



## ELLI'S BIG MOMENT

Actor Elli AvrRam explains how miracles happen in reality when one dares to dream big

LEISURE P2



## 2021: A SPACE ODYSSEY

With the successful completion of his space trip, billionaire Branson has opened a new chapter in space tourism

INTERNATIONAL P10



## INDIA FACE SL TODAY

Shikhar Dhawan-led second string Indian side take on Sri Lanka in the first match of three-ODI series

SPORTS P12

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Just a suggestion, sir. A separate ministry for ribbon cutting could help you save 18 hours daily for other work....

## Woman pushes her two kids into well

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kandhamal, July 17:** In a shocking incident, a woman allegedly killed her two kids by pushing them into a well following a dispute with her husband Friday in Kandhamal district, police said Saturday.

According to the police, Bhagyalaxmi Patra, a resident of Raikia Block in the Kandhamal district had left home with her five-year-old son and 9-year-old daughter after a quarrel with her husband M. Rajesh Patra Friday afternoon.

On Saturday morning, when Rajesh searched for them, he found his wife near the well and was shocked to learn that Bhagyalaxmi had pushed their two kids into the well. With the help of local fire service personnel, police recovered the dead bodies from the well. "We suspect that the woman had pushed the kids into the well. The woman, Bhagyalaxmi, sustained a minor injury on her leg but she is stable. This incident is the fallout of a family dispute. Further investigation is on," sub-divisional police officer, G Udayagiri, Tirupati Rao Patnaik said.

## CURFEW IN PURI

**Puri:** Curfew will be imposed in Puri town from 8 pm Monday to ensure the smooth conduct of the Bahuda Yatra of Lord Jagannath and his siblings, without the participation of devotees. The curfew will continue till the end of the Yatra, July 20. Sources in the Puri district administration said that no one will be allowed to witness the return journey of the Holy Trinity from rooftops July 20. Meanwhile, preparations are in full swing for the 'Return Car Festival' from Gundicha temple to Srimandir on the ninth day of Ratha Yatra. The 'Dakshina Moda' ritual, or the southward turn, of the three chariots of Lord Jagannath and his siblings stationed outside Gundicha Temple was held Saturday on the sixth day of the Trinity's annual sojourn. This marks the beginning of the preparations for the Bahuda Yatra.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
TEMP		35.8°C	35.5°C
MAX		35.8°C	35.5°C
MIN		26.5°C	26.0°C
Humidity		81%	76%
Rainfall		Trace	Nil
	Forecast	Generally cloudy sky	



Darpadalan chariot of Devi Subhadra being turned southward as part of the preparations for Bahuda Yatra in Puri, Saturday

PHOTO: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

## FOR RETURN JOURNEY

# State to reopen schools for Classes X, XII from July 26

- Students have been given the option to attend classes in person or pursue online classes
- Classes for IX, XI students are likely to begin from Aug 18 and Sept 15 respectively

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 17:** As many students are unable to reap the benefits of online teaching due to poor internet connectivity, the state government Saturday decided to reopen the schools for Class X and XII students from July 26.

Speaking to reporters in virtual mode, School and Mass Education department secretary Satyabrata Sahu said online teaching is reaching only 40 per cent of the students while the remaining are left behind. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, school students in the state have lost 150 days of classroom teaching during the last academic year.

Both the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) and Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) have reduced their respective syllabi. Hence, the government has decided to reopen both private and government-run schools for the Class X and XII students from July 26, Sahu said.

However, it is not mandatory for all students to attend the classes. "We have given an option to the students to come to school only with the consent of their parents," said Sahu. Meanwhile, the schools will continue

with online teaching for all classes, including Classes X and XII, he said.

The district Collectors have been empowered to take a final call on reopening the schools after reviewing the Covid situation in their respective districts.

The classes will be held from 10 am to 1.30 pm for the students without any break, he said, adding, the schools will remain closed on all Sundays and other holidays. Schools that will be used as examination centres will be reopened at a later stage after completion of the examinations.

The government will issue a detailed SOP for resumption of the classes in adherence to the Covid-19 guidelines. Prior to reopening of the schools, all teachers will be vaccinated on a priority basis and the District Education Officers (DEOs) have been instructed to ensure that all the Covid-19 protocols are strictly followed in schools, Sahu further said.

The state government also plans to reopen schools for Class IX and XI students from August 16 and September 15, respectively. Classes for Class XI students will be held from September 15 after completion of admission to Plus II courses, Sahu informed.

Keeping the prevailing pandemic situation in mind, the BSE will for the first time implement a "Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation System", wherein four formative assessments and two summative assessments will be conducted for Classes IX and X. Parents and students have been asked to take all class examinations seriously. If the pandemic situation deteriorates, evaluation would be done on the basis of these examinations. The

## NEW SESSION IN VARSITIES BY OCT 1

**NEW DELHI:** The new academic session in universities and colleges across the country will begin from October 1, while the admission process has to be completed by September 30, according to new guidelines of the University Grants Commission (UGC). Universities and higher education institutions (HEIs) have been asked to ensure that the admission process for undergraduate courses begins only after the declaration of results by the CBSE, ICSE and all state boards. "It is expected that all school boards will declare their results for Class XII exams by July 31. If there is any delay in declaration of the result of qualifying exams, the new academic session may begin by October 18," the UGC said in the new guidelines.

state will also hold Matriculation examination offline between July 30 and August 5 for students who are unhappy with the alternative evaluation system. The BSE has been asked to prepare question papers for all tests of Class IX and X, he stated.

Speaking about the Matriculation examination, the secretary said the annual High School Certificate (HSC) examination was cancelled due to the Covid-19 and, accordingly, an alternative methodology has been followed to award marks to Class X students. Those who are dissatisfied with the process, have been allowed to appear for the test in person.

Only 2,244 students (0.39 per cent) have filled up forms for the offline test. It means about 99 per cent students are satisfied with the marks awarded to them, Sahu said.

## PETROL PRICE MOVES UP FURTHER

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 17:** Global cues pushed petrol prices to increase again across the country Saturday adding further pressure to the stretched budgets of consumers grappling with rising food prices amidst shrinking income.

However, unlike uniform price movement earlier, oil marketing companies Saturday increased the pump price of petrol only and kept diesel rates unchanged offering some relief to the transport sector.

Accordingly, while the price of petrol increased by 30 paise per litre to ₹101.84 a litre in Delhi, diesel price remained at Friday's level of ₹89.87 a litre.

Across the country as well, petrol price increased in the range of 30-40 paise per litre, while diesel prices remained unchanged.

### CITY FUEL PRICES

PETROL	₹102.72 (+0.30)
DIESEL	₹98.01 (+0.0)

Before Saturday, oil marketing companies had kept fuel prices unchanged Friday but had affected increases for both petrol and diesel Thursday. With expectation of increased global supply of oil as OPEC agreed to taper production cut in line with growing demand. In the city of Mumbai, where petrol prices crossed ₹100 mark for the first time ever May 29, the fuel price reached new high of ₹107.85 per litre Saturday. Diesel price in the city is also at ₹97.45, the highest among metros.

Petrol prices in all metros have now crossed ₹100 per litre mark and OMC officials said that if international oil prices continue to firm up, rates may rise further.

# Cabinet approves 15 new proposals

Govt to upgrade the College of Engineering and Technology into a non-affiliated unitary university under the name Odisha University of Technology and Research

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 17:** The state Cabinet under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday approved 15 projects relating to education, civil service recruitment rules, mega piped water and augmenting information services among others.

The Cabinet proposed a new legislation to upgrade the College of Engineering and Technology (CET) into a non-affiliated unitary university under the name Odisha University of Technology and Research (OUTR). According to the government, the decision will pave way for more facilities and opportunities for graduate, post-graduate and other students in diverse fields.

The Cabinet also decided to formulate new rules for the timely promotion of pharmacists in jails, citing lack of statutory provisions for recruiting pharmacist in jails, which often lead to piling up of litigations in different courts.

A decision to improve the 23-km stretch of the Duduka-Gopalpur-Toparia road in Sundergarh district was also taken at the Cabinet meet. This road is a part of a major road connecting Sundergarh town and Raigarh in Chhattisgarh. It also connects the town to Basundhara coal mines. The Cabinet also approved a tender for the project worth ₹102.65 crore and set a deadline of 24 months to complete the work.

At the same time, the Cabinet decided to relax the norms related to stamp duty in land developments work such as making provisions



Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra briefing the media after the state Cabinet meeting, Saturday

for agreements between the developer and land owner and granting power of attorney to ease the process as well as ensure more revenue to the government. At the same time, the government increased the stamp duty for certified copies from ₹10 to ₹100.

The Cabinet also approved amendments to the Odisha Civil Services (Criteria for Promotion) Rules, 1992 to offer better scope for promotions to Group C employees. The meeting decided to do away with the provision of Confidential Character Report and Performance Report for granting promotions. The amendments allow higher officials to assess the performance of Group C employees and record their remark as 'fit for shouldering higher responsibilities' or 'not fit for shouldering higher responsibilities'. Several other decisions relating to piped water projects in mining areas and amendment to recruitment rules were also approved by the Cabinet Saturday.

MORE P3

## Daughter of Af envoy to Pak briefly kidnapped

REUTERS

**Kabul, July 17:** The daughter of Afghan envoy to Pakistan Najibullah Alikhil was abducted Friday and severely tortured by unknown individuals in Islamabad, according to Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Silsila Alikhil, 26, was kidnapped while she was on her way home from Jinnah supermarket.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Silsila Alikhil has been admitted to a hospital and is under medical care after being released from captivity.

The Afghanistan government condemned the heinous act and expressed

their concern over the safety and security of their diplomats and their families in Pakistan in a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

The Afghan Foreign Ministry has called upon the Pakistan government to take necessary and immediate action to ensure full security of the Afghan diplomats and their families, in accordance with the international treaties and commitments.

The statement further added that the Afghan Foreign Ministry is pursuing the matter with their counterpart in Pakistan. They urged the Pakistan government to identify and prosecute the perpetrators as soon as possible.

# First resident of Olympic Village tests positive for Covid

THE PERSON IS IDENTIFIED SIMPLY AS A "GAMES-CONCERNED PERSONNEL," WHO IS ALSO LISTED AS A NON-RESIDENT OF JAPAN

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Tokyo, July 17:** The first resident of the Olympic Village has tested positive for Covid-19, Tokyo Olympic organisers said Saturday.

Officials said it was not an athlete with the Games opening in just under a week, July 23.

Tokyo officials including Seiko Hashimoto, the president of the organising committee, confirmed the case and said the person tested positive Friday. Organisers say for confidentiality purposes they can only offer a vague description and few details.

"In the current situation, that positive cases arise is something we must assume is possible," said Toshiro Muto, the CEO of the Tokyo organising committee.



The person is identified simply as a "games-concerned personnel." The person is also listed as a non-resident of Japan. Tokyo officials said the person was placed in 14-day quarantine.

The Olympic Village on Tokyo Bay will house about 11,000 athletes dur-

ing the Olympics and thousands of other staff.

IOC president Thomas Bach said this week there was "zero" risk of athletes in the village passing on the virus to Japanese or other resident of the village.

Organisers say since July 1 and as of Saturday, 45 people under their "jurisdiction" have tested positive.

Only one involves a person in the village and most are identified as "contractors" for Tokyo 2020 and "games-concerned personnel." The list includes one athlete - who tested positive July 14 - and three members of the media.

Of the 45, only 12 are listed as "non-resident of Japan."

Organisers say that athletes and staff who have been away from Tokyo at training camps are excluded from this list and their accounting.

Tokyo officials said they could not give an estimate of the number of people in the village as of Saturday.

New Covid-19 cases Saturday were reported at 1,410. They were 950 one week ago, and it marks the 28th straight

day that cases were higher than a week previous. It was the highest single day since 1,485 January 21.

IOC president Thomas Bach, as he has done all week in Tokyo, again asked the Japanese to support the Olympics. Opinion polls, depending how the question is asked, show 50-80% want the Olympics postponed again or canceled.

"We are very well aware of the skepticism, obviously that a number of people have here in Japan," Bach said Saturday in his first large briefing of the Olympics at the main press center in Tokyo. "My appeal to the Japanese people is to welcome these athletes."

Bach was asked about the absence of support at least twice, both times by Japanese reporters.

# leisure



## GRANT HATES RESPONSIBILITY

Actor Hugh Grant has revealed that he detests responsibilities. "I hate responsibility. I don't want this. I am looking after five children and an elderly father and I don't like it. I keep looking around for someone more grown up to come and do it for me," Grant said on *The Drew Barrymore Show*.

## SOPHIA LOVES BROKEN CHARACTERS

Actress Sophia Di Martino says she had a great time working on her character Sylvie in the web series *Loki*. She says the most interesting thing for her was how broken her character was, adding that she finds it interesting to play characters that are damaged.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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

**ARIES**  
Just grab any chance you get to demonstrate your expressive abilities, as it will fetch widespread appreciation. Something about your children may make you proud. However, Ganesh says, don't neglect the aged members of your family.

**TAURUS**  
Today, you are likely to pay attention to your health issues and eating habits. Fortune may not favour your efforts. However hard you may try, you may still find yourself back to square one at the end of the day. Try until you taste the sweet fruit of success, suggests Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
You will be able to express your thoughts and opinions to the people you come in contact with today. They will also reciprocate and echo your feelings and emotions. This will give you validation and satisfaction. The day should be filled with fun and entertainment overall, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Your career will reach a decisive moment. You can expect a transfer, promotion or pay hike. Alongside your responsibilities will also increase. A chance of new job is also indicated. You can reject a tempting job offer.

**LEO**  
Your expenses may shoot through the roof if you do not pay careful attention to your finances. You will want to splurge on expensive perfumes and clothing. You will be able to attract those of the opposite sex. You must guard against coming off as a show-off.

**VIRGO**  
Logic as well as emotions will hold sway in your relationships today. Emotionally you will feel a little confused and will swing between your feelings and what is actually expected of you. However, finally you will pay more heed to your inner voice rather than depending on the views of others.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says you will be more aware about your beauty and outward appearance and try to enhance it by going to a beauty parlor. You will spend most of your time looking after your external beauty.

**SCORPIO**  
Your close friends and loved ones seem to be on the menu today, predicts Ganesh. Romantic brilliance will usher in happiness and favourable business prospects will be the icing on the cake. Your charm will peak and you will enjoy the attention you get out of it. Try your hands at creative things as there is a good chance that you may come home bragging about the results.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Tedious day in store for you as hectic work is likely to keep you on toes; this is not-so-good-news. And well, it's time for some good news now. You will do so much running around for your work, that you will actually shed a few kilos of weight.

**CAPRICORN**  
You love your family and you will try your best to live up to the expectations of your family members. If you are student, you will finish up your existing projects and get on with some fresh assignments, foretells Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
You may have to remain indoors today. But, don't think that you will get bored. You can do a lot of things, like playing cards and other board games, reading, watching the natural world around, and what not. You will spend the day in a relax mood and look at life from a different perspective, feels Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
You will work hard to organize your day to day routine but due to the ill alignment of the planets you will not be able to sort things out successfully today. Ganesh advises you to be patient and let things be as they are but also to hold on to the sentiments of change.

## 'This is a golden period for all musical artistes'

**Mumbai:** Singer Aastha Gill says she feels blessed to be part of an era where independent music has grown and is still gaining momentum.

Aastha rose to fame with her collaborative works with Badshah such as *DJ Waley babu* and *Paani paani*, besides hits like *Buzz* or *Naagin* with Akasa among others.

"Our audience's taste has evolved and people

know what is going on worldwide. They know what sounds are in. People know how music is made. I think this time that we have, I feel very blessed to be a part of this era," Aastha said.

She added: "I wake up and I realise that I am blessed. There was a time when I used to listen to Alisha Chinai and the band Viva. Now I am here. At times it is difficult for me to believe that I have made it. But yes, this is a golden time for all artistes and everyone is doing their kind of work." IANS



Aastha Gill



### ON SHARING SCREEN SPACE WITH BIG B

## Miracles do happen: Elli

**Mumbai:** Actress Elli AvrRam says working with Amitabh Bachchan in the upcoming film *Goodbye* is a miracle. She shared her sentiments with a picture she posted on Saturday posing alongside Bachchan.

"Dear fan-fam, here's what's next! Remember the script I was holding, but not sharing? Well it was 'Goodbye' with one and only @amitabhbachchan sir. I still remember how I used to dance on Shava Shava, back home in Sweden with my girlfriends, and today, I'm getting to act with sir!!!! O m g. All I can say is Miracles do happen, when you dare to Dream Big. Can't wait for next schedule to start soon!!! #goodbye," the actress wrote.

Vikas Bahl's directorial *Goodbye* also features Neena Gupta, Telugu actress Rashmika Mandanna and Pavail Gulati.

Elli was last seen featured alongside Aamir Khan in the song *Har funn maula* in the film *Koi Jaane Na*. IANS

## Pankaj's method of picking a project



**Mumbai:** Actor Pankaj Tripathi, who wows with his realistic acting and makes his fans chuckle with his comic timing, has spoken about what he keeps in mind while choosing a film.

"Sometimes I pick stories I like, or something in the film that I really want to reach to the people, like a message. Before choosing a project I see if there is gender sensitivity or not and what a filmmaker is trying to say through the film," Pankaj says.

"Box office collection is a by-product. I just want to pass on a message through a film. So, I keep that in mind," he added.

The actor currently awaits the release of his upcoming film *Mimi*, starring Kriti Sanon.

The film tells the tale of a girl who wants to try her luck in Hindi film industry and ends up becoming a surrogate for a couple. IANS

## First Indian female photojournalist featured in Met Museum show

One of Vyarawalla's photographs on display at the exhibition in New York include ashes of the Mahatma Gandhi being carried in a procession at Allahabad



A file photo of Homai Vyarawalla (L) and an image of Mahatma Gandhi's ashes being carried in a procession at Allahabad taken by her

**H**omai Vyarawalla (1913-2012) commonly known by her pseudonym 'Dalda 13' and India's first woman press photographer among 120 trailblazing photographers from over 20 countries to be featured at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The ongoing exhibition titled *The New Woman Behind the Camera* runs till October 2021.

Vyarawalla began work in the late 1930s and retired in the early 1970s. In 2011, she was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, the second highest civilian award of the Republic of India. Some of her photographs on display

include one of the Victoria Terminus, Mumbai; ashes of the Mahatma Gandhi being carried and Students at the Sir JJ School of Arts. In 2010, the Alkazi Collection of Photography acquired the poignant photographic archives of Homai Vyarawalla.

