



## TAPSEE'S SPECIAL DAY

Actor Tapsee Pannu has shared a philosophical post on her Instagram handle to mark her birthday

LEISURE P2



## MYANMAR POLLS

Myanmar's junta chief Sunday said that elections would be held and the state of emergency lifted by August 2023

INTERNATIONAL P10



## INDIA IN SEMIS

India enter semifinal of Olympic hockey event after 49 years beating Great Britain 3-1

SPORTS P12

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Blaming Nehru for current woes is not helping. Guess, we should start blaming the Mughals!

## CBSE Class X results by August 8

**New Delhi:** After the declaration of CBSE Class XII Board results 2021, Sanyam Bhardwaj, the Controller of Examinations, CBSE, confirmed that the CBSE Class X Board results, 2021 will be declared in a week. "We will start working on Class X result from Sunday and try to deliver it by next week," said Sanyam Bhardwaj. However, Bhardwaj didn't reveal the exact date and time when the CBSE Class X Board results, 2021 would be declared. Meanwhile, once the result is declared, students can check the CBSE Class X Board results 2021 on the official websites - cbse.gov.in and cbsereults.nic.in.

## Maha reports first Zika virus case

**Pune:** Maharashtra officially confirmed its first case of Zika virus a mosquito-borne viral infection Saturday. A blood sample of the 50-year-old resident of Belsar village (Purandar taluka) in Pune district tested positive for Zika-chikungunya co-infection at Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Virology (ICMR-NIV) in Pune late Friday. The sample was drawn as part of routine surveillance to rule out mosquito-borne illnesses after some villagers showed dengue/chikungunya-like symptoms in Belsar and Parinche villages in early July.

## J&K: No jobs, passport for stone-pelters

**Srinagar:** The CID wing of Jammu and Kashmir Police has ordered the denial of security clearance required for passport and other government services to all those involved in stone-pelting or subversive activities. In an order issued Saturday, the senior superintendent of police (SSP), CID, Special Branch (SB), Kashmir, has directed all the field units under it to ensure that the person's involvement in law and order, stone-pelting cases, and other crime prejudicial to the security of the state be specifically looked into during verification related to passport, service and any other verification related to government schemes.

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP MAX	33.8°C	35.0°C	Forecast
TEMP MIN	25.4°C	25.2°C	
Humidity	80%	71%	Light rain very likely
Rainfall	0.5mm	NIL	

# Sindhu tames Bing Jiao, wins bronze

THE ACE SHUTTLE IS COUNTRY'S FIRST WOMAN TO WIN TWO OLYMPIC MEDALS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Tokyo, August 1:** Reigning world champion PV Sindhu Sunday became only the second Indian and the country's first woman to win two Olympic medals, securing a bronze after a straight-game win over world No.9 He Bing Jiao of China in the badminton women's singles third-place play-off here.

Sindhu, who has returned with medals from each of the big-ticket events such as the Commonwealth and Asian Games and the BWF World Tour Finals in the last five years, out-witted eighth seed Bing Jiao 21-13 21-15 to add a bronze to the silver that she had secured at the 2016 Rio Games.

"It makes me feel really happy because I've worked hard for so many years. I had a lot of emotions going through me - should I be happy that I won bronze or sad that I lost the opportunity to play in the final?" the 26-year-old said after the match.

"But overall, I had to close off my emotions for this one match and give it my best, my all and



Pusarla V Sindhu reacts after winning her women's singles badminton bronze medal match 21-13 21-15 against China's He Bing Jiao, at the 2020 Summer Olympics, in Tokyo, Sunday

think about the emotions. I'm really happy and I think I've done really well. It's a proud moment getting a medal for my country."

Wrestler Sushil Kumar is the first and only other Indian to win two Olympic medals, following up his bronze at 2008 Beijing with silver at the 2012 London edition.

She also became only the fourth player to win two consecutive medals in women's badminton singles across the Olympic history.

Up against an opponent, who had beaten her nine times so far in the last 15 meetings, Sindhu showed great determination to out-play Bing Jiao with her aggression to scoop India's third medal at Tokyo.

Sindhu showed great fortitude as she recovered from her painful semifinal loss to world No.1 Tai Tzu Ying and produced an aggressive show at the Musashino Forest Plaza Sunday.

"It was a fresh game altogether; we both had losses yesterday and came back. For us, it was very important in getting a medal for the country and at the Olympics," Sindhu said.

"It's not easy. It's a big thing. There were really long rallies but I had to be patient and calm. Even though I was leading, I did not relax."

Sindhu galloped to a 4-0 lead early on but Bing Jiao started to engage her in rallies and waited for her to make errors. The rallies started getting intense as Bing Jiao set up the points with her angled returns and flat pushes to claw back at 5-5.

The Chinese didn't give Sindhu pace to play her power game but the Indian soon worked her way around even as her opponent committed a few unforced errors.

Sindhu ended another superb rally with a cross court smash and entered the interval with another down the line hit at 11-8.

The Indian stepped up the pace after the break to gather three more points and looked in total control to pocket the opening game when her opponent went wide. After change of ends, Sindhu continued her aggressive game, egged on by coach Park Tae-Sang from the sidelines, to lead 4-1 with a cross court return.

Bing Jiao tried to change the momentum but Sindhu rode on her attacking half smashes and slices to keep her nose ahead at the interval with a three point advantage.

Bing Jiao erased the deficit quickly before a precise smash on the line helped Sindhu wrest back control. She soon restored the three point advantage with another cross court drop.

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## SC to hear petitions on Pegasus Thursday

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 1:** A two-member Bench, headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana, will hear the petitions. Justice Surya Kant is the second judge on the Bench.

The Supreme Court will be hearing a clutch of petitions seeking a special investigation into the Pegasus scandal involving allegations that opposition politicians, journalists and others were targets of the Israeli spyware.

Senior journalists N Ram and Sashi Kumar; CPM MP John Brittas and advocate ML Sharma have petitioned the top court to direct the government to disclose whether it has obtained a licence for the spyware or used it - directly or indirectly - to conduct surveillance of any kind. They also seek a probe by a sitting or former judge of the Supreme Court into the matter.

Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for senior journalists N Ram and Sashi Kumar, had said that the civil liberties of citizens, politicians belonging to Opposition parties, journalists and court staff were at stake as they were put under surveillance. Headed that Pegasus snooping row was making waves in India and all over the world.

Ram and Sashi Kumar said in their plea that such "targeted surveillance" using a "military-grade spyware" is "grossly disproportionate invasion of the right to privacy". It added, "The Pegasus hack is a direct attack on communication, intellectual and informational privacy, and critically endangers the meaningful exercise of privacy in these contexts."

While Sharma's plea cited media reports on the controversy and said "the Pegasus scandal is a matter of grave concern and a serious attack on Indian democracy, judiciary and country's security", Brittas said the Pegasus spyware allegations give rise to two inferences - which it was done by the Indian government or by a foreign agency.

"If it is done by the Indian government, it is done in an unauthorized manner. The spending of sovereign amount for personal and political interests of the ruling party cannot be permitted. If snooping is done by some foreign agency, it is an act of external aggression which also needs to be dealt in a serious manner", he contended.



# Satellite imaging to resolve North East border disputes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 1:** The Centre has roped in the North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC), a joint initiative of the Department of Space and North Eastern Council (NEC), to undertake satellite mapping of border areas to help "scientifically" demarcate inter-state boundaries.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah came up with the suggestion some time back to commission NESAC with mapping the inter-state border areas and forests in the northeast region so that there is a "scientific" basis to demarcation of borders between states.

According to senior government officials, the task of demarcating boundaries has been given to the North Eastern Space Application Centre (NESAC), a joint initiative of the Department of Space (DOS) and the North Eastern Council (NEC).

**Why is demarcation necessary**

The inter-state border disputes have come under fresh focus after the recent violent clash on Assam-Mizoram border that resulted in the deaths of six Assam Police personnel and a civilian.

The idea for demarcation of inter-state boundaries through satellite imaging was mooted by Union Home Minister Amit Shah a few months ago.



Border disputes are in focus following the recent violent clash along Assam-Mizoram border

**ASSAM-MIZORAM ROW**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah came up with the suggestion to commission NESAC with mapping the inter-state border areas and forests in the northeast region.

Since there shall be scientific rationale in the demarcation of borders, there will be no room for any bias and there shall be better acceptability of the boundary solutions by the states concerned.

Shah had suggested giving the task to NESAC for mapping the inter-state borders and forests in the Northeastern region and coming up with a scientific demarcation of boundaries between states. Once the satellite mapping is done, the boundaries of Northeastern states could be drawn and the disputes could be resolved permanently, the officials said.

The current tensions in the Assam-Mizoram border area first flared up in October of last year and then again in June. On June 5, two abandoned houses along the Mizoram-Assam border were burnt down by unidentified persons, fuelling tension along the volatile inter-state border.

On June 30, Mizoram accused Assam of encroaching upon its land in Kolasib, one of the bordering districts. Assam, in turn, accused Mizoram of building structures and carrying out plantations of betel nuts and banana saplings.

## Woman shot dead in Nuapada district

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nuapada, August 1:** A woman was allegedly shot dead at Duajhar village under Khariar block in Nuapada district Saturday night. Past enmity is said to be the reason behind the crime. The deceased has been identified as Basanti Meher (47), wife of Bibhishan Meher who runs an eatery in the locality.

Sources said that Basanti was at the eatery Saturday night when a person appeared from nowhere and shot her from point blank range before fleeing the spot. Hearing the agonising cries of Basanti, the staff of the hotel and other local residents rushed her to the Khariar sub-divisional hospital. However, doctors declared her "brought dead" on arrival.

On being informed, police reached the hospital and sent the body for post-mortem.

The cops also visited the spot where the crime took place. On the basis of an FIR lodged by the husband of the deceased, police have launched an investigation. Efforts are on to nab the culprit.

Sources said that Basanti had married off her daughter to a person in Jharsuguda. However, she was not on good terms with her daughter and son-in-law. The son-in-law used to visit the eatery quite often and during most of his visits he would have a spat with Basanti. There have been many occasions when he had threatened to kill Basanti.

## Site showing excess Covid mortality data pulled down

GOVT SAYS DATA IS UNAVAILABLE DUE TO 'SERVER PROBLEMS'

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 1:** Key official health data that pointed to excess mortality and disrupted health services during the Covid-19 pandemic have suddenly gone offline, an independent investigation by IndiaSpend shows. While government officials say that the reason for the data being unavailable is "server problems", all pre-pandemic data hosted on the same website remain available.

