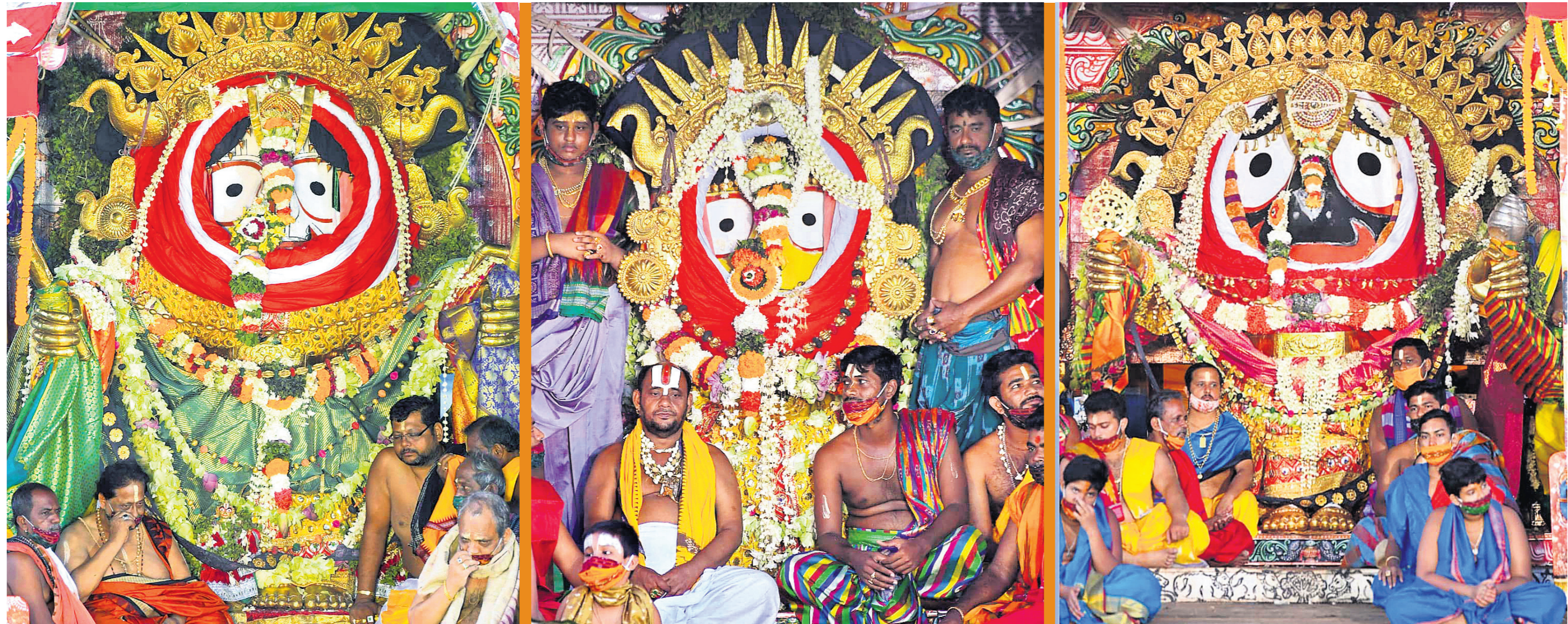
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Like last year, this year too devotees were kept out of the car festival in Puri. We saw a replay of the Covid-19 restrictions with the authorities clamping down curfew in the holy town a day in advance. The wheels of the Rath, arguably the biggest of the rituals of the Lord, are all set to roll down on the Grand Road. However, the quintessential objective of the yatra—allowing devotees to have a direct glimpse of the Trinity, would be watered down for the second year running courtesy the pandemic.



### KAPILENDRA DEV STARTED SUNA BESHA

The Raja Besha or the Rajarajeswara Besha ritual of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra is held on the occasions of Kartik Purnima, Kumar Purnima, Dola Purnima, Vijaya Dashami when the deities are adorned with gold ornaments. However, words will fall short to describe the vibes and the ambience in which the Suna Besha is performed on

King Kapilendra Dev, after winning the whole of south in 1460 AD, returned to the state with 16 elephant-loads of gold and other precious metals, which he offered to Lord Jagannath

Kapilendra Dev consulted the Tadhau Karana servitor, in-charge of the ornaments of the deities, and the royal priest (Rajguru) regarding a plan to adorn the Trinity with the ornaments

Bada Tadhau made a request before the king to decorate the Trinity with precious ornaments on the auspicious occasion of 'Bada Ekadashi' when the chariots reach the Singhadwar after returning from Srigundicha temple

The book mentions that Bhanu Dev-III (1308-1328) accepted Lord Jagannath as the 'Rajadhiraja'. Similarly Suryavanshi King Kapilendra Dev (1435-1466) admired Lord Jagannath as the 'State Deity' and himself as His servitor. Moreover, Anangabhima Dev and Purushottama Dev withheld their coronation ceremonies for two years as they admired Lord Jagannath as the king of the state.

According to researcher Pankaj Sahu, "It is believed that Anangabhima Dev performed the Suna Besha ritual of the deities on the auspicious occasion of Ashadha Shukla Ekadashi." Some other scholars are of the opinion that Suna Besha on chariots is otherwise known as



'Bada Tadhau Besha'. Inscriptions at the Jaya-Vijaya Gate of Srimandir reveal that King Kapilendra Dev, after winning the entire south India in 1460 AD, returned to the state with 16 elephant loads of gold and other precious metals, which he offered to Lord Jagannath. Kapilendra Dev consulted the Tadhau Karana servitor, in-charge of the ornaments of the deities, and the royal priest (Rajguru) regarding a plan to adorn the Trinity with the ornaments obtained from the victory over the south. Observing the eagerness of the king to decorate the deities with ornaments, Bada Tadhau informed Kapilendra Dev that it was not possible on the part of the devotees

Even though the ritual of 'Suna Besha' or golden adornment of the Trinity is performed on several occasions throughout the year, the elegance and grandeur of the one held on the chariots during the Rath Yatra are matchless. History says that king Kapilendra Dev introduced the Suna Besha of the deities atop the chariots. Read on...

of the Lord to have glimpses of all the beshas performed on 'Ratna Singhasa' throughout the year. Therefore, the servitor made a request before the king to decorate the Trinity with precious ornaments on the auspicious occasion of 'Bada Ekadashi' when the chariots reach the Singhadwar after returning from Srigundicha temple which is of course the valedictory phase of Rath Yatra. With due regard for Bada Tadhau's request, Kapilendra Dev, who agreed to the proposal, named a gold garland after the former and devoted it to the Lord. It is learnt that the king prepared 138 ornaments including hands, legs, pendants, armlets, earrings, crowns, rings, bracelets, waist chains, necklaces and other ornaments to adorn the Trinity atop the chariots for the first time. Since then, the Lord's Suna Besha is being performed on the chariots with much fanfare. This golden adornment of the deities is also traditionally known as 'Bada Tadhau Besha', which is a befitting tribute to Bada Tadhau who proposed the idea of Suna Besha on the chariots.

This Besha is observed after completion of Madhyahna Dhupa ritual on Ashadha Shukla Ekadashi (the 11th full moon day) as per the Hindu calendar every year. There are specified servitor groups like Palla, Mekap and Khuntia, who bring the ornaments from Ratna Bhandar to the chariots in the presence of the District Magistrate and temple administration officials. The servitors are also guarded by the police. Finally, the deities on the chariots are adorned with the ornaments by servitors like Pushpalaka, Daitapati, Khuntia Mekap, Taluchha and Bhitarchha.

### THE NO RATH YEARS



There are no historical records to show when exactly the world famous Rath Yatra at Puri had started. However, we know for sure when the Rath had not rolled on the Grand Road. The car festival had been suspended when the deities weren't in Puri. The servitors had taken the deities out of Srimandir and hid them at safer places out of Puri. We have done a list of the years when the deities had been taken away and hidden resulting in cancellation of the world famous Rath Yatra.

Following an attack by Kala Pahad, a general of Bengal king Suleiman Kirrani, on the temple in 1568, the Rath Yatra could not be held for nine years from 1568 to 1577. In 1601, Mirza Khurum, a commander of the Bengal Nawab attacked the temple. But the priests saved the idols by shifting them to the Panchamukhi Gosani temple at Kapileswar, about 13-14 km from Puri. Due to the shifting of the idols, the Rath Yatra could not be held. In 1607, Qasim Khan, the Mughal subedar of Odisha, attacked the temple. The idols were hidden and taken to Khurda and kept in the Gopala Jew temple. As a result, the Rath Yatra could not be held. The Rath Yatra was not held in 1611 after Kalyan Mal, the son of Todar Mal (a famous courtier of Akbar), became subedar of Odisha and attacked the temple. The idols were shifted beforehand to Mahisnasi in the Chilika lake. The festival was not held in 1617 after Kalyan Mal attacked the temple for the second time. Before the attack, the priests shifted the idols to Gurusagar in Chilika lake.

In 1621, the idols of the Lords were shifted to Andharigarth in Banapur following an attack by the Muslim subedar Ahmed Beg on the temple. Later, the Brahman of the idols was taken to Gadamantri village in Khurda district. Due to the shifting of the idols, the Rath Yatra could not be held for two years in 1621 and 1622. In 1692, Ekram Khan, the Mughal commander in Odisha attacked, the temple. Prior to the attack, the priests shifted the idols to a place behind the Bimala temple in Khurda. From there the idols were taken to Gadakokala village near the Chilika lake and then to Bada Hantuauda village in Banapur where they were kept till 1707. Due to the absence of the deities in Jagannath temple in Puri, the Rath Yatra could not be held for 13 years.

The festival was not held in 1731 after Mohammed Taqi Khan, the Naib Nazim (Deputy Governor) of Odisha attacked the temple. The idols were taken to Kankanasekhari Kuda in Chilika lake and then shifted to Harishwar Mandap at Nairi village in Chilika tehsil in Khurda district and finally to Chikili village near the foothill of Chakadimbiri in Khallikote in Ganjam district. As Taqi Khan attacked the Jagannath temple for the second time in 1733, the idols of the Lords were shifted to Harishwar Mandap and then to the Marla temple near Hatibari hill in Polasara of Ganjam district where the priests had performed secret rituals for more than two years. As a result, the Rath Yatra could not be held for three years from 1733 to 1735.

### Glassless mirror

About 2.5-ft in height, the disc-shaped mirrors are made up of brass, each with a handle. And there is no trace of glass in them. Both of its surfaces are smooth and well polished, allowing the reflection of light

Lord Jagannath and His siblings—Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra—are treated more as human beings than gods. Hence, they too, have to follow the natural laws, applicable to living beings. The daily rituals of the Lord, which are performed at Srimandir from around 4.30 am to late in the night, reflect the lifestyle of Trinity which closely characterises the human attributes—brushing of teeth and bathing (Abakashi), dressing up (Mailam and Besha Lagi), taking food at certain intervals (Sakala Dhupa, Madhyahna Dhupa, Sandhyah Dhupa and Badasinhra Dhupa) and taking rest at night (Pahuda).

The servitors sit on the temple floor down the Ratnavedi in the sanctum sanctorum before showing tooth-sticks and tongue-scrapers to the mirrors in which images of the deities are reflected, symbolising cleaning of their teeth and tongues.

Among the items used in the daily rituals in the 12th century shrine, three mirrors have a significant role in the service of the Lord since time immemorial. About 2.5-ft in height, the disc-shaped mirrors are made up of brass, each having a handle. And there is no trace of glass. Both of its surfaces are smooth and well polished, allowing the reflection of light. The mirrors are used during the Abakashi ritual of the deities which is performed every day around 6.30 am after Dwaraprita (opening of the shrine doors) at 4.30 am. Mangala Alati (offering lamps) at 5.30 am, Mailam (removal of floral decorations used in previous nights) 6.00 am. The Abakashi ritual, which comprises teeth cleaning and bathing of deities, is performed by a host of

servitors including Bhitarchha, Palla Puspalka, Suarbadu, Paniapati, Mukhapakhala, Pratihari, Ghatuary Bhandar Mekap, Darpania, Mahabhoi and Khuri Nayak (astrologer). The servitors sit on the temple floor down the Ratnavedi in the sanctum sanctorum before showing tooth-sticks and tongue-scrapers to the mirrors in which images of the deities are reflected, symbolising cleaning of their teeth and tongues. Then, they sprinkle aromatic water containing

The servitors sit on the temple floor down the Ratnavedi in the sanctum sanctorum before showing tooth-sticks and tongue-scrapers to the three disc-shaped mirrors in which images of the deities are reflected

camphor, curd, sandal paste and amla paste on the mirrors placed on the floor, one each for the three sibling deities, symbolising their bath. A Darpania servitor is in charge of keeping the mirrors for the rituals. He also cleans certain utensils used in the rituals apart from setting 'Purnakumbha' for the deities.