The event features 185 photographs, photo books, and illustrated magazines by diverse photographers and

highlights the work of the diverse 'new' women who made significant advances in modern photography from the 1920s to the 1950s.

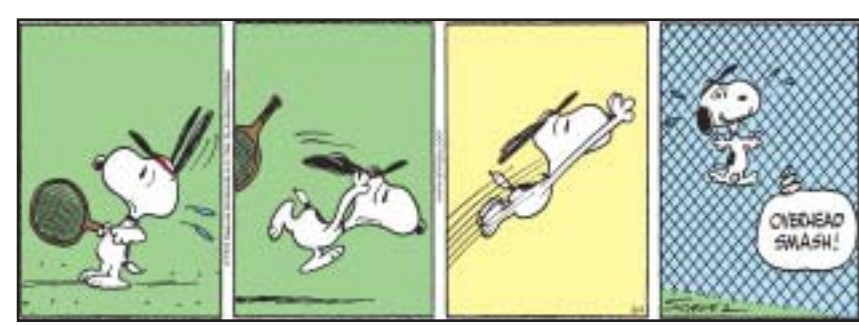
According to The Met, during this tumultuous period shaped by two world wars, women stood at the forefront of experimentation with the camera and produced invaluable visual testimony that reflects both their

personal experiences and the extraordinary social and political transformations of the era.

The exhibit examines women's pioneering work in a number of genres, from avant-garde experimentation and commercial studio practice to social documentary, photojournalism, ethnography, and sports, dance, and fashion photography. It highlights the work of photographers such as Ilse Bing, Lola Alvarez Bravo, Claude Cahun, Florestine Perrault Collins, Elizaveta Ignatovich, Dorothea Lange, Lee Miller, Niu Weiyu, Tsuneko Sasamoto, Gerda Taro, and Homai Vyarawalla, among many others.

As per Max Hollein, Marina Kellen French Director of The Met, "The international scope of this project is unprecedented. Though the New Woman is often regarded as a Western phenomenon, this exhibition proves otherwise by bringing together rarely seen photographs from around the world and presenting a nuanced, global history of photography." AGENCIES

### PEANUTS



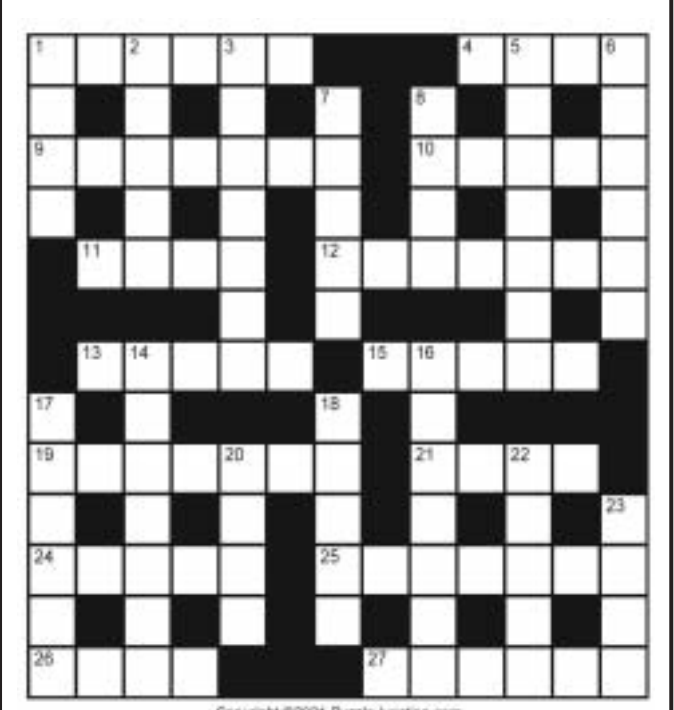
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



### FUN post CROSSWORD



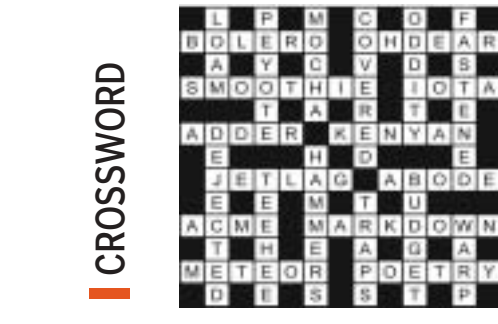
- Across:**
- 1 Inhabit
  - 4 Cigar butt
  - 9 Former Venezuelan statesman
  - 10 Fresh from the shower
  - 11 Kind of phone locale
  - 12 Casablanca
  - 13 Antique auto
  - 15 Girder material
  - 19 Simple protein
  - 21 Type of tide
  - 24 Ogre
  - 25 Worsen
  - 26 Self-images
  - 27 Naval unit
  - 6 Confection
  - 7 Oven emanation
  - 8 Kind of tissue
  - 14 Temperature in the Arctic
  - 16 Firebird
  - 17 Confuse
  - 18 Like helium
  - 20 Fashion
  - 22 Circus site
  - 23 Away from port
- Down:**
- 1 Choir attire
  - 2 Figure out
  - 3 Let the cat out of the bag
  - 5 Thick dark syrup

### 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.

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

### SOLUTIONS



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

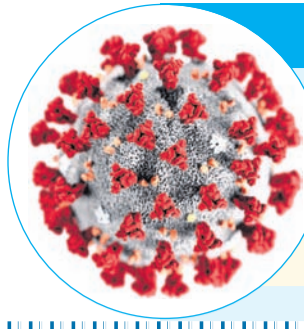
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## FRESH YIELD

Workers unloading pumpkins from a truck at Unit-1 market in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	19,05,73,180	17,36,62,708	40,95,533
India	3,10,64,908	3,02,27,792	4,13,091
Odisha	9,52,111	9,27,926	4,992

# Govt nod to piped water projects in 3 districts

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 17:** The state Cabinet Saturday approved several piped water supply projects for several areas including some mining-affected regions of the state.

The Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and attended by top officials of several departments talked about providing uninterrupted supply of safe drinking water of tap quality to urban areas of Champua and Joda blocks in mineral bearing Keonjhar district.

The Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department has planned to undertake the works through Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO) Ltd. The Cabinet approved the contract of an Ahmedabad-based firm with an estimate of Rs 103.8 crore. The works are slated to start in September this year and likely to be completed by August 31, 2023.

The Cabinet also approved tenders worth Rs 388 crore for execution of rural piped water supply projects to provide safe potable water in mining-hit Sundargarh district. The works are likely to be completed in 24 months. The project is likely to benefit 2,59,617 people of 295 villages. Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC) funds will be utilised for the same.

Out of 295 villages, 62 are under 12 gram panchayats (GPs) of Bisra block, 70 under 17 GPs of Lathikata block, 70 under 7 GPs under Lahunipada block and 93 under



## CABINET DECISIONS

Tenders worth ₹388 crore for execution of rural piped water supply projects for mining-hit Sundargarh district got the Cabinet nod. The works are likely to be completed in 24 months

For Keonjhar district, the Cabinet approved ₹103.8 crore contract of an Ahmedabad-based firm. The works would start in September this year and are likely to be completed by August 31, 2023

A tender of a Mumbai-based firm worth ₹275.39 crore was also approved for execution of piped water supply projects in Cuttack district. The project is likely to help 2,61,978 people of 262 villages in the district

Bonai block of Sundargarh district. In another decision, the Cabinet also approved tenders worth Rs 786.66 crore for execution of rural piped water projects in other regions of the district like Balisankara, Lefripada, Tangarapalli, Sundargarh and Bargaon blocks. A total of 421 villages and 3,78,790 people are likely to get benefitted under the scheme. The works are likely to be completed within 24 months. The utilisation of OMBADC funds and

District Mineral Foundation (DMF) funds will be utilised for the same. The Cabinet also approved the tender of a Mumbai-based firm worth Rs 275.39 crore for execution of rural piped water supply project in Cuttack district with the utilisation of funds from Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). The project is likely to help 2,61,978 persons in 262 villages. The benefits are likely to reach the villages under Athagarh block, Tigiria block, Banki block and Tangi Choudhwar block.

## BTech courses in 11 languages including Odia: Dharmendra

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 17:** The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has permitted B.Tech programs in 11 regional languages, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said Saturday.

These languages are: Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Gujarati, Malayalam, Bengali, Assamese, Punjabi and Odia.

"AICTE has permitted B.Tech programs in 11 regional languages. PM Shri @narendramodi is committed to promoting regional languages in mainstream education. NEP stresses on this important aspect to empower students coming from diverse regions," Pradhan tweeted.

Earlier in the day, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu welcomed the decision of 14 engineering colleges across eight states to offer courses in regional languages in select branches from the new academic year. "Gratitude to Honourable Vice President for welcoming the decision to offer courses in regional language in engineering colleges," Pradhan said.

## 100% vax of gym staffers must before reopening: Assn

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 17:** With the state government easing Covid restrictions, the All Odisha Gym Owners' Association (AOGOA) has instructed all gyms and health clubs in the state to resume their services only after all their staffers are fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

Gyms and health clubs in Odisha had been shut for people since May 5 due to the lockdown clamped by the state government to deal with the second wave of the pandemic.

The state government recently allowed gyms and health clubs to resume their service while partially relaxing the lockdown norms. A few gyms welcomed back people Friday while many others have decided to resume their service July 19.

In this context, the AOGOA has asked all its members to follow the guidelines laid down by the state government.

"The gyms should reopen as per the timings issued by the state government for Category A and B districts. All staffers, personnel and trainers of the gyms must be vaccinated before resuming service. However, the gyms coming under containment zones will remain shut for people," said AOGOA president Satyajit Dash.



Dash also revealed that there will be no extension of service periods for the members who had paid the fees prior to the lockdown. Citing operational costs and rental fees during the lockdown, Dash said, "Any advance payment made by the members could not be adjusted to subsequent months. Gyms are now free to design their fee structure as per facilities and requirements."

The AOGOA, meanwhile, urged the state government to provide some compensation and free electricity for one year. "We also urge the state government to include gyms in essential health services. Gyms should not be considered as an entertainment sector," Dash said.

## Khimji to refurbish Trinity's jewellery

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 17:** The largest jewellery chain of Odisha, Khimji Jewellers, has once again received the assignment of refurbishing the age-old jewellery of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra from Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) ahead of the *Suna Beshha*.



This is the 12th year that Khimji Jewellers has been bestowed with this prestigious task of refurbishing the Trinity's ornaments.

Expressing his pleasure on being entrusted with this work, Director of Khimji Jewellers Sumeet Khimji said, "We feel fortunate and blessed that we were given the opportunity to serve the Lord this year too and we thank the temple authorities for trusting us with such work."

A team of highly-skilled and experienced goldsmiths has been deployed by Khimji Jewellers on the temple premises under the watchful eyes of the SJTA to carry out the task.

## CAKE FOR THE LORD



Priests bake *Poda Pitha*, a traditional cake, at Mausi Maa temple in Puri Saturday ahead of the Bahuda Yatra of Lord Jagannath and His siblings. The cake would be offered to the deities during their return journey July 20 OP PHOTO

## CAR FEST GAFFE

# 15 booked for breaching security cordon

AGENCIES

**Puri, July 17:** The Singhadwar police Saturday initiated criminal proceedings against 15 people who had breached security cordon during Srigundicha Yatra of the Trinity July 12.

The police registered criminal cases and booked 15 persons for violating curfew norms and breaching the security cordon near the three chariots. However, no arrest has been made so far, said sources.

Criminal cases were registered after police scanned the CCTV footage, drone and live telecast footage on the Rath Yatra day to identify whether any intruders were present inside the cordon during the festival.

The administration had banned the participation of devotees in Rath Yatra, clamped curfew in the Pilgrim town and sealed all the roads to the Rath Yatra venue to ensure that no devotees enter the town to witness the festival.

The police, acting on media reports about the presence of unauthorised people near the chariots, conducted a preliminary investigation, identified 15 persons and



Three Chariots parked at the Nakachana Gate of Srigundicha temple in Puri after their southward turn, Saturday OP PHOTO

lodged criminal cases against them. City deputy superintendent of police (DSP) Janardan Padhi said these persons would be prosecuted for violating curfew and coronavirus protocols.

The police action came after media reports stated that despite curfew and three-layer security cordon around the chariots, many unauthorised persons were seen

inside the cordon during live telecast of Rath Yatra.

A number of devotees, social activists and lawyers of Puri Bar Association had filed complaints with Singhadwar police demanding stringent action against the violators.

They too questioned how these unauthorised persons entered the inner cordon of chariots when

Criminal cases were registered after police scanned the CCTV footage, drone and live telecast footage on the Rath Yatra day

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The administration had banned the participation of devotees in Rath Yatra, clamped curfew in the Pilgrim town and sealed all the roads to the Rath Yatra venue

the city was virtually turned into a fortress with deployment of 65 platoons of police force to implement the Supreme Court order for a smooth conduct of Rath Yatra.

This apart, police sealed eight rooms of a lodge in the Holy town that had allowed people to watch the festival from the rooftop, the DSP said.

Meanwhile, the administration imposed Section 144 in Puri from 8pm July 19 to 8pm July 21 ahead of the Bahuda Yatra.

## BJD for debate on inflation during Monsoon session

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, July 17:** The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Saturday demanded that Parliament should hold discussions on inflation during the Monsoon session commencing Monday.

During a meeting convened by Vice-President and Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu at his official residence, BJD MP and

party leader in the Upper House Prasanna Acharya urged that the House must hold discussion on the issue of inflation. He said that the price rise has been affecting the common people.

In an hour-long meeting, the BJD MP stressed upon granting more time to regional parties to speak on the issues during the session.

"We represent the emotions of

people of our state. So, we must be given more time to speak. The allocation of time to regional parties should be increased as most of the allotted time is consumed by national parties," Acharya said.

He said that the Women Reservation Bill that seeks to grant 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and Legislative assemblies should be passed in the monsoon session.

"Our CM has been demanding the passage of Women Reservation Bill. The Bill has already been passed in the Rajya Sabha. The government must pass the Bill in the Lok Sabha during the current session," Acharya said.

The Monsoon session of the Parliament will start July 19 amid Covid-19 protocol and conclude August 13. The session will have total 19 sittings.

## SHOTS OF HOPE



A girl receives anti-Covid vaccine at an inoculation centre in Unit-IV area of Bhubaneswar, Saturday OP PHOTO

# Now, pickle from SHGs on Aahar platter

STATE GOVT DECIDES TO TAP THE POTENTIAL OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH MISSION SHAKTI BY ENCOURAGING WOMEN SELF-HELP GROUPS TO MANAGE THE SEMI-MECHANISED PICKLE MANUFACTURING UNITS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 17:** Aiming at socio-economic empowerment of women, the state government has engaged three women self-help groups (SHGs) to supply pickles to Aahar centres.

Mission Shakti department in collaboration with State Urban Development Authority (SUDA) under Housing and Urban Development department is setting up three state-of-the-art pickle manufacturing units at Baripada, Berhampur and Dhenkanal to cater to the needs of Aahar centres across the state, official sources said Saturday.

Since each meal includes 10 gm of pickle, a day's requirement is 1 tonne and 300 tonne per year to cater to the requirement of 166

Three state-of-the-art pickle manufacturing units would be set up at Baripada, Berhampur and Dhenkanal to cater to the needs of Aahar centres across the state

Aahar centres across the state. Till now, the SHGs had been purchasing the required amount of pickles from open market. Now, the state government has decided to tap the potential of women entrepreneurship through Mission Shakti SHGs by encouraging them to manage the semi-mechanised pickle manufacturing units, source said. Maa Durga SHG of Baripada,



People queuing up for subsidised meals at an Aahar centre in Bhubaneswar, Saturday OP PHOTO

Bighneswar II SHG of Berhampur and Mahasangam Mission Shakti ALF of Dhenkanal have been se-

lected to run fully mechanised pickle centres and fulfill the required demand of 300 MT pickle

every year for Aahar centres. Each unit will supply pickles to the Aahar centres of 10 districts each.

All the three SHGs have signed an MoU with Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI-CSIR), Mysuru to get technological assistance for preparing pickles. The business model estimate of the project comes to around Rs 80 lakh out of which Rs 47 lakh each (1.41 crore for 3 units) is incurred towards civil construction and that has been borne by Mission Shakti department.

All three Mission Shakti groups have been provided with a loan of Rs 30 lakh each from HDFC Bank to meet the working capital and cost of equipment for operationalisation of the pickle units. The units will start production from August 2021.

**NEW LOOK**



A view of the recently-renovated Taladanda canal in Cuttack, Saturday. The canal has been refurbished as part of a road expansion and beautification project in the Silver City

**State logs 2,182 fresh nCoV cases**

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 17:** Odisha's Covid-19 caseload surged to 9,52,111 Saturday after 2,182 more people tested positive for the virus, while 67 fresh fatalities pushed the death toll to 4,992, a health department official said.

The state now has 21,540 active cases, and 5,25,526 patients have so far recovered from the disease, including 2,317 since Friday, he said.

Of the new fatalities reported from 15 districts, Khurda alone accounted for 25 deaths, followed by Ganjam (8), Sundargarh (7), Mayurbhanj and Puri (6 each), Bargarh (4) and Nayagarh (3).

A total of 53 other Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities, the official said.

The fresh infections, detected in all the 30 districts, include 510 from Khurda, 308 from Cuttack, 175 from Jajpur and 161 from Balasore. The coastal state has thus far conducted over 1.49 crore sample tests for Covid-19, taking into account 73,027 in the past 24 hours. The positivity rate stands at 6.35 per cent.

The Health and Family Welfare Department has asked all district



**3rd containment zone in City within 72 hrs**

**Bhubaneswar:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Saturday declared an apartment at Nayapalli here as a micro containment zone following detection of several Covid-19 positive cases. In a notification, BMC said that the Niladri Nilaya apartment in IRC Village, under Ward No 25, has been declared as a micro containment zone. This is the third micro-containment zone that has come up within 72 hours after an apartment in Rasulgarh and a residency in Khandagiri were given the sealing orders, Thursday. As per the notification, people will be restricted from entering or leaving the containment zone and those residing within it will strictly remain at home. Apart from this, all shopping establishments, government and private institutions located within the restricted zone will be closed immediately. Essential items and medicines for those residing within the containment zone will be supplied by the BMC, the notification added.