The National Health Mission's Health Management Information System (HMIS) is a public portal where data from over 200,000 public health facilities - most of them government-run and rural - across India are uploaded every month. The data currently available date back to 2008, and are available down to the sub-district level for every state.

Following reports of disruptions to routine health services during the first nationwide lockdown to stop the spread of Covid-19, which began March 25, 2020, IndiaSpend used these HMIS data to show that immunisations for children as well as access for adults to drugs and treatments for life-threatening diseases had declined sharply during March-May 2020. Following the publication of the article, the data became unavailable from the HMIS website.

In early July 2021, the data became available again on the website, updated up until May 2021. IndiaSpend used the data to show that there had been a large and unexplained spike in mortality in rural India during the pandemic, which rural health experts interpreted as an indication of severe undercounting of Covid-19 deaths.

Following IndiaSpend's report, a team of researchers led by Prabhat Jha, director of the Center for Global Health Research and professor at the University of Toronto, Canada, used the HMIS data as well as other estimates to argue in a preprint paper that India saw 2.7-3.3 million deaths between June 2020 and June 2021 - 7-8 times higher than the official Covid-19 toll.

# Konark to be India's first 'Zero Emission City' by 2022

A 10MW SOLAR PLANT AT KALAHANDI WILL CATER TO CITY'S ENERGY REQUIREMENT

MANISH KUMAR, OP

**Bhubaneswar, August 1:** The state government with assistance from the Union government is working hard to make Konark India's first ever 'Zero Emission City' by September 2022, following which the city will use only renewable sources for its energy demands.

The government agencies involved in the work claimed that several aspects of the project have already been completed, while the remaining work is being completed on war footing. All off-grid (not connected to grids) interventions for the project are likely to be completed by September this year, while work on the remaining grid will be over by September next

year, officials at Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency (OREDA) told Orissa POST.

OREDA has recently taken up the work to set up solar panels at the Konark temple as well as across Konark city. To achieve this, OREDA has been working on two different kinds of interventions,

including off-grid project for the Konark Notified Area Council (NAC) area where smaller solar equipment are being installed.

"There is a vision for the development of the city. In future when the city develops, it will have more energy consumption

demands. We have planned how to reduce the dependency of the city on fossil energy and boost use of renewable energy sources like solar energy," Ashok Choudhury, Joint Director, OREDA, told this correspondent.

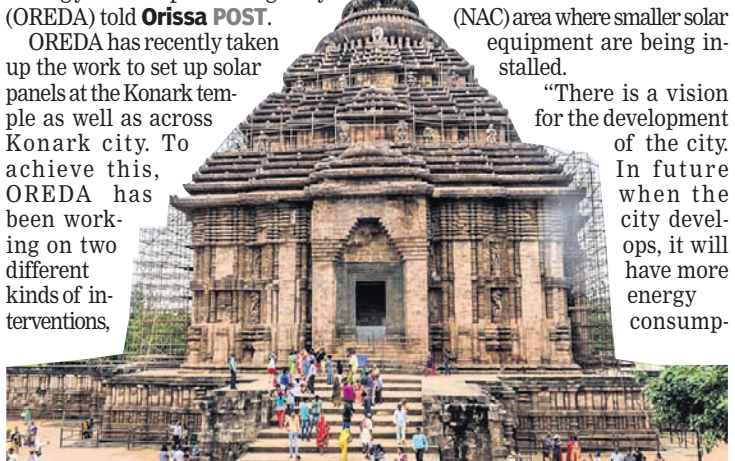
The agency has planned solar trees, drinking water stations, rooftop solar panels, introduction of electric vehicles and battery charging stations. The city will soon host charging points for electric vehicles passenger and commercial vehicles.

"To ensure that Konark becomes a zero emission town, we have calculated its entire energy consumption. It came around 10 Mega Watt. Konark is not a feasible area for setting up of a solar power plant due to its proximity to Bay

of Bengal. Corrosion activities and vulnerability to cyclones could have created problem for such plants technically," he said.

Instead, OREDA plans to install a solar power plant at Kalahandi to cater to the energy demands of the city. A 10MW solar power plant for Konark will be setup soon at Kalahandi soon. The tender process is already over and work will start soon, the official said.

As per the plan, the energy produced in Kalahandi will be supplied to the local grid. "If the energy produced in Kalahandi is in excess of the city's demands, Konark will be emission free. We are likely to complete the project by September 2022. Konark will be India's first zero emission city after achieving the target," he said.



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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### ARIES

Today you will land up in a tricky or hazardous situation. You will feel compelled to wade against the tide, which may not be such a productive thing, says Ganesha. Nothing seems to be going your way. Take some time off for yourself to relieve the stress.

### TAURUS

Today you are going to focus on enhancing your looks and appearances, says Ganesha. Instead of trying to seek satisfaction from within yourself you will be flaunting your fine clothes, your hairstyles. A visit to a beauty parlour cannot be ruled out.

### GEMINI

You will feel out of sorts today. This could result in distances between you and your loved ones. You may fall into the wrong sorts of debates on account of your ill-temper. You need to keep a curb on your emotions to perform better, says Ganesha.

### CANCER

You are most likely to appear edgy and hypercritical to others, says Ganesha. Remain your typical poised self. Try not to be harsh to others, if you wish to save your relationships and sustain a reputable image. Avoid clashes with your superiors and colleagues.

### LEO

You will pay more attention to matters at home. You may take up home renovation projects. You may end up replacing the entire furniture at your place even. You will spend the day enjoying with your family members and friends, says Ganesha.

### VIRGO

Avoid all kinds of prejudice and do not allow intolerance to enter your mind today, advises Ganesha. In all likelihood, you will look around yourself in search of love and affection. You will do well to keep negativity at bay as otherwise it may cow you down.

### LIBRA

Ganesha says that you will be busy in your work field today and will be able to attain your goals in your work field today. Your level of enthusiasm will be at its peak. Today you may be able to meet with a person from the opposite sex who will be your future partner. Ganesha showers you with his blessings always.

### SCORPIO

Being a workaholic may divert your attention from your family and you may have to bear the consequences. It's time to sort differences with your spouse. But, all this while, you need to be calm and patient. Watch your words in case of any arguments, warns Ganesha.

### SAGITTARIUS

You need to increase your tolerance power as you may have to face criticism from close ones. However, it is not feasible to please everyone around. You may just be happy doing basic favours for your loved ones. Ganesha asks you to be patient.

### CAPRICORN

Not everyday is the same day. And, today is one of those days when you feel extremely confused, feels Ganesha. While you won't be able to get rid off negative emotions, your hard work will be paid off and lay a strong foundation for future. You'll not understand whether to feel good about your achievements or experience sadness of confusion. Ganesha throws light on your path and advises you to keep a calm head over your shoulders.

### AQUARIUS

You are already overloaded with work. On the top of it, people around you will conveniently put their share of load on your back, and you will take it most of the times. You, however, will not get bogged down by the additional responsibilities.

### PISCES

Are you fretting over the obstacles you are facing on the business front? Ganesha tackles the root of your problem and advises you to be patient and have faith in your undertakings. Good things will come your way, in good time. You may find it hard to accomplish even run of the mill tasks that you do easily everyday and this could be because of the unfavorable alignment of the stars but this is only a matter of time and this too shall pass.



## BADGLEY DOESN'T FIND SOCIAL MEDIA FULFILLING

Actor Penn Badgley joined social media to do good in the world but, despite his 'pure intention,' he became 'overwhelmed' by the ideas of online popularity. "While trying to have honest interaction with pure intention on these spaces, I found that I was completely overwhelmed," he said.

## JULIANNE MOORE CHANGED HER NATIONALITY TO HONOUR MOM

*Spirit Untamed* star Julianne Moore said she had decided to take up British citizenship in 2011 to honour her Scottish-born mother Anne Love Smith as she has always grown up with a 'strong identity of being part Scottish.'



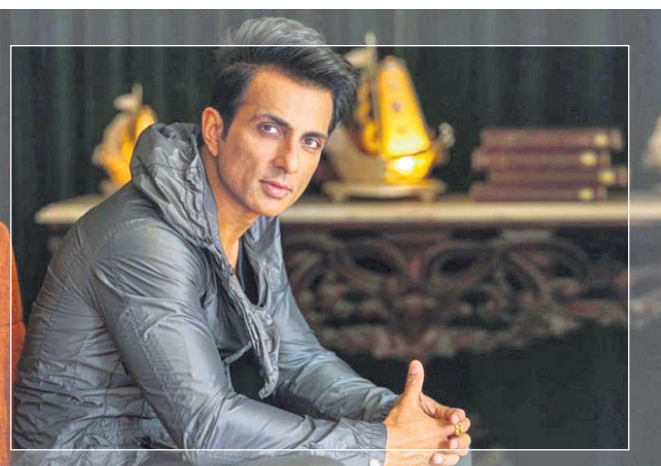
## Pooja excited to be working in *Maaya 4*

**Mumbai:** Actress Pooja Dey, who is known for featuring in web series *Gandii Baat 5*, is now set to feature in Vikram Bhatt's upcoming web series *Maaya 4* which also stars popular actors like Rohit Roy and Rushaad Rana.

The actress is quite impressed with the working style of her co-star. Pooja praised Rohit Roy's grounded nature and said working with him is a great opportunity for her and he is always supportive.

She shared: "Working with Rohit Roy was very comfortable. He is very jolly and cracks jokes on set. He is friendly and looks after everyone. I learnt a lot of things from him too."

Pooja made her acting debut with reality show *Dating in the Dark* and now she is working with Bhatt in his directorial project. She said: "I learnt so much from Vikram sir. I wish to work with him again and again." IANS



## SPECIAL OLYMPICS BHARAT

## Sonu appointed brand ambassador

**Mumbai:** Actor Sonu Sood has consented to support Special Olympics Bharat as the Brand Ambassador. At a virtual event viewed by over 500 athletes, coaches, families, officials and volunteers, he interacted with the special athletes responding to their queries while admiring and appreciating their sporting achievements. The inaugural session introduced him to the #WalkForInclusion, an initiative of the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Region, demonstrated by the athletes, marking his entry into the Inclusion Revolution of the Special Olympics movement.

Sonu will support Special Olympics Bharat in all its endeavours of promoting Inclusion for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in and beyond the sporting arena. Speaking about his role as the Ambassador, the actor said, "Today is a very special day for me and I am delighted to join this journey of Inclusion with Special Olympics Bharat. Through their sporting achievements, each and every Special Olympics Athlete redefines the human spirit that stands tall in the face of every challenge. I wish luck to them to do their best and showcase their abilities with confidence." AGENCIES

## Taapsee turns philosophical on b'day



Actress Taapsee Pannu, who is currently shooting for her maiden production film *Blur*, Sunday rang in her 34th birthday on the sets of the movie.