# New population policy unveiled

The Uttar Pradesh Population Policy 2021-2030, unveiled on the occasion of World Population Day, also aims at bringing down the gross fertility rate among women to 2.1 by 2026 and to 1.9 by 2030



to 2.1 by 2026 and to 1.9 by 2030. A few days ago, a draft bill on population control was put up on the website of the Uttar Pradesh law commission inviting suggestions from the public till July 19. It says people having more than two chil-

dren in Uttar Pradesh will be debarred from contesting local bodies polls, applying for government jobs or receiving any kind of subsidy. It also seeks to prohibit promotions in government jobs for such people, while offering incen-

Across the world, concerns have been raised from time to time about increasing population being a hurdle in development. Discussions on it have been going on for the four decades

YOGI ADITYANATH | CM, UTTAR PRADESH

tives to those limiting their children to two.

Unveiling the population policy Sunday, Adityanath said, "Across the world, concerns have been raised from time to time about increasing population being a hurdle in development. Discussions on it have been going on for the four decades."

The countries and states which have made efforts in this direction have seen positive results. However, more efforts are needed, he said, adding the Uttar Pradesh government was implementing this policy keeping in mind all sections of the society.

Besides seeking to achieve population stabilisation and reduce preventable maternal and infant deaths, the UP Population Policy also aims at preventing the death of children under the age of 5 years and improving their nutritional condition.

Addressing a function at his official residence here, the chief minister said efforts to control population is linked to comprehensive awareness in the society.

We should not forget that the increase in population contributes to that poverty in the society. Hence, until all sections of society are made comprehensively aware, there will be a delay in fulfilling various goals. Every section of the society has to be associated with the awareness campaign, Adityanath said.

If there is no gap between the birth of two children, it affects their nourishment, he said, adding the efforts made in the past four to five years have yielded good results, but more efforts are needed.

The health of a mother and her child has to be linked with this, the CM said.

# Communication wars erupt as 2 ex-AIADMK leaders eye comeback



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, July 11: Two former AIADMK leaders now aspiring to become the party's general secretary are reaching out to party cadres and middle-level functionaries to drum up support through Zoom meetings and telephone calls.

Former MP and MLA KC Palanisamy is talking to a cross-section of party cadres via Zoom. His rival, VK Sasikala, long-time aide of the late chief minister and party supremo J Jayalalitha, meanwhile, has been dialling up local office-bearers.

Palanisamy is one of the few persons left in the party who have been active since the time of its founder, the late MG Ramachandran (MGR). An articulate speaker, he became an MP and MLA at a very young age when MGR was leading the party.

I have held around 105 Zoom meetings with core members of the AIADMK, Palanisamy said. At each meeting, which would last for an hour and half, I would get to meet about 150 new participants, with about 80 expressing their willingness to speak initially, but not more than 30 actually speaking.

Palanisamy said that till date, about 2,500-3,000 party cadres would have spoken at his Zoom meetings and about 2,000 of them would be new faces. Care is taken to avoid par-

ticipants and speakers being repeated, Palanisamy added.

The meetings are relayed live on Facebook, bringing in about 25,000 views per interaction. The number of views goes up sometimes to a lakh on occasions when major issues facing the party are discussed. Of late, the meetings are also being relayed live on Twitter and Clubhouse, Palanisamy said.

Personally targeting to reach about 10 lakh AIADMK cadres and earn their support by 2024, Palanisamy said that if the cadres are with him, then the middle-level leaders would extend their support to him.

At the Zoom meetings, Palanisamy insists that the party leader should be elected by the cadres and also shares his views on various developments while claiming the MGR legacy.

Palanisamy was the party's spokesperson and belonged to the camp of the AIADMK coordinator (and former deputy chief minister) O Panneerselvam (OPS) who was expelled from the party in 2018 after he urged it to back a no-confidence motion against the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre if it did not take a stand favourable to the state on the Cauvery waters issue.

He was also the first person to oppose the election of Sasikala as AIADMK general secretary and also filed a case against the amendments made in the party's bye-laws.

# If voted to power, SP will audit Covid mgmt, says Yadav

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, July 11: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav Sunday said if voted to power in the coming Uttar Pradesh assembly elections, his government will carry out an audit of Covid-19 management and take stringent action against officials for allegedly concealing data related to deaths.

He accused the BJP-led state government of hiding Covid-19 death figures and claimed that it hid data as it did not want to help the people.

After the assembly elections in the state, and the formation of the SP government, an audit (of Covid-19 management) will be done, and officials who had concealed information will face stringent action.

"Officials who had breached their limits, their list has been prepared. In the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a time when it was felt that there was no government in UP. People were left to their fate, Yadav said.

Assembly elections are scheduled to take place in Uttar Pradesh next year.

The government did not give the statistics pertaining to the Covid-19 deaths, nor any help was

given to them (victims). They (UP government) did not give the statistics of Covid-19 deaths, as they did not want to help (the people), Yadav told reporters.

The SP chief also alleged that people had to struggle to arrange medicines for coronavirus patients.

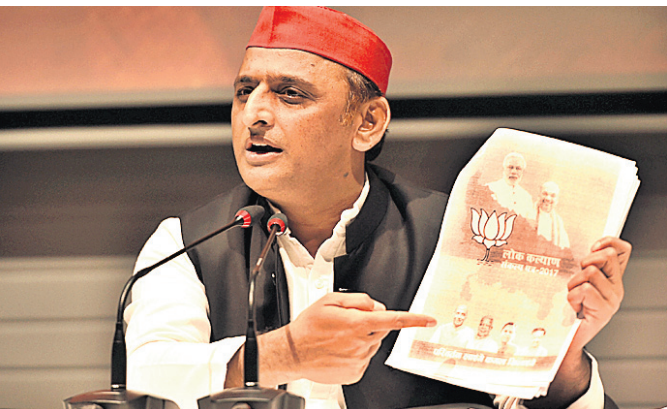
Medicines were black marketed, people did not get beds and they had run from one place to another for oxygen, he said.

A number of lives were lost. If anybody is responsible for this, it is the BJP government, the former chief minister said.

He also talked about the issue of teachers who allegedly died during panchayat poll duties in the state.

When the teachers went on (panchayat poll) duty, it was said that only three teachers died (on poll duty due to Covid-19). Later, when organisations and we raised questions, the government had to admit that actually how many lives were lost, he said.

A teachers' body had earlier claimed that over 1,600 teachers and workers of the Basic Education Department had died in Uttar Pradesh since the first week of April due to Covid-19, and said that 90 per cent of them were on panchayat polls duty.



## STUDENTS IN SAFFRON



Students during a mass Yagyopavit Sanskar organised by Akhil Bharatvarshiya Brahman Mahasabha in Vrindavan, Sunday

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, July 11: Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath has reaffirmed his position as numero uno in the state after the BJP won 635 seats out of 825 block pramukh seats.

The victory is proof of the BJP's immense presence in rural Uttar Pradesh and will make it easier for the ruling party in the next year's assembly elections.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP president JP Nadda, union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari were among those who took to Twitter to congratulate Yogi Adityanath on this 'unparalleled and stupendous' victory.

Yogi Adityanath told reporters that it was a mandate for the policy of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas'.

He said that it was also a stamp of approval on policies of the Centre and the state governments and a robust law and order situation in the state. It was unlike in the previous regimes when anarchy prevailed and criminals held sway, he said.

UP BJP president Swatantra Dev Singh said that the victory had established BJP as the leading political force from the villages to the national level.

It is a clear victory of the governance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief minister Yogi Adityanath. There is no denying the fact that both the leaders are unparalleled and have immense public support, he said.

According to reports, the BJP-supported candidates contested on 735 seats, while 14 seats were given to its ally Apna Dal.

The party also gave an unan-



Yogi Adityanath with BJP state President Swatantra Dev Singh celebrates victory in UP Block/Panchayat Elections, at party office in Lucknow

nounced support to 76 candidates while agreeing not to field its officially supported candidates.

As results trickled in Saturday

# Yogi numero uno as BJP sweeps block level polls

candidates, according to reports, won in over 103 seats, while Congress supported candidates managed a win on just two seats. The independents won around 95 seats.

A day ago, as many as 349 candidates were elected unopposed after 187 candidates took back their nomination papers Friday. Polling for the remaining 476 seats was held Saturday.

Significantly, the block pramukh polling got marred by reports of violence and clashes between the BJP and the Samajwadi Party workers in various parts of the state.

The Samajwadi Party, which was in direct contest with the BJP, accused the ruling party of resorting to misuse of government machinery. SP has announced a protest July 15 against what it called murder of democracy by the BJP.

# Politics of colour blooms in Uttar Pradesh

Lucknow is, perhaps, the only state capital in the country where the politics of colour dominates the development of the city

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, July 11: As soon as you alight from a train or an aircraft in Lucknow, the first signage that greets you says, 'Muskuraiye ki aap Lucknow mein hain'.

The colour of this signage will also politely inform you about the party that is in power in Uttar Pradesh.

Lucknow is, perhaps, the only state capital in the country where the politics of colour dominates the development of the city.

The dominant colour in the city has become synonymous with the political party in power. The politics of colour was initially started by the Bahujan Samaj Party in 2007 when it came to power with a comfortable majority of its own.

For BSP supremo Mayawati, this was the time to go blue with a vengeance.

All road railings and signage were painted blue; traffic constables also got a change of uniform - white shirt and blue pants.

The official directory of the state information department also came with a blue cover and government hoardings had a blue background.

The stage for all programmes attended by the then chief minister, was draped in blue.

The BSP rallies were known for men painting their bodies in blue and elephant replicas in blue.

In fact, the blue shade of the BSP came to be popularly known as 'BSP blue' and you could get the right shade of cloth or ribbon by just saying 'BSP blue'.

When the Samajwadi Party came to power in 2012, the first decision taken by its Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav was to change the colour of signages to green.

The blue colour flew off the rail-



ings and road dividers and an emphatic green replaced it.

The Samajwadi Party workers wore their red caps to flaunt their new found power and also their status in the government.

The official directory turned green - with a tinge of envy perhaps. Personally, however, Akhilesh Yadav showed no liking for either green or red - the colours of his

party - and preferred pristine white instead.

His official and personal residences were done up mostly in shades of white. His official residence as former Chief Minister, that was later vacated by him and even created a huge controversy, had come to be known as 'i, 1/2 White House'.

The walls, flooring, furniture, curtains and upholstery were all

white and, expectedly, not many were allowed entry into the spottlessly clean house.

When the BJP returned to power last year, its Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath almost shunned the party colours in the sense that he did away with the green and retained only saffron.

It was then time for a change of politics and, of course, colour when the BJP and Yogi Adityanath stormed into power in 2017.

Knowing the Chief Minister's penchant for all things saffron, the state bureaucracy went into an overdrive and got saffron curtains, saffron towels, saffron diaries, saffron hoardings and saffron flowers for government programmes. The trend continues with hospitals and schools being given a saffron coat of paint and even some of the toll plazas were painted saffron. Toilets, too, got a saffron coat of paint.

# High digital divide between TN govt, pvt schools: Study

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, July 11: A study and subsequent report by the Department of School Education and Literacy of the Government of India has revealed that there is a high digital divide in Tamil Nadu between the government and the private schools, which can lead to a high level of disparity.

The study report of the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) for 2019-20, revealed that only 18 per cent of the government schools in Tamil Nadu have internet access and in private schools it is more than 75 per cent.

The study revealed that almost 79.12 per cent of the government schools have computers but the internet access is only 17.95 per cent. On the other hand 90 per cent of private schools have computers and the internet access is

The UDISE study report for 2019-20 revealed that only 18 per cent of the government schools in Tamil Nadu have internet access and in private schools it is more than 75 per cent.

As schools are still not open, the only medium of education is through technology and the government students in Tamil Nadu are most affected due to the poor Internet access in these schools. It may be noted that during the lockdown, the Tamil Nadu education department's plan to educate students of Class 12 through schools did not materialise owing to the lack of internet access.



**“We don't want to do it like China, but at the same time we need to control our population. We live in a democracy and if we implement such a law through incentives, then we can certainly control our population”**  
DEVENDRA FADNIS | FORMER MAHARASHTRA CM

### 'NO COVID+VE INMATE'

The Delhi prisons department currently has no inmate or jail staff who is Covid-19 positive, officials said Sunday. However, they said Covid-appropriate behaviour is still strictly being followed



### of the day quote

India has many talented people, who are doing exceptional work at the grassroots. Often, we don't see or hear much of them. Do you know such inspiring people? You can nominate them for the #PeoplesPadma. Nominations are open till 15th September. <http://padmaawards.Gov.In>

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

There will be no power cuts. Free electricity doesn't mean long outages. When we took over in Delhi 7-8 hours long power outages were common. We set that right

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

While the number of ministers has increased, but vaccines have not increased

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

## 'PAK ARMY ROLE BEHIND JAMMU ATTACK'

AGENCIES

**Jammu/New Delhi, July 11:** The 'pressure fuse' used in the bombs that were dropped on the Indian Air Force station in Jammu through drones in a first-of-its-kind attack indicates that some elements of the Pakistan army or the ISI helped terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba in fabricating the IEDs, according to security sources.