Collectors and Commissioners of municipal corporations to ensure 100 per cent vaccination for transgressors. In a letter to the district authorities, the department said

that the Union Health Ministry has called for inoculation of all transgressors without any discrimination or causing any inconvenience and social stigma.

**Routray demands voters' survey before panchayat polls**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 17:** State Congress leader Suresh Routray Saturday demanded fresh survey of voters for the upcoming panchayat elections in the state.

He said, "There are several panchayats in the state where thousands or more people came in due to rise in population and the shifting of more people into the state. The number of voters has increased. There needs to be a fresh survey of new voters."

"Let there be some delay in the election process. The work must start. Why is the government desperate to conduct the election faster?" he asked.

**UGC urged for recognition to Rajendra varsity**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 17:** The Higher Education department has written to the University Grants Commission (UGC) for affiliation of and recognition to Rajendra University after the commission rejected a request in this regard by the university.

On the reason behind rejection of the application, the UGC had stated that since the university has come up through a government notification and not established by act of legislature, it cannot be included in the list of universities established as per section 2(f) of the UGC Act, 1956.

In reaction to this, Higher Education department principal secretary Saswat Mishra said



that the observation of UGC is legally and factually wrong. The Odisha Universities Act 1989, a valid legislation of the state legislature, empowers the state government to establish new universities by way of notifications.

Under this Act, the state government had established multiple universities such as Fakir Mohan University, North Odisha University, Rama Devi University, Gangadhar Meher University, Khallikote University, Kalahandi

**Students protest over UGC rejection**

**Bhubaneswar:** Students of Rajendra University Saturday staged a protest against the state government over UGC's denial to recognise the university. They blamed the government for the rejection alleging faulty work on its part in the upgradation process of the erstwhile autonomous college into university. Bijay Kalta, a student, said that the state government had failed to clear the doubts with UGC and due to its inefficiency the university and its students suffered. "We demand the state government to sort out the issue and help Rajendra University get its due recognition," said the student.

University, Rajendra University and Madhusudan Law University, Mishra said. "Therefore, under these circumstances, I request you to kindly examine the matter and grant recognition to Rajendra University under section 2(f) of UGC Act, 1956," he added. The state government had up-

graded Rajendra Autonomous College, Bolangir March 2, 2019, to Kalahandi and Bolangir University. After that Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal appointed Umaballav Mohapatra as Vice Chancellor of Rajendra University for a period of four years.

**Women SHG to handle new SeTP**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 17:** Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has decided to hand over operation and management of new Septage Treatment Plant (SeTP) at Rokati Women Self Help Group (WSHG). The BMC has selected WSHG Unique to oversee operations of the 75 Kilo Litre per day plant set up at Rokati (near Pandara) under Mission Shakti Group. The WSHG selected for the purpose is presently undergoing training at the existing SeTP, Basuaghai. The month-long training of WSHG Unique for operation and maintenance of the SeTP began from July 9. It will continue till August 8.

**CRUT to run 87 buses on 16 routes**

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 17:** The Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) will resume Mo Bus service from July 19 in accordance with the order of Odisha government.

The Odisha government, while extending the partial lockdown from July 16 to August 1, had allowed public transport services

without any time limit in the entire state.

CRUT General Manager Dipti Mohapatra said that initially 87 buses will operate on 16 routes of the capital region and later more buses and routes will be introduced. The buses will operate from Monday to Friday from 7am to 6pm to begin with, she added.

The regular Mo Bus service will

remain suspended on weekends. However, bus services for incoming passengers will continue from railway station to Cuttack and Khurda, and shuttle service will be available from airport to railway station during weekends.

No standing passenger will be allowed to travel in the buses. All the crew members have been instructed not to allow the passengers

to board the buses in which all the seats are occupied, the CRUT GM added.

She further said that wearing a mask in compulsory for all the passengers and crew members alike. She also appealed to all the commuters to take precautions while commuting in Mo Bus and requested them to carry sanitisers as well.

**Students, teachers hail school reopening**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 17:** Several students, parents and teachers organisations Saturday welcomed the state government's decision of re-summing physical classes for Class X and Class XII students from July 26.

Odisha Parents' Federation (OPF) said that government and private schools must ensure safety for students. Private schools must arrange infrastructure and follow strict Covid guidelines such as wearing masks and sanitising schools. All India Students Federation, Odisha chapter said that many schools in the state have no teachers which put studies in jeopardy. So, the government should recruit teachers in these vacant posts, it said.

**Heavy rain to lash state from Monday, says IMD**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 17:** The regional office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday said that heavy rain could lash different parts of the state from Monday.

The department has issued warning of heavy rain for four consecutive days starting Monday. "Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places of Nuapada, Nabarangpur, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj," it said.

It also added, "Thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur Monday at one or two places over the districts of Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Kalahandi,

Kandhamal, Bolangir, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj." The weatherman said that light to moderate rain could also occur during these four days.

The IMD added that thunderstorm and lightning could occur at a few places in eight districts - Koraput, Malkangiri, Rayagada, Gajapati, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Ganjam - Sunday.

It also said that light to moderate rain or thundershower are very likely to occur at a few places over the districts of Koraput, Malkangiri, Rayagada, Gajapati, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and at one or two places in rest of the districts.

**THROUGH THE EYES OF A STUDENT**

**'Adieu Father Abe, a professor, administrator & human being'**

Smile is what I saw in my first interaction and smile is what I saw on his face when I bid adieu to his mortal remains, as he was put on an ambulance for the last journey from XIM Bhubaneswar to XLRI Jamshedpur.

I had the good fortune of learning from Father Abe at three levels. As a student, I learnt Organisational Behaviour (OB) from him. As the general secretary of the batch, I had many interactions with him where I learnt first-hand administration. Post MBTI (Myer Briggs Type Indicator), he met me near the library and from that day onwards I learnt from his humane side.

**Professor:** For an MBA student, the real appreciation of OB came in when he saw the power of the subject unleashed in handling teams. As I had 4 years of work experience before XIMB, I was wowed by the series of psychometry tests, Industrial Psychology classes and nuances of Human Resources vs Personnel Management taught by him. Even after 15 years of passing



**Fr. Abraham was the founding Dean of Xavier Institute of Management from 1987-1989 and Professor of Organisational Behaviour**

out when the psychometry tests were done in the MNC Bank I was working for; it had relevance and what he taught stood good. Such was his dedication and purist avatar as a teacher/professor.

**Administrator:** The equity that I got as the general secretary of students body from Fr. Abe gave assertion to the confidence I had throughout my life in interaction with anyone in my professional career. When a mere student is treated with equity, he gets encouragement for self-expression and I have had so many discus-

sions with him. I observed and learnt from two opposite scenarios. One when he agrees with, he would still want to listen and ask some investigative questions to go to the root of my logical thought process before saying, "Ok Chitto (Mallu Accent), I agree. Let us do it."

**Human being:** After the OB class where we all got our MBTI results, he met me near the library and with a childlike enthusiasm said, "Yours is ENTJ, same as mine." I was like ... "Hey it is just a psychometry test", but then this is a Prof and the Director speaking. I asked with

a little hint of cynicism, "Will this be same if I take it a few years later?" He replied confidently it is same for me since I took for the first time and I smiled with a belief which proved to be true in future. After passing out, when I went to him before joining my campus offer, he wrote me a beautiful note on his letter pad and said it is his blessing for me as I commence my corporate career. When I got married almost 9 years after passing out, he took the pain of coming in a car from Jamshedpur to Kolkata. He had a vehicle breakdown and he called me and kept me informed and met me later. He told me, "Never hesitate to give help and ask for help."

Adieu Fr. Abe, Rest in Peace. Your love, blessings and warmth will always stay with me...

*By Chittaranjan Mohanty  
Ex- Executive Director,  
Strategy & Consulting, Asset  
Management, JP Morgan  
Chase. General Secretary for  
XIMB batch, 2002*

**TURM-OIL**



Youth Congress activists mock the last journey of a motorcycle at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar as part of their protests against frequent rise in fuel prices, Saturday

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# Delayed wages scuttle MGNREGS in Nuapada



## PANDEMIC WOES

The government laid thrust on proper implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) as a panacea to ensure earning scope for the rural workforce in their localities at the pandemic times

Inordinate delay in clearing wages of job card holders has become a cause of concern for labourers. It is alleged that delayed wage has been a hurdle for its successful execution in the migration-hit district

Minaketan Majhi, Chandrabhanu Gahir and Mukund Sagaria said as their wages are pending, they have to face a lot of difficulties in meeting daily expenses of their families. "We are working for wages and there is no point working under MGNREGS when wages will not be paid for months together," they lamented

Over 70 job card holders of the same village have not got their wages. They alleged that they have been running from pillar to post, starting from the panchayat office to the collectorate about their wage issue, but nothing is done.

"We are only assured by officials that an investigation into MGNREGS projects is underway and the issue will be sorted out soon" they said.

They said that agriculture activities are peaking up now, but they have no funds at hand. If their wages had been cleared, they would spend money on buying implements and seeds.

When contacted, Komna BDO Sadashib Bhadra said an investigation into wage delay is in progress and it is expected to be settled soon.

been a hurdle for its successful execution in the migration-hit district.

As wages are not cleared in time, daily wagers are not interested to work in the ongoing projects.

According to a report, scores of job card holders in Komna block of this district have been awaiting their wages for the last nine months. Their families are living in misery.

Job card holders of Agren village - Duryodhan Majhi, Balabhadra Majhi, Ramesh Majhi, Raj Kumar Majhi, Tarasan Nag, Gangaram Nag and Bhuban Nag lamented that they worked in a project nine months ago, but they have not yet received their payment. They warned of agitation if no step is taken to clear their dues in a week.

Same is the problem with other job card holders of the village. Minaketan Majhi, Chandrabhanu Gahir and Mukund Sagaria said as their wages are pending, they have to face a lot of difficulties in meeting daily expenses of their families. "We are working for wages. There is no point working under MGNREGS when wages will not be paid for months together," they lamented.

But, delay in clearing wages of the job card holders has become a cause of concern for labourers. It is alleged that delayed wage has



Women farmhands transplating paddy saplings in row method in Nabarangpur

OP PHOTO

# NO TRACE OF FIRE IN HOUSE

POST NEWS NETWORK

## ACF'S DEATH MYSTERY



Mahapatra and other family members. No such evidence, whatsoever, could be detected to establish

**Paralakhemundi, July 17:** A scientific team Friday conducted a detailed scrutiny of the house where Paralakhemundi assistant conservator of forest (ACF) Soumya Ranjan Mahapatra had been charred to death. However, the team found no evidence of fire in the house, a source said.

According to the source, a team of police and scientific officials carried out a scrutiny of the house Friday afternoon in presence of the deceased ACF's father Abhiram

that the forest official had sustained burn injuries on the intervening day.

The scientific team only found smoky smell from inside Soumya's bedroom. There were no traces of inflammable objects that possibly could have caused the fire mishap, in which the ACF is said to have died, an official said.

Besides, no sign of any damage caused to items such as plastic articles and paper documents owing to inferno could be found.

Additional SP Bamadev Singh, who was in the investigating team,

refused to provide any more information about the incident.

Meanwhile, Gajapati DFO Sangarm Keshari Behera, one of the suspects in the mysterious death, is expected to be questioned within a couple of days.

Notably, police booked the deceased's wife Bidya Bharati Panda July 15, including the DFO and the cook in connection with the alleged murder.

Earlier, father of the deceased had accused Soumya's wife and the senior forest official of killing the ACF over some issue.

# Tirtol to have cluster of rice mills

LAND ALLOCATION WAS APPROVED BY DLSWCA FOR FIVE ENTREPRENEURS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jagatsinghpur, July 17:** Tirtol will be turned into a hub of rice mills. The district level single window clearance authority (DLSWCA) in Jagatsinghpur has given its stamp of approval to the proposal. The effort is aimed at promoting the small and medium enterprises in the district. A committee has been formed to work on this.

A meeting of the DLSWCA was held Friday under the chairmanship of Collector Sangram Keshari Mohapatra. The meeting was attended by representatives



A patch of suitable land will be earmarked for the project. A committee comprising Collector, Tirtol tehsildar, chief of the IDCO (district office) and general manager of the DIC was formed

of nine entrepreneurs who want to set up their businesses with the help of the small, medium and micro enterprise department.

It was learnt that the entrepreneurs are keen to set up their

plants near Paradip if the IDCO allocates land near the port area.

At the meeting, officials of various departments and IFFCO held a review of the progress of the oxygen plant to be set up by IFFCO.

The officials approved land allocation for five companies.

It was learnt that there are bottlenecks for setting up of the industrial estate at Nipur and Tentulia. The Collector ordered the officials concerned to settle the issue as soon as possible.

A decision was taken to promote a hub of rice mills in Tirtol area. It was decided that a patch of suitable land will be earmarked for the purpose. A committee was formed with the Collector as chairperson, Tirtol tehsildar, chief of the IDCO (district office) and general manager of the DIC as its members.

# Shrine vandalised; tribals fume



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Joda, July 17:** Tension flared up in tribal-dominated Bhuyanroda panchayat under Joda block of Keonjhar district Saturday after security men of a mining company allegedly vandalised a place of worship for Lord Hanuman. This has hurt the religious sentiments of tribals, a report said.

According to the report, tribals have been worshipping Panchamukhi Hanuman at Chhatabar for decades. They developed the shrine in 2017.

Jaura Oram, the priest of the shrine, said that security personnel of a private mining firm forcibly entered the place and violated the sanctity of the shrine, apart from ransacking it. They have also bro-

Jaura Oram, the priest of the shrine, said security personnel of a private mining firm forcibly entered the place, violated sanctity of the shrine and ransacked it. They also broke the puja mandap

ken the puja mandap of the shrine. However, they did not reveal the reasons for the vandalism. Such unholy act has hurt the religious sentiments of tribal communities, said locals like Gaddas Oram, Baula Patra and Dhiren Oram. They demanded action against the accused.

## ECO CONCERN



A plantation programme being launched alongside a PMGSY road in Khajuripada area in Kandhamal district

# CRACK IN NEELAMADHAB TEMPLE WALL WIDENING

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khandapara, July 17:** With a crack widening in the wall of a 'pindi' (a raised platform) of the 12th century Neelamadhabjew temple at Kantilo in Nayagarh district, servitors and devotees visiting this temple are in fear.

They apprehend that the wall may collapse any moment.

The temple had been in a state of ruin due to lack of proper maintenance. While cracks developed at many places, some structures were in bad shape.

Following media coverage, the State Archaeology Department had carried out repair in the temple at a cost of ₹50 lakh.

The department had engaged Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Bhubaneswar for the purpose.

It is apprehended that the wall may collapse any moment. The temple had been in a state of ruin due to lack of proper maintenance. Following media coverage, the State Archaeology Department had carried out repair at a cost of ₹50 lakh



With that fund, a 'pindi' was constructed close to the western gate of the temple for visitors in April 2015. It was when the 'pindi' was half-constructed, a crack appeared on its wall. It was immediately brought to the notice of the officials overseeing the construction work.

The officials had then said the cracks appeared because the sand-filled 'pindi' was sprayed with water. However, they had assured that it would not pose any threat in future.

Since then the 'pindi' has been lying half-constructed and the crack

is widening. Besides this, a crack was also seen on the flight of steps and it is said to be due to the weight of the 'pindi'.

When asked, Khandapara tehsildar and executive officer, Endowment Department, Partha Sarathi Hansda said the problem had been intimated to the State Archaeology Department in writing two months ago. "If there were no Covid-induced restrictions, the necessary repairs would have been already carried out. However, steps will be taken in this regard soon," he added.

**REGIONAL OFFICE: 108 - B, Unit-VII, Surya Nagar, Gopabandhu Square, Bhubaneswar-751003, Ph. No.: 0674-2397551, 2397199**

**NOTICE**

This is for the information that the Memorandum No. RO/BBSR/HRD-DAD/2020-21/222, Dated 17.07.2020 was served to Sri Natabar Mallick, Emp. No.: 049919, since retired from Bank service at his recorded address by speed post and the same was refused by the addressee. Mr. Mallick is advised to visit at Regional Office, Bhubaneswar within three working days of publication of this notice and acknowledge the same falling which Bank shall proceed as per extant guideline.

**Date: 17.07.2021 Sd/- Asst. General Manager**

**OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, CHAKAPAD**

**ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ସମିତି, ଚକାପାଡ଼**

**ଜିଲ୍ଲା- କନ୍ଧମାଳ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା**

**Ph.- (06847) 273704, E-mail: ori-chakapad@nic.in**

**No.2143 Date: 16.07.2021**

**TENDER CALL NOTICE**

Sealed tenders are invited from intended from the C and D class of registered State Governments and contractors of equivalent grades / class registered with Central Government / MES / Railways, to be eventually drawn up in PWD P-1 Agreement form, for execution of buildings i.e. civil works. For execution of 3 (Three) numbers of Civil work in different panchayat of Panchayat Samiti, Chakapad, Kandhamal District.

The detailed terms and conditions of tender call notice can be obtained from official website of Kandhamal District, <http://kandhamal.nic.in> from 20.07.2021, 11 A.M. to 05.08.2021, upto 5 P.M. The bids shall be received through Registered Post / Speed Post only with AD, on or before Dt.05.08.2021 upto 5.00 P.M. The authority will not be held responsible for any Potal delay in delivering of the bid documents or non-receipt of the same.

The authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tender without assigning any reason thereof.

**Sd./- Block Development Officer Chakapad Block**

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

# AF-PAK-CHINA AXIS



**If Pakistan and Taliban engineer cross-border terrorism in Kashmir and China pushes the envelope in Ladakh, where three external provocateurs converge, New Delhi will have a plateful of security issues to worry about**

region. Taking advantage and excuse of the infighting among tribal warlords, the USSR invaded Afghanistan in 1979 and the US in order to counter Soviet influence launched a proxy war in collusion with Pakistan by raising Mujahidin, which subsequently mutated into Taliban. Also, the US strategy boomeranged forcing the US army to march into Afghanistan.

fighters who would sacrifice themselves for 'Jannat'. At any rate, the withdrawal of the US forces without finishing the job or realising the objectives has left Afghanistan in turmoil and India vulnerable.