The *Pink* actor took to her Instagram handle and shared an early morning philosophical post to mark her special day, and wrote that the last one week has been tough for her.

Alongside a beautiful picture of herself gazing at the bright sun, Taapsee wrote, "Last week has been tough, tricky, testing but with this sunrise and this new year I shall again gather the strength to look forward to what life has in store for me."

Taapsee's sisters Shagun and Evania Pannu joined her for a birthday celebration.

Sharing a picture with the birthday girl, Shagun wrote, "Made it in time! #myhappy-place."

Actor Gulshan Devaiah, who was one of the first people to wish Taapsee, also shared a lovely, candid reel of the actor. Along with it, he wrote, "Happy birthday, TAAPSE!! Be candid, be bindaas and be curly." AGENCIES

## Hindi films that broke surrogacy stereotypes

*Doosri Dulhan*, made in 1983, revolves around a childless couple who hire a sex worker to carry their child

The recent OTT-released film *Mimi* is getting a lot of admiration from the audience for the portrayal of the complex subject of surrogacy in a nuanced way.

In the film, Kriti Sanon plays the role of a dancer who agrees to be a surrogate mother for an American couple in exchange for Rs 20 lakh. Before *Mimi*, several other Hindi movies have also dealt with the concept of surrogate motherhood.

Here goes a look at the other Hindi films that tackle the subject of surrogacy:

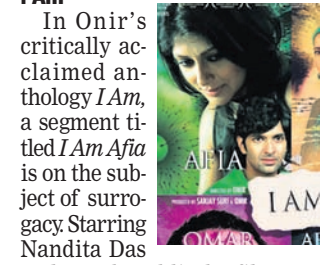


This 1983 film was way ahead of its time. The film revolves around a childless couple who hire a sex worker to carry their child. Directed by Lekh Tandon, the film had popular actors Shabana Azmi, Sharmila Tagore, and Victor Banerjee in lead roles. The film was inspired by the American film *The Baby Maker*.



Meghna Gulzar's directorial debut in 2002 was ahead of its time when romantic genres were

only accepted in the industry. Tabu and Sushmita Sen are seen in powerful roles as best friends who are always there for each other. While Tabu isn't able to conceive due to birth complications, Sushmita offers to be their surrogate mother. As the movie progresses, it shows conflicts between the two best friends.



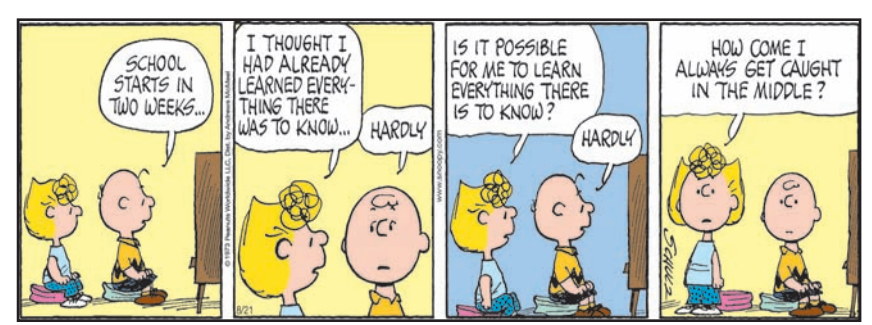
In Onir's critically acclaimed anthology *I Am*, a segment titled *I Am Afta* is on the subject of surrogacy. Starring Nandita Das and Purab Kohli, the film was released in 2010. The film portrays a single woman who desires to be a mother but is scared

of how society will treat her unconventional journey.



The 2019 film is a comedy-drama based on the concept of in-vitro fertilisation. Starring Akshay Kumar, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Kiara Advani and Diljit Dosanjh, it is about a hilarious swap that happens when the two couples attempt surrogacy. However, trouble ensues when they find that the sperm of each couple has been mixed with the other.

## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

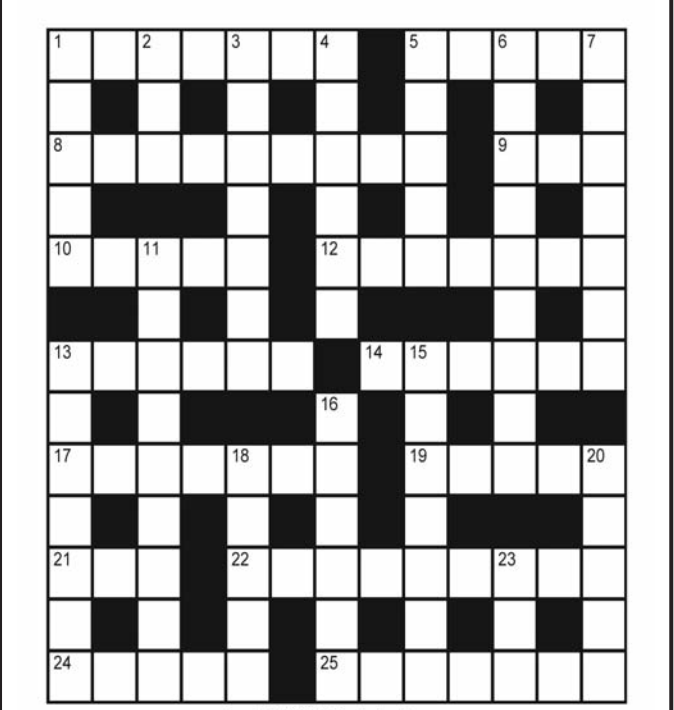


## BREVITY



## FUN post

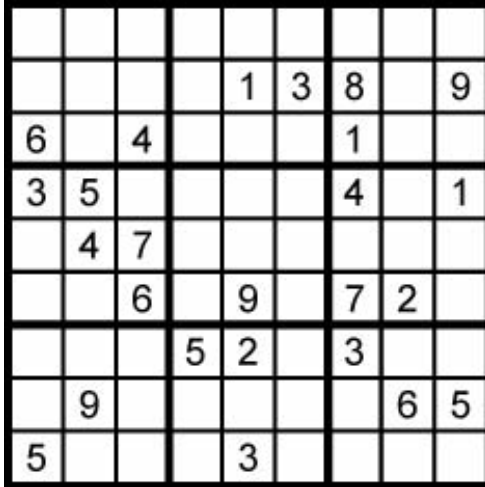
## CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2021 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Transport, for some
  - 5 Confronted
  - 8 Words to a slowpoke (5,1,3)
  - 9 Safety device
  - 10 Relinquished
  - 12 Oil source
  - 13 Sound quality
  - 14 Aquitania locale
  - 17 Improvement
  - 19 Sin city
  - 21 Follow
  - 22 Old printer type (3,6)
  - 24 Flightless birds
  - 25 File on a person
  - 4 Sign up
  - 5 Unclear
  - 6 Troubled
  - 7 Easement of tensions
  - 11 Rabble-rouser
  - 13 Storm warning?
  - 15 Scamps
  - 16 Not standing
  - 18 Right hands
  - 20 Kitchen utensil
  - 23 King (Fr.)
- Down**
- 1 No-frills
  - 2 Chinese brew
  - 3 Cheese type

## SUDOKU

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



## SOLUTIONS



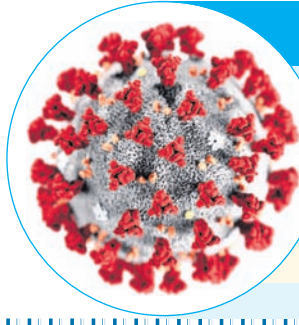
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## FISHING TIME

A man casts his fishing net into Bindusagar tank in the Old Town area of Bhubaneswar, Sunday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	19,88,46,122	17,95,05,901	42,38,143
India	3,16,55,824	3,08,20,521	4,24,351
Odisha	9,78,705	9,58,601	5,966

# Cinemas to reopen, rules dispirit owners

**Orissa POST** had earlier highlighted the financial burden on cinema halls in Bhubaneswar due to the Covid induced lockdown. Maintenance and equipment costs, salary bills and other expenses have already pushed the owners to the edge. Big cinema halls in the City have incurred losses of around Rs 20-30 lakh each due to the restrictions



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, August 1:** After months of shut down, the cinema halls in the City are getting ready to run again. However, the rules and guidelines set by the state government have upset the owners. As per the guidelines, halls have been granted permission to run with 50 per cent seating capacity. However, people visiting theatres are required to furnish certificates of their second dose of vaccination. Maharaja cinema hall owner Biswajit Mohapatra said, "The weekend lockdown is not good news for us as our business heavily depends on weekends. Also, as per the guidelines, the 8 pm deadline will hamper our business as there won't be night shows." "We have started sanitising the seats and hall premises. We will be ready to reopen the halls after August 5," said Mohapatra.

**Orissa POST** had earlier highlighted the financial burden on cinema halls in Bhubaneswar due to the lockdown. Maintenance and equipment costs, salary bills and other expenses have already pushed theatre owners to the edge. Big cinema halls in the City have incurred losses of around Rs 20-30 lakh each due to the restrictions. Earlier, the cinema halls were allowed to open in January this year. Because of the second Covid wave, they were shut down again. The fear continues among the owners as there are talks of a third wave. This apart, the demand for second dose vaccination certificate is problematic to the cinema hall crew as checking the authenticity of so many certificates will be a humongous task. The All Odisha Cinema Hall Owners' Association president and owner of Sriya-Swati-Stutee Cine-

Complex, Bijendra Mohanty said, "It will be difficult to bring the audience back to cinema halls as there was no movie show for the last several months. Gone are the days when a movie ticket was considered a catch. Emergence of private television channels, piracy, and OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime have dented our business. It will take some time to recover." "We demand the government to at least allow night shows as people mostly come to cinema halls at this hour," Mohanty added. Producer Shridhar Martha said that they would take steps towards releasing their new movies 'Dil Mora Manena' and 'Patnagarh' soon. "The cinema halls will take some time to resume shows. The release dates of our movies would be announced after due consultation with cinema hall owners," Martha added.