The improvised explosive device (IED) that pierced the rooftop of one of the IAF buildings at the Jammu airport carried less than one kg of RDX and a cocktail of other chemicals whereas the one that was dropped on the ground contained a little over one kg of the deadly explosives along with some ball bearings, they said.

The sources said the IED used in the June 27 attack on the IAF station "definitely" used the technical expertise of the Pakistani military. The 'pressure fuse' used is similar to the ones used by the Pakistani army. A 'pressure fuse' is generally used in minefields, anti-tank mines and those dropped by the air force in the fuselage between the explosive and main detonator of a shell or an IED.

The explosive devices are activated by the pressure of either falling on the ground with force or some individual or vehicle passing over it. However, in these sophisticated IEDs, the 'pressure fuse' had been deployed at the nose of the



bombs so that they trigger with a force after falling on the ground, the sources said.

Most of the artillery shells and mortar bombs have this type of fuse and that's why they don't explode in the air but on impact, they exploded.

Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh had said earlier that Pakistan-based terrorists of Lashkar-e-Taiba were suspected to be behind the bombing of the IAF station in Jammu through drones, which may have come from across the border.

The National Investigation Agency took over the investigation into what was the first instance of Pakistan-based terrorism deploying drones to strike vital installations in India on June 29. Two IAF personnel were injured in

the explosions that took place within six minutes of each other. The first blast ripped off the roof of a single-storey building at the technical area of the airport manned by the IAF in Satwari on the outskirts of Jammu. The second one was on the ground.

It is mentionable that Pakistan has been procuring armed drones from China and Turkey of late. The sources said drones can fly up to three hours and can be monitored and manoeuvred remotely through Global Positioning System technology.

The aerial distance from the Jammu airport to the international border is 14 km. In September last year, five Lok Sabha members from the YSR Congress, in a written question, had asked whether the government had issued any guide-

### NIA team arrests several persons

**Srinagar:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) team Sunday carried out raids at many places in Kashmir and arrested several persons, including the chairman of an Islamic seminary in connection with a terror funding case. The NIA team along with Jammu and Kashmir Police and CRPF raided several places in Anantnag and Srinagar districts in connection with the case registered 10 days ago relating to the radicalisation in the Indian subcontinent.

lines in the light of the possibility of drones being used as weapons of attack on high-security installations.

The then Minister of State for Home G K Reddy had stated, "In order to counter the threat of drones in the country, necessary guidelines have been issued, which include measures to be taken by the central and the state governments in consultation with the security agencies." Earlier in March last year, four Lok Sabha members and a BJP leader had asked whether the government had formulated a comprehensive policy to prevent attacks by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) on vital security installations.

## IMD's faulty monsoon forecast for N India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 11:** Wrong signals by models, difficulty in predicting the outcomes of the interactions between the easterly and westerly winds were some of the major reasons behind the India Meteorological Department's monsoon forecast for parts of north India going haywire, experts pointed out as any relief from the oppressive heat eludes the region.

The Southwest Monsoon has reached almost all parts of the country but has stayed away from parts of north India. It is yet to reach Delhi, Haryana, parts of west Uttar Pradesh and west Rajasthan. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had predicted that monsoon is expected to cover these parts by June - a little less than a month back, but its predictions are yet to come true.

In its forecast June 13, the IMD had predicted that the Southwest Monsoon will reach Delhi by June 15. However, a day later it said conditions are not favourable for its further advancement in this region. Then began a long 'break-spell' during which the Southwest Monsoon was weak over several parts of the country.

On July 1, the IMD said conditions could be favourable for further advancement of the monsoon by



July 7. The moist easterly winds in the lower level from the Bay of Bengal are likely to establish gradually over parts of eastern India from July 8, it had said.

On July 5, the IMD again said the monsoon is likely to spread into northwest India covering Punjab and north Haryana by July 10. However, there were no signs of any relief even on July 10.

On forecasting the onset of Southwest Monsoon over Kerala, the IMD said it would hit the southern state by May 31. Till May 30, the IMD, in its daily bulletin, said the onset of the monsoon over Kerala was expected to be around May 31. However, by afternoon of that day, it revised it saying the onset is expected to be by June 3. "We could have told (the delayed onset) in the morning itself. However, we are monitoring all the defined parameters/ criteria for onset of monsoon over Kerala. At present the criteria are not fully satisfied," IMD Director General Mrutunjay Mohapatra had said May 30.

### SHORT TAKES

#### Heavy rains likely in AP

**Amaravati:** A low pressure area has formed over West Central and adjoining Northwest Bay of Bengal off north Andhra Pradesh-south Odisha coasts, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said Sunday. As per IMD forecast, under the influence of the cyclonic circulation over coastal Odisha and neighbourhood, a low pressure area has formed. The associated cyclonic circulation extends up to mid-tropospheric levels tilting south westwards. Under the influence of low pressure system, heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely at isolated places over coastal Andhra Pradesh and heavy rainfall at isolated places over Rayalaseema July 11 and 12, and heavy rainfall at isolated places over coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema July 13.

#### Ruckus outside Goa MLA's house

**Panaji:** Ruckus prevailed outside Goa BJP MLA Wilfred D'Sa's residence at Nuvem village in the state Sunday after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) held a protest against him, claiming that his supporters had allegedly verbally abused the party workers the previous day. The AAP alleged that during the party's "silent protest" held outside D'Sa's house Sunday, his supporters hurled eggs and tomatoes on them.

#### No lockdown in Itanagar

**Itanagar:** The Arunachal Pradesh government has turned down the request for a week-long total lockdown in the state capital from July 12 but suggested a slew of measures to check the spike in Covid-19 cases. In a letter to Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar, Capital Deputy Commissioner Talo Potom Saturday sought approval for a total lockdown for a week from Monday, citing the rise in Covid-19 cases.

#### Two more blasts in Mizoram

**Guwahati:** A day after a suspected IED blast was carried out inside Cachar district of Assam allegedly by miscreants from Mizoram during an eviction drive, two back to back explosions took place Sunday along the inter-state border on the side of the neighbouring state, a police source said. Tension is running high in Khulicherra area of the district, where people from Mizoram have reportedly entered up to 6.5 kilometres inside Assam land a few days ago, following which the Assam Police along with civil administration carried out an eviction drive.

## Al-Qaeda module busted

*The suspects were planning serial blasts in the state capital and other cities in the coming days*

AGENCIES

**Lucknow, July 11:** The UP Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS), in a major operation, has arrested two alleged terrorists, linked to Al-Qaeda, from Kakori on the outskirts of Lucknow Sunday.

The two alleged ultras were reportedly hiding in a house in Kakori area. UP ATS IG G.K. Goswami, who led the seven-hour operation, told reporters that the suspects were planning serial blasts in the state capital and other cities in the coming days. He said that arms, as well as live bombs including pressure cooker bombs, detonators and 6 to 7 kg of explosives had been recovered from the house.

A bomb disposal squad was summoned to the site and nearby houses were evacuated. The ATS IG claimed that the suspects had links with Kashmir also.

Briefing reporters, ADG, Law and Order, Prashant Kumar said that the arrested persons had been identified as Minhaz Ansari, 32, and Maseeruddin, 50. He said that based on information gathered

from initial interrogation, raids were being conducted at various places to arrest their accomplices. However, he refused to divulge the source that tipped them off about the terror plan. The ADG said that the arrested persons were members of Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind, a Kashmiri wing of Al-Qaeda that is active in Jammu and Kashmir. The outfit was formerly led by Zakir Rashid Bhat who was eliminated by security forces. He said that their handler was Umar Halmandi from the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, who had radicalized the two. The ATS team had received a tip-off about their presence and had been tracking them since the past one week. A team led by IG ATS had closed in on their location and raided their houses.

The ADG said that the two arrested men would not be produced before the court and taken on remand for further investigations. Meanwhile, security has been beefed up at all vital installations in the state including airports and checking at various highways and bus stations is being carried out.



## CAPTURING THE MOMENT



People pose for a photograph on the river bank of Ganga during World Population Day in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh. UNI PHOTO

## TMC PROTESTS OVER FUEL PRICE HIKE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, July 11:** Trinamool Congress members protested across West Bengal Sunday against the spiralling fuel prices that are causing hardships for the common people amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Petrol is retailing at over Rs 101 per litre and diesel at more than Rs 92 in West Bengal, while domestic LPG touched Rs 861 per cylinder. The protests, which continued for the second consecutive day,

were held at important junctions in Kolkata, including Paikpara, Baguiati, Chetla and Behala.

Demonstrations were also held in Belgharia, Bolpur, Katwa, Ratiganj and Siliguri, besides other parts of the state. TMC MLA Atin Ghosh, who led the protests at Paikpara in north Kolkata, said the unabated rise in prices of petrol, diesel and LPG has burdened the common people.

However, the BJP-led government at the Centre is not bothered

about the people as they are solely concerned about revenues and serving the interests of big oil companies, he alleged. At the Baguiati protest site, TMC members cooked on a firewood oven and served the food to those who were attending.

"This is a symbolic protest. The fuel price hike is pushing us backward and we are going back to the age of such ovens and bullock carts," TMC MLA Aditi Munshi said.



### Modi's new war team

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 77-member new war team for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls is a pack of talent drawn from almost all parties. Among the 12 sacked, 10 belonged to the RSS-ABVP-BJP. Of the 36 new entrants, it transpires that more than half belonged to other parties. Of the 42 ministers who were part of the Modi ministry before the reshuffle, more than a dozen did not belong to the BJP at all. For example, heavyweight former Maharashtra Chief Minister Narayan Rane belonged to Shiv Sena before being brought to BJP.

### Who will be BJP's leader of RS?

With the exit of Thawar Chand Gehlot from the Union Cabinet, there is intense speculation about who will succeed him in the Rajya Sabha. Gehlot was Leader of the Rajya Sabha in addition to being a Cabinet Minister. The veteran Dalit leader from Madhya Pradesh was given an honorable exit and made Governor of Karnataka

### Congress' huge Punjab dilemma

The Congress high command is in a bind as to what post should be offered to Navjot Singh Sidhu so that there is no further erosion of the party's strength in Punjab months before the polls. The on-going public spat between Captain Amrinder Singh and Navjot Singh Sidhu has already cost the party dearly. The Akalis who were pushed to the corner until the

other day, have bounced back and speedily forged an alliance with the BSP too. PCC Chief Sunil Jakhar was in town for a discussion with the senior party leaders. He has already conveyed to the high command that if his resignation from the post resolves the crisis, he is ready to quit. But his resignation won't solve the crisis as the Captain is reluctant to accept Sidhu as PCC Chief. There is a view that Sidhu be made the Campaign Committee chief with a ministerial post. It is also suggested that a Dalit be made party president to counter the Akali-BSP alliance. The Captain is not opposed to rehabilitating Sidhu at this juncture as elections are being fought under his leadership only. But the party and the Captain are also insisting that Sidhu should control his "tongue". He had no occasion to rake up the power crisis in the state and give fodder to the Opposition. If Sidhu is made PCC Chief, Sunil Jakhar may be brought to the AICC in a senior position and there may be a battery of vice presidents along

with Sidhu. If he is made Chairman of the Campaign committee there may be two-three co-chairman of the campaign committee too. Detractors of the Chief Minister are criticising the central leadership for using them against Captain Amrinder Singh saying, "We have prepared a ground against the Chief Minister but Sidhu is getting its advantage." Obviously, leaders like Pratap Singh Bajwa are very upset. He too had a long meeting with Rahul Gandhi. The Captain has also come down from his high-horse as he was forced to appear before the three-member committee in Delhi twice.

### NCP stumped by BJP's offensive

The BJP seems to have mounted a fresh offensive against the NCP leadership. Two recent acts have turned heads; first being ED's action against Anil Deshmukh which forced NCP supremo Sharad Pawar and others to repeatedly come out in his defence and the

second; BJP's open tirade against Ajit Pawar. It suddenly looks as if the ED is in a great hurry to book Deshmukh and others through him. The super speed action by a Central agency was never witnessed before. But the shocker came when BJP's top Maharashtra leaders passed a resolution naming Ajit Pawar in the Sachin Waze case and asked for a CBI probe against him. Though both the BJP and NCP down-played the dragging of Ajit Pawar's name in the case, insiders say a lot is cooking in Maharashtra and political blast can take place any time. The MVA is looking 'unworkable'. The BJP high command seems to be veering round to the view that alliance with the NCP may not be in its larger interest either in Maharashtra or Delhi. The one-day wonder experiment of BJP-NCP alliance in 2019 is better to be forgotten. The twin actions against NCP are part of this strategy. Whether this action will result in any future alliance with the Shiv Sena or not, is yet to be seen.