In particular, the consequences of exit of the US and NATO forces are: China will virtually take control of Afghanistan. Indications are China is taking greater interest in Afghanistan and Taliban is responding to the behest of Pakistan. The interests of Taliban and Pakistan are co-terminus. Pakistan will accept China's influence over Afghanistan as Islamabad is heavily indebted to China.

It is an open secret that Beijing has been encircling India by various instruments. It has established surveillance in IOR, Chittagong in Bangladesh, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Coco Island of Myanmar, Gwadar in Pakistan, Chumbi Valley in Tibet. Now it will extend the encirclement by effectively blocking the transportation of goods, mainly oil from Central Asian countries to India via Afghanistan.

Going by the past experiences, Taliban-aided Afghan and Pak terrorists will begin to sneak into Kashmir. Even the peaceful Ladakh

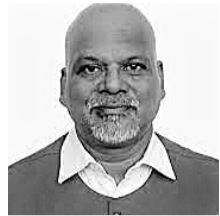
region may experience the evil influence of Taliban because of its physical proximity. China will back it up by inducting more troops in Tibet: already six division size troops are present in the area to exert pressure on India. In desperation and to stoke the nationalist sentiments, Pakistan will increase its offensive in Kashmir, backed by Chinese presence in Ladakh.

New Delhi has already missed the bus by not actively engaging the US on the co-terminality of Taliban and Pakistan. The US was ironically arming Pakistan to fight Taliban whereas these arms were used against India. Secondly India's ambivalence on alliance with the US has stunted its role in resolution of the Afghanistan imbroglio. It is high time New Delhi actively corners Pakistan and China in every international forum. Third, it should take the Quad members on board to counter any adventurist military operation by Pakistan and China. Fourth, New Delhi must make up its mind in forging a dependable and formidable alliance against any such axis formed by China in the sub-continent or elsewhere. Fifth, New Delhi must conclude the pending economic agreements with the European Union and the US. It is the social capital and economic strength which will attract friends from abroad in matters of common security and defence of democracy.

New Delhi has been a peripheral player in Afghanistan while doing some commendable development projects. It has earned tremendous goodwill of the Afghan government and its people. Although Taliban has been nurtured by Pakistan, it would be content with the control of its own country rather than meddling in others; note its position on Chinese Muslims. New Delhi could have insulated Taliban from Pakistan with the good offices of friends in the Middle-East. Let New Delhi begin to do the course corrections.

*The writer is Professor of International Relations, JIMMC, INFA*

The US engagement in Afghanistan is somewhat akin to their lost war in Vietnam. There, America militarily stayed over a decade and withdrew without achieving the purpose. Similarly in Afghanistan they remained deeply engaged for two decades and left without accomplishing the tasks – to secure democracy and stability in Afghanistan. Many observers including the government of Afghanistan hold the view that the American mission is a failed one. However, unlike Vietnam, the consequences of America's 'failure' in and withdrawal from Afghanistan bode ill for India.



DK Giri

**NEW DELHI HAS BEEN A PERIPHERAL PLAYER IN AFGHANISTAN WHILE DOING SOME COMMENDABLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

As Taliban is marching unstopably towards Kabul, a nefarious nexus is growing between Afghanistan (Taliban), Pakistan and China. Taliban has openly announced that China is a friend and it will not react to anything happening to the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. If Pakistan and Taliban engineer cross-border terrorism in Kashmir and China pushes the envelope in Ladakh, where three external provocateurs converge, New Delhi will have a plateful of security issues to worry about.

India is paying a heavy price for the erroneous decisions of Nehru both on Kashmir and on Tibet. The British colonialists while dividing India and Pakistan on religious lines had strategically drawn the McMahon Line between India and Tibet and had placed Tibet as a buffer between China and India with certain rights to the latter over Tibet. Nehru gave away all those strategic assets without any reciprocal commitment from China.

The third mistake committed by Nehru was to tilt towards the USSR and to keep America guessing. The subsequent Indian leadership did not perhaps fully comprehend both the superpowers' interests and engagements in the region – India, Pakistan and IOR (Indian Ocean Region) – which resulted in a feverish arms race in the sub-continent.

Afghanistan became a hapless victim of superpower rivalry in the

SPECTRUM RIGHTS

# Power of civil society in post-Covid world

May 25, 2020, a 17-year-old girl filmed a disturbing video, which subsequently went viral, of a white police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota kneeling on the neck of a black man, handcuffed and lying facedown on the pavement, for nine minutes and 29 seconds. The man, George Floyd, died that day.



Hina Jilani

**WHEN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN-RIGHTS PRINCIPLES AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES ARE NOT BEING REFLECTED IN PEOPLE'S LIVES, IT IS CIVIL SOCIETY THAT SOUNDS THE ALARM**

For millions of people worldwide, Floyd's death was a wake-up call regarding the pervasiveness of systemic racism and police violence. The Black Lives Matter movement capitalised on this growing awareness, organising protests on the streets of cities across the United States, which inspired demonstrations from France to Colombia to South Africa. And, in a testament to the power of organisation, the protests effected real change.

The police officer who killed Floyd, Derek Chauvin, has now been convicted of murder and sentenced to more than 22 years in prison. But the BLM protests achieved something more consequential: the creation of an international commission, on which I served, to examine police racism in the US. We found that the persistent systemic racism against African-Americans in the US constitutes a crime against humanity and mer-

its an investigation by the International Criminal Court.

This is the power and essence of civil society. As the world attempts to "build back better" from the Covid-19 pandemic, it must be harnessed to make progress on a broad array of pressing issues, from economic inequality and educational inequities to racial justice and climate change.

To those who were not paying attention to systemic racism or police violence before Floyd's death, it might seem that BLM had an impact relatively quickly. But the fight has been long and difficult – and it is far from over. The same is true for other civil-rights movements, which often demand a deep and enduring resilience from their participants.

Consider the women's movement in my home country, Pakistan. For decades, Pakistani women have fought against repressive norms, discriminatory attitudes, and legislation that limited women's status or rights. Progress has been slow and inconsistent, but we have stood our ground. And the gains we have made instill the hope that continues to motivate and inform our work today.

The importance of such efforts must not be underestimated. As Nelson Mandela, that global icon

of freedom, explained in 2001, "a vibrant network and range of civil society activities and organs" is essential to "cement the foundations" of democracy.

Today, those foundations seem to be under siege. Many countries are experiencing an alarming drift toward authoritarianism. Even the most consolidated democracies are facing the erosion of citizens' trust in the institutions that underpin them. Just as the pandemic has underscored the fragility of human life, it has also highlighted the vulnerability of our democracies to a different class of ailment, including political polarisation and disagreement on basic facts.

Like a human body, a democracy needs proper care to remain in good health. Akin to a health screening, civil society reveals a democracy's afflictions before it is too late to treat them.

When international human-rights principles and democratic values are not being reflected in people's lives, it is civil society – organised in groups like BLM – that sounds the alarm. This includes ensuring that authorities do not illegitimately expand or extend the emergency powers they have exercised during the pandemic.

Governments have a responsi-

bility to listen to and embrace the voices and values of civil society. Rather than fearing, dismissing, or repressing their critics, leaders must engage with them, especially the most vulnerable. But where governments shirk this responsibility, human-rights defenders must continue to fight.

Many wonder whether civil society can survive democratic erosion and the slide toward authoritarianism in many countries. But this question is impossible to answer today; and trying to do so might even prove detrimental. Human-rights defenders can afford neither fatalism nor apathy.

Instead, we must continue to show courage and determination, like our brothers and sisters in places like Hong Kong, Harare, Minsk, and Yangon. We must harness the energy, eloquence, and anger of the young on issues ranging from inequality and racism to climate change, and advance clear, achievable roadmaps for change. And, above all, we must not despair. As Mandela reminded us, "It always seems impossible until it's done."

*The writer, a member of The Elders, is an advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.*

PROJECT SYNDICATE

Our best friend is he who loves us in the best of ourselves and yet does not ask of us to be other than we are.



THE MOTHER

# Govt after NGOs

Few people have understood what Niti Aayog is or what it does, but its head Amitabh Kant has given his view on how to "enhance ease of doing business" in India. His answer is "single window clearances, timely clearances and land acquisition." Kant also says that "public-private-partnership in social infrastructure such as healthcare is another avenue of investment in India."

It is of course important that India does this because the number of people employed in India has shrunk in the last five years, though the population has grown. NGOs or Non-Governmental Organisations are the third largest workforce in the United States. Retail and manufacturing employ more people than the NGO sector there. In 24 America states out of 50, NGOs actually employ more workers than all the branches of manufacturing combined. It is similar in the United Kingdom. In Europe 13 per cent of all jobs are in the NGO sector, and this is 2.8 crore jobs in total. To put this figure in perspective, consider that less than 10 per cent of all jobs in India are in the formal sector.

Now let us look at how this government has enhanced ease of doing business for this part of the private sector in India. In 2020, the Modi government ordered a change in the way that NGOs could work in India. The first change is that the 23,000 NGOs that received any form of foreign donation could receive that money only in a single branch of the State Bank of India at Sansad Marg in New Delhi. Only 1,488 NGOs were registered in Delhi, and so the rest must come to Delhi to open and operate their accounts, and this is during Covid. No other part of the private sector is asked to do this and corporates can receive foreign money in any bank account anywhere in India. Over 46 per cent of these NGOs had received no foreign money in 2018-19 though they had a Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) licence, and another 41 per cent had received less than ₹1 crore.



Aakar Patel

**No other part of the private sector is ordered what it can and cannot do with its own money**

The second change was that an NGO could spend only 20 per cent of the money it received on what the government defines as 'administrative expenses.' Salaries, travel expenses, the cost of hiring individuals, consumables like electricity and water charges, telephone charges, postal and courier charges, repairs to the office, stationery and printing charges, transport, the cost of accounting for and administering funds, running and maintenance of vehicles, cost of writing and filing reports, legal and professional charges and rent were all classified as administrative expenses. No more than 20 per cent could be spent on these things. Again, no other part of the private sector is ordered what it can and cannot do with its own money.

The third change is the law now prevented an NGO from redistributing its funds to smaller NGOs which worked on the ground and did not have access to money. This rule would hit the sector because NGOs do not compete with each other and cooperate in many areas. A study by Ashoka University showed that half of the 4,107 small NGOs which received money in this fashion in 2018-19 got only ₹7.6 lakh or less. They would no longer get even this.

There were other changes also, but let us leave those aside to consider what the damage to India has been. When the second wave of the Covid pandemic hammered India, the Modi government turned to these same NGOs for help. Ten NGOs the

BBC spoke to for a report on its Newsnight show said they all had trouble distributing aid because of the new rules. Indian hospitals and charitable trusts could not receive Covid relief material sent by donors abroad because of the law. This jeopardised plans by donors to buy oxygen plants and concentrators especially in rural areas. In one hospital where two dozen people had already

died for lack of oxygen, foreign donors could not send an oxygen production plant because of the law. No entity could receive foreign aid even as medicines or equipment to save lives, without being registered under the NGO law, called the FCRA. Moreover, the very stringent provisions of this FCRA law mean that the intended use of the foreign contribution should also "match the specified objective of the trust at the time of FCRA registration." Meaning that if the NGO has registered its specified objective as education, it cannot use its money to buy ventilators. None of these restrictions apply to any part of the rest of the private sector. It is only the NGOs of India that are subjected to this, even though it is damaging for the country as the pandemic has exposed clearly.

If the government is serious about making it easier to operate in India, there is one easy way for it to do so. It should stop what it is deliberately doing to the NGO sector and let it operate as freely as the rest of the private sector. And it should look at the US, the UK and Europe and consider what the benefits of a large and robust NGO sector are to the economy, employment and to society.

WISDOM CORNER

- A man always has two reasons for doing anything: a good reason and the real reason. **JP MORGAN**
- Faith is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark. **RABINDRANATH TAGORE**
- I had to live in the desert before I could understand the full value of grass in a green ditch. **ELLA MAILLART**

WORDSWORTH

Omni-um-gatherum

Omni-um-gatherum is a grand term for a miscellaneous collection. One of the reference books disparagingly calls it Dog Latin and it's a fair description. The first part is genuine enough, being the genitive plural of omnis, all (omnibus, for what we prefer nowadays to call a bus, is the dative plural of the same word). The second part, however, is just the English word gather with a fake Latin ending. The 1788 second edition of Francis Grose's Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue says it's a "jocular imitation of law Latin" and this seems plausible. There's an older form, omnigatherum, mainly Scots, which the OED says was used from the seventeenth century for a group of craftsmen in Stirling, such as coopers, glassworkers, dyers, and gardeners, whose skills weren't recognised in a formal trade guild but who were lumped together for some purposes, mostly taxation.

LOL

CUT YOUR HAIR FIRST

A young man comes home and says: "Dad, just got my driver's licence and would like to use the family car." Father replies, "OK son. But, first, you have to get good grades in school, keep your room clean, make the yard neat, and cut your hair. Come back in a few months and then we'll see." Well, several months pass and the young man comes into the



house with his report card in his hand. "Dad, I got great marks on my report card. I've been keeping my room as neat as a pin, and the yard is always ship-shape. How about letting me use the car?" Father replies, "That's all true, but son you didn't cut your hair." Son says, "But, dad, Jesus had long hair." Father replies, "Yes, son, you're perfectly right. And he walked everywhere he went."

Bridging the tech divide

# 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, Russagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Sir, Prof Jhunjhunwala in his column published in Orissa POST (July 17, 2021) rightly argues in favour of higher public investment in technology. It is not surprising that private investments have not caught up with the radical changes taking place in global technology even though there is huge return on investment. The governments both at the Centre and states have the primary responsibility to develop the tech infrastructure after which private players can compete and provide services while innovating along the way. Whether the policy focuses on digital India, e-governance and emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence at the national level or the 5T in Odisha, technology is central to all such initiatives. But there is a need to bridge the technology divide. We have seen the digital divide in our country badly exposed during the pandemic. As we embark upon developing new tech architecture for 21st century India, we need to ask if we are ready for inclusive technology management in a digitally divided country. **Kamala Kanta Dash, CUTTACK**

Monetising railway properties

Sir, The Prime Minister has rightly said that our railway stations need to step up from being modes of transport to becoming hubs of economic activities. Railway stations are prime properties in any city. But most often we find that the vast premises of railway stations simply remain unused. Most stations in India have acres of land in their possession but not all the land is used. As the PM said the land can be developed into centres of economic activity. The new five-star hotel atop a railway station in Gandhinagar which the PM inaugurated recently is a case in point. Other railway zones too can come out with such plans. Besides serving passengers and tourists these facilities help the railways boost the economy. Although all major stations have retiring rooms and other staying facilities, good budget and luxury hotels can attract more people. Besides these, the railways can also come up with medical facility centres, entertainment zones, tourism coordination centres, banking facilities and even mini malls not just to attract train passengers but also local residents. The PM said that the needs of 21st century India can't be fulfilled through the ways of 20th century and reforms are required through a new approach. Utilisation of railway land can definitely change the face of railway infrastructure and boost the economy. **M Pradyu, KANNUR**

# Online edu a mockery in Malkangiri district

IN THE ABSENCE OF ELECTRICITY AND NETWORK FACILITIES IN THE VILLAGE, ONLINE EDUCATION PROVES USELESS FOR STUDENTS



## INFRA BOTTLENECKS

There are central and state government schemes for rural electrification like Saubhagya Yojana and Biju Gram Jyoti Yojana. But the villagers are not getting any benefits from such programmes

Most of the children would stay in hostels of the institutions but they had to return home after the outbreak of Covid-19 as their offline classes were suspended

are reading in schools and colleges. As of now, when their classmates living in neighbouring villages are attending classes through online, they feel they are lagging behind.

Prior to pandemic, most of the children would stay in hostels of the institutions. As offline classes were suspended with the outbreak of Covid-19, they were forced to return home.

Expressing their concern, these children said had there been electricity and internet facility in their village, they would not have been deprived of online classes.

"There are central and state government schemes for rural electrification like Saubhagya Yojana and Biju Gram Jyoti Yojana. But we

are not getting any benefits from these yojanas. Besides other problems we are facing, our children are still studying in dim light of kerosene oil lamp. And taking on-line class is a dream for them. We have been requesting administrative officials to provide power connection to our village but received no joy as yet," rued some villages including Udaynath Seesa, Padam Seesa and Danapati Seesa.

In this regard, when Chittrakonda block development officer (BDO) Rahul Mandal was contacted, he said he would soon take steps to bring electricity to the village.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, July 17:** During these difficult times of pandemic, when offline teaching has been put on hold, online education has become a new normal.

However, reality bites when it comes to implementation of on-line teaching in remotest pockets where students do not receive benefits of online education. Lack of electricity and network facilities is blamed for this.

Podkhal village of Jodamba panchayat in the Swabhimana Anchal in Malkangiri district can be taken as a case in point.

The village is inhabited by around 18 families. Their children

## Cong alleges rice miller, admin nexus



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, July 17:** The Congress party in Nayagarh has alleged that the administration and custom millers have formed an unholy nexus even as sub-standard rice is being supplied to consumers in the district.

Addressing a press meet here Saturday, Ranjit Das, president of the party's district unit, said millers are buying FAQ paddy from farmers during procurement and are harassing farmers on various pleas.

"But millers are delivering poor quality rice. The administration is favouring them, instead of taking action against them," he added.

Alleging that there has been a scam worth crores of rupees in paddy procurement in the district, the party has decided to stage a dharna over the issue July 23.

It was also alleged that 17 custom millers in the district were supposed to deliver 70 per cent of their rice by July end, but they have delivered only 38 per cent between January and July. The Congress alleged that millers are collecting rice from beneficiaries and indulging in rice recycling.

Despite all this, custom millers have not been served show cause notices, it was alleged.

## Nayagarh yet to get rid of female foeticide, child marriages

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, July 17:** The district has once again gained notoriety for female foeticide and child marriage incidents. What is of great concern is that the district is yet to get rid of these two most disgraceful issues.

July 14, 2007 was a black day for the people of Nayagarh. On this day, not one but six foetuses were recovered from the foothills of Duburi. With this incident, Nayagarh district virtually became synonymous with foeticide.

According to some, this doesn't mean that killing of foetus was occurring in Nayagarh district only. "The fact is that such crimes were taking place in other districts too. What the July 14 incident revealed was that it brought the sensitive issue to the fore," they said.

This incident paved the way for strict implementation of Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC & PNDT) Act.