# CM congratulates Indian men's hockey team

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 1:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik congratulated the Indian men's hockey team Sunday for reaching the semi-finals of the Olympics after 49 years. The Chief Minister also conveyed his best wishes for the last four encounter against Belgium to be played August 3. Expressing his joy over the India's victory over Great Britain, the Chief Minister said the national team have come out with flying colours in the quarterfinals. He expressed hope that the team will keep up the momentum to win the semifinals and as well as the final at the Tokyo Olympics. It should be stated here that the Odisha government is the main sponsor of the Indian men's and women hockey teams till 2023. Odisha is the only state that in India which is promoting the national game and has become the cradle of hockey. The Odisha gov-



**Keen enthusiast:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik watching the India-Great Britain Olympics quarterfinal game which was played Sunday at Tokyo

ernment trying its best to help India regain their lost glory in the global scenario. Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president Narinder Dhruv Batra thanked Patnaik for extending his best wishes to the India team for their success against Great Britain.

## Decision on school reopening soon: Min

**Bhubaneswar:** School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash Sunday said that discussions are underway regarding the reopening of schools for the students of class I to class VIII. The department will come to a decision regarding this soon. The statement from the Minister came after the state government issued fresh Covid-19 guidelines for the month of August Saturday. While announcing the guidelines for this month, SRC Pradeep Jena said that the School and Mass Education department has complete authorisation to take a decision on whether to reopen schools for the students studying in Class I to Class VIII at this juncture or not. Notably, the state had announced the date for reopening of schools for students of Class X and Class XII to be July 26 after assessing the Covid-19 situation in the state.

# Residents breathe easy as parks reopen today

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, August 1:** With the state government easing Covid restrictions, the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) here has geared up to reopen parks Monday with strict adherence to the norms laid down by the state government to check the infection. Parks and other recreational facilities across the state were remained out of bounds for people for around three months in the wake of the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic. CMC sources said parks in the Silver City here will remain open for people from 6am to 10 am and 4pm to 6pm on the weekdays. Those visiting the parks have to follow Covid appropriate behaviour like wearing facemasks and maintaining social distance. The civic body has barred people from using gym equipment at the parks. CMC deputy commissioner Ajaya Kumar Mohanty said that adequate arrangements are in place to make sure that Covid appropriate behaviour are followed by the park visitors. "There are around 45 parks in the CMC area. While almost all the parks have been sanitised, grass-cutting will be carried out at all these facilities once in a week. All the major parks will have security guards to keep a tab on people visiting the facilities and ensure that they strictly adhere to the Covid norms," Mohanty said. The decision to reopen parks in



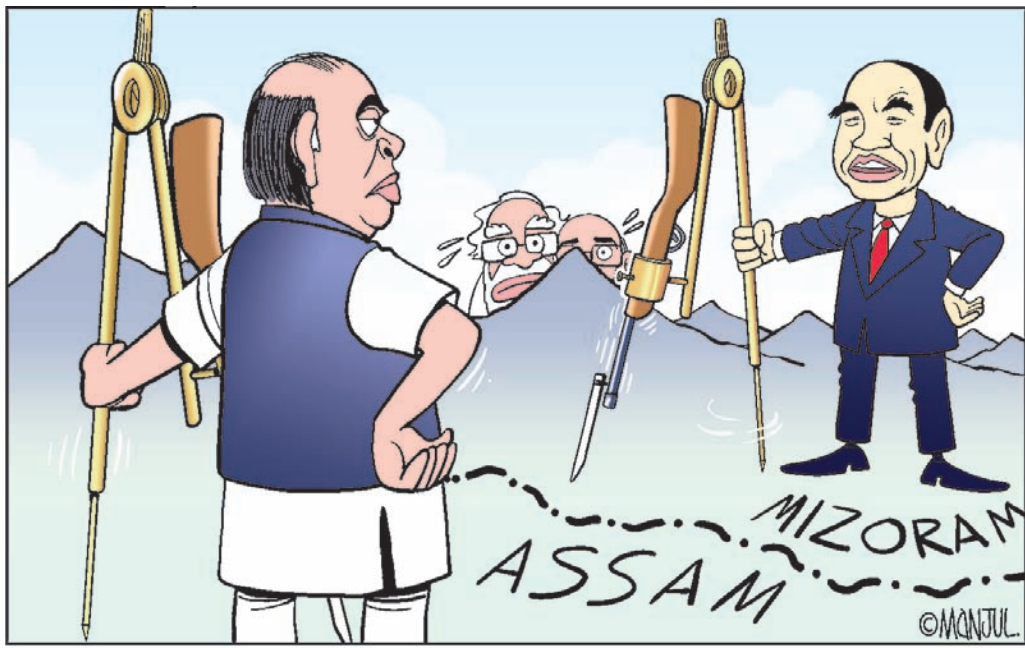
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## Man commits suicide over 'financial stress'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 1:** A 45-year-old man Sunday committed suicide due to financial miseries, sources said. The deceased was identified as Dukhishyam Pattanaik of Pokhariput area under Airport police limits. According to sources, Patnaik was under severe financial stress as he suffered huge losses in business recently. Pattanaik had borrowed money from some people for his business. Pattanaik Sunday hanged himself from the ceiling of his bedroom with a rope while his family members were away. Pattanaik's wife informed police when he did not open the door. Police rushed Patnaik to Capital Hospital, where he was declared dead-on-arrival.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# Khurda farmer grows Himachal apple in his orchard

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khurda, August 1:** While many insist that Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir apples can't be grown in hot climate of Odisha, a farmer from Arikama village under Bolagarh block in Khurda district has proven them wrong. Arun Kumar Nayak, who studied only till Class VIII, has successfully turned a patch of his land into an apple orchard here and has been a source of inspiration for many. Narrating about his success story, Nayak said the seed of the desire to grow Himachal Pradesh apple in his land was implanted in his mind after he saw YouTube videos of apple farming there. "I then consulted agriculture experts, got my soil tested and prepared accordingly. I gathered information about an organisation in Himachal Pradesh from YouTube and placed an order for 30 saplings around two years ago. I planted the saplings in pits each measuring three feet wide and three feet deep. Organic manure such as cow dung was used to process the soil,"



he said.

"Initially, three saplings withered and died. But I did not lose hope. I kept on working in my orchard and tending to the saplings. The saplings grew up to small trees and they began flowering around six months ago. Now, each tree has a few green apples. Seeing apple trees in my garden laden with apples, my joy knew no bound," Nayak narrated. Nayak said he had to wait for one-

**This is the first time that the apple trees have borne fruits. I have been told that each tree can initially produce 10 to 20 kilograms of apples. Thereafter, the production will rise as the trees grow older**

ARUN KUMAR NAYAK

and-a-half years to see apples in his orchard. "This is the first time that the apple trees have borne fruits.

I have been told that each tree can initially produce 10 to 20 kilograms of apples. Thereafter, the production will rise as the trees grow older," added the 40-year-old farmer. Nayak has recently planted saplings of top-quality guava and Indian Jujube in his orchard. He said he had ordered the guava and Indian Jujube saplings online. Only organic manure is being used in his orchard. Besides these, Nayak is cultivating paddy and vegetables in his farmlands. "We also raise fish in our pond. We had never thought that apples could be grown in the hot and humid climate of Khurda. Now, we are sure that apple farming is possible in Odisha too," said Nayak's wife Lili. Speaking about Nayak's achievements, a fellow villager Jadhishtra Nayak said Arun may not be highly qualified, but his self-confidence, dedication and never-say-die attitude has transformed him into a successful farmer. As things stand, youths and other farmers from the village and nearby areas are taking a page from his book, he added.

## 27 students qualify NTSE Stage-II exam

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 1:** Students from FIITJEE Odisha Centers demonstrated outstanding scholastic brilliance in National Talent Search Exam (NTSE 2020) conducted by the NCERT. In NTSE Stage-II, a total of 27 students from the institute passed with flying colors. The Stage II of this national level exam was delayed owing to the Covid-19 pandemic and was later held February 7, 2021. Mahandeep Parida, who scored 155 in the exam, said, "For me, qualifying National Talent Search Exam is the first step towards my dream. NTSE was all about battle of brains, where concept and reasoning were to be used to crack the questions within the stipulated time," he said. Parida added, "In order to qualify the exam, it was important for me to train my brain to get accustomed to the required type of ability." Ambarish Pradhan, Kanishk Modi, Veda Raju and Pratyush Kumar Das are other top students from the institute who have qualified the exam.

## Aspirants demand probe into 'recruitment scam' in OSSC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 1:** Aspirants Sunday demanded probe into the alleged recruitment scam on part of the Odisha Staff Selection Commission (OSSC) following the arrest of Biranchi Narayan Sahoo, personal secretary to the Member of OSSC Saturday. The students preparing for various competitive examinations under OSSC were reportedly seen reading books in open at MLA colony here to protest against the alleged malpractices in recruitment examinations. They demanded probe by a special investigation team to unearth the alleged racket fixing jobs by receiving bribe. The vigilance, during search operations, stumbled upon admit cards of applicants, who had applied for recruitment tests conducted by the OSSC, at the residences of Sahoo. The seizure of huge number of admit cards during the raids indicated towards the Sahoo's involvement in alleged 'job for money' scam in the OSSC recruitment process. Many opined that further probe into the matter would unearth the involvement of some more officials of OSSC in the alleged scam. As per rules, the private secretaries are attached to Chairman and Members of the Commission

who assist them in various official works. Additionally, the members form an integral part of Viva-Voce Boards and other recruitment process as well. So the possibility of other officials' involvement in the racket cannot be ruled out. Meanwhile, vigilance sources revealed that the names of Sahoo's wife and brother-in-law are in the FIR on charges of helping Sahoo amass assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. The suspected officer has allegedly purchased many properties in his wife's name. She is included in the FIR as an abettor. Similarly, the vigilance sleuths have recovered Rs 13,31,000 from the house of his brother-in-law. Notably, Sahoo was found to be possessing disproportionate assets of 268 per cent of his known sources of income. The officials arrested Sahoo by registering a case (16/21) Saturday. Earlier, the officials of anti-corruption wing had Friday carried out simultaneous raids on houses of Sahoo and his relatives at six places in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. They had unearthed properties worth over Rs 3.79 crore that included Rs 25 lakh in cash, 1.5 kg gold ornaments worth over Rs 60 lakh and 14 landed plots in Bhubaneswar, Khurda and Puri possessed by Sahoo.



# Sundargarh sees drop in delivery deaths

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sundargarh, August 1:** The number of maternal deaths during delivery in Sundargarh district has shown a decline in the past six months as compared to the previous period. As per the district health department, the number of deaths from November 2020 to April 2021 is recorded as 9 against 19 recorded between May and October last year, thanks to the launching of mother and child health programme 'Matrujyoti'.

Reports said that 'Matrujyoti', is a flagship programme launched by the Sundargarh district administration, with the financial support of the District Mineral Foundation (DMF). The scheme offers four time free ultrasound and other tests to every woman during pregnancy.