## of the day quote

It is a matter of pride for me and for all of us that six daughters from Gujarat, including three from Ahmedabad, are going to represent India in the Olympics to be held in Japan's capital Tokyo from July 23

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

An important announcement pertaining to population policy, including voluntary sterilisation, would be made in the state Budget. The Budget Session of the state Assembly would begin July 12. Assam's first woman Finance Minister (Ajanta Neog) would table the Budget for FY 2021-22 on the floor of the House July 16

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | CHIEF MINISTER OF ASSAM

Uttar Pradesh is working for awareness on population control, and we should welcome the step taken by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Ji. This step will prove to be a gift for the society and the generations to come

ABBAS NAQVI | UNION MINORITY AFFAIRS MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Afghan diplomats visit Taj Mahal

**Agra/New Delhi:** Diplomats from Afghanistan visited the Taj Mahal Sunday morning and enjoyed their stay at the iconic monument amid the weekly lockdown imposed in the city Saturday and Sunday to curb Covid-19 infections. The Afghan delegation arrived in Agra Saturday, visited Fatehpur Sikri the same day and the Taj Mahal Sunday which remained open for specific time despite the weekend lockdown. However, tourists were not allowed entry during this time.

### Namassivayam new Pondy HM

**Pondicherry:** BJP's A Namassivayam was Sunday allotted the Home portfolio in the AINRC-led NDA government in Puducherry, with the exercise being carried out two months after the bloc won the polls and the cabinet members other than Chief Minister N Rangasamy were sworn-in June 27.

### 3 more Zika cases reported in Kerala

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Three more, including a toddler, were found to be infected by Zika virus in Kerala Sunday, taking the total count to 18. Health Minister Veena George said the government has arranged testing facilities at Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur and Kozhikode Medical colleges and also at the National Institute of Virology (NIV) unit at Alappuzha.

### 3 suspected terrorists held

**Kolkata:** Three suspected terrorists of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) were arrested from south Kolkata's Haridevpur area Sunday afternoon, police said. The arrests were made by the Kolkata Police's Special Task Force (STF), they said. The three suspected JMB terrorists were living in a rented accommodation for a few months in the middle-class locality, raising concern among the locals.

### Mentally unwell woman garraped

**Kozhikode(Ker):** A 21-year-old mentally challenged woman here was allegedly sexually assaulted thrice in a span of one year by some people under the pretext of helping her, police said.



The three parties (Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress) have decided that the new Maharashtra assembly Speaker will be from the Congress party only. We all will support whatever the party (Congress) decides about the speaker (candidate)

SHARAD PAWAR | NCP CHIEF

## TRIPURA TRIBALS GROW APPLE BER

Hit by the economic crisis triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic and enthused by a tribal youth, some tribal farmers in Tripura are scripting a new story by cultivating Apple Ber, a variety of horticultural fruit. It is being done for the first time in the entire northeastern region



# India pulls officials from Kandahar

India's move to temporarily bring back its staff came in view of Taliban fighters rapidly seizing control of a number of key areas in the region

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 11:** India has pulled out around 50 diplomats and security personnel from its consulate in Kandahar in Afghanistan in view of the deteriorating security situation and the Taliban gaining control of new areas around the southern Afghan city, people familiar with the development said Sunday.

A special aircraft of the Indian Air Force was sent Saturday to bring back the Indian diplomats, officials and other staff members including a group of Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel, they said.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said India-based personnel have been brought back for the time being in view of intense fighting near Kandahar city. Describing the pull out of the India-based personnel as a temporary measure, he said the consulate continues to operate through the local staff members.

He said India is closely monitoring the evolving security situation in Afghanistan. "The safety and security of our personnel is paramount. The consulate general of India in Kandahar has not been closed. However, due to the intense fighting near Kandahar city, India-based personnel have been brought back for the time

being," Bagchi said.

He was replying to a media query on the issue. "I want to emphasise that this is a purely temporary measure until the situation stabilises. The consulate continues to operate through our local staff members," Bagchi said.

He said arrangements are being made to ensure continued delivery of visa and consular services through the Indian embassy in Kabul. "An important partner of Afghanistan, India remains committed to a peaceful, sovereign and democratic Afghanistan," the spokesperson said. On Tuesday, the Indian embassy in Kabul said there was no plan to close the embassy and the consulates in Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif.

Two days back, the Ministry of External said India was carefully monitoring the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan and its implications on the safety and security of Indian nationals. "Our response will be calibrated accordingly," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Bagchi had said at a media briefing on Thursday.

Afghanistan witnessed a series of terror attacks in the last few weeks as the US looked to complete the withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan by August-end, ending a nearly two-decade of its military presence in the war-ravaged country.



Former Mujahideen hold weapons to support Afghan forces in their fight against Taliban

# Switch to vegan: PETA India urges CLE

THE INITIATIVE BY THE ANIMAL RIGHTS ORGANISATION COMES IN THE RUN UP TO COW APPRECIATION DAY WHICH IS OBSERVED JULY 13

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad, July 11:** Stepping up efforts to stamp out livestock slaughter in the country, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India, has urged the Council for Leather Exports (CLE) to promote vegan or plant-based leather production.

Writing to Sanjay Leekha, chairperson of the CLE which functions under the Commerce and Industry Ministry, PETA India has urged him to advise the organisation's members to move away from the slaughter of cows and buffaloes for producing leather goods.

Currently, the CLE members' directory lists cow leather, cow calf leather, buffalo leather, and buffalo calf leather suppliers.

falo calf leather suppliers.

According to PETA India functionaries, Cow Appreciation Day was created by a US fast-food chain, as a marketing gimmick, to sell slaughtered chicken products over its competitors' beef, but PETA US has routinely hijacked the day to tell the public that both cows and chickens matter and that neither want to be killed for food.

"Vegan leather is the future, and we don't want India to be left behind. Market reports show that ever more shoppers are demanding plant-based options, which are friendly to animals and the environment," PETA India CEO Manilal Valliyate said. PETA India has pointed out that demand for vegan leather is growing fast, citing

Infinium Global Research estimates that the market for vegan leather will reach nearly \$90 billion by 2025. PETA India has also identified some of the factors behind the boom, which include concerns over tannery waste in the Ganges, which is causing human health problems and creating agricultural wastelands, as well as workers' rights issues, since the toxic chemicals in leather production cause many to suffer from skin diseases, respiratory disorders, and various cancers. "CLE members should start producing leather using only plants and other non-animal materials, thereby empowering farmers, sparing animals' lives, and protecting human health and the environment," Valliyate elaborated.

# Surge in optimism as tourist arrivals rise in Kashmir

TOURISTS CAN BE SEEN LINING UP AT THE TICKETING COUNTERS OF THE HISTORIC GARDENS OF SRINAGAR -- MUGHAL, NISHAT, SHALIMAR AND CHASME SHAHI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Srinagar, July 11:** For the first time since the beginning of the year, tourist footfalls have started going up in Kashmir, raising hopes all over again in the local hospitality industry.

Tourists can be seen lining up at the ticketing counters of the historic gardens of Srinagar - Mughal, Nishat, Shalimar and Chasme Shahi. Elsewhere, too, the hospitality industry had reasons to celebrate.

"It now takes over an hour to cross the Wayil Bridge on the Srinagar-Leh highway in the evenings," said Jan Mohammad, who runs a restaurant near this famous bridge.

"Vehicles returning with tourists from Sonamarg are lined up on the northern side of this narrow bridge waiting for their turn to cross over," he said. Shikarwallahs, who earn their livelihood taking visitors across Dal Lake on joy rides, have started getting their first customers this year.

"There has been a gradual increase in the number of tourists coming to visit Dal Lake," confirmed Abdul Salam, a shikarwallah in the Gagribal area of the Lake. "I expect the flow to pick up and increase till the end of the summer tourist season," Salam added.

Reports are equally encouraging from hoteliers and tour operators in Pahalgam and Gulmarg.



"We had bookings for the spring, but those were cancelled because of the second wave of COVID-19,"

said the manager of a Pahalgam hotel. "Now we have started getting guests and also bookings for

the coming months." Gulmarg, the most sought-after tourist destination in Kashmir, has been getting tourists in good numbers for the first time after the winter tourist season. "All of us, from the taxi operators to pony owners, trekking guides and hoteliers, have started getting back our clientele," said Shabir Ahmad, a ski trainer in Gulmarg.

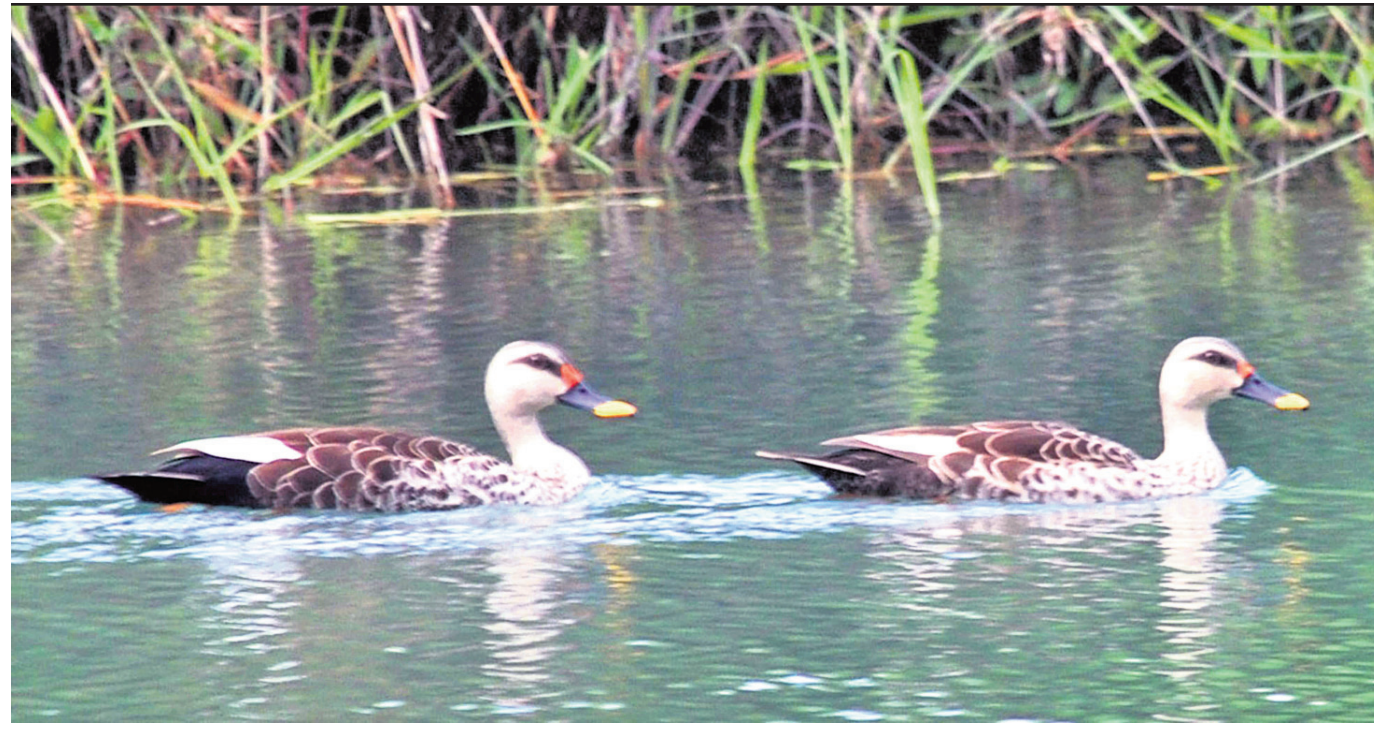
"If all goes well, we will get a good number of tourists in Gulmarg by the end of this month," Ahmed said. The main worry for the administration is the absence of strict compliance with the Covid-19 protocols among the tourists coming into the Valley.

"We have to keep on reminding the visitors and the local people

accompanying them that the pandemic is still around," a Srinagar police officer said.

"As a deterrent we impose fines on those not wearing masks or those who wear them in the most casual manner. A word of caution followed by a fine has been working, but both tourists and tour operators are duty-bound to keep the pandemic at bay. This message is being delivered at every place where we check tourist vehicles," the official said. The hospitality industry, while trying its best to follow the Covid-19 protocols, is not letting such fears cloud their optimism. Steadily growing footfalls through the rest of the tourist season is just what they need to lift their businesses out of the extended slump.