In order to stop foeticide and child marriages in the district, several government programmes like 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' are being undertaken spending lakhs of rupees. But the result is not satisfactory. While as many as 56 child marriages were foiled between January and June this year, the district is at the top of the list for reporting maximum cases of foeticide (according to 2011 census).

It stands to reason that the money the government is spending to organise various programmes only goes down the drain. It also suggests that there must be some faults in implementation of the programmes. As long as these faults are there, the

As many as 56 child marriages were foiled between January and June this year

programmes will remain confined to delivering speeches only, some intellectuals observed.

Even today foeticide is being carried out at clinics clandestinely. Women from Nayagarh district are allegedly going to Bhubaneswar to determine the sex of their foetuses. They are allegedly killing them if they are found females. According to sources, a pregnant woman recently claimed that a mobile van was doing the rounds in Bhubaneswar city. People moving in this van, not only determine the sex of foetus, but also help to do away with the foetus, if it is detected to be a female.

The woman had gone to Bhubaneswar and contacted the mobile van. Since she has three daughters, she was aspiring for a son. The van is equipped with gadgets that determine the sex of foetus. Since her yet-to-be born child was found to be a male, she did not go for abortion, the source added.

It is alleged that women visiting Bhubaneswar to determine the sex of their foetuses are mostly from rich families as well as families whose members are spearheading the campaign against foeticide.

Chairperson of Gania Unnayan Parishad, Usha Pattanayak said female foeticide and child marriages can never be stopped unless the desire for sons and the mindset of people are not changed.



Wildlife activists observing World Snake Day at Pahandei village under Hindol block in Dhenkanal district Saturday

OP PHOTO

## Row over sand mining in Vamsadhara rages

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kashinagar, July 17:** Even as illegal sand mining continued unabated in Vamsadhara river in Kashinagar area of Gajapati district, the wrongdoing has stoked a controversy, a report said.

In this regard, when Chittrakonda block development officer (BDO) Rahul Mandal was contacted, he said he would soon take steps to bring electricity to the village.

Addressing a press meet, BJD leaders like G Tirupati Rao, K Apparao, Raghuram Sahu and K Ramarao alleged that there was no CCTV at sand ramps while sand quarrying is not allowed in the monsoon.

"Machines are used to lift sand which is illegal. Besides, lifted sand is dumped on a patch of forestland at Idudi mouza," they pointed out, adding there are two ramps at one place which contravenes the existing rules. They stated that though the local tehsildar and the DFO have been apprised of such ille-



gality by the lease holders, no action is being taken against the lessees.

However, the lease holders argued that as per the Odisha Minor Mineral Concession Rule-2016, sand can be lifted from dry riverbed in the monsoon while the allegation of two ramps at one place is baseless.

As for forest land, the lessees countered that how there can be for-

est land inside the river, they added.

"There used to be CCTV at the ramp. A few days back, some drivers of tractors failed to get Y-Forms for sand loading. They got angry and vandalized the CCTVs," the lease holders added.

Tehsildar Laxmiprasad Sahu said lease holders have deposited their revenues. There are no re-

strictions on lifting sand during monsoon. Sand mining during rainy season will rather augment revenue generation for the government, he added.

He also added that all allegations leveled against the lease holders were being probed and action will be taken only after the investigation report is available.

## CONTRABAND WORTH ₹1 CR SEIZED IN BHADRAK; 4 HELD

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhadrak, July 17:** In a major crackdown Friday night, Sadar police in Bhadrak district seized a large quantity of brown sugar from Charampa area. The market value of the seized contraband is estimated to be more than Rs 1 crore, a source said.

Police have arrested four persons including a woman in this connection.

The four arrested were identified as Kunilata Sarangi (30), Manoj Kumar Das (23) and Ajay Kumar Sarangi (32) - all three are said to be drug peddlers. The supplier had sent a man named SK Abdul Hamid (45) with the contraband to supply it in and around Bhadrak town. He has also been arrested, a Sadar police official said.

According to the source, a team



of Sadar police officials had been enforcing lockdown restrictions and Covid-19 safety protocols in the area. The officials stopped an overloaded auto-rickshaw beneath Dhamra railway overbridge near Charampa area on NH-16, which was carrying four persons including a woman.

Later, the abnormal behaviour of the passengers onboard the auto-rickshaw raised doubts in the minds of cops. After conducting a thorough

search of the three-wheeler, the officials recovered several packets of brown sugar weighing more than 1 kilogram along with Rs 1 lakh. Besides, three mobile phones including incriminating documents were seized from them.

During interrogation, it was ascertained that the three drug-peddlers had gone in the auto-rickshaw to procure the seized brown sugar from the main drug supplier of Jaleswar in the district.

Sadar police have registered a case under Section 21(C) of NDPS Act. A detailed investigation is underway to nab the supplier of Jaleswar and a manhunt has been launched, the police official informed.

Notably, arrested Hamid is a brother of drug mafia Chachi from Jaleswar area and father-in-law of the history-sheets SK Asgar.

## Rape accused held after 5 years

PNN/AGENCIES

**Kendrapara, July 17:** A 32-year-old man, who was on the run for five years after allegedly raping a 22-year-old woman in Kendrapara district, has been arrested, police said Saturday.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team nabbed the accused from a house in Bhubaneswar Friday night. He is a resident of a village in Rajkanika police station area in Kendrapara district. The man was accused of rape in 2016 and had evaded arrest since then.

The survivor had delivered a girl child in 2017, Rajkanika police station Inspector Umakanta Nayak said. The accused was remanded to judicial custody, the officer said. He was booked under Sections 493 (cohabitation caused by a man deceitfully inducing a belief of lawful marriage), 417 (cheating), 376 (rape) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code, he added.

## 'Cage fish culture to raise fish output in state'

STATE GOVERNMENT FIXES TARGETS AT 50 CR FINGERLINGS, 60 TONNE CAGE FISH PRODUCTION

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, July 17:** The state government is planning to augment fish production in the state through cage fish culture, a report said. This was stated here by state fisheries minister Arun Sahoo during his visit to Sambalpur district, Friday.

He said the state government is trying to increase fish production in the state through cage fish culture which has gained acceptance worldwide. The Hirakud reservoir in the district has enough facilities to carry out cage fish culture as the state government aims to produce 60,000 tonnes of cage fish per annum, he said.

The minister said fish farmers in the state produced 2.60 lakh MT of fish in 2019-20, while it was 8.73 lakh MT in the last financial year. Similarly, over 50 crore fingerlings will be produced in the April-June quarter from the Chipilima fingerlings hatchery for which the state government will provide all help.

Sahoo said the state government has undertaken cage fish culture in the Hirakud reservoir to augment



fish production. The fisheries minister visited the Hirakud Dam Friday to review the cage fish farming and later the Chipilima fingerlings production centre.

The cage culture is being undertaken in the Hirakud reservoir for which a review is being done on the progress of the work and in exploring new possibilities, Sahoo said. He added that cage culture programme was going in a proper way at the Hirakud reservoir. The process entails fishes are cultured in cages enclosed on all sides by nets and an opening at the top for feed-

ing and handling of the stock.

Reports said one per cent of the water area of the three big reservoirs, including the Hirakud, besides as many medium reservoirs of the state, will be leased out for cage fish farming. At present, cage fish culture is carried out in 78 cages in the reservoir.

In the first phase, 0.8 per cent of the water area at Hirakud has been opened for lease, but 15,000 cages could be installed at the reservoir.

The fisheries department started cage fish farming in Hirakud reservoir in 2013 by in-

stalling 28 cages. Later, 50 more cages were installed in the reservoir in 2019. Around 2 lakh MT of fish could be produced from the cage fish farming in the state. Hence, the government now wants to encourage cage fish farming.

An official said 90 per cent of the population of the state consume fish in their regular meals. Moreover, Tilapia and Pangasius species having export potential could be produced in cage fish culture method.

Tilapia has a high demand in the US, Europe and Southeast Asian nations, he said.

Sahoo said the state government was also laying thrust on early breeding. He asked officials to involve more and more farmers in the cage fish culture in Hirakud reservoir. The minister also wanted to increase the livestock farming in the district along with fish farming.

R Raghunath Prasad, commissioner-secretary, fisheries and animal resources development department, Smruti Ranjan Pradhan, director, fisheries and district level officials of the department accompanied the minister to the district during his visit.

## JAL SATYAGRAHA



People staging protests (Jal Satyagraha) demanding a bridge across Lanth river in Belapada of Bolangir district

OP PHOTO

# Heat makes Muzaffarpur prone to AES outbreak



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Muzaffarpur, July 17:** With no respite from the sweltering heat and humidity in Bihar, there has been a spurt in Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) cases in children in Muzaffarpur and surrounding areas.

As per the data released by the Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital (SKMCH), Muzaffarpur, 41 children with symptoms of AES

were admitted from Muzaffarpur and the adjoining districts, of which 33 children were confirmed to be suffering from AES.

Head of the Department of Paediatrics at SKMCH, GS Sahni, Saturday said four children are undergoing treatment in the infant ward, in which AES has been confirmed in three children while one other patient is suspected to be suffering from this disease.

Till Friday this year, 41 children

have been admitted to SKMCH from Muzaffarpur and surrounding areas reported to be suffering from this disease. As many as nine children have died. The intensifying heat and humidity makes Muzaffarpur and the surrounding areas susceptible to AES outbreak in children. Every year a large number of children die of this disease.

The worst AES outbreak has been reported in various villages of Minapur, Kanti, Musahari and Paroo blocks of Muzaffarpur district. For the treatment of AES, a special hospital ward has been set up by the health department in Muzaffarpur.

From time to time, awareness campaigns have also been carried out in rural areas by the district administration and the health department but till date they have failed in eradicating this disease. However, a lesser number of patients suffering from this disease have been reported this year.

## EMERGENCY CARE



Ambulances meant to be sent to Bihar district government hospital for COVID-19 patients are parked at a government school ground in Patna, Saturday. PTI PHOTO

# J&K admin to prevent militant sympathisers from getting govt jobs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

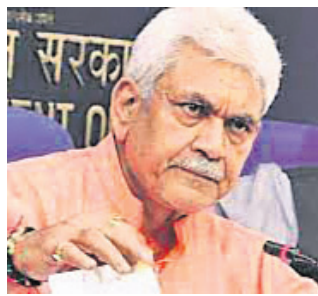
**New Delhi, July 17:** Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has asserted that all employees of anti-national credentials would be purged out of the State institutions and systems and there would be no more any place in the government for the incumbents posing a threat to the unity and sovereignty of the country.

Addressing a function after inauguration of Ayurvedic College at Akhnoor in Jammu, followed by an interview with CNN News 18 network, Sinha said that recruitment of the people of doubtful integrity and undesirable credentials had been "a deliberate and intentional" process in the past which the successive governments should not have overlooked.

With an obvious reference to the termination of 11 government employees, including two sons of Hizbul Mujahideen chief Salahuddin, who has been designated as a global terrorist by the US government as well as the United Nations, Sinha said that their appointment into the government services was a 'favour' and it was not based on merit. "One was even afraid of hearing the names of persons who were in government jobs," he said in an apparent reference to Salahuddin's two sons who were among the 11 government employees dismissed from the services last week.

"There will be no place in the government jobs for those who are a threat to the unity and sovereignty of the country," Sinha asserted in a stern warning to the government officials indulging in anti-national activities.

Sinha said that the previous (po-



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha

litical) government had intentionally overlooked such cases, implicitly communicating that a section of the mainstream politicians had been hand-in-glove with the separatists and the militants in Jammu and Kashmir.

"All such cases are under scrutiny and the law enforcement agencies will launch a crackdown to remove such elements from the government jobs," he said and pointed out that both the sons of the Hizbul Mujahideen chief were involved in terror funding from abroad.

He disclosed that as per Article 126 of Jammu and Kashmir Constitution, an investigation is conducted against the government employees involved in terrorism who are a threat to the State. He clarified that their individual conduct rather than their familial association was pertinent in termination of their services.

All those dismissed were involved in terror funding and promoting separatism, the LG maintained. He said 20,000 government jobs have been identified and a process had been initiated for recruitment of the unemployed youths in the most transparent and fair manner. "No clout or money would fetch any jobs. Only merit will matter," he added.

# New nomenclature for Jammu & Kashmir High Court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 17:** The "long-winding and cumbersome" nomenclature 'Common High Court of UT of Jammu and Kashmir and UT of Ladakh' has been changed to 'High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh', according to an order.

President Ram Nath Kovind has signed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Removal of Difficulties) Order, 2021, to effect the change. The order was notified by the Department of Justice in the Law Ministry Friday.

It observed that the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, was enacted to provide for reorganisation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir into the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir

President Ram Nath Kovind has signed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Removal of Difficulties) Order, 2021, to effect the change

and the Union Territory of Ladakh.

The order pointed out that the Act declared that the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir will be the 'Common High Court for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh.'

"The present nomenclature is found to be rather long-winding and cumbersome. The said nomenclature may be substituted as High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, which besides being convenient would also be in consonance with the name pattern followed in other common High Courts, namely, Punjab and



Haryana High Court, which has jurisdiction over the states of Punjab and Haryana and the Union Territory of Chandigarh," it said.

Considered views on the proposal were sought from the Lieutenant Governor of Union

Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Ladakh and the Chief Justice of the High Court.

"The Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir vide letter dated October 27, 2020, and the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Ladakh vide letter dated October 20, 2020, have conveyed their agreement to the proposed change in the name of the High Court."

"The then Chief Justice of the common High Court for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh vide letter dated November 21, 2020, has also conveyed her no objection to the proposed name," the order said.

# J&K to weed out 'ineffective' staff over 48

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Srinagar, July 17:** The Jammu and Kashmir government Friday asked administrative secretaries to initiate a process to identify the employees who are "ineffective in work or not fit to continue" after completion of 22 years of service or those having attained 48 years of age.

In October last year, the government had amended Article 226 (2) of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Service Regulations for a provision to retire at any time any government servant after he/she completes 22 years of service or attains 48 years of age.

The appropriate authority has to give either three months' prior notice or three months' salary to retire any employee, according to the notification issued by the then Financial Commissioner.

Setting the time schedule to be followed, the notification stated that "the exercise of review of performance of the government ser-



vants will be initiated for each government servant for the first time after her/his completion of 22 years of government service or attaining 48 years of age and any time subsequently, as may be required."

Thursday, a fresh circular was issued by the incumbent Chief Secretary, Arun Kumar Mehta, which said, "It has been observed that the departments have not initiated any exercise for re-

viewing the performance of government servants."

"It impressed upon all the administrative secretaries to initiate the process/ exercise of reviewing the performance of any government servant who has completed 48 years of age/ 22 years of service for identifying such government servants who are ineffective in work and are not fit to continue in the post held and have no

In October last year, the government had amended Article 226 (2) of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Service Regulations for a provision to retire at any time any government servant after he/she completes 22 years of service or attains 48 years of age

The appropriate authority has to give either three months' prior notice or three months' salary to retire any employee, according to the notification issued by the then Financial Commissioner

utility for the purpose for which they are employed.

"The departments shall follow the procedure as laid down in Article 226(2) of Jammu and Kashmir Civil Service Regulations Volume I and place the cases of such identified employees before the review committee for consideration of the competent authority."

# 16 deaths in 2 days in Bihar village; hooch suspected

AGENCIES

**Bettiah, July 17:** At least 16 people have died at a remote village of Bihar in the last couple of days, in a suspected case of hooch tragedy in the state that went dry six years ago.

According to a statement issued by the administration of West Champaran district headquartered here, family members of only four of the deceased have confirmed the consumption of liquor prior to death.

Two persons appear to have died of diseases, as suggested by documents produced by family members, while kin of the remaining 10 were non-committal about the possible cause of death.

The state has enacted a stringent prohibition law which also includes penal action against those from whose premises alcohol is recovered

All deaths have taken place at Deurva village under Lauria police station area.

Eight had died Thursday while an equal number of deaths were reported on the following day.

Five persons, including Sumit (22), the son of Thag Sah who is said to be involved in illicit liquor trade, have been arrested in connection with an FIR that was registered on the basis of statement given by a relative of 36 years old Mumtaz Miyan, who is undergoing treatment at a private hospital after he fell ill upon consuming the spurious liquor. Sale and consumption of liquor was completely banned by the Nitish Kumar government in April, 2016.

The state has enacted a stringent prohibition law which also includes penal action against those from whose premises alcohol is recovered.

According to the statement issued by the administration, an appeal has been made by District Magistrate Kundan Kumar to the villagers to "come out and share all information without fear" with regard to the "mysterious" deaths.

# Champaran's flood-hit villagers demolish their own homes

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bettiah (Bihar), July 17:** It was only two years ago that 52-year-old Akhilesh Kumar, from East Champaran's Bhawanipur village, had built a single storey house with the money he had earned as a migrant labourer. Back then, he had no inkling of the tragedy that awaited the home that housed his family of seven.

Then, July 5, the flooding of the Sikrahna river engulfed several houses in the village. "It all happened so fast that we couldn't save anything, and our house collapsed like a pack of cards," narrated Kumar.

A tributary of the Ganges, Sikrahna, also known as the Burhi Gandak river, turned turbulent owing to heavy rainfall in the Champaran region. This, coupled with the outflow of water from Valmiki Nagar barrage, has created havoc in several villages of Sugauli block, about 25 km from district headquarters, Motihari.

With many houses, like Kumar's, engulfed by the river and razed to rubble, villagers from Sugauli block in East Champaran district took to



demolishing their own dwellings to save the bricks and other construction material from being carried away by the river.

## Demolishing dwellings & dreams

"My house was built almost 15 years ago with hard-earned money. But half of it was demolished by the river, and we had to tear down the remaining to save whatever little construction material we could,"

said Sukhiya Devi, who had taken refuge in a plastic makeshift tent along with six family members.

Sant Lal Mahato, another villager, described the collapse of his house as an inescapable part of his destiny. "It would be hoping against hope if we do nothing and keep sitting with our fingers crossed. We may be able to build another house with these bricks if land and compensation is pro-

vided," said Mahato.

Over the past month, almost 100 houses in the village have collapsed due to erosion caused by the river, according to Rajesh Yadav, a former sarpanch nominee. "With our village headman no longer alive, there's no one in power to look into the tragedy that pervades here," said Yadav, pointing to a 25-metre stretch of barren land that once bustled with people.