Thus, the service launched in November 2020 has thrown up encouraging results and it is hoped to be instrumental in curbing Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) in the district in the long run.

Contacted, Dr Saroj Kumar Mishra, chief district medical officer (CDMO) of Sundargarh district said, "The MMR in Sundargarh district is currently 101 (for every one lakh live births), and it has been our constant en-



**MATRUJYOTI YOJANA**  
'Matrujyoti' is a flagship programme launched by the Sundargarh district administration, with the financial support of the District Mineral Foundation

As per the monthly data from May-October 2020, the maternal mortality cases recorded were 19. However, the number recorded in the next six months has come down to 9

Under 'Matrujyoti', over 28,000 pregnant women of the district are going to avail the benefit annually. Over 19,500 ultrasound tests have already been carried out and more than 250 high risk cases have been addressed with necessary medical care and advice

deavour to further check the same."

The 'Matrujyoti' programme launched by the district administration has started giving rich dividends in the said direction. The health condition of the pregnant mother and the unborn baby is assessed through ultrasound tests ex-

tended under the service. Special attention is given to the high risk cases by providing proper medical intervention at the right time, the CDMO said.

As per the monthly data from May-October 2020, the maternal mortality cases recorded were 19. However, the number recorded in

the next six months, after the launch of 'Matrujyoti', has come down to 9. Moreover, not a single death of expectant mothers was recorded in the months of January and March 2021.

Although the numbers are for six months only, it is needless to say that the flagship project 'Matrujyoti' is going to be one of the key factors in reducing IMR (Infant Mortality Rate) & MMR in the district, the CDMO added.

Under 'Matrujyoti', over 28,000 pregnant women of the district are going to avail the benefit annually. To achieve these objectives, seven government hospitals and 45 private clinics have been empanelled by the district administration. Anganwadi and ASHA workers along with members of Gaon Kalyan Samiti (GKS) and the local community have been roped in as they play a vital role in ensuring the success of this programme.

The programme which was on hold for a temporary period due to Covid-19 has resumed from July 1. Over 19,500 ultrasound tests have been carried out since the inception of the programme. Similarly, more than 250 high risk cases have been addressed with necessary medical care and advice.

## PROBE STARTS INTO INDRAVATI CANAL BREACH

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koksara, August 1:** An investigation has been launched into the occurrence of a breach on Indravati Lift Irrigation Project canal near Majhiguda village under this block in Kalahandi district, Sunday.

A breach of around 10 feet had occurred in the left embankment of the canal on the intervening night of Friday and Saturday. As a result, hectares of agricultural land in the region were submerged.

According to sources, a small breach eventually broke a large portion of the embankment near Majhiguda village and submerged large swathes of farmlands in the canal water.



Local villagers had blamed it on low-quality construction works. The consultancy firm that had undertaken the construction of the mega irrigation project is responsible for the breach, many villagers alleged.

The villagers claimed that a minor crack had earlier developed in the canal a few days ago after the project was inaugurated in 2021. The 10-foot-wide breach occurred as no immediate steps were taken to repair the cracks, they added.

Sources said, a high-level team headed by the internal vigilance cell engineer-in-chief Ashim Mohapatra Sunday visited the site and started an investigation into the matter.

"Larsen and Toubro - the implementing agency of the lift canal system has been entrusted to look after its maintenance for five years. I have just come here to examine the exact reason behind the breach. I have collected the sample and it will be sent to laboratory for testing," said Mohapatra.

The investigating team which comprises Quality Control chief along with Water Resources department officials will examine the exact cause behind the breach in the canal and submit a detailed report to the state government.

# Irregularities alleged in Anwasha scheme



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna, August 1:** To ensure quality education for students belonging to ST and SC categories, the government is executing Anwasha programme. But the scheme is allegedly marred by irregularities in Kalahandi district.

Allegations have come from various quarters that lakhs of rupees under the scheme are provided to some private schools, in violation of guidelines. They have sought to know how far the SC and ST category students are benefitting from the scheme.

They have demanded a high level probe into the alleged irregulari-

ties. As per letter-2956 (December 27, 2017) and letter-5891 (July 10, 2021), the School and Mass Education department has laid down certain conditions in case of granting funds under ANWESHA to private schools.

The private schools having certificate of recognition or NOCs by right authorities, quality playgrounds, safe drinking water, electric inverters, libraries, fire safety and some other facilities are entitled to get funds. Besides, these schools should be affiliated to CBSE along with hostel facilities for the SC and ST students from Class-1 to Class-10.

It was alleged that officials looking after the execution of the scheme have bent the rules and provided lakhs of rupees to some schools which fail to fulfill many conditions or are lacking facilities as prescribed by the department. Between 2015-16 and 2021-22, crores of rupees have been provided to some schools towards admission and re-admission of students.

Though the locals have repeatedly drawn attention of the state government and the district administration about the irregularities, no step has been taken yet, it was alleged.

Notably, the scheme is aimed at fulfilling hopes and aspirations of the parents of ST & SC communities to get their children educated like public schools in urban areas in partnership with urban educational institutions (private, aided and other central government managed schools) located in urban centres or district headquarters.

The scheme is currently being implemented in 17 districts like Angul, Bargarh, Bolangir, Deogarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Mayurbhanj, Nuapada, Rayagada, Sambalpur and Sundargarh.

## FOLK DANCE



Artists performing a traditional dance on the occasion of Sambalpuri Day held at Madri Kalo Bhawan in Sundargarh, Sunday

# Beekeeping leads women to self-sufficiency

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Boudh, August 1:** As the state government has taken a host of measures for women empowerment, a group of women in Boudh district has been able to earn well from bee keeping. They have become self-sufficient from beekeeping and shown a way for earning a healthy income.

According to reports, an SHG of Landeikur village under Harbhanga block received funds from the bank to take up income generating activities. 35 women of the village who



## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

An SHG of Landeikur village under Harbhanga block received funds from the bank to take up income generating activities. 35 women of the village who used to earn their livelihood from daily wages were led by Rebati Beheram to take up the opportunity.

Thanks to the bees, the women members said, they were able to access fresh produce from their kitchen gardens pollinated by the industrious insects

used to earn their livelihood from daily wages were led by Rebati Beheram to take up the opportunity.

The SHG started apiculture or beekeeping and mushroom farming, apart from vegetable farming. Over the years, the women members worked hard and managed to grow their farming activities, which have made them self-sufficient today.

The SHG had earlier received ₹3 lakh from ORMAS with which they started preparing turmeric powder, selling resins and other minor forest produces.

## FIRE MISHAP



Fire personnel pour water on an eatery to douse fire at Angul bus-stand, Sunday

# Top Maoist carrying ₹4L bounty on head surrenders in Bolangir

AGENCIES/PNN

**Bolangir, August 1:** A top Maoist cadre carrying a cash reward of ₹4 lakh on his head surrendered before the Bolangir police Sunday in the presence of DIG (Northern Range, Sambalpur) Deepak Kumar and Bolangir SP Nitin Kusalkar.

The Left wing ultra, identified as Aitu Korsa, has several criminal cases filed against him in the state, including IED explosion and murder, Kumar said.

He was an area committee member (ACM) of Committee of Kandhamal-Kalahandi-Boudh-Nayagarh (KKBN) division of the outlawed organisation.

Aitu is a resident of Mankelli village under Gangaloor police limits in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh. However, he was active in several divisions of the Maoist party in Odisha.

"He (Aitu) has been working in the state since last eight years. He had earlier worked in the Bolangir, Bargarh and Mahasamund (BBM) division of the CPI (Maoist) and later joined the KKBN division. The State government's surrender and rehabilitation policy for the Maoists are encouraging these cadres to surrender," said the DIG



**The Left wing ultra, identified as Aitu Korsa, has several criminal cases filed against him in the state, including IED explosion and murder**

(Northern Range, Sambalpur), Deepak Kumar:

"Responding to the appeal of Odisha Chief Minister and the DGP, I have surrendered before the police. Maoists have been involved in protests against the developmental schemes in remote areas. This is wrong and therefore I decided to give up arms," said Aitu after surrendering in the

Bolangir police headquarters. Meanwhile, DIG Abhay appreciated the efforts of Bolangir police and appealed Maoists to shun violence and surrender.

"I again appeal to the Maoists to desist from violence and surrender. They should join the mainstream." "Aitu Korsa, ACM of KKBN divn, r/o Chhattisgarh, surrendered before DIG NR today at Bolangir. I again appeal to the Maoists to desist from violence and surrender. They should join the mainstream. Well done SP, Bolangir," tweeted the DGP.

Earlier, July 18, three other Maoist cadres, including two women, had surrendered before the Odisha Police.

## MURDER OF 5-YR-OLD Locals gherao police station

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, August 1:** In a gruesome crime, a youth killed the five year old son of his neighbour over past enmity at MV-19 village under Sadar police limits in Malkangiri district, Saturday.

The deceased was identified as Ankit Mandal, 5, son of a local resident and the accused as Bikash Ray in the village. The boy was playing outside his house when he suddenly went missing at around 11am. Meanwhile, hundreds of villagers visited the Model Police Station in Malkangiri, Sunday and demanded stern action against the arrested youth.

They relented after Malkangiri IIC Ram Prasad Nag intervened and assured of action against the accused youth. Family members searched for him but failed to trace him. Neighbours soon joined hands and traced him in an unconscious state in the house of Bikash Ray in the neighbourhood. They rushed him to the MV-19 primary health centre where a doctor pronounced him brought dead.

Later, Bikash surrendered in the police station and admitted to the murder. Malkangiri police registered a case and arrested Bikash in this connection. The body was sent for post-mortem. Tension was palpable as a team of police reached the village and tried to defuse the tension arising out of the boy's killing.

# Estuarine crocodile nesting sites dip to 84 in Bhitarkanika

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kendrapara, August 1:** The number of nesting sites of estuarine crocodiles in the marshy wetlands of Bhitarkanika National Park has dipped to 84 from 103 last year, a senior official said Sunday.

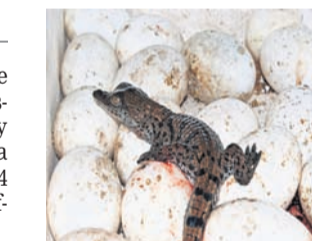
Tidal waves during cyclone Yaas might have washed away several crocodile nesting sites but the factors behind the drop are being examined, JD Pati, Divisional Forest Officer of Rajnagar Mangrove (Wildlife) Forest Division said.

Female crocodiles lay around 50-60 eggs, and the hatchlings usually emerge from the nests after 70-80 days of incubation, he said.