## TOGETHER IN JOY



Birds swimming in a lake on the outskirts of Belagavi city in Karnataka

UNI PHOTO

## COVID SURGE

# NORTHEAST, KERALA REGIONS OF CONCERN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 11:** Giving rise to fresh worries about the COVID-19 pandemic rearing its head again, the R-factor, which indicates the speed at which the infection is spreading in the country, has risen recently leading to a sluggish pace in the decline of active cases while Kerala and northeast states have emerged as regions of concern.

This is despite the nationwide tally of new cases remaining low, revealed an analysis by researchers at the Institute of Mathematical Sciences in Chennai. The R-factor has increased slightly to 0.88 in June-end after being at its lowest-ever value of 0.78 from mid-May till late last month, it showed.

This comes amid the unlocking process by many states trying to restore a semblance of normalcy as the deadly second wave, which infected lakhs and killed thousands during its peak in April-May, shows signs of ebbing. Sitabhra Sinha, who



led the team of researchers, said the 'R' for India is still below one, so the number of active cases is decreasing at a much slower rate. The same trend of slowing down in the rate of decline in active cases is also seen in many states.

"Kerala showed a brief spike in cases and its R continues to hover close to 1. The northeast region is of great concern. Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and possibly Tripura are showing a rise in the number of cases," Sinha pointed out. When the second wave of the COVID-19 infection was at its peak, the overall R-value in the country

was estimated to be 1.37 between March 9 to April 21. It declined to 1.18 between April 24 to May 1 and then to 1.10 between April 29 to May 7, according to the analysis.

Between May 9 and 11, the R-value was estimated to be around 0.98. It then to 0.82 from May 14 to May 30. The R-value was 0.78 from May 15 to June 26 and 0.88 from June 20 to July 7. In Kerala, the R-value is estimated to be around 1.10. As for the northeastern states, the R for Manipur is 1.07, Meghalaya 0.92, Tripura 1.15, Mizoram 0.86, Arunachal Pradesh 1.14, Sikkim 0.88, Assam 0.86.

## DELHI UNLOCKS

# ACADEMIC GATHERINGS ALLOWED

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 11:** Unlocking Delhi further from next week, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) has allowed academic gatherings and meetings at schools and colleges from Monday.

However, students will not be allowed to physically attend educational institutions, till further orders. "Only teachers and professors will be allowed inside educational institutions for online lectures and other administrative work," the Delhi Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said Sunday.



Exemption has also been given for Delhi Police and Army personnel to attend skill training classes. They will no longer require permission from the DDMA to attend these programmes. The DDMA, the capital's Covid management authority, has said that not more than 50 per cent capacity will be allowed at the auditorium and assembly hall of the school or educational institution.

The CMO stated that owing to the considerable decline in Covid cases in the national capital and overall improvement of the situations, the DDMA has removed academic and training activities from the list of completely prohibited activities. It said that there will be strict adherence to standard operating procedure and other guidelines to ensure Covid appropriate behaviour.

The schools and other educational institutions shall, however, remain closed and the teaching activities shall continue to be in online mode only.

# Political barbs fly in Delhi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 11:** Amid peak of Summer when water demand in the national capital has risen up to around 1,200 MGD per day, the ruling AAP and the opposition BJP have launched political barbs at each other.

On Sunday, scores of AAP workers protested outside Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta's residence, warning him to resolve the water issue with BJP-led Haryana government within 24 hours, otherwise, water supply of his residence would be cut.

The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) is governed by the Delhi Government, however, it justified its protest alleging that BJP-led Haryana is solely responsible for the situation as it has reduced supply of raw water to Delhi 100 MGD per day.

## WATER CRISIS

"There has been a shortage of water in Delhi for a few days, but the BJP leaders are busy doing politics," said AAP leader Durgesh Pathak.

AAP's protest came as a counter to the BJP as its Delhi unit head Adesh Gupta had Friday warned of the water crisis and had warned that if the issue is not resolved, the BJP will cut water supply to the residence of Delhi Water Minister Satyendar Jain.

Meanwhile, DJB vice chairman and AAP leader Raghav Chadha claimed that Haryana has been withholding Delhi's legitimate share of water and that the raw water being discharged into the Yamuna by the neighbouring state is at an "all-time low".

# international

## of the day quote

It is particularly striking that Western countries with cold-bloodedness, cynicism and cruelty are fighting for profits during the period of mankind's struggle against the pandemic

MARIA ZAKHAROVA | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, RUSSIA

I think it is important that we remain cautious and careful and the guidelines that we will set out tomorrow will demonstrate that, including guidelines that people are expected to wear masks in indoor, enclosed spaces

NADHIM ZAHAWI | VACCINES MINISTER, UK

We have 30 months left in the mandate and the government is starting a new period. We have built a team to focus on fair economic recovery... I want to highlight the incorporation of young men and women who have experience in the public sector

PEDRO SANCHEZ | PRIME MINISTER, SPAIN

## SHORT TAKES

### Afghan to rush troops to border

**Kabul:** Afghan authorities prepared Saturday to try to retake a key border crossing seized by the Taliban in a sweeping offensive that the insurgents claim has helped capture a vast swath of the violence-wracked nation. As US troops continued their withdrawal, the Taliban said its fighters had seized two crossings in western Afghanistan -- completing an arc of territory from the Iranian border to the frontier with China. It now held 85 per cent of the country, said a Taliban official.

### Bulgarians elect new parliament

**Sofia:** Bulgarians are voting in a snap poll Sunday after a previous election in April produced a fragmented parliament that failed to form a viable coalition government. Latest opinion polls suggest that the rerun could produce similar results but also a further drop in support for former Prime Minister Boyko Borissov's GERB party, after the current caretaker government made public allegations of widespread corruption during his rule.

### Myanmar faces shortage of O2

**Bangkok:** Myanmar is facing a rapid rise in Covid-19 patients and a shortage of oxygen supplies. Myanmar had weathered last year's surge by severely restricting travel and securing vaccines from India and China. People shunned military hospitals after the takeover and medical workers spearheaded a popular civil disobedience movement. Myanmar's new rulers have ordered oxygen plants to work at full capacity including converting industrial oxygen for the needs of patients.

### Turkey bus crash leaves 12 dead

**Ankara:** Twelve people died and 26 others were injured when a bus carrying migrants crashed in eastern Turkey Saturday night, local media reported, quoting authorities in the prefecture of Van. Among the dead were 11 migrants and a person who helped organise their illegal transport, the authorities were quoted as saying Sunday. Situated near Turkey's eastern border with Iran, the city of Van is used as a crossing point for migrants on their long journey to reach Europe, with many coming from Afghanistan.

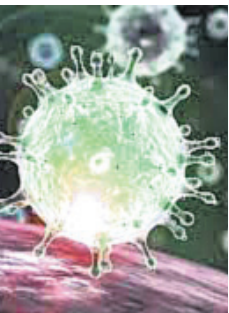


Now, Delhi has moved its spoilers in different directions to blame Pakistan for the unrest in Afghanistan, but the Indian propaganda would not get any traction

MAJ GEN BABAR IFTIKHAR | DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE INTER-SERVICES PUBLIC RELATIONS, PAKISTAN

## NONAGENARIAN INFECTED WITH BOTH ALPHA, BETA VARIANTS DIES

A 90-year-old unvaccinated woman in Belgium has died after being simultaneously infected with Alpha and Beta - two different variants of concern (VOCs) of Covid-19, researchers have said



# RICHARD BRANSON FLIES TO EDGE OF SPACE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Washington, July 11:** British billionaire Richard Branson flew into space Sunday aboard a Virgin Galactic vessel, a voyage he described as the "experience of a lifetime" -- and one he hopes will usher in an era of lucrative space tourism.

"Congratulations to all our wonderful team at Virgin Galactic for 17 years of hard, hard work to get us this far," he said during a live feed as the VSS Unity spaceship glided back to Spaceport America in New Mexico.

It reached a peak altitude of around 53 miles (85 kilometers) --

## VIRGIN GALACTIC DOESN'T EXPECT TO START FLYING CUSTOMERS BEFORE NEXT YEAR

beyond the boundary of space, according to the United States -- allowing the passengers to experience weightlessness and admire the Earth's curvature. The trip proceeded without drama, and touchdown occurred at around 9:40 am Mountain Time (1540 GMT), about an hour after take-off.

Earlier, a massive carrier plane



took off and ascended to 50,000 feet before dropping VSS Unity to complete the rest of the flight using its rocket-powered engine.

The space plane carried two pilots and four passengers, including Branson.

The ship then re-entered the atmosphere, lowered its flexible wings and glided back to the runway.

"It's a beautiful day to go to space," the brash Brit wrote in a tweet earlier where he posted a video of himself biking to the base and meeting with his crewmates, all Virgin employees.

Several tourists journeyed to the International Space Station in the 2000s, but on Russian rockets.

# Over 30mn citizens under heat alerts as western US swelters

Sweltering conditions have hit much of the Pacific seaboard and as far inland as the western edge of the Rocky Mountains over the weekend, with forecasters warning of more to come Sunday

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Los Angeles, July 11:** Hot weather alerts are in place for more than 30 million people across the western United States after the region's second heat wave in weeks brought another round of record-equalling high temperatures.

Las Vegas matched its all-time record of 117 degrees Fahrenheit (47.2 Celsius), according to the National Weather Service (NWS) -- a temperature recorded in the desert entertainment city once in 1942 and three other times since 2005. Forecasters issued an excessive heat warning for the city along with several other urban centers including the southern city of Phoenix and San Jose, the center of the Silicon Valley tech industry south of San Francisco.

"Over 30 million people remain under either excessive heat warnings or heat advisories," the NWS said Saturday, adding that dangerous heat and dry conditions



would continue through Sunday. The weekend's hot weather follows another heat wave that struck the western United States and Canada at the end of June.

The scorching conditions saw the all-time record daily temperature broken three days in a row in the Canadian province of British Columbia.

The death toll is not yet known but is thought to run into the hundreds. Last month was the hottest June on record in North America, according to data released by the European Union's climate monitoring service.

Human activity has driven global temperatures up, stoking increasingly fierce storms, extreme heatwaves, droughts and wildfires.

The World Meteorological Organization and Britain's Met Office said in May there was a 40 percent chance of the annual average global temperature tem-

# Violence spreads to SA's economic hub

AGENCIES

**Johannesburg, July 11:** Shops were looted overnight and a section of the M2 highway was closed in Johannesburg Sunday, as sporadic acts of violence following the jailing of former South African President Jacob Zuma spread to the country's main economic hub.

The unrest had mainly been concentrated in Zuma's home province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), where he started serving a 15-month sentence for contempt of court Wednesday night. Police said criminals were taking advantage of the anger to steal and cause damage. National intelligence body NatJOINTS warned that those inciting violence could face

## ZUMA JAILING

criminal charges.

NatJOINTS said in a statement that 62 people had been arrested in KZN and Gauteng, the province where Johannesburg is located, since the violence began.

The Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) said there had been looting in the Alexandra township and Jeppestown suburb Saturday night. The M2 was closed off after there were reports of shots being fired at passing vehicles.

Protests were ongoing in the Hillbrow neighbourhood Sunday morning, JMPD spokesman Wayne Minnaar said.

## 60TH ANNIV OF FRIENDSHIP

# 'China, N Korea vow to bolster relations'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Seoul, July 11:** Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un have vowed to bring their relations to a "new stage" as the two countries mark the 60th anniversary of a friendship pact, Pyongyang's state media reported Sunday.

China is North Korea's longtime ally and economic benefactor, their relationship forged in the bloodshed of the Korean War, when Mao Zedong sent millions of "volunteers" to fight US-led United Nations forces to a standstill.

The two countries signed a treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance in the event of an armed attack July 11, 1961, with Mao describing the allies as close as "lips and teeth".

Relations have fluctuated over the years due to Pyongyang's growing nuclear ambitions, but with negotiations between North Korea and the US at a standstill, both sides have moved to strengthen their alliance.

"Despite the unprecedentedly complicated international situation in recent years the comradely trust and militant friendship between the DPRK and China get stronger day by day," Kim wrote in his message to Xi, referring to the North by its official name.

In the message carried by the KCNA news agency, Kim highlighted the role of the pact in "ensuring peace and stability in Asia

and the rest of the world now that the hostile forces become more desperate in their challenge and obstructive moves".

Xi wrote he planned to bring "greater happiness" to the two countries and their people "by steadily leading the relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries to a new stage," KCNA said.

## China vows retaliation as US blacklists firms

China Sunday said it will take "necessary measures" to respond to the US blacklisting of Chinese companies over their alleged role in abuses of Uyghur people and other Muslim ethnic minorities. The Commerce Ministry said the US move constituted an "unreasonable suppression of Chinese enterprises and a serious breach of international economic and trade rules."