My house was built almost 15 years ago with hard-earned money. But half of it was demolished by the river, and we had to tear down the remaining to save whatever little construction material we could

SUKHIYA DEVI

## Rescue & rehabilitation underway

Amidst the disaster, the people are fighting for their right to live. "Day in and out, we are trying to save some bricks. The earlier, the better, or else, the river is going to spare nothing," said Shiv Sah.

Currently, villagers are either residing in makeshift tents or taking refuge in the government schools. For food, most of them are dependent on the eight community kitchens operating across the Sugauli block. "We are keeping a tab on the situation. More community kitchens would be run if required," said Circle officer, Dharmendra Kumar Gupta.



## of the day quote

We have to prepare ourselves to meet future challenges by developing adequate healthcare infrastructure in small towns and cities. We can fight this global pandemic when all civil societies and other institutions support the efforts of the government

OM BIRLA | LOK SABHA SPEAKER

In this 75th year of independence of the country as we are honouring freedom fighters and those eminent personalities who gave a right direction to the nation, I request you on the behalf of Delhi government to felicitate Sunderlal Bahuguna with Bharat Ratna

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

It is no accident that the three states where the government is talking about reducing population are Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Lakshadweep, where everyone knows who their intended audience is

SHASHI THAROOR | CONGRESS LEADER

## SHORT TAKES

### Three drown taking selfies

**Deoria (UP):** Three girls drowned in a pond here after their boat overturned while they were taking selfies, a senior government official said Saturday. The girls were in the 8-12 age-group. Seven girls went for a boat ride in Mahadev Taal under Bhaluani police station area Friday evening. They were clicking selfies when the boat overturned, District Magistrate Ashutosh Niranjana said. While four girls somehow managed to save themselves, three drowned.

### New VHP prez

**New Delhi:** Rabindra Narain Singh, an orthopaedic surgeon and a Padma Shri awardee, was elected as the president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) Saturday. Singh, who hails from Bihar, was serving as the vice president of the saffron outfit so far. He had received Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian honour, in 2010 for his contributions to the field of medical science. "Our board of trustees today unanimously elected Padma Shri Ravindra Narain Singh as our president," VHP's joint general secretary Surendra Jain said at a press conference.

### UP ATS nabs three

**Nagpur:** The Uttar Pradesh police's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has arrested three persons from Nagpur in Maharashtra in connection with a case registered in Lucknow under UP's anti-conversion law, an official said Saturday. The trio was arrested from Ganeshpeth area in Nagpur city Friday night, he said. The accused were identified as Prasad Rameshwar Kavale (from Nagpur), Kausar Alam Shaikat Ali Khan (from Jharkhand) and Bhupriya Bando Devidas Mankar (from Gadchiroli in Maharashtra), the police official in Nagpur said.

### Tiger count goes up

**Hyderabad:** The Telangana Forest Department has said there are 14 tigers in the Amrabad Tiger Reserve as against 12 recorded in 2019. The Amrabad reserve is home to the highest population of tigers in the State. The latest findings on the presence of the big cats came out during the phase-IV monitoring carried out in 2020-21, according to an official release. "During the phase-IV census in 2019, there were 12 identified tigers. In the phase-IV monitoring in 2020-21, the number increased to 14..." it said. Phase-IV monitoring is being conducted as part of the exercise in every tiger reserve across the country.



Do you want that the democracy be shattered in this way in the state and in the country? And the prime minister is praising and has congratulated for the panchayat polls. In every district, some incident has taken place -- be it poll violence, bomb explosion or atrocities against women

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONG GEN SECY

## KARGIL VIJAY DIWAS: CARDS TO SOLDIERS

NCC cadets from Gujarat have prepared 30,000 cards highlighting the sacrifice and valour of armed forces which were dispatched Saturday to Kargil district in Jammu and Kashmir ahead of the 22nd anniversary of the Kargil Vijay Diwas to be observed July 26



# Border to be sealed before 2022: Shah

HE ALSO ASSERTED THAT IT WAS ONLY AFTER MODI BECAME PM THAT THE COUNTRY GOT AN INDEPENDENT SECURITY STRATEGY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 17:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah Saturday asserted that unfenced gaps along India's over 7,500-km-long land border will be sealed before 2022, thus covering areas that lead to infiltration and smuggling of arms and narcotics.

He also asserted that India's security policy was either influenced or was overlapping with the foreign policy and it was only after Narendra Modi became prime minister that the country got an independent security strategy.

Shah was delivering the annual 'Rustamji memorial lecture' instituted by the Border Security Force (BSF) in the memory of its first director general (DG) K F Rustamji. An officer of the 1938 batch of the British-era Imperial Police, Rustamji headed the 1965 raised force for nine years. He died in 2003.

Shah also gave away gallantry



medals to the serving personnel and to the family members of those who were killed in the line of duty from the country's largest frontier force. I assure that there will be no gap in our fencing before 2022, he said.

Shah said about three per cent of the unfenced area leaves a big gap and makes the border vulner-

able for infiltration of terrorists and other border crimes like smuggling of arms, ammunition and narcotics among others.

India has fenced borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh and there are certain areas including the riverines ones which are not fenced. The Modi government has been

plugging these gaps after resolving administrative obstacles and even by talking to neighbouring countries, he said.

I believe that border security is national security, Shah said adding they are developing a new model of the border fence that cannot be cut or broken.

He also spoke about the security policy of the Modi government. "I used to think if there is a security policy of this country or not? Till Narendra Modi became the prime minister we did not have any independent security policy," Shah said. It was either influenced by foreign policy or it was overlapping with the foreign policy, he said.

After Modi became prime minister, the country got an independent security policy.

Our idea is to have peaceful relations with all but if someone disturbs our borders, if someone challenges our sovereignty, the priority of our security policy is that such

an attempt will be replied in the same language, Shah said.

He said this security policy was a big achievement as the country wanted such a good plan.

I believe without this (security policy) neither the country can progress nor democracy can prosper, the home minister said.

Modiji (PM) has done this big job. I do not want to give examples as it is well known, he said adding the policy was made operational on the ground by his government.

Shah said India was working to soon develop an indigenous counter-drone technology, which is being carried out by technical organisations like the DRDO and some other agencies.

His comments came in the backdrop of the first-ever drone attack on the IAF station in Jammu last month where two unmanned aerial vehicles dropped bombs injuring two airmen and damaging a portion of a building inside.

## Kanwar Yatra cancelled in UP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, July 17:** The annual Kanwar Yatra in Uttar Pradesh has been cancelled this year, a senior government official said here Saturday night.

The development came a day after the Supreme Court said it cannot allow the Uttar Pradesh government to hold 100 percent physical Kanwar Yatra in view of Covid, stressing that sentiments, including religious, are subservient to the Right to Life.

The Kanwar Yatra has been cancelled by the Kanwar Sanghs on the appeal of the Uttar Pradesh government. Additional Chief Secretary Information Navneet Sehgal said Sunday.

The yatra was scheduled to start July 25. The Uttarakhand government has already called off the Kanwar Yatra citing fears expressed by experts of a possible third wave of the pandemic and the risk posed by such gatherings.

The yatra goes on till the first week of August and sees thousands of Shiva devotees called 'kanwariyas' travelling mostly on foot from neighbouring states, including Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi to collect water from the Ganges in Haridwar.

## Bhushan Kumar alleges extortion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 17:** Mumbai Police registered an FIR against a man for allegedly demanding money from T-Series company owner and producer Krishan Kumar earlier this month for not filing a rape case against his nephew and the company's managing director Bhushan Kumar, an official said Saturday.

The FIR was registered at the Amboli police station Friday night against one Mallikarjun Pujari for extortion and other charges of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), a day after an offence was registered against Bhushan Kumar for allegedly raping a 30-year-old woman under the pretext of providing her with a job in his company between 2017 and 2020. An FIR of extortion was registered against Mallikarjun Pujari who had allegedly approached Krishan Kumar between July 3 and 10 this year demanding money for not filing a complaint of rape against Bhushan Kumar, the official said.



Pujari tried to blackmail Krishan Kumar with the fake allegation of rape against Bhushan Kumar and threatened to malign the latter's image in media, the official said quoting the First Information Report. The accused had allegedly told Kishan Kumar that the woman's friend will kill Bhushan Kumar if money is not paid, he said.

A case was registered against Pujari under sections 386 (Extortion by putting a person in fear of death or grievous hurt), 500 (Punishment for defamation), and criminal intimidation under sections 506 and 506(2) of the IPC, the official said, adding no arrest is made so far.

As per the FIR registered against Bhushan Kumar, 43, he allegedly raped the woman on the pretext of providing a job to her in some project of his company, police had said.

## RIDERS ON THE STORM



Police personnel patrol at Marina beach as dark monsoon clouds hover in the sky in Chennai

PTI PHOTO

## 'Reconciliation' on among warring factions

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chandigarh, July 17:** Within hours of the meeting between Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh and AICC Secretary General and state in-charge Harish Rawat amid the 'tussle' over talks of appointing Navjot Singh Sidhu as the new state Congress chief, a reconciliation between the 'warring' leaders was held here Saturday to project a united face ahead of the Assembly polls scheduled early next year.

Speaker Rana KP Singh, Pratap Singh Bajwa, Rajya Sabha MP and former PPCC President who is known in the political circles as a strong critic of the Chief Minister, and Cabinet minister Rana Gurmeet Sodhi called on Amarinder Singh at his residence Saturday evening. Photos of the meeting were shared by the Chief Minister's Office.

### PUNJAB CONG TUSSLE



During the meeting between Amarinder Singh and Rawat earlier in the day, the former categorically told Rawat that he won't meet Sidhu until he apologises for his 'derogatory' tweets.

Reiterating that he would accept any decision taken by interim Congress President Sonia Gandhi, Amarinder Singh termed the meeting with Rawat as fruitful, adding that the latter would take up the issues raised by him with Sonia Gandhi.

The meeting between the two senior Congress leaders lasted for over an hour.

Minutes after the meeting, Amarinder Singh's media advisor Raveen Thukral tweeted a statement by the CM that said "Had a fruitful meeting with @harishrawatcmuk. Reiterated that any decision of @INCIndia President will be acceptable to all. Raised certain issues which he said he'll take up with @INCIndia president."

AICC General Secretary Rawat reached Chandigarh Saturday morning to meet Amarinder Singh. He returned to Delhi later in the day.

I have just returned to Delhi after meeting Amarinder Singh Ji. I am glad that a lot of the things that are being discussed have been proven pointless and Captain Sahib has reiterated his important statement that any decision taken by the Congress president will be acceptable to all, Rawat said in a tweet.

## Navy gets 2 MH-60R helicopters from US

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 17:** The Indian Navy has received two MH-60R multi-role helicopters from the US, in a boost to its combat capabilities.

Officials said the Navy received the choppers from the US Navy in a ceremony held at a naval air station in San Diego Friday.

The ceremony marked the formal transfer of these helicopters from US Navy to Indian Navy, which were accepted by Taranjit Singh Sandhu, Indian Ambassador to the US, a spokesperson of the Indian Navy said.

MH-60R helicopters manufactured by Lockheed Martin Corporation is an all-weather helicopter designed to support multiple missions with state of the art avionics and sensors.



India is procuring 24 of these helicopters from the US government under the framework of foreign military sales.

The helicopters would also be modified with several India-unique equipment and weapons.

The induction of these helicopters would further enhance the Indian Navy's three dimensional capabilities, the spokesperson said.

In order to exploit these potent helicopters, the first batch of Indian crew is presently undergoing training in the US, he said.

# Pendency of 45 mn cases in courts an overstatement: CJI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 17:** The projected statistics that pendency in Indian courts has reached 45 million cases, which is perceived as the inability of the Indian judiciary to cope with the caseload, is an overstatement and an uncharitable analysis and one of the factors contributing to judicial delays is luxurious litigation, Chief Justice of India NV Ramana said Saturday.

He said conflicts are unavoidable in any society for various reasons, including political, economic, social, cultural and religious, and there is a need to develop mechanisms for conflict resolution and referred to the Mahabharata, providing an example of an early attempt at mediation as a conflict resolution tool.

Delivering his keynote address at the India-Singapore Mediation Summit Making Mediation mainstream Reflections from India and Singapore, Justice Ramana said many Asian countries have a long and rich tradition of collaborative and amicable settlement of disputes.

The great Indian epic, the Mahabharata, actually provides an example of an early attempt at mediation as a conflict resolution tool, where Lord Krishna attempted to mediate the dispute between the Pandavas and Kauravas. It may be worthwhile to recall that the failure of mediation led to disastrous consequences, he said.

Mediation, as a concept, is deeply embedded into the Indian ethos. Long before the arrival of the British adversarial system in India,



various forms of mediation were being practised as a method of dispute resolution. Disputes were often resolved by the chieftains or elders of the community...

However, the establishment of the

British courts system, in 1775, marked the erosion of community-based indigenous dispute resolution mechanisms in India. The British judicial system has ultimately become the framework, with appro-

Mediation is deeply embedded into the Indian ethos and was prevalent before the British adversarial system in India, various forms of mediation were being practised as a method of dispute resolution

NV RAMANA | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

priate modifications, for the current judicial system in India, he said.

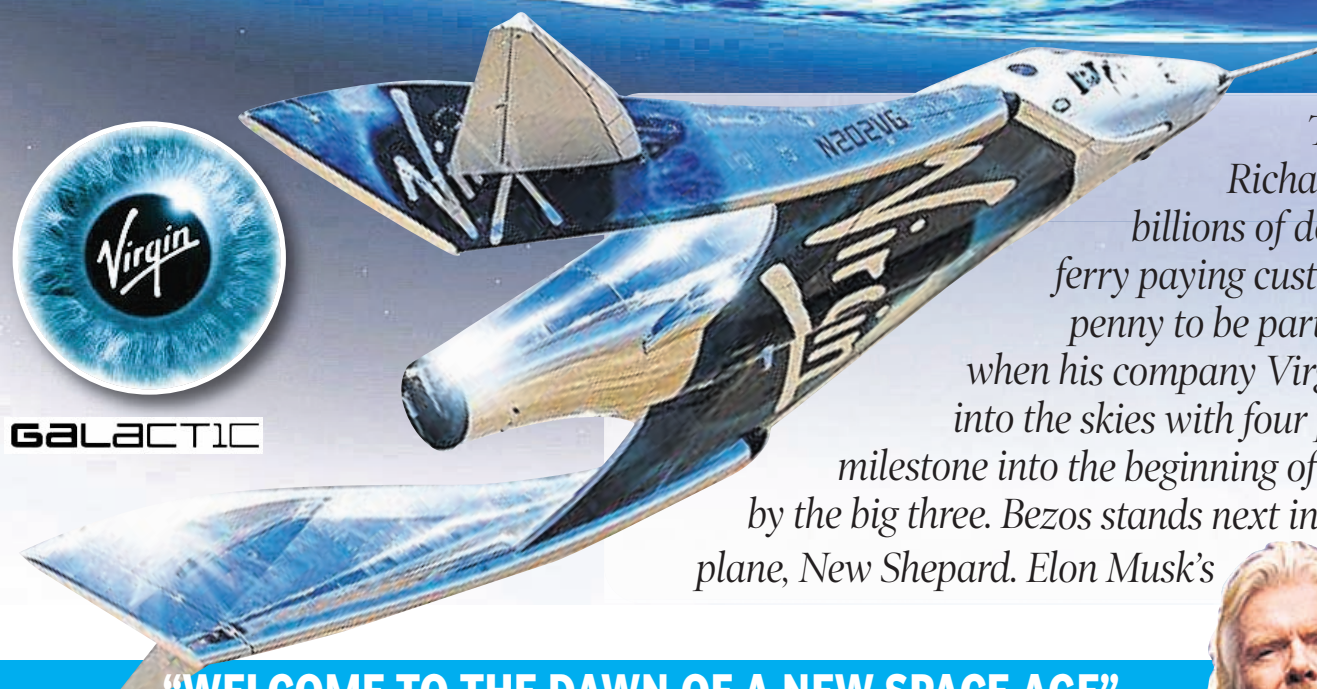
He said there are a few contributing factors that have revived the Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms in India and one of them is related to judicial delays. The often-quoted statistic that

'pendency' in Indian courts has reached 45 million cases, which is perceived as the inability of the Indian judiciary to cope with the caseload. This is an overstatement and an uncharitable analysis.

The term pendency is used to refer to all cases which have not yet been disposed of, without any reference to how long the case has spent in the judicial system. This would mean that a case which was filed yesterday gets added to the pendency statistics. This is, therefore, not a useful indicator of how well, or poorly, a system is doing, Justice Ramana said.

Admitting that the issue of judicial delays is a complex problem, not just in India, he said several factors contribute towards such a situation.

# 2021: A SPACE ODYSSEY



The three horsemen of space tourism Jeff Bezos, Richard Branson and Elon Musk have been investing billions of dollars in their space startups, each promising to ferry paying customers on rides to space and it will cost a pretty penny to be part of it. July 11, Branson made his mark in history when his company Virgin Galactic's VSS Unity space-plane propelled into the skies with four passengers aboard. This launch marked a huge milestone into the beginning of commercial space flights, a brain child cradled by the big three. Bezos stands next in line, as he will set out July 20 on his own space plane, New Shepard. Elon Musk's ambitious SpaceX missions include sending a crew to orbit around the moon in 2023

"WELCOME TO THE DAWN OF A NEW SPACE AGE"

## BRANSON BOSSES SPACE RACE

British billionaire Richard Branson July 11 soared more than 50 miles above the New Mexico desert aboard his Virgin Galactic rocket plane and safely returned in the vehicle's first fully crewed test flight to space, a symbolic milestone for a venture he started 17 years ago.

Branson, one of six Virgin Galactic Holding Inc employees strapped in for the ride, touted the mission as a precursor to a new era of space tourism, with the company he founded in 2004 poised to begin commercial operations next year.

"We're here to make space more accessible to all," an exuberant Branson, 70, said shortly after embracing his grandchildren following the flight.

The spaceplane's two pilots were Dave Mackay and Michael Masucci. The three other mission specialists were Beth Moses, the company's chief astronaut instructor; Virgin Galactic's lead operations engineer Colin Bennett; and Sirisha Bandla, a research operations and government affairs vice president.

The gleaming white spaceplane was carried aloft attached to the underside of the dual-fuselage jet VMS Eve (named for Branson's late mother) from Spaceport America, a state-owned facility



near the aptly named town of Truth or Consequences.