The national park houses an estimated 70 per cent of the country's estuarine or saltwater crocodile population, conservation of which started in 1975.

The number of saltwater crocodiles, which are not found in any other river system in Odisha, stood at 1,768 as per the census conducted in Bhitarkanika in January this year.

Bhitarkanika, a Ramsar site,



is one of the richest storehouses of mangrove genes. In the national park, researchers have come across 11 of the 70 mangrove species that were facing a threat of extinction around the world.

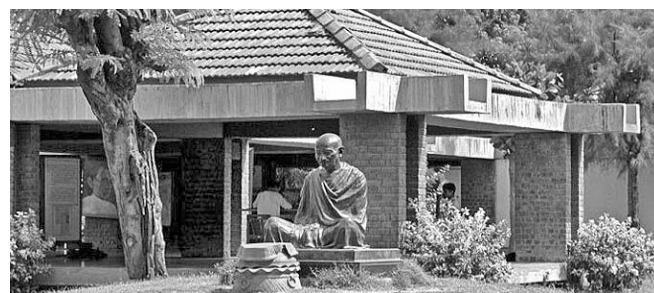
Officials claimed that conservation measures by the state Forest Department over the years have led to a systematic rise in the number of crocodiles. Bhitarkanika continues to remain out of bounds for tourists in view of the global Covid-19 pandemic. It remains closed from May 31 to July 31 every year to ensure disturbance-free nesting of crocodiles, the official said.

Incidentally, Odisha is the only state in the country where three species of crocodiles - saltwater, gharial and mugger - are found inhabiting the river systems.

**OFFICE OF COLLECTOR & DISTRICT MAGISTRATE, ANGUL (EXCISE SECTION)**  
**NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR SETTLEMENT OF OUT STILL LIQUOR AND I.M.F.L 'OFF' SHOPS FOR ANGUL DISTRICT**  
No. 1834/ Ex. Dated. 31.07.2021 & 1837/Ex. dt.31.07.2021  
Applications are invited for settlement of three Out still liquor shop i.e. Lohabandha, Purunakote and Anadipur and one I.M.F.L shop i.e. Sanahulla of ANGUL DISTRICT for the year, 2021-22 onwards by way of lottery.  
The persons interested to participate may apply online in 'Form - B' through the portal 'http://stateexcise.odisha.gov.in' from Dtd. 02.08.2021 to 15.08.2021 (by 5.00 P.M). Lottery will be held on Dtd. 25.08.2021 (Wednesday) at Conference Hall of Zilla Parishad, Angul from 11.00 A.M onwards.  
The details of the shops to be settled and the terms and conditions applicable thereof are available in the said website and the notice boards of the District Excise Office, ANGUL and Collectorate, ANGUL.  
NB: - The TOLL-FREE Number for the service is - 155335 or 18003456770 and Operation Hours - All days of week except Sunday, 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. Sd./- COLLECTOR, ANGUL Dt.-31.07.2021

FOCUS SOCIETY

# BID TO ERASE BAPU'S LEGACY



**Bapu in his bequest clearly stated that the Sabarmati Ashram has to work for the uplift and benefit of Harijans. How will the proposed revamp achieve this?**

Bapu lived in the Ashram. Ever since then, families and descendants of the residents have continued to live in these tenements, some for over a hundred years continuously. Now they are faced with the possibility of being evicted, uprooted, displaced.

So, for the past two years, whenever I visit the Ashram, the current occupants of these properties, who feel threatened by the government's proposal, meet me with a plea to safeguard their Ashram and of course, their residences. I have grown up knowing many of them as belonging to the extended Ashram family. The thought of them being displaced is disturbing, and naturally they are anxious.

Various reports in the media suggest that the government is in a very advanced stage of planning the 'takeover' and revamp of the Ashram. Stories have circulated about the architect being appointed and detailed plans of the redesign of the Ashram keep appearing in the media and are in circulation; many of the reports are conflicting. One says that the government possesses a photograph of the Ashram as it was in 1947 when India became independent and it intends to restore the Ashram to that state. The sinister implication of this move is that even the acclaimed and award-winning Sanghrhalaya, designed and built by the eminent architect Charles Correa will also be removed. Why? Because it was commissioned and inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru? Another re-

port claims that a 'grand', 'world class' tourist attraction is planned. Bapu in his bequest clearly stated that the Sabarmati Ashram has to work for the uplift and benefit of Harijans. How will the proposed revamp achieve this? There are Harijan families living in the Ashram precinct, they too face eviction because of the 'proposed' revamp. How does that benefit them? The colonial government forcefully seized homes of farmers and Satyagrahis causing much distress to Bapu. Why is an Indian government acting like the authoritarian and tyrannical colonial administration?

All this and much more about the plans and intentions of the government are unofficially known, but nothing has been officially said. One thing is certain that it is a 'PM's Project' and like all the other 'PM's Projects' it is going to be steam-rolled through, and shoved down our throats. His men in Gujarat are driving the bulldozer. The present residents have given me many details, but when I talk to the trustees of the several trusts associated with the Sabarmati Ashram, who are custodians and caretakers of the Ashram, they keep reiterating that they have no 'official' information or intimidation from the government, even now. Tenants and residents say they have been approached, some say threatened, to accept compensation and move out amicably or face being evicted. Yet the trustees have no official intimidation. The whole thing smells bad, rotten and reeks of hidden and ill

intentions. Otherwise, why this shroud of secrecy? What is the government hiding? This is the background of what is happening to the Sabarmati Ashram. Soon it may be irrevocably lost!

Bapu said, 'My life is my message,' that is his legacy. In today's times it is very difficult to imagine the simplicity, frugality and openness of that man. His was a truly transparent life, there was no public man and a hidden, private person. In present times it is difficult to imagine, let alone believe that such a person ever lived. Sabarmati Ashram and Sevagram Ashram at Wardha are the visual symbols of the man's simplicity, his frugal existence, his transparency. On visits to Sabarmati Ashram, at Hridaykunj, I have often heard children ask their parents, "Such a great man lived in such a small and simple hut? He sat and worked in such an open place." It is when they see Hridaykunj at Sabarmati Ashram and Bapu Kutir at Sevagram that Bapu becomes believable to the present generation. When these are lost, Bapu will become a myth. Mythology is so convenient to live with and tweak as required.

Sabarmati Ashram today enshrines the ideals of Bapu's life and legacy. It is sparse, it is simple and it is starkly frugal. Those who understand Bapu's ideals and life know that this is his true legacy and the Sabarmati Ashram portrays them truly. It is only those who have never understood Bapu and are not bothered about understanding him, let alone emulating him, who feel that it needs to be made 'grand'. Their intention is not to preserve or conserve the Ashram or make it more attractive; their intention is to obliterate it and the legacy it enshrines. To convert a shrine of our Independence movement and the life of the couple who lived there into a tourist plaza, an amusement park. That is their real intention. The question now is not about saving Sabarmati Ashram, it is about saving the legacy of Bapu and Ba.

**The writer, a peace activist, heads the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation.**

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Tushar Gandhi

**VARIOUS REPORTS IN THE MEDIA SUGGEST THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS IN A VERY ADVANCED STAGE OF PLANNING THE 'TAKEOVER' AND REVAMP OF THE SABARMATI ASHRAM**

For the past two years, frequent reports in the press suggest that the government of India through the government of Gujarat is going to redevelop Sabarmati Ashram and build a 'Grand World Class' monument there. There are many, very loud rumours but there is very scant official information; it seems officially they prefer secrecy. During this time, whenever I have visited Sabarmati Ashram, I have met many of the long-term residents of the Ashram precinct. These are descendants of those who lived in the Ashram since Ba and Bapu first established it in 1917 - families who have continued to live there for over a hundred years.

When Bapu left on the Dandi March 12th March 1930, he vowed not to return to the Ashram till India won freedom and in 1933 he finally decided to disband it but was dissuaded from doing so. In the wake of the Dandi Kooch and the subsequent nation-wide Namak Satyagraha, the colonial regime unleashed a brutal reprisal to crush the non-violent revolt. Farmers and Satyagrahis bore the brunt of the tyrannical oppression. Their properties were seized by the State along with all their possessions and they were rendered destitute. This anguished Bapu and he decided that he would surrender Sabarmati Ashram to the colonial power as a mark of protest against the brutal methods employed by it. Since he was the instigator of the regime's 'troubles', he believed he must be punished. When Bapu's associates were informed about his decision there was much consternation and a lot of voices were raised against this. Eventually, Thakker Bappa, one of Bapu's very senior associates, convinced him not to take such a drastic step. Bapu relented, and handed over the Ashram to the Harijan Sevak Sangh. He instructed them to use the Ashram for the uplift and benefit of Harijans in perpetuity. As he bid farewell to his home of 13 years, he instructed Maganlal Gandhi, who was managing the Ashram, to ensure that all those who were occupying Ashram properties were allowed to do so, as long as they lived according to the ideals of the Ashram, which were practiced when Ba and

## Tibet, Taliban, China

India and China held the 12th round of the Corps Commander-level talks July 31 on the Chinese side of Chushul-Moldo Border Personnel Meeting Point to end the nearly 15-month-long military standoff in eastern Ladakh. But, that does not seem to be indication that China has any intention to ease tension along India's borders. For, the past few days saw manoeuvres by China at the highest level along India's borders with Tibet and Afghanistan. In a first ever exercise, China's President Xi Jinping visited Nyingchi in Tibet, close to Arunachal Pradesh, and Lhasa, while a key Taliban leader met China's top leadership in China. The two developments took place at a time when US Secretary of State Antony Blinken held high level talks with the Indian leadership on a range of issues, including the current turmoil in Afghanistan, and also met a representative of the Dalai Lama in Delhi. These are but calibrated moves by both China on the one hand and India and the USA on the other to test each other's nerves and diplomatic skills. The stakes are too high and China is acting from a vantage ground. The Taliban are making conciliatory gestures towards it and China's grip in Tibet is now firmer than ever before. These do not augur well for India.

Xi Jinping's Tibet visit is significant for a number of reasons and it impinges on the future of Tibet and India-China ties. The last time when a top ranking Chinese leader visited Tibet was in 1990 and it was Jiang Zemin, then General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. Xi's visit is planned to send clear political signals to the people of China, the Tibetans and India. He was accompanied by Zhang Youxia, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission. The intent appears to flex muscles and possibly also browbeat India. Visits by India's leaders to Arunachal Pradesh are seen by China as politically provocative. Xi's visit to a place in Tibet opposite Arunachal Pradesh appears to be an act of provocation as well. Of course, India has accepted Tibet as part of China, but it would be naive to treat the visit of Xi and other top leaders as China's internal matters. For, Tibet is being used by China as a launching pad for advancing its persistent territorial claims on India. Moreover, the visit was timed when China is embroiled in a military confrontation with India.