No details were given, but China has denied allegations of arbitrary detention and forced labour in the far western region of Xinjiang and increasingly responded to sanctions against companies and officials with its own bans on visas and financial links.

and the rest of the world now that the hostile forces become more desperate in their challenge and obstructive moves".

Xi wrote he planned to bring "greater happiness" to the two countries and their people "by steadily leading the relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries to a new stage," KCNA said.

and the rest of the world now that the hostile forces become more desperate in their challenge and obstructive moves".

## CONFEDERATE COLLAPSE



A statue of Confederate General Robert E Lee is removed after years of legal battle over the monument, in Charlottesville, Virginia

# Research suggests 'superbug' link to man's best friend

RESEARCHERS WARNED SUNDAY OF 'AN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH RISK' AFTER FINDING ANTIBIOTIC-RESISTANT BACTERIA IN A RANGE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF RAW DOG FOOD

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Paris, July 11:** Antibiotic-resistant "superbugs", which the World Health Organization calls one of the



top global threats to public health -- usually conjure images of hospital settings. But new research may point to a less-obvious source: the

family dog. Researchers warned Sunday of "an international public health risk" after finding antibiotic-resistant bacteria in a range of different types of raw dog food.

"The trend for feeding dogs raw food may be fuelling the spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria," the researchers said in a press release for their study, to be presented at the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases.

Separate research to be presented at the same conference found resistance to a last-resort antibiotic may be passing between pet dogs and their owners.

Antibiotic resistant bugs can render minor injuries and common infections potentially deadly.

In the dog food study, a team from the University of Porto analysed 55 samples of dog food from 25 brands including 14 raw frozen types, looking for Enterococci bacteria.

The bacteria is able to live harmlessly in human and animal intestines but can be dangerous in other parts of the body and can be resistant to antibiotics.

Researchers found that all of the raw dog food samples contained antibiotic-resistant Enterococci, including bacteria resistant to the last-resort antibiotic linezolid.

"The close contact of humans with dogs and the commercialisation of the studied brands in different countries poses an inter-

national public health risk," said researcher Ana Freitas.

"European authorities must raise awareness about the potential health risks when feeding raw diets to pets and the manufacture of dog food, including ingredient selection and hygiene practices, must be reviewed." She added that dog owners should wash their hands after handling pet food and disposing of faeces.

The World Health Organization (WHO) classes antibiotic resistance as one of the greatest public health threats facing humanity.

Drug-resistant infections kill an estimated 700,000 people a year globally and the UN has warned that could rise to 10 million by 2050 if no action is taken.

## of the day quote

**We all agree we should avoid introducing again any restriction on the movement of citizens and the way of life of people**

**DANIELE FRANCO** | ITALIAN ECONOMY MINISTER

**I feel the impact of the third wave on the economy will be much weaker than it was during the second wave and the beginning of the first wave**

**RAJIV KUMAR** | NITI AAYOG VICE CHAIRMAN

**The deadly second wave has not affected much of the economic activities as lockdowns were largely designed to limit social gathering and this has helped limit the impact of the second wave on economic growth when compared to the first wave**

**CHANDRAJIT BANERJEE** | CII DIRECTOR GENERAL

## SHORT TAKES

### Hero Electric to invest ₹700 crore



**New Delhi:** Hero Electric Vehicles will invest ₹700 crore by 2025 to rev up its business expansion, including setting up of a new manufacturing unit, for which it has raised ₹220 crore to part-fund the activities, according to a top company official. The company is planning to set up a new manufacturing facility with an annual capacity of 10 lakh units besides increasing production at its current plant at Ludhiana to 3 lakh units per annum from 75,000 units at present, as it targets to sell around 10 lakh units a year by 2025-26. Moreover, it is also ramping up research and development (R&D), marketing, dealer network expansion, along with expanding its supply chain, service network and charging stations in order to cash in on the 'explosive growth' in demand for its electric two-wheelers. "What we're doing now is expanding our capacity from 75,000 units to about 3 lakh units. While we are building this up, we're also planning on the next facility which is going to be about a million units per year and that we believe is not very far off now. It's going to be sooner rather than later," Hero Electric Managing Director Naveen Munjal told PTI.

### India's coal import rises 20 pc in May



**New Delhi:** India's coal import rose 20.4 per cent to 19.92 million tonnes (MT) in the month of May. The country had imported 16.54 MT of coal in May last fiscal, according to data compiled by mjunction Services. "On a year-on-year basis, however, India's coal and coke imports in May 2021 were up 20.4 per cent as against 16.54 MT imported in May 2020," it said. Import volumes of dry-fuel, it said, are expected to remain subdued in the ongoing monsoon season on account of lower demand, firm prices and high freight rates. India's coal import also rose 25.4 per cent to 42.19 MT in the first two months of the ongoing fiscal, against 33.63 MT of coal imported in the corresponding period of previous financial year, it said.

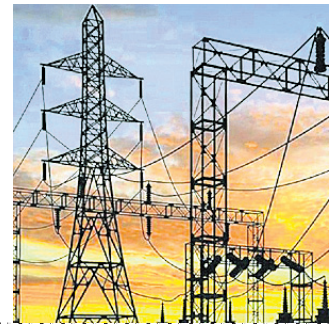


**We're very hopeful... that the pillar one deal that will involve a reallocation of taxing rights (in the OECD agreement) over large profitable firms wherever they're located, will enable us to get rid of existing digital levies**

**JANET YELLEN** | US TREASURY SECRETARY

### INDIA'S POWER CONSUMPTION RISES 18 PER CENT TO 30.33 BU

India's power consumption grew nearly 18 per cent in first week of July to 30.33 billion units (BU) compared to a year ago and returned to pre-pandemic level mainly due to easing of lockdown curbs and delayed monsoon, according to power ministry data.



# Govt exit from BPCL may hit over 8.4cr households

A legal opinion has been sought to ascertain if privatised BPCL will be eligible to receive LPG produced by companies such as ONGC & GAIL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 11:** A two-decade-old LPG supply order restricting supply of domestically produced LPG to only state-owned oil companies has stymied plans to allow Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) to continue selling subsidised cooking gas (LPG) after its privatisation.

A legal opinion has now been sought to ascertain if privatised BPCL will be eligible to receive LPG produced by companies such as ONGC and GAIL, two government officials with knowledge of the development said.

Currently, BPCL has more than 8.4 crore domestic LPG customers, including 2.1 crore Ujjwala customers. The company does not produce enough LPG at its refineries to be able to cater to the requirement of all these. It, like other oil marketing companies, buys LPG from state-owned firms like Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and GAIL (India) Ltd as well as private companies such as Reliance Industries Ltd. The Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of



Supply and Distribution) Order, 2020, known as LPG Control Order of 2000, restricts sale of indigenously produced cooking gas only to state-owned oil marketing companies — Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) and BPCL. It restricts supply of LPG produced by firms such as ONGC and GAIL to private firms. Private LPG

retailers, called parallel marketers, have to use imported gas for supplying to customers.

The 2000 Control Order was issued as the nation is short in LPG production. Once BPCL is privatised, the 2000 order will bar ONGC and GAIL from selling LPG to BPCL, the officials said.

"Post divestment of the government's stake in BPCL, it shall

cease to be a government oil company in terms of clause 2(g) of LPG Control Order of 2000," an official said.

With no access to indigenously produced LPG, BPCL won't be able to serve its customers and it would not be possible to shift the customers to IOC and HPCL as LPG cylinder equipment at customer end will need to be changed. Also,

IOC and HPCL may not have the required infrastructure to cater to such a large customer base, the officials said.

As a way out, it is being considered to continue to treat BPCL as a government company for the purpose of the 2000 Control Order for three years, the officials said adding that a legal opinion has been sought to ascertain if such a move is tenable under the law.

The other alternative is to amend the LPG Control Order itself to allow private firms to access indigenously produced LPG. This would open up LPG retailing to other private firms.

Officials said law ministry opinion has been sought to determine if the term government oil company in the LPG Control Order necessary requires the company to be a government company and if BPCL post privatisation can be notified as a government oil company.

To interpret the term 'government company', the opinion of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) as well as the Ministry of Consumer Affairs (MoCA) has been sought, they said.

### Franklin Templeton MF unitholders to get ₹3,303cr in 5th tranche



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 11:** SBI Funds Management (SBI MF) will distribute the fifth tranche of ₹3,303 crore to unitholders of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund's six shuttered schemes during the week beginning Monday.

With this, the total disbursement will reach ₹21,080 crore, amounting to 84 per cent of assets under management (AUM) as April 23, 2020, a Franklin Templeton MF spokesperson said Sunday.

Under the first disbursement in February, investors received ₹9,122 crore, while ₹2,962 crore were paid to investors during the week of April 12, ₹2,489 crore during the week of May 3 and in the latest disbursement during the week of June 7, investors were paid ₹3,205 crore. "SBI Funds Management Pvt Ltd (SBI MF) would be distributing the next tranche of ₹3,302.75 crore to unitholders across all six schemes. The payment to all investors whose accounts are KYC compliant with all details available will be made during the week of July 12, 2021," the spokesperson said.

# Govt identifies items for customs exemptions review



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 11:** The government has identified a host of customs exemptions for review and has invited suggestions from trade and industry bodies on the same.

Importers, exporters, domestic industry and trade associations are invited to give views on the subject for consideration by the government by August 10 on the 'MyGov.In' portal.

Some key products covered under the list include fabrics, games/sports requisites, magnetron for microwave manufacturing, specified parts for PCB, set-up box, routers, broadband modem, contraceptives and artificial kidney.

The list also includes magnetic tapes, photographic, filming, sound recording/ radio equipment, parts/raw material for manufacture of goods supplied for off-shore oil exploration, specified machinery/parts covered in textile industry.

### Importers, exporters, domestic industry and trade associations are invited to give views on the subject for consideration by the government by August 10 on the 'MyGov.In' portal

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her 2020-21 Budget speech had announced that a further review of existing customs exemption notifications would be undertaken through extensive consultations.

Giving a list of 97 notifications, the government said certain Customs exemptions have been identified for purpose of further review.

"Suggestions are invited in respect of their review which may in-

clude the need for review of the notification, amendment in wording of the notification for bringing clarity, consolidation, other relevant factors such as extent of use, etc," it added.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) last year too had conducted this crowd-sourcing exercise to identify the customs duty exceptions which need to be reviewed. Following that, the government has now drawn up a list of notifications and invited stakeholder views for a comprehensive review.

Exemptions from customs duty have been given in public interest from time to time and a review of the Customs laws and procedures would help to align them with the needs of changing times and ease of doing business.

Abhishek Jain, Tax Partner, EY, said the government seems to be looking at exemptions prevalent for divergent sectors as is evident from the list of targeted Customs exemption entries released by the government.

"As such, the various industries should see if their goods are being covered in the said exemption entries, and provide their recommendation to the government in a timely fashion, so as to ensure certain scope for further liaisoning in case the government has any further queries. The suggestions are most likely to vary from sector to sector considering parameters such as how much that sector is ready to manufacture the currently imported product in India, the possible threat to the domestic players in case of further customs duty reduction," Jain added.

# FPIs pull out ₹2,249cr from Indian equities in July so far



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 11:** After a month of net inflows, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pulled out ₹2,249 crore from the Indian equities segment in the first seven trading sessions of July.

This could be largely attributed to profit booking by FPIs with markets trading near all-time highs and investors choosing to stay on the sidelines, said Morningstar India Associate Director (Manager Research) Himanshu Srivastava.

VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said it was important to appreciate the fact they are not selling big.

"This is because even though valuations are stretched, there are no signs of a major crash in markets. The sharp dip in the US 10-year bond yield to around 1.3 per cent has again tilted the market in favour of equity," he said.

The steady rise in the dollar index has become a headwind for capital flows to emerging markets, he further added.

Conversely, the debt segment saw a net inflow of ₹2,088 crore between July 1 and July 10, as per the depositories data.

The total net outflow during the

period under review stood at ₹161 crore. In June, FPIs became net investors to the tune of ₹13,269 crore in Indian markets (equity and debt), after remaining net sellers in April and May.

Kotak Securities Executive Vice-President (Equity Technical Research) Shrikant Chouhan said the MSCI Emerging Markets Index has lost 3.9 per cent this week, overall. "All key emerging markets and Asian markets have seen FPI outflows this month to date. Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia saw month-to-date FPI outflows of USD 1,640 million, USD 991 million, USD 171 million, USD 89 million, USD 77 million, respectively," he said.

For the future of FPI investment, he said India is expected to remain vulnerable to US Federal Reserve's monetary policy and rising crude oil prices.

"Elevated crude oil price hurts India's external account, results in higher inflation and possible currency depreciation which can adversely impact the foreign portfolio flows," Chouhan added.