Reaching its high-altitude launch point at about 46,000 feet (14,020 m), the VSS Unity passenger rocket plane was released from the mothership and fell away as the crew ignited its rocket, sending it streaking straight upward at supersonic speed to the blackness of space some 53 miles (86 km) high.

The spaceplane's contrail was clearly visible from the ground as it soared through the upper atmosphere, to the

cheers of the crowd below.

At the apex of the climb with the rocket shut down, the crew then experienced a few minutes of microgravity, before the spaceplane shifted into re-entry mode, and began a gliding descent to a runway back at the spaceport. The entire flight lasted about an hour.

Back at a celebration with supporters from a stage outside Virgin Galactic's Gateway to Space complex at the spaceport, Branson and crewmates doused one another with champagne.



I was once a child with a dream looking up to the stars. Now I'm an adult in a spaceship looking down to our beautiful Earth. Cameras don't do it justice. You have to see it with your own eyes

## RICHEST RUNNER-UP

Jeff Bezos, the richest man in the world, may have been beaten to space by rival Richard Branson, but the billionaire American businessman is poised to make history July 20 aboard what would be the world's first uncrewed suborbital flight with an all-civilian crew.

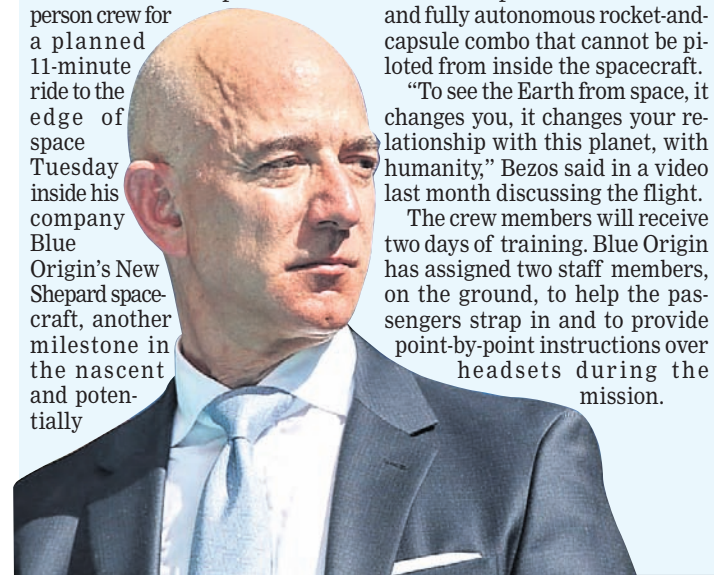
Bezos is due to be part of a four-person crew for a planned 11-minute ride to the edge of space Tuesday inside his company Blue Origin's New Shepard spacecraft, another milestone in the nascent and potentially

lucrative space tourism sector.

He is set to be joined by his brother and private equity executive Mark Bezos, trailblazing octogenarian woman aviator Wally Funk and a beneficiary who paid \$28 million for a spot aboard the spacecraft, scheduled to launch from a West Texas site.

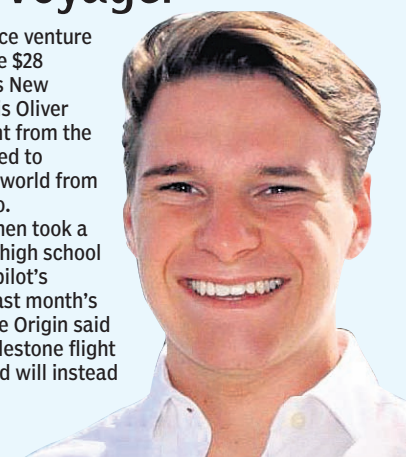
New Shepard is a 60-foot-tall and fully autonomous rocket-and-capsule combo that cannot be piloted from inside the spacecraft. "To see the Earth from space, it changes you, it changes your relationship with this planet, with humanity," Bezos said in a video last month discussing the flight.

The crew members will receive two days of training. Blue Origin has assigned two staff members, on the ground, to help the passengers strap in and to provide point-by-point instructions over headsets during the mission.



## Youngest voyager

Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin space venture says the beneficiary of the \$28 million auction for a spot on its New Shepard suborbital spaceship is Oliver Daemen, an 18-year-old student from the Netherlands. "I am super excited to experience zero-g and see the world from above," Daemen said in a video. According to Blue Origin, Daemen took a year off after graduating from high school last year to obtain his private pilot's license. The actual winner of last month's auction is still anonymous. Blue Origin said the winner had to forgo the milestone flight due to scheduling conflicts, and will instead go on a future flight.



## Octogenarian's dream fulfilled

Barrier-breaking woman aviator Wally Funk, 82, will join Jeff Bezos, announced the firm. The trip is 60 years overdue for Funk, who was one of the Mercury 13 -- the first women trained to fly to space from 1960-1961, but excluded because of her gender. She will become the oldest person ever to go to space when she takes part in the journey aboard the New Shepard launch vehicle. "I can hardly wait," Funk says in a video posted on Bezos's Instagram account. "I would say, Honey, that was the best thing that ever happened to me!" replies an exuberant Funk, throwing her arms around the laughing tech mogul.



## Sirisha Bandla: 3rd Indian-origin woman to space



Aeronautical engineer Sirisha Bandla Sunday became the third Indian-origin woman to fly into space when she joined British billionaire Richard Branson on Virgin Galactic. Ms Bandla, who was born in Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh flew to space after Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams. "I am kind of still up there but so glad to be here. I was trying to think about a better word than incredible, but that is the only word that can come to my mind... Seeing the view of Earth is so life-changing, but also the boost the rocket motor kicking in. The whole trip to space and back is just amazing," said Ms Bandla. Ms Bandla wanted to be an astronaut for the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration. However, her poor eyesight meant she could not meet the requirements to become a pilot or an astronaut.

## What's next for space tourism?

Following July 11 success, Virgin Galactic expects to launch commercial flights to suborbital space next year. To date, the firm has sold an estimated 600 tickets, fetching a price of roughly \$250,000 each. Roughly 600 people from 58 countries have reserved tickets worth up to \$250,000 to be in the first waves of space tourists, according to company filings. The list is widely believed to include

### DREAMS OF THE RICH

celebrities like Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hanks, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Russell Brand, Lady Gaga, Katy Perry, Justin Bieber, and Ashton Kutcher. Always the salesman, Branson has claimed a major victory for Virgin Galactic, which he founded. But his rival Bezos's ambitions don't end July 20. Blue Origin also wants to build infrastructure in space and help NASA return to the moon, just like Elon Musk's private space firm, SpaceX. In the meantime, Blue Origin is building a massive new rocket, called New Glenn, which will compete with SpaceX's Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy. That rocket is estimated to start flying sometime next year.

## dearMoon project

## MUSK ON A MISSION

Billionaire businessman Elon Musk's space transportation company SpaceX is planning an even-more-ambitious mission.

SpaceX will fly Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa around the moon with its forthcoming Starship rocket in 2023, said Musk. The dearMoon project is a lunar tourism mission and art project conceived and financed by the



Japanese billionaire. Maezawa, who paid an undisclosed sum for the trip said he plans to invite six to eight artists to join him on the voyage around the Moon. Maezawa and his band of astronauts will become the

first lunar voyagers since the last US Apollo mission in 1972 - if SpaceX can pull the trip off.

"I'm highly confident that we will have reached orbit many times with Starship before 2023 and that it will be safe enough for human transport by 2023. It's looking very promising," said SpaceX founder Elon Musk. The mission will be the first private space flight beyond Earth's orbit, Musk added.

Because it will not land on the Moon, but loop behind it, "we expect people will go further than any human has ever gone from planet Earth," he added.

SpaceX plans to send its customers into orbit, not on brief up-and-down hops.



## Musk pays \$250K to ride on Galactic

SpaceX and Tesla CEO Elon Musk, who claims to be living in a modest \$50,000, 37-square-metre prefab guest house in Boca Chica, Texas, has bought a \$250,000 ticket to space from fellow billionaire Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic. In an interview, Branson said: "Elon's a friend and maybe I'll travel on one of his ships one day."

## of the day quote

Covid-19 is not the first healthcare challenge that has brought about a huge change in the world around us and it certainly won't be the last. But what will make the difference is how we respond to these challenges

**PANKAJ R. PATEL** | CHAIRMAN, CADILA HEALTHCARE

India's continuous wide-ranging reforms make the country an attractive destination for foreign investments

**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN** | FINANCE MINISTER

Indian rupee is expected to weaken against the US dollar in the coming week due to higher crude prices and a possible outflow of IPO money going back to foreign venture capitalists

**SAJAL GUPTA** | HEAD, FOREX AND RATES, EDELWEISS SECURITIES

## SHORT TAKES

### 'Revival depends on vax coverage'

**Kolkata:** Future of brick-and-mortar retail stores looks promising if the vaccination drive continues at full steam as it will help improve consumer confidence, a top official of a leading retail chain said Saturday. Retail boom will be directly correlated to vaccination levels, Shoppers Stop MD and CEO Venu Nair said. Countries like Dubai and Australia that have either vaccinated the majority of their population or have been closing their borders early compared to other nations are witnessing huge improvements in retail and consumer confidence, he said.

### Electricity demand expected to rise

**New Delhi:** India's electricity demand is expected to rise by around 6% per cent in FY22, said Fitch Ratings Friday. The country's electricity demand had fallen by 1.2 per cent in FY21, as the lockdown, during the recent pandemic resurgence, was less restrictive and more localised than in 2020. "The increase in demand is likely to result in higher thermal power plant load factors (PLF) in FY22".

### Intel to acquire GlobalFoundries

**San Francisco:** Chip-maker Intel is reportedly exploring a deal to acquire GlobalFoundries, a semiconductor company its rival AMD spun off a decade ago, for nearly \$30 billion. According to a report in The Wall Street Journal citing sources, "It isn't guaranteed one (the deal) will come together, and GlobalFoundries could proceed with a planned initial public offering". Both GlobalFoundries and Intel (which have a market value of nearly \$225bn) have denied any such talks.

### HDFC Bank net profit up 16.1%

**Mumbai:** HDFC Bank Saturday reported a year-on-year rise of 16.1 per cent in its net profit for Q1FY22. Accordingly, the bank's net profit increased to ₹7,729.6 crore during the quarter under review ended June 30 in the current fiscal, over the quarter ended June 30, 2020. Besides, the bank's net interest income (income earned less interest expended) rose to ₹17,009.0 crore from ₹15,665.4 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2020. "During the quarter, India was hit by the second wave of Covid-19, with a significant surge in cases. While there was an improvement towards the end, business activities remained curtailed for almost 2/3rd of the quarter."



The Covid-19 pandemic is probably the most significant world event of our lifetime and has unarguably pushed back the world economy and people by 5-10 years

**SANDEEP KATARIA** | CEO, BATA CORPORATION GLOBAL

### OLA SCOOTER RECEIVES 100K BOOKINGS IN A DAY

Ride-hailing major Ola Saturday announced that its electric scooter has received a record-breaking 1,00,000 reservations within the first 24 hours, making it the most pre-booked scooter in the world. Ola Electric opened the reservation for its electric scooter on the evening of July 15



# HIRING ACTIVITY WITNESSES UPTICK IN JUNE FOR MOST SECTORS: REPORT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 17:** With gradual easing of lockdowns, the overall hiring activity witnessed positive growth for most sectors in June, according to a report. Hiring activity improved in June, suggesting a recovery for the non-tech sectors as well, based on newly added job listings during the month, according to a report by job site SCIEKY Market Network.

So far, the IT sector has been boosting at a fast pace, the report stated. Although, in June, the data revealed that a lot of other sectors have started showing improvement in the hiring activity, the report, based on hiring data posted on the SCIEKY Market Network's job portal, said.

Further, the data revealed that there has been a 21 per cent improvement in hiring in the banking sector in June compared to May.

The key industries like IT and BPO showed 18 per cent growth each, the pharmaceuticals sector showed 16.9 per cent growth, whereas the hiring demand in the healthcare sector improved by 20



per cent, it stated. This brings a ray of hope for job seekers who are currently in the badly affected sectors to look for jobs in other sectors. Other sectors like insurance, retail, education and FMCG also showed a progress of 12 per cent, 5 per cent, 12.1 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively, it added. Although, hiring in the telecom sector has declined by 8 per cent in June compared to May this year, it noted.

The data revealed that hiring also grew across the board in terms

of job roles like sales, HR and marketing which witnessed an increase of 20 per cent, 19.9 per cent and 12.1 per cent, respectively.

Other job roles like software developers (11.8 per cent), site engineering (11.8 per cent), finance (9.9 per cent) and project manager (4.9 per cent) also indicated positive growth, it said.

Meanwhile, tier-I cities like Mumbai (12 per cent), Pune (6 per cent), Delhi (1 per cent), Chennai (12 per cent), Hyderabad (12 per cent) and Kolkata (20 per cent),

## Hiring picked up steam last month, providing a mild shot of relief to job seekers. It is good to finally see the job market bounced back from the pandemic-induced recession at a worthy pace. It's been a rough patch for most sectors since the lockdown took place

**KARUNIT KUMAR DHIR** | CO-FOUNDER, SCIEKY

# CPI writes to FM opposing govt proposal to privatise nationalised banks



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 17:** CPI general secretary D Raja wrote to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Saturday, hitting out against the government proposal to privatise nationalised banks. In his letter, Raja said the finance minister had mentioned in her budget speech that the government has proposed to privatise two nationalised banks.

"Since privatisation of any bank is not in the interest of our economy and people, we have expressed our strong opposition to the same, both inside Parliament and outside. Our opposition to such privatisation of banks is on account of the fact that our banks today represent huge public savings of the common masses and these precious savings are safe only if the banks are in government control," he said.

The Left leader pointed out that a large-scale failure of many private banks was the reason behind the move to nationalise banks in the first place, adding that the government is thinking about privatisation of banks at a time when many private companies have turned out to be major loan defaulters.

"It would be imprudent to hand over the banks to private hands, whose efficiency is also not guaranteed going by the recent experiences of some of the private banks. Nationalised banks have been greatly helping and supplementing the government's efforts to boost the economy and hence,

need to be further strengthened with adequate measures from the government," he said. Raja said media reports have quoted a Niti Aayog recommendation proposing the names of the Central Bank of India and the Indian Overseas Bank for privatisation.

"Even though these are news items not authenticated by any official agency of the government, nonetheless, the same is creating a lot of anxiety and anguish amongst the employees and officers of these two banks. "I have learned that even some deposits are being withdrawn by customers. Hence, it will be desirable for the government to make a statement clarifying the position," he added.

"In case the government has any such proposal to privatise any bank, our party is opposed to it. Such a decision must be reviewed and rescinded," the Communist Party of India (CPI) said.

## 'Restructuring on cards in absence of moratorium'



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 17:** Financial institutions are likely to exercise 'Restructuring 2' for stressed assets, in the absence of a moratorium, said HDFC Securities. Accordingly, HDFC Securities, expects banks to remain selective in restructuring stressed assets.

"We believe that NBFCs (lender category) and the MSME sector (borrower category) are likely to witness the highest amount of restructuring," the brokerage firm said in a report. Besides, the firm expects a stop-start pattern in loan disbursements during Q1FY22, particularly in retail and SME segments, on account of lockdowns and surging second-wave numbers.

"System-wide credit grew by 6 per cent YoY with retail contributing to bulk of the credit growth."

"Net additions to credit cards, which had gathered pace during Q4FY21, also slowed down significantly during Apr-May'21."

Furthermore, HDFC Securities said strong deposit momentum is expected on the back of surplus in systemic liquidity, and RBI's accommodative stance to revive growth.

In addition, it expect provisioning to normalise on a YoY basis, although it is likely to remain flat on a sequential basis. Lenders are likely to frontload their loan loss provisions during the first half of the year for expected impairments in the portfolio, although our full year estimates on credit costs remain largely unchanged."

# 'Higher competition in road sector can impact quality'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 17:** Higher competition in the road sector could impact the building quality, said India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra). Ind-Ra said that increased competition in the road sector in FY21, resulting from the National Highways Authority of India's (NHAI) initiative to reduce pre-qualification requirements, may ultimately lead to a moderation in the quality of roads.

"Along with higher order inflows, the sector has also witnessed an increase in competition, resulting in lower-than-expected bid prices," the agency said in a report. "The NHAI's stated plan of action



to monitor the execution closely, especially in cases of abnormally low bids, needs to be implemented strictly to maintain the quality of roads," it added.

The report also cited that engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) players have been

trying to increase their order book visibilities, backed by strong counterparties, to avoid the working capital lockups that could result from delayed realisations.

"Hence, Ind-Ra believes that the EPC players have started increasing their order books towards Central government or public sector entities, which have better financial profiles and are more prompt with respect to making payments," the report said.

"This, along with the increase in budgetary allocations by the Central government in its budget towards the road space, and the fact that the NHAI is regarded as one of the most reputed counterparties, had heightened the competition in the sector," it added.

# OPEC+ plans new output policy meeting today: Sources

REUTERS

**Dubai, July 17:** OPEC+ ministers plan to hold their next meeting Sunday to decide on output policy, three sources within the producers group told Reuters Saturday.

The development comes after Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) reached a compromise last week in a dispute over OPEC+ policy, in a move that should unlock a deal to supply more crude to a tight oil market and cool soaring prices.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, along with Russia and other allies, a group known as OPEC+, still



needs to take a final decision on output policy after talks earlier this month were abandoned because of the dispute between Saudi and the UAE.

OPEC could not be reached for comment outside regular business hours. Sunday's meeting will be held virtually as have all such discussions since last year.

## BIZ BUZZ

### Samsung launches French door refrigerators

**BHUBANESWAR:** Samsung, India's most trusted consumer electronics launched a new range of 3-door convertible French door refrigerators. With this, the South Korean multinational conglomerate is expanding its Side-by-Side portfolio to address the demand for large capacity refrigerators among consumers in India. The 580L French door refrigerator will be available at a starting price of ₹89,990 while the 579L will be available at a starting price of ₹95,990. Consumers buying these refrigerators will get up to 10% cashback on credit and debit cards of leading banks and can also avail no-cost, easy EMIs as low as ₹2,499.