Had Xi visited Tibet after the settlement of the current border dispute and restoration of the ground positions that existed in April 2020, India would have had no reason to be bothered about it. But, Xi didn't wait for the completion of negotiations on restoring the status quo ante and hammering out new terms of border management. This makes the purpose of the visit suspect and indicates China under Xi is toughening its stand on India on the border question.

As for China's Tibet policy under the Xi regime, it is tightening its military hold over the region, exploiting its resources and building dams on the Brahmaputra, throwing to the wind environmental concerns. It plans to construct a dam at the river's bend before it enters India. China has already built roads and railway lines in Tibet for both military and economic reasons. It is systematically changing Tibet's demography through the settlement of Hans in newly-built villages close to India's border in the east. Xi's policies seem to aim at undermining the Dalai Lama's position on a truly autonomous Tibet as part of China.

Intriguingly, China has settled its border disputes with Russia and contiguous Central Asian states. But, it has illegally acquired Indian territory in Shaksam valley and is unflinchingly staking its maritime and land claims in South and East China Seas, Bhutan and India. Against this backdrop, it is only natural that China would take umbrage at the meeting Blinken had with the Dalai Lama's representative in Delhi. China is worried about US-India bonhomie with increasing military cooperation and joint stakes in the security of the Indo-Pacific region. Blinken's meeting with the Director of the Bureau of the Dalai Lama in Delhi, Ngodup Dongchung, has turned out to be a sore point with China. As the USA follows one-China policy, it is expected not to meddle with China's Tibetan affairs. This is why the Foreign Ministry in Beijing immediately lashed out at the US and asserted it won't allow "foreign interference with China's internal affairs in Tibet." China is extremely allergic to any form of contact between foreign officials and the Dalai Lama. Blinken's meeting, seemingly goaded by India, touched a raw nerve with China.

But, what is of greater concern for India is the meeting of nine Taliban representatives with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi in the northern Chinese city of Tianjin. It is reported that peace process and security issues figured in the discussion. China could extract a promise from the Taliban delegation, headed by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, that they would crack down on the East Turkestan Islamic Movement posing a threat to China by allegedly helping the Uygur Moslems being subjugated by China. The Taliban are seeking international legitimacy of their forcible occupation of vast swathes of Afghanistan weakening the Afghan rule of Prime Minister Ashraf Ghani. Pakistan is their ally and now China is veering to its side with mediation by Pakistan. China also wants to protect its economic interest and expand its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into Afghanistan. This is bad news for India. A Taliban regime, supported by Pakistan and China, has potential to turn the Kashmir tangle even more problematic and it could go well beyond that.

### WISDOM CORNER

- If you want peace, you don't talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies.** DESMOND TUTU
- Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.** MARK TWAIN
- As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest.** NELSON MANDELA

### WORDSWORTH

#### Opisthograph

We're used to bound books, in which a blank page is unusual enough that the reader may on occasion encounter the reassuring — albeit paradoxical — legend, "this page intentionally left blank". It was very different when texts were hand-written scrolls on papyrus or parchment. To write on both sides would result in handling rapidly wearing away the writing on the outer side. It was also awkward to read the reverse side and it was difficult to unroll a scroll and roll it up the other way, because, once rolled, they took on a permanent bend. As a result, scrolls written on both sides are rare enough that a special term has been created to describe them: opisthograph. It comes via French and Latin from Greek opistho, behind, plus graphos, written. Rather rarely, the word also refers to a memorial slab that has been reversed so that a new inscription can be made on the blank side. Bound books (the technical term for one is codex, to distinguish it from the scrolled sort) are for the most part opisthographic, a useful property that was a key reason why they superseded scrolls. But hand-written documents are still commonly anopisthographic, written on one side only.

### LOL

#### Angry drivers meet

In a very small alley, two trucks driving in opposite directions meet. As the drivers are equally stubborn, neither of them wants to reverse. They angrily look one at the other.



Finally, one of them picks up a newspaper and starts reading. The other one politely asks, "When you've finished the paper, will you please bring it over, and let me read it?"

### SPECTRUM PANDEMIC

## Time to inoculate our children



Nikunja Bihari Sahu

**TIMELY AVAILABILITY OF A VACCINE FOR CHILDREN IS THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THE PRESENT SITUATION**

While over 40 crore vaccine shots have been administered to adults in the country, inoculation drive for children against Covid-19 is yet to take off and is long due. The education sector has been hit badly by the pandemic with school children missing their physical classroom sessions for nearly one and a half years. Although some states are embarking on ambitious plans for reopening schools in a restricted manner, parents have expressed their concerns in sending their wards to schools.

Availability of a dependable vaccine for children will be a milestone achievement in bolstering the education sector in the country as this would not only ensure the safety of children, but also facilitate reopening of schools in a graded manner. This would also boost the confidence of parents in letting their wards to go to schools. It is widely speculated that the impact of a possible third wave on children due to the new variants is likely to be more severe compared with the first or the second wave. Hence, the timely availability of a vaccine for children is the only way out of the present situation.

Some western countries have gone ahead with their vaccination programme for children. The US Food and Drug Authority and Canada's drug regulatory authorities have recently given the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine emergency use authorisation for children. This vaccine requires two shots to be given 21 days apart. Similarly, the European Union's regulatory authority, the European Medicines Agency, has recommended authorising the Moderna vaccine for use in children aged between 12 and 17 and, according to research conducted on more than 3,700 children of 12 to 17 age group, the shots indeed produced substantial antibody response.

Russia, the manufacturer of Sputnik V vaccine, has also tested a nasal spray version suitable for children aged 8-12 and plans to launch the new product in September.

In India, the situation is fast picking up momentum and the government plans to rope in indigenous manufacturers to ensure adequate and timely supply of quality vaccine to fulfill its dream of inoculating its younger citizens. In India, two vaccine candidates, in

particular, are in the race for completing the formalities for launching their shots for children.

Ahmedabad-based Zydyus Cadila, which is developing a DNA plasmid-based vaccine, has already concluded its trial for the 12-18 age group, and subject to statutory provisions, the vaccine might be available soon in the near future. The company has already applied to the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for emergency use authorisation for its vaccine ZyCoV-D, which it claims would be effective for both adults and children. The vaccine will be the first needle-free shot to be administered as an intra-dermal injection using a spring-powered jet injector. The efficacy of the vaccine is reported to be 66.6 per cent against the symptomatic and 100 per cent against the moderate or severe patients based on the interim analysis of its phase III trial data. The vaccine contains a DNA plasmid vector that carries the gene encoding the spike protein of the virus. As with other DNA vaccines, the recipient's cells then produce the spike protein, triggering an effective immunogenic response against the virus.

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech

is going through its clinical trial phases (phases II and III) for its nasal spray for children and the data for the results is likely to be available by September. Similarly, Pune-based Serum Institute of India is all set to start phase II and phase III paediatric trials of its Covovax in 920 children (460 each in 12-17 year and 2-11 year groups) from next month. The primary objective of the study is to assess the safety and immunogenicity of the vaccine among children. If everything goes well, a first-hand vaccine for children is expected by early October.

Going by the 80 per cent coverage strategy, the government would have to ensure supply of enough vaccines to cover its 104 million strong children population against the disease. The exercise would, therefore, require at least 208 million doses of a two-dose vaccine. Hence, it is going to be herculean task for the government to bring back the lost glory of children's education in the country.

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

#### Time to ponder

Sir, This is in reference to the news item "Girls outshine boys in CHSE +2 exams," published in the front page of Orissa Post August 1, 2021. Definitely this is a milestone in the process of girl child education and women empowerment in the state, but there are worrying aspects too. This news may be true as a 'whole' taking an account of all the female students in the state. However, with reference to specific social groups like STs, SCs, and other backward sections, the case could be exactly the opposite. This is likely so due to the patriarchal social system existing where the education of a male child is given more importance than that of a female child. Another intriguing question one could ask is: What is the representation of female students from backward sections in the current CHSE +2 results, where the girls seem to outshine the boys? Thus, before we celebrate the social development of any kind, it is time to ponder and reflect if we are making the right strides in the right direction.

Astvino Gomango, GUNUPUR

#### Promote cycling

Sir, Cycling is beneficial for both the body and the mind and it also fosters intellectual and social development. No one's prestige is lowered by riding a bicycle. Man's greatness is not measured by his attire but by his actions and virtues. In foreign countries, bicyclists are adored as nature lovers and least pollution-creators. But, in India, cyclists are lampooned as lesser citizens and indigent. Cycling costs nothing but one can gain many things from that activity. Money is saved, physical fitness is assured, pulmonary condition is stabilised and heart rate is improved. State government officials should at least go to their offices once in a week on a bicycle. It will be inspiring and motivating for the youth. Former Chief Minister the late Biju Patnaik, the architect of modern Odisha, once reached the Odisha Legislative Assembly by a bicycle. However, cycling as an activity should not be taken up in compulsion. It should be taken up as an activity that ensures a pollution-free atmosphere. The state government should promote bicycle riding among the public, especially the youth. Bicycling reduces global warming and lessens greenhouse gas effect on the atmosphere. Cycling is also a morale booster and an enchanting experience.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

## 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**

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# Iron ore smuggling rampant in Jajpur

**A RACKET HAS BEEN TRANSPORTING THE MINERAL FROM KALINGANAGAR TO BUDHAKENDUA ON A REGULAR BASIS**



Reports said, miscreants are transporting iron ore illegally in trucks from Kalinganagar area at the dead of night and selling it to a factory in collusion with its staff. Lack of action by enforcement agencies and police has encouraged such illegal activities in the area, locals alleged

Sources said, 20 to 30 trucks have been engaged in such illegal iron ore transportation without valid documents. Bairi IIC Sanghamitra Nayak feigned ignorance when asked about the smuggling of iron ore

Scores of trucks are also allegedly operating from Kalinganagar to Budhakendua carrying iron pellets in huge quantities.

Sources said, 20 to 30 trucks are engaged in such illegal iron ore transportation without valid documents, but police and officials of the Mines department have failed to take any preventive measures. In fact, some of them are not even aware that such activities are continuing under their noses.

Budhakendua is a hill-locked place and tribal dominated area, 15km from NH-16, which makes it easy for mafia to carry on their activities, it is said.

In another development, a number of trucks carrying iron ore have been hijacked and taken to a different destination from their original one in the past. The situation has become a cause of concern for the police. Police suspect that a huge racket is behind such a clandestine operation.