Srivastava added that interim profit booking cannot be ruled out given high valuations, while dollar movement could also have an impact on the flows going ahead.

# Jet staff to get truncated relief

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 11:** It is not yet a happy ending for the Kalrock-Jalan consortium and the insolvency resolution process of Jet Airways, as employees of the grounded airline are unhappy with the relief they are being offered which is heavily slashed down from the actual claims.

The admitted claims of employees stood at ₹1,265 crore, while the consortium has proposed ₹52 crore to settle their claims.

According to employees, the airline owes at least ₹3 lakh to each employee which may well go up to



₹85 lakh, while now each employee is being offered a total of around ₹23,000, which one employee, who did not want to be named, described as "peanuts".

The plan proposes to pay each workman of the corporate debtor ₹11,000 cash, ₹5,100 cash as medical expense reimbursement for the parents of the workmen, ₹5,100 cash as school fee reimbursement for children of the staff, ₹1,100 would be paid for stationary for children of the staff and one-time mobile phone recharge of ₹500.

# A month since launch, glitches continue to hit I-T portal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 11:** A month after its launch and two weeks after the finance minister reviewed its functioning, technical glitches continue to mar the functioning of the new income tax portal as certain key utilities like e-proceedings and digital signature certificate are not yet functional, say chartered accountants.

Also, some overseas firms have been facing problems in logging in to the portal, they said. The much-touted new income tax portal 'www.Incometax.Gov.In' had a bumpy start from the day of its launch on June 7 as it continued to face tech glitches, which prompted Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to call a meeting on June 22 with officials of Infosys which has developed the new website.

Infosys in 2019 was awarded a contract to develop the next-generation income tax filing system to reduce processing time for returns from 63 days to one day and

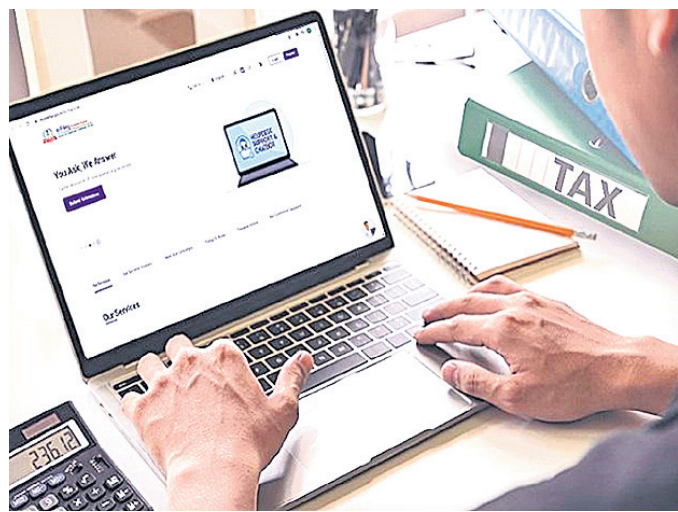
expedite refunds.

Even after two weeks of the meeting and over a month of the portal launch, users still continue to encounter multiple problems like unable to file I-T returns for past years, download intimation notice u/s 143(1) for AY 2019-20 and earlier years, and Form-3 under 'Vivad se Vishwas Scheme' is not visible on the portal.

In response to queries on the glitches on I-T portal, Infosys said, "We're in our silent period. Clarity on the income tax matter was provided at our recently concluded AGM".

An email sent to the Finance Ministry for comments remained unanswered.

BDO India Partner (Tax & Regulatory Services) Amit Ganatra said after the meeting of the Finance Minister with the Infosys team on June 22, it appeared that all the pending issues would get resolved quickly. While there has been improvement in the functioning of the site thereafter, it seems that the technology-related



challenges still persist and it may take some more time to get the site up and running completely.

"The e-proceedings tab is not fully functional, online rectification option is not available, JSON utility for filing tax returns in ITR 5, 6 and 7 is still not available and unlike the earlier website

there is no tab for the VsV scheme for providing comprehensive information and no update of the pending actions tab, these are some of the functionalities amongst others that remain to be addressed in the new tax portal," Ganatra added.

Dhruva Advisors LLP Partner

Sandeep Bhalla said Form 15CA/CB utility (relating to remittances) is still awaited. While physical filing of the same is permitted, it is a time-consuming process. This is a time when companies declare and pay dividends and physically filing Form 15CA/CB for remittance to each shareholder can be a task.

"Also, the DSC is now required to be registered on the personal e-filing account of the authorized signatory. In the case of foreign companies having non-resident authorized signatories not having a PAN in India, it is unclear as to how this procedure will work. In fact, for such foreign companies, an error is being encountered even at the time of attempting to login onto the e-filing portal," Bhalla added.

Industry chamber PHDCCI's Direct Taxes Committee Chairman Mukul Bagla said the new income tax portal is expected to improve efficiency in tax return filing along with general tax administration. However, since the portal

has major glitches even till date, the income tax work of taxpayers and tax professionals is seriously hampered.

Listing out some of the glitches on the portal, Bagla said the taxpayer is not able to file ITR u/s 148 of the Income Tax Act for earlier years as download of utility is happening erratically and attachment of digital signature is not taking place consistently even though the return is required to be filed within 30 days of receipt of notice.

Also in many cases, OTP is not reaching the taxpayer for e-verification of ITR. In the e-proceeding tab, replies cannot be filed as OTP is not reaching to the authorised representative. This is creating major problems as proceedings are getting time-barred. In cases where tax demands have been raised, there is no option to send a request for obtaining intimation u/s 143(1). The taxpayer is not able to file applications u/s 154 for rectification of mistakes as tab is not available.

It's a great title, especially for our people. The fans support the team unconditionally. We never gave up because of the fans

LIONEL SCALONI | ARGENTINA COACH



MATCH STATS

ARGENTINA		BRAZIL
46%	Possession	54%
5	Yellow cards	4
10	Fouls committed	11
7	Shots on goal	6

# PAINFUL ODYSSEY FINALLY OVER

Lionel Messi ends title drought with national team as Argentina win Copa America

I was sad before, but I knew that at some point it was going to happen. I feel that God was saving this moment for me, against Brazil in a final and in their country

LIONEL MESSI



TURNING POINT: Angel di Maria (extreme right) chips the ball over the head of Brazilian goalkeeper Ederson for Argentina's winning goal in the Copa America final played Saturday

AGENCIES

Rio de Janeiro, July 11: It was same Maracana Stadium which Lionel Messi had left with a frustrated and sad face a little over seven years ago, in spite of being nominated the 'Best Player of the 2014 World Cup'. There were no smiles or joyful celebrations as Argentina had lost the final 0-1 to Germany. It was again a case of so near yet so far for Messi who was desperate to win a major trophy with the national side.

Well Messi's odyssey finally came to end Saturday (IST Sunday) here as Argentina defeated Brazil 1-0 in the final of the Copa America. It also ended Argentina's 28-year-old wait for a major trophy, their last success coming in the 1993 edition of the same tournament when the great Gabriel Batistuta's brace gave them a 2-1 win over Mexico in the Copa final in Ecuador. The loss also ended Brazil's unbeaten home record that stretched back more than 2,500 days. It was the first time in six editions playing at home that Brazil had failed to lift the trophy.

And while the 34-year-old Messi's odyssey has come to an end, Brazil's Neymar, five years his junior, is still without a major title at international level having missed the Selecao's Copa win on home soil two

years ago through injury.

Argentina edged a brutal and fractious affair thanks to Di Maria's goal on 22 minutes. The 33-year-old winger ran on to Rodrigo De Paul's sumptuous through ball to lob Brazil goalkeeper Ederson with a first time finish.

"We fell short so many times, we dreamt so much about this, fought so hard," said Di Maria, who was named 'Man of the Match'. "Many people said we wouldn't manage it, we were criticised a lot. But we kept knocking at the door and kept going until today we knocked it down and entered," the goalscorer added.

Messi could have wrapped up the win two minutes from time but slipped when clean through with only Ederson to beat.

In a frantic start, Argentina's burly enforcer Nicolas Otamendi was quickly in with his first foul while Brazilian midfielder Fred picked up the first booking after just three minutes for a studs up lunge at Gonzalo Montiel.

Brazil were unchanged from their semifinal win over Peru while Lionel Scaloni made five alterations, notably bringing in Di Maria - who made an energetic and decisive entry off the bench against Colombia last time out.

The first clear chance came on 13 minutes as Richarlison headed down Marquinhos's long ball into the path of Neymar but the

Brazilian star was crowded out by a pair of defenders.

The brutal nature of the early challenges could be seen on the players' kits, with Neymar sporting ripped shorts and Lucas Paqueta being left with a hole in his sock following an intervention by Otamendi.

Argentina played with aggression and commitment. There was quality too with Di Maria tormenting Brazil's left back Renan Lodi, who probably should have cut out De Paul's pass for the winger's goal.

Di Maria had a shot from 20 yards blocked while Messi fired just wide following a 40-yard run midway into the first session. Brazil struggled to create anything of note. Even when they had a free-kick from shooting range, Neymar couldn't beat the wall. When the hosts did finally maintain some pressure late in the first half, Everton's deflected strike bobbed though to goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez.

In the second half, Brazil were more aggressive after coach Tite brought on forward Roberto Firmino for defensive midfielder Fred. Richarlison had the ball in the net soon after but he was flagged offside. And moments later Neymar teed up Richarlison but Martinez parried his near post effort.

However, then the match descended into a fractious, niggly affair with little fluid play between fouls. Argentina however, held their nerves to emerge deserved winners.

## AT LAST TEARS OF JOY FROM MESSI



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Buenos Aires, July 11: Argentina finally made Lionel Messi cry with joy. Prior to Saturday, it had always been tears of sorrow.

After losing four times in finals, early exits in major tournaments and even a decision to retire from the national team, Messi celebrated a much-awaited title with Argentina at Saturday's 1-0 win against Brazil in the Maracana Stadium.

When Uruguayan referee Esteban Ostojich blew the final whistle, Messi knelt down on the pitch and covered his face with his hands. The next challenge is to win the World Cup in Qatar next year, which would be the first since Diego Maradona took the team to glory in 1986.

Until Saturday, Messi's titles with Argentina were only the U-20 World Cup title in 2005 and a gold medal at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

Messi's first frustration at the senior-team level started when he was just 19. In the 2006 World Cup quarterfinals Germany beat Argentina on penalties. The very next year, Brazil beat Argentina 3-0 in the Copa America.

His next major shot at winning with Argentina came in the 2014 World Cup final against Germany. The 0-1 defeat at the Maracana

Stadium in Rio frustrated the star, who was voted the best player of the tournament.

Chile would crush Messi's hopes in two Copa America finals, in 2015 and 2016, both on penalties.

After the second defeat to Chile, Messi told journalists that the national team was over for him. "It is not for me. I tried, I think that is it," he said. Thankfully he didn't and returned for the South American World Cup qualifiers in which Argentina struggled. He took the team to Russia, but the round-of-16 defeat against France came at a turbulent time for the team. Messi kissed the Copa America trophy Saturday and lifted it at age 34. The biggest gap in his decorated career has finally closed to some extent.

## Thiago praise for Albiceleste

AGENCIES

Rio de Janeiro, July 11: Brazil defender Thiago Silva said Argentina deserved to win the Copa America title after the Albiceleste's 1-0 victory over the tournament host in Saturday's final.

"We have to congratulate our opponents. Argentina neutralised our players and it was very difficult to come back after going a goal down," Silva told a local television channel after the match at the Maracana Stadium.

"We weren't able to play the way we wanted to in the first half because they neutralised us. In the second they defended very well.



The loss in the final doesn't portray our real performance in the tournament. We are proud to have finished as runners-up. In football you cannot win all the time

THIAGO SILVA

However, I must say that in the second half, we tried to play football... they didn't. But we knew that they would resort to such tactics. We tried our best but things didn't go our way," the defender added.

Despite stumbling at the final hurdle here, Silva insisted Brazil would not be discouraged by the result. "Overall, I think we had a good campaign. We have to hold our heads up high and we should still be proud of the runners-up medal. That's football and we have to deal with it. You cannot expect to win every game. For us, it is indeed sad that we lost in the final, it is a hard pill to swallow," Silva pointed out.

The result broke a 13-match unbeaten run for Tite's men and gave Argentina their first major title since 1993. The Brazilian coach however, was not ready to blame his boys for the loss.

"It feels bad to lose the final as hosts," Tite said after the game. "I think we created a number of chances in the second half and we should have put the issue beyond doubt. We couldn't do the expected and had to pay the price," the coach added.