### Jawa pays tribute to 1971 war victory heroes

**BHUBANESWAR:** This year marks the 50th anniversary of the 1971 war victory over Pakistan and Jawa Motorcycles has come to the fore to offer a tribute to the gallantry of our 'Forever Heroes'. Continuing its Forever Heroes initiative, Jawa has introduced two new colours in its modern classic Jawa section to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the war victory. To further contribute to the 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' celebrations along the year, Jawa Motorcycles will be a part of various celebratory rides with the Indian Army that marked important landmark occasions like Kargil Vijay Divas, Battle of Turtuk and Battle of Longewala, with the Jawa Khakhi and Midnight Grey leading the charge.



## ONLINE BOOM

# Industry bigwigs on shopping spree for internet-based cos

AGENCIES

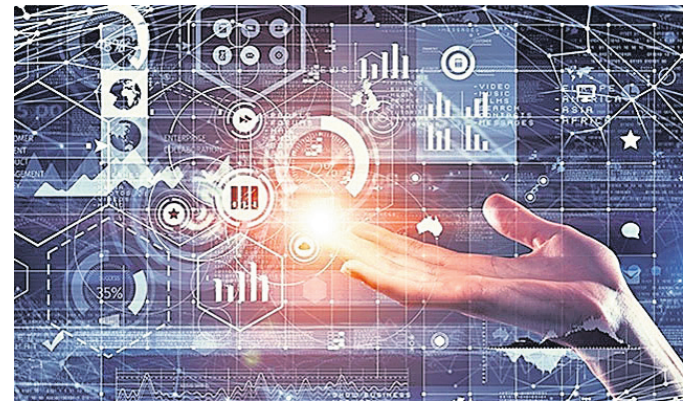
**New Delhi, July 17:** The past one year has witnessed dynamic changes in several aspects and internet and mobile penetration has been a major phenomenon. This growth in the online space has led to major growth of internet-based companies in India, in turn, making them attractive for bigger, deep-pocketed businesses.

Several mega acquisitions have taken place in the past one year, the latest being the announcement made by Reliance Retail of acquiring controlling stake in the home-grown online search engine platform Just Dial for ₹3,497 crore.

Recently, Tata Sons' subsidiary Tata Digital acquired a majority stake in Supermarket Grocery Supplies Private Ltd, the company which is better known as BigBasket. Further, Tata Digital and Reliance

India's internet economy is booming aided by a surge in smartphone penetration and declining internet costs. Internet penetration reached 56% in January 2021 and the country's internet economy is expected to grow from \$250 billion in 2020 to \$335bn in 2025

Retail have acquired majority stakes in digital health companies IMG Technologies Private Ltd (IMG) and Vitalic Health Pvt Ltd and its subsidiaries, collectively known as Netmeds, respectively.



Both the business houses which are betting big on the e-commerce space are adding these online companies to strengthen their respective online offerings.

Speaking to IANS, Technopark Advisors Arvind Singhal, Chairman of Technopark Advisors noted that it is like "putting to-

gether a string of pearls" and completing the products and services you offer.

This larger interest in the internet-based companies can be attributed to the business growth these ventures have witnessed amid the pandemic.

India's internet economy is boom-

ing aided by a surge in smartphone penetration and declining internet costs. Internet penetration reached 56 per cent in January 2021 and the country's internet economy is expected to grow from \$250 billion in 2020 to \$335 billion in 2025.

While Covid-19 has had a major impact on small-scale businesses, big technology companies have benefited from the ensuing digitisation wave.

"We estimate that the pandemic has hastened the digitisation process by 3-5 years as the use of technology became imperative for clients to survive and to capture future demand. In India, the pandemic has particularly fuelled demand in areas such as online entertainment, edtech, e-commerce, fintech, foodtech, gaming and healthtech," said a report by BOB Capital Markets.

Singhal of Technopark was of the view that going ahead more

acquisitions by the industry majors would take place and this competition would be in the best interest of the consumers.

Such acquisitions and investments, he said, have a lot of indirect positive outcome as they encourage other entrepreneurs with the hope of getting major investments and acquisition offers in the future.

"Has Reliance stopped looking for companies to acquire? Certainly no. Has the Tatas stopped looking for companies to acquire? certainly not. We will see many more such acquisitions."

Further, this growth in the internet-based companies will also spur interest among other major businesses looking to strengthen their online portfolio and several more mergers and acquisitions (M&A) may be in the waiting going ahead.

# Newbies begin Lanka audition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, July 17: A bunch of fresh faces will be desperate for a fair T20 World Cup audition when India's different-looking yet formidable white-ball squad face an under-fire Sri Lanka in the six-match limited overs contest, beginning with the first ODI here, Sunday.

Winning any international series will be paramount but one can expect a few combinations being tried out during a series which got delayed by five days due to COVID-19 scare in the Sri Lankan camp. The series comprises three ODIs and as many T20s.

Dasun Shanaka is their 10th captain in four years and barring a classy batsman like Dhananjaya de Silva and a steady pacer in Dishmantha Chameera, this team lacks quality to challenge the might of Indian team led by Shikhar Dhawan.

The suspension of Kusal Mendis and Niroshan Dickwella due to bio-bubble breach in UK along with injury to former skipper Kusal Perera puts Sri Lanka in a tight spot. If they can manage to win one game, that will be an achievement in itself after a disastrous tour of England.

Expect Prithvi Shaw, Vijay Hazare Trophy's top scorer to open alongside Dhawan, while seniors Hardik Pandya and Bhuvneshwar Kumar are expected to find automatic slots in the playing XI.

However there are multiple contender for other slots. Will it be



Prithvi Shaw likely to open the innings alongside his skipper Shikhar Dhawan in the first ODI, Sunday

Devdutt Padikkal or Ruturaj Gaikwad for No.3 slot? Will Suryakumar Yadav's 360 degree hitting ability be used or Manish Pandey get a final chance to show

some consistency?

Will Krishnappa Gowtham's off-spin and big hits be preferred over Krunal Pandya's left-arm darts along with cheeky batting skills? How is Rahul Chahal placed against Yuzvendra Chahal, who hasn't been in best of forms of late?

And who will don the big gloves? Is it Rahul Dravid's protegee Sanju Samson or the mercurial Mumbai Indians man Ishan Kishan, who can really pack a punch?

These are questions that need to be answered by the team management during the next 11 days in Colombo.

India's bench strength has been a matter of envy for all top cricketing nations and has allowed two national teams to compete in different parts of the globe in COVID times.

While Virat Kohli's men are keen to set their dismal Test record in England straight, the team led by Dhawan and coached by Dravid-

the man responsible for creating the pool, will never accept that this is a 'second string' outfit taking on islanders, who are going through their lowest ebb.

A team that has Dhawan and Shaw at the top along with likes of Pandey, Suryakumar, Pandya brothers - Hardik and Krunal, seasoned Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Deepak Chahal along with spin twins Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav can be anything but pushovers.

Some of these players are T20 regulars and while the 50 over format is of lesser importance going into the global event in next three months, both Dravid and Dhawan know the importance of game time.

While there are six uncapped players in this Indian line-up, Dravid had recently made it clear that it will be difficult to provide game time to all the available players.

It is expected that both Dravid

and Dhawan would be consulting with Ravi Shastri and Kohli on what they would be looking for from the assortment of players available with them.

One thing is crystal clear. There aren't many slots available in the Indian team for the T20 World Cup and it would need some out of the world show from the rookies in order to find a slot in the UAE bound team.

Among the newcomers, Varun Chakravarty, who probably will be exclusively used in the shortest format, has a good chance of making the World T20 cut and Chetan Sakariya's left-arm seam bowling is an option they would like to look at.

Chahal and Kuldeep, the pair who could do no wrong till 2019 World Cup, are both on borrowed time right now and it couldn't have been a better time to face a struggling Sri Lanka.

However, Dhawan himself is still not assured of a ticket to UAE extravaganza with Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and KL Rahul being contenders to open the innings.

Dhawan is someone, who can only bat at the top and the skipper himself would like to reassert his supremacy in both formats. Ditto for Bhuvneshwar, who would like to see himself in that T20 attack along with Jasprit Bumrah.

## THE SQUADS

**India:** Shikhar Dhawan (C), Prithvi Shaw, Devdutt Padikkal, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Suryakumar Yadav, Manish Pandey, Nitish Rana, Ishan Kishan (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Hardik Pandya, Krunal Pandya, Krishnappa Gowtham, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Varun Chakravarty, Rahul Chahal, Deepak Chahal, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Chetan Sakariya & Navdeep Saini.

**Sri Lanka:** Dasun Shanaka (C), Dhananjaya De Silva, Avishka Fernando, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Pathum Nissanka, Charith Asalanka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Ashen Bandara, Minod Bhanuka, Lahiru Udara, Ramesh Mendis, Chamika Karunaratne, Dushmantha Chameera, Lakshan Sandakan, Akila Dhananjaya, Shiran Fernando, Dhananjaya Lakshan, Ishan Jayaratne, Praveen Jayawickrema, Asitha Fernando, Kasun Rajitha, Lahiru Kumara & Isuru Udana.



Stand-in head coach Rahul Dravid and Dhawan would be in dilemma over top-five selection considering their roster

# Pogacar eyes second Tour de France crown



Tadej Pogacar keeps hold of the 'Yellow Jersey', while winning the 'White Jersey' (inset top) as the best young rider with the lowest overall time and the 'Polka Dot Jersey' as the 'King of the Mountains' after the end of Stage 20

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Saint-Emilion (France), July 17:** Tadej Pogacar is all but guaranteed to win a second straight Tour de France after completing the penultimate stage unscathed Saturday.

With the final day of the race usually uneventful until the final sprint on the Champs-Elysees, the Stage 20 time trial marked the last serious test after nearly three exhausting weeks.

Given Pogacar's near six-minute advantage at the start, it was always unlikely someone would be able to knock the Slovenian off his perch.

As Wout van Aert claimed the 31-kilometer (19-mile) stage from Libourne to Saint-Emilion, Pogacar played it safe and finished eighth.



Wout van Aert on the podium

He will carry an unsurmountable lead of five minutes, 20 seconds into the final day, a 109-kilometer (68-mile) stage from Chatou to Paris.

Pogacar won the delayed Tour last September at 21 and became the youngest champion in 116 years. He routed all of his rivals in the first time trial in Laval, where he stamped his authority on the race before snatching the yellow jersey in the Alps. He reigned supreme in the Pyrenees, with two consecutive stage wins, and did not need to go full gas in the burning heat enveloping the vineyards of Saint-Emilion.

It was Van Aert's second stage win this year after the versatile Belgian claimed the double ascent of the Mont Ventoux. Van Aert had 21 seconds on second-placed Kasper Asgreen, and Jonas Vingegaard was third, 32 seconds off the pace.

Van Aert can sprint, climb and time trial, but is too heavy to fight for the general classification. He worked in support of Jumbo-Visma leader Primoz Roglic and was given more leeway by his team after Roglic retired from the race.

Overall, Vingegaard cemented his runner-up spot ahead of Richard Carapaz, who lagged 7:03 behind Pogacar.

# Athletes depart for Olympics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jul 17: "How's the josh? It should be high." Sports Minister Anurag Thakur picked up the famous line from Bollywood blockbuster 'Uri' in giving an unprecedented send-off to the first batch of India's Olympic-bound athletes, for whom a red carpet was laid out at the airport Saturday.

Amid loud cheers, claps and plenty of good wishes at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, athletes from the eight disciplines of archery, badminton, table tennis, hockey, judo, gymnastics, swimming and weightlifting boarded the flight to Tokyo.

Notwithstanding the gloom surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the IGI witnessed unprecedented scenes and the hockey teams, arriving from Bengaluru, and the table tennis contingent led by A Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra, were accorded a warm reception on entering the terminal, with the airport staff lining up on both sides as they walked through.

Such was the euphoria surrounding the send-off, that the Government of India arranged for a special Olympic Contingent Clearance immigration line for the Tokyo-bound members.

Beside Thakur, the send-off ceremony was attended by Minister of State for Sports, Nisith Pramanik, Sports Authority of India Director General Sandip Pradhan and Indian Olympic Association (IOA) officials, including President Narinder Batra and Secretary General Rajeev Mehta.

# PADMINI BOWS OUT OF FIDE WORLD CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sochi (Russia), July 17:** Odisha chess star Padmini Rout bowed out of the FIDE Chess World Cup Saturday following a 0-2 loss against Iran's Sarasadat Khademalsharieh after having drawn the two-game mini-match.

Indian Grandmaster Vidit Santosh Gujrathi defeated Brazil's Alexandr Fier in the tie-break to secure a spot in the third round. However, the



A contingent of 88 members, which includes 54 athletes besides support staff and IOA representatives, departed for the Japanese capital on Saturday night to participate in the COVID-hit Tokyo Games, which will begin in a week's time July 23.

Hockey, consisting of both the men's and women's teams, is the largest among all disciplines. "How's the josh? It should be high and that should be the spirit of Indian athletes," Thakur said.

"There are 135 crore Indians and you are blessed to be representing the country, you should be proud. The blessing of entire nation is with you and everyone is hoping for your success."

Reiterating the message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Thakur said the athletes shouldn't take any pressure while representing the

of Russia 0.5-1.5.

In other third-round games on Sunday, Sarin will take on Dmitry Andreikin (Russia) and Harikrishna will clash with Constantin Lupulescu (Romania), while Pragmanandhaa will face Michal Krasenkow of Poland.

D Harika remains the only Indian in the fray in the women's event after R Vaishali and Bhakti Kulkarni lost Friday. She faces Valentina Gunina in the third round.

# OLYMPICS DIARY

TOKYO 2020

**SEOUL:** South Korea's Olympic committee said Saturday it removed banners at the Olympic athletes' village in Tokyo that referred to a 16th-century war between Korea and Japan after the International Olympic Committee ruled they were provocative. In agreeing to take down the banners, the South Koreans said they received a promise from the IOC that the displaying of the Japanese "rising sun" flag will be banned at stadiums and other Olympic venues.



The flag, portraying a red sun with 16 rays extending outward, is resented by many people in South Korea and other parts of Asia who see it as a symbol of Japan's wartime past. The South Korean banners, which drew protests from some Japanese far-right groups, had been hung at the balconies of South Korean athletes' rooms and collectively spelled out a message that read: "I still have the support of 50 million Korean people." This borrowed from the famous words of 16th-century Korean naval admiral Yi Sun-sin, who according to historical lore told King Seonjo of Korea's Joseon Kingdom "I still have 12 battleships left" before pulling off a crucial victory against a larger Japanese fleet during the 1592-1598 Japanese invasions of Korea.

## Protest against Tokyo Games

**TOKYO:** Around two dozen demonstrators marched here Saturday to protest against the upcoming Olympic Games less than a week before its opening. The group was intending to deliver petitions to IOC President Thomas Bach calling for the cancellation of the games and approached the location where the organization's Executive Board Committee was being held. Minor scuffles broke out after the police stopped the protesters along their march around 20 meters away from the venue. The Olympics, already delayed by 12 months because of the pandemic, will be held with virtually no fans. Fans from abroad were banned several months ago, and last week Tokyo and three neighboring prefectures banned all local fans. A few outlying venues are expected to allow a smattering of fans.

## Giant Olympic puppet arrives in Tokyo

**TOKYO:** With just six days to go until the opening ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, the organizing committee held a cultural event "Rediscover Tohoku - MOCCO's Journey from Tohoku to Tokyo" at a park here. The massive animated installation is the centerpiece of the Tokyo 2020 Nippon Festival, which is an official cultural program of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games and is being held under the theme of "The Reconstruction of Tohoku". MOCCO made the first appearance May 15 in Iwate prefecture and then toured across three prefectures in the Tohoku region before arriving in Tokyo, the final destination of the journey. MOCCO is the brainchild of children from the earthquake and tsunami devastated Tohoku region, the area most affected by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. Its name was given by screenwriter Kankuro Kudo, who was inspired by 'MOCCO's Story', a tale written by Japanese comedian and writer Naoki Matayoshi.



# BLAST FROM PAST

With the Tokyo Olympics approaching, let's take a look at interesting facts and trivia about the Games from its previous editions. Here are some highlights and fun facts from the 1924 and 1928 Olympics...

## Paris Games, 1924

### VIII<sup>e</sup> OLYMPIADE PARIS 1924

COMITE OLYMPIQUE FRANCAIS

It was the second time Paris hosted the Games, becoming the first city to host the Olympics twice.

More than 3,000 athletes, including over 100 women, represented a record 44 countries. The Games were attended by over 1,000 journalists.

The 1924 Paris Games introduced the closing ceremony ritual as we know it today, involving the raising of three flags -- the flag of the International Olympic Committee, the flag of the host nation and the flag of the next host nation.

The Olympic motto Citius, Altius, Fortius (Faster, Higher, Stronger) was used for the first time at the Olympics.

It marked the first time that the athletes were accommodated in an Olympic Village, a group of wood cabins.

American swimmer Johnny Weissmuller, known for playing the titular role of Tarzan in Tarzan the Ape Man (1932 version), won three golds at the Games.

The marathon distance was fixed at 42.195 km.

British runners Harold Abrahams and Eric Liddell won the 100 m and the 400 m events, respectively. Liddell refused to compete in the 100-meter dash because it was held on a Sunday and he was an observant Christian. Their stories were depicted in the 1981 movie Chariots of Fire.

The 1924 Paris Olympics were the first to use the standard 50 m pool with marked lanes.

Ireland made its first appearance in the Olympic Games as an independent nation.

## Amsterdam Games, 1928

### OLYMPISCHE SPIELE 1928

#### AMSTERDAM

The Olympic Flame was lit for the first time for the duration of the Olympics, a tradition that continues to this day. The fire was lit in a cauldron that was placed at the top of a tower in the stadium.

Tennis was dropped from Olympic competition because of questions over the amateur standing of many participants.

For the first time, the parade of nations started with Greece, which holds the origins of the Olympics, and ended with the host country, a tradition which has also continued ever since.

The number of female competitors more than doubled, as women were finally allowed to compete in gymnastics and athletics.

The Indian men's hockey team took its first-ever gold medal, beginning a streak of six consecutive gold medals in the sport.

Asian athletes won gold medals for the first time.

Australian rower Henry Pearce stopped midway through his quarter-final to let a family of ducks pass, but still went on to win the race and eventually the gold medal.

Germany participated in the Games once again after 16 years of absence since the 1912 Games. Athletics events were held on a 400-meter track, later becoming the standard for athletics tracks.

The sponsor Coca-Cola made its first appearance at the Olympic Games.