WAIT CONTINUES: A disconsolate Neymar leaves the pitch after Brazil's loss in the Copa America final

### AWARDS

BEST PLAYER	Lionel Messi
GOLDEN BOOT	Lionel Messi and Luis Diaz (Uruguay) (4 goals each)
BEST GOALKEEPER	Emiliano Martinez (Argentina)
PLAYER OF FINAL	Angel Di Maria
FAIR PLAY	Brazil
PRIZE MONEY	Argentina (USD 6.5 million) Brazil (USD 3.5 million)

## Di Maria dreaming big

World Cup next target for Argentina scorer

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Buenos Aires, July 11: Ángel Di María once admitted that he sought out a psychiatrist to help him deal with the trauma of his performance in finals. He overcame that stigma Saturday with the goal that gave Argentina a 1-0 victory over Brazil in the final of the Copa America.

"I can't cry, I can't fall, we dreamt so much of achieving this. So many people said I shouldn't come back, I kept banging my head against the wall and today (Saturday) it happened," the veteran winger said after the match in Rio de Janeiro.

Argentina's winner came in the 22nd minute after Rodrigo de Paul made a long pass to Di Maria. The 33-year-old striker counted on poor defending by Brazil left-back Renan Lodi to take control and lob it past goalkeeper Ederson.

Di Maria, Lionel Messi and striker Sergio Agüero are the sole survivors of the squad that lost the 2014 World Cup

final in Brazil. They also experienced defeat against Chile in the deciders of Copa America in 2015 and 2016.

"(Messi) said 'thank you' and I said 'thank you' to him. He told me it was going to be my final," an emotional Di Maria said. "Soccer is like this, comebacks are like this and it had to be today," the winger added.

Di Maria didn't play in the 2014 World Cup final due to an injury in the quarterfinals against Belgium. One year later, another muscle injury forced him out during the Copa America final against Chile.

That is when Di Maria started seeing a psychiatrist. Argentina fans wanted him out of the squad, but he turned the tables on them Saturday, despite the fact he started the tournament as a substitute.

Di Maria promised more joy for Argentina fans after the Copa title. "This is enough to continue the charge. The World Cup is coming soon, and this is a great push," he said.

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# Tennis has a new GOAT 'ALL SHOULD GET COMPENSATION'

AGENCIES

**London, July 11:** They were called GOAT (greatest of all time) before him – Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal. However, Novak Djokovic proved Sunday that he is the new GOAT of tennis with his sixth Wimbledon men's singles title and the 20th Grand Slam of his career. Step over Roger and Rafa, the 'Nole' (Djokovic's nickname) has arrived. Incidentally both Roger and Rafa have also 20 Grand Slams in their kitty.

Against the firepower of the seventh seed Matteo Berrettini, it was Djokovic's superb returning and retrieving skills that helped the Serb win the match in three hours and 27 minutes. After losing the first set in tie-breaker, Djokovic simply upped the ante to emerge a deserved winner 6-7 (4-7), 6-4, 6-4, 6-3. Overall, he was simply too good for the Italian and it seemed at times that he was just doing enough to win the match with a lot left in the reserves.

Djokovic was the first to admit after the match that his predecessor 'GOATS' had made him what he is today. "The early losses to Roger and Rafa made me realise where I have to improve mentally, tactically, physically and in shot-making.

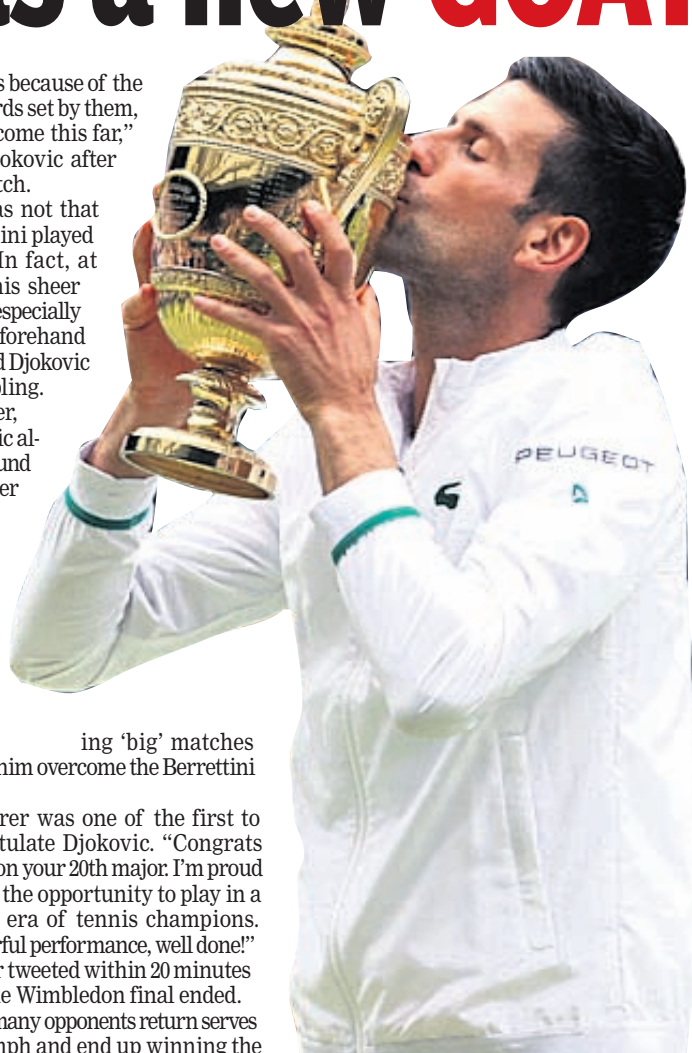
It is because of the standards set by them, I have come this far," said Djokovic after the match.

It was not that Berrettini played badly. In fact, at times his sheer power, especially on the forehand side had Djokovic scrambling. However, Djokovic always found the better angles on the court and his experience in playing 'big' matches helped him overcome the Berrettini storm.

Federer was one of the first to congratulate Djokovic. "Congrats Novak on your 20th major. I'm proud to have the opportunity to play in a special era of tennis champions. Wonderful performance, well done!" Federer tweeted within 20 minutes after the Wimbledon final ended.

Not many opponents return serves at 137 mph and end up winning the point, but Djokovic did that at least twice. And the big groundstrokes that the 6-foot-5 inch, barrel-chested Berrettini can drive past most other players kept coming back off Djokovic's racket. That's what Djokovic does to any opponent: He just forces foes to work so hard to win every point, let alone a game, a set, a match.

Now with the Australian, French and



NOVAK DJOKOVIC KISSES THE TROPHY

Wimbledon trophies in his cabinet this year, Djokovic has his sights on a 'Calendar Grand Slam'. The US Open will fulfil his dream and Djokovic said that the title at Flushing Meadows is his next target.

It simply is bad news for his opponents. Isn't it?

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 11:** Saurashtra's Jaydev Shah, who is part of BCCI's newly-formed working group for domestic cricket, feels all age-group cricketers should be compensated for loss of games last season and not just Ranji Trophy players.

Shah is a former Saurashtra captain. He said how to compensate the cricketers and the quantum of the payout will be decided by the working group after due consultation with BCCI secretary Jay Shah and president Sourav Ganguly. "The working group has just been formed and we will work with the guidance of Jay bhai (BCCI

secretary). A time frame has not been set yet but I feel compensation, whatever the amount may be, should be given to all age-group cricketers," Jaydev told this agency Sunday.

The other members of the panel are Mohammad Azharuddin, Karnataka's Santosh Menon, Assam's Devajit Saikia, CAB's Avishkek Dalmiya, Uttar Pradesh's Yudhvir Singh and Delhi's Rohan Jaitely.

A senior domestic player earns Rs 15-16 lakh per season but it was not the case last season with the Ranji Trophy being cancelled for the first time in 87 years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Only the T20 and 50-over competi-

tions were held at the senior level.

The 2021-2022 season domestic season begins with the women's one-day competition in September-October while the men start the year with the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy in October-November. The premier event, Ranji Trophy, will be staged from November 16 to February 19.

Jaydev also informed that veteran batsman Sheldon Jackson is all set to return to Saurashtra after spending a season with Pondicherry. Jackson, who is part of the KKR squad this IPL season, had moved to Pondicherry as an outstation player after guiding Saurashtra to their maiden Ranji Trophy win in March 2020.

## INDIAN CONNECTION

**LONDON:** Finally some Indian connection was found Sunday at Wimbledon when Samir Banerjee won the junior boy's title. In the final, the American of Indian origin defeated Victor Livo 7-5, 6-3. The 17-year-old, who is a resident of New Jersey in the United States, dominated the match right from the start and never allowed his opponent to settle down. Yuki Bhambri was the last Indian to win a junior Grand Slam title when he won the Australian Open in 2009. Before him, Leander Paes (Wimbledon 1990, US Open 1991), Ramesh Krishnan (French Open and Wimbledon 1979) and Ramanathan Krishnan (Wimbledon 1954) have won junior singles majors.

## Praneeth worried over 'false' report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 11:** Ahead of his maiden Olympics appearance in Tokyo, shuttler B Sai Praneeth is 'a bit worried' about returning false positive for Covid-19 in one of the many tests he might undergo in Tokyo. This is because during the Thailand Open event in January he had tested 'false positive' which forced him to pull out of the tournament. However, the very next day he tested negative.

"You know what happened to me in Thailand, it was a false positive and I couldn't play. Since it happened to me so I am a bit worried," Praneeth, the 2017 Singapore Open champion, said Sunday.

"Olympics are the biggest sporting event. Before you could just focus on your game now there are so many things: tests, so many protocols, you have to think about all that and then practice and play. But I am vaccinated now. A lot of effort has been made to conduct a safe Olympics, so hopefully, things will be okay. There is no guarantee but we need to be positive and focus on the game," the shuttler added.

Praneeth is the only Indian to have made the cut in the men's section.

## NO NEW COVID +VE CASES

# SL players to enter bio-bubble Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, July 11:** The entire Sri Lankan first team, including senior players Kusal Perera, Dushmantha Chameera and Dhananjaya de Silva, have all returned negative in their latest RT-PCR tests ahead of the limited overs series against India. The tests were conducted by Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC). Sources said that the players would be allowed to enter the bio-bubble by Monday as they complete a week-long hard quarantine after their arrival from the United Kingdom.

Batting coach Grant Flower and data analyst GT Niroshan, along with another player in a separate bio-bubble had tested positive for Covid-19 a couple of days back. It forced SLC and BCCI to push back the ODI series, originally scheduled to start July 13, by five days.

"Normally, the moment we get any positive results we announce. Another round of RT-PCR tests were conducted Saturday. We only get the results if there are any positive cases. Since we haven't got any positive report, which we normally receive by midday, it can be presumed that all players have tested negative," the source informed.

- All the first team Sri Lankan players have returned negative reports in the latest RT-PCR tests
- ODI series against Sri Lanka to start July 18
- Condition of batting coach Grant Flower stable

As far as its revised training itinerary is concerned, it is understood that the Sri Lankan team will practice at the R Premadasa Stadium here, since the Indians are training at the Singhalese Sports Club ground (SSC).

"If all goes well, the UK-returned players would be able to come out of their hard quarantine (room isolation) and enter the bio-bubble. The robust testing is expected to continue as per norms (every third or fifth day)," the source added.

Once the players get to enter the bio-bubble, they can at least meet each other in their rooms and also start using the gymnasium in a staggered manner. The outdoor training and skills session (net practice) is also expected to start in the next 48 hours.

The source also informed that both Flower and Niroshan are in isolation and there has not been any deterioration in their health or medical parameters.

Indian javelin thrower trying to remain positive

## Chopra laments lack of proper exposure

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 11:** Lack of competitive events has affected javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra's preparations before the Tokyo Olympics. To remain in a positive frame of mind, Chopra has devised a unique technique. He is keeping himself focussed by listening to slow music and imagining that he is taking part in a competition.

"I listen to slow music and imagine that I am in a competition, taking part and throwing in the Olympics, so that I don't feel completely new in my maiden Olympic appearance," Chopra revealed in an online interaction from his training base in Uppsala, Sweden. Chopra incidentally is being touted as one of India's strongest medal bets at the Olympics.

The 23-year-old Chopra said he has missed the 'natural feeling' of being in a world-class field, except for one occasion, in the run up to the Games which open July 23. That one time was the Kuortane Games

in Finland June 26 where he won a bronze with a performance of 86.79m in a star-studded field comprising, among others, Olympics gold favourite German Johannes Vetter, who won the event with a massive throw of 93.59m.

"I had a new experience in Finland. During the run-up, I felt the real experience of a top-level competition which motivates you to give your best. Sadly, I have missed these kind of competitions in the last 18 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic," lamented the former junior world champion. "For me, that was the only time," he added.

Chopra informed that he will continue with high intensity training till a week before the Olympics. After that it will be light training. "I am just concentrating on improving my technique. Also I am working on reducing the height of the javelin so that it travels greater distance," informed Chopra. He said he meditates to keep himself focussed when not training.

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