Some locals demanded that special squads of the Mines department should conduct raids in the area. They said that is the only way to bust the racket.

When contacted, Bairi IIC Sanghamitra Nayak said that police are aware of trucks operating in the area.

However, she feigned ignorance when asked about the smuggling of iron ore. However, she assured that she will look into the matter personally and a proper investigation will be carried out.

Budhakendua area of Jajpur district. The smuggling mafia is managing to hoodwink the law and carry out their nefarious activities.

According to reports, the miscreants are transporting iron ore illegally from Kalinganagar area in trucks at the dead of night and selling it to a factory in collusion with its staff. Lack of action by enforcement agencies and police has encouraged such illegal activities in the area, it was alleged.



With forecast about the third wave of Covid-19, officials of the district administration and Bhawanipatana civic body take tour of the town, making people aware of safety guidelines and protocols

## TACKLING THE PANDEMIC

# Class-XII student raped in Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, August 1:** A minor girl studying in Class XII was allegedly raped by a youth while she was on her way back home from her college Saturday evening. The crime was committed in a locality under the Badamal police outpost in Sambalpur district.

After the girl narrated her ordeal to her family, the father of the victim lodged an FIR with Badamal po-

lice later in the day. During investigation, police have detained a youth, who has been identified as Suresh Mahakud of Potubahal village, for interrogation, an official said.

Sources informed Sunday, that the victim was returning home on her bicycle at around 5.00pm after her classes got over. As it started raining, the girl took shelter under a tree in a lonely locality.

Sources said that Suresh was



travelling through the same locality at that time. Seeing the girl

all alone, he allegedly raped her. They also said that Suresh had tied the nuptial knots only a few days back. This has been mentioned by the victim's father in the FIR lodged.

"The accused has been detained and we are interrogating him," Charamal police IIC Basant Kumar Dalai said Sunday. He did not, however, disclose whether the detained youth has confessed to the crime.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chandikhole, August 1:** Iron ore transportation to Paradip port currently remains suspended as transporters and truck owners are refusing to take the mineral due to the hike in fuel prices and spare parts of vehicles. They have said that transporting the mineral leads to heavy losses.

Taking advantage of the situation, smuggling of iron ore, pellets and coal are on the rise in

# Umerkote's 2-year-old Sampurna amazes all

*Wonder kid with stunning memory finds place in India Book of Records*



for Sampurna. According to the old saying 'morning shows the day' Sampurna's talent and mind-blowing memory power caught the attention of her parents and relatives when she was only a toddler. She used to answer even the toughest of questions without an iota of hesitation.

She always wanted to learn something new and had great memory power, Samir informed. Due to her talent and interest in various matters, Sampurna's parents kept her teaching new things.

The little genius is smarter than any child of her age and is passionate to learn new things by reading books and by learning from acquaintances and surroundings, her parents said.

Her father after coming to know about the competition by India Book of Records prepared her for the big test. She applied for the test June 10, 2021.

Later, the authorities of IBR sought details about the talent of Sampurna following which her father sent 20 videos to its office. The organisation also conducted a test over video call with Sampurna with questions on various subjects. She answered all the questions correctly with absolute ease.

Among the questions, she had to name 46 animals, 20 birds, 18 types of vegetables as well as flowers, 17 types of fruits, 11 colours, six insects and eight varieties of food. Family members were informed of her inclusion in the book, June 30 while she received the certificate, Friday.

# ₹400 crore drinking water project shelved in Balasore

*Groundwater level depletes in Jaleswar and Basta blocks, leaving people high and dry in summer*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jaleswar, August 1:** In summer, a large number of people in many pockets under Jaleswar and Basta blocks have to face acute shortage of drinking water. This happens as groundwater level plummets sharply, leaving scores of tube wells defunct. The reducing level of groundwater has become a cause of concern for people in this coastal pocket.

Now the government has started an initiative under which small ponds are being dug up at different places to conserve rainwater. Through this process, officials feel that the groundwater level will also be replenished.

A mega drinking water project had also been planned few years back, locals informed. However, the project has since then remained in the 'planning' stage with no development. They said that the state government talks about providing clean and hygienic drinking water. However, when it comes to delivering on its promise, there is sheer indifference. The failure to start the drinking water project in the two blocks is a proof of the government's apathy.

The cost of building the drinking water project would be around ₹400 crore. Once implemented it would provide water from the



A private agency had prepared a DPR suggesting provision of drinking water for 30,000 people in 17 wards under Jaleswar municipality in the first phase

The DPR suggested lifting of water from Subarnarekha at Sasanabada with three treatment plants at Sitabaghipada, Deuli and Nahanjara near Jaleswar stadium

Subarnarekha river to the households. As per approval of the state and Central governments, an international agency had conducted a survey on the project. It submitted a detailed project report (DPR) to the Odisha government five years ago. The project aims at meeting the drinking water needs of 3.5 lakh people. It should be stated here that the majority of people living in 35 panchayats of Jaleswar block and 13 panchayats under Basta block have been facing acute drinking water crisis in summer every year.

In the first phase, a Bangalore-based agency had prepared a DPR for provision of water for 30,000 people in 17 wards under Jaleswar municipality. The cost was estimated at ₹50 crore. The report suggested lifting water from

Subarnarekha at Sasanabada and setting up of a treatment plant at Sitabaghipada. Two more treatment plants were proposed at Deuli and Nahanjara near the Jaleswar stadium.

The project proposal also envisaged supply of drinking water to 1,00,000 people in 14 panchayats on the western side of the river. Lifting of the water from the river was proposed at Makidia-Kuanpur.

Another component of the mega drinking water project was to lift river water at Rajghat for 2.5 lakh people living in 21 panchayats under Jaleswar and 14 panchayats under Basta block.

However, till date nothing has moved after the DPR was submitted. The project has been under red tape while people continue to suffer due to lack of drinking water.

# Bhitarkanika National Park to reopen Aug 5

**VISITORS ALLOWED DURING THE DAY ONLY; OVERNIGHT STAY NOT PERMITTED**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, August 1:** After remaining closed for a little over three months to facilitate the breeding of crocodiles, the Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara district will reopen for visitors from August 5. The national park, under Rajnagar block had been kept out of bounds for visitors from May 1 till July 31 as it was the breeding season of the endangered estuarine crocodiles.

**Since the lockdown May 5, the national park had remained out of bounds for tourists due to Covid curbs**

During the mating season, crocodiles tend to become ferocious and attack at the slightest hint of provocation. So a three-month ban is imposed each year on the entry

of tourists into the park to ensure safety of all and at the same time, give a congenial environment to the reptiles.

Four days after shutting the park's gate for tourists, the Odisha government had imposed lockdown May 5 in the state due to the second wave of Covid-19. Since then the park had remained out of bounds for visitors even though, officially the ban ended July 31. Due to the Covid-19 guidelines visitors were prevented from visiting the park for few more days.

Now, with lockdown restrictions slowly easing in the state, the authorities of the Bhitarkanika National Park have decided to open the gates once more for visitors. Officials announced Sunday that the park will again reopen from August 5. However, the visitors will be allowed to visit the park during the day only. No decision has been taken regarding overnight stay of tourists inside the park, even though the facilities are there, officials said.



# Forest dept foils pangolin sale

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kotpad, August 1:** A pangolin of rare breed was rescued by the forest department personnel near Bania bridge while it was being smuggled by a poacher. The pangolin weighed approximately 4.60kg and the poacher was going to sell it for around ₹5,00,000, the officials said.

Prabhu Datta Himansu Mishra, ACF Jeypore, division, said the department received information Saturday regarding an impending deal to sell the mammal. "We laid a trap and rescued the pangolin alive. However, the miscreant managed to escape towards Nabarangpur," he informed.

A manhunt has been launched to nab the accused in this case. It is suspected that the poacher belongs to a neighbouring state and was in the district to smuggle pangolins, Mishra further informed.

Mishra expressed confidence that the poacher will be nabbed soon.

# Kutarakend's long wait for bridge to end soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Titilagarh/Kesinga, August 1:** The dream of residents of Kutarakend village for a road and bridge is soon going to be fulfilled. The village is under Mahulapada panchayat in Titilagarh block of Bolangir district. Women and Child Development and Minister Tukuni Sahu visited the remote hamlet Saturday. She experienced herself the hardships villagers face after she had to walk on a temporarily built wooden bridge to reach the village.

Kutarakend village is just four kilometers away from the Muribahal main road. But, to reach the village, one has to cross three rivulets that lie in close proximity. The village remains cut-off from the rest of the world for seven months as the rivulets swell up during the monsoons. The village is tucked away deep



inside a reserve forest. It is mostly inhabited by tribal families displaced due to the construction of the Badmal ordnance factory in 1984. Since their displacement, these tribal people have been facing a plethora of problems. One

of the major hurdles they have to tackle is the lack of proper road communication.

Critically ill patients and pregnant women are carried in makeshift cots and slings as the village lacks an approach road

for ambulances.

In spite of repeated appeals to the district administration, the villagers did not get a proper bridge. So they got together and on their own made a makeshift wooden bridge over one of the rivulets. The

Kutarakend village is just four kilometers away from the Muribahal main road. But, to reach the village, one has to cross three rivulets that lie in close proximity. The village remains cut-off from the rest of the world for seven months as the rivulets swell up during the monsoons

Critically ill patients and pregnant women are carried in makeshift cots and slings as the village lacks an approach road for ambulances

minister visited the village by crossing the bridge.

In 2011, the construction of a proper bridge over the three rivulets was more or less finalised

under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). However, the proposition fell through as the village lacked the requisite population to get benefit from the Central government scheme.

However, with Sahu's announcement, it now seems that the woes of the villagers will finally end. The minister said that the bridge will be constructed under Mukhya Mantri Sadak Yojana (MMSY) scheme. The entire expenses will be borne by the Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) fund.

During interaction with the girls and youths of the village, Sahu inquired about their online education.

She also promised to sanction funds for the construction of a clubhouse in the village. The villagers thanked Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and the minister for taking the initiative to end their 37-year-long issue.

# No govt jobs, no passport clearance for stone-pelters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, August 1:** The CID wing of Jammu and Kashmir Police has ordered the denial of security clearance required for passport and other government services to all those involved in stone-pelting or subversive activities.

In an order issued Saturday, the senior superintendent of police (SSP), CID, Special Branch (SB), Kashmir, has directed all the field units under it to ensure that the person's involvement in law and order, stone-pelting cases, and other crime prejudicial to the security of the state be specifically looked into during verification related to passport, service and any other verification related to government schemes.

"The same must be corroborated from the local police station records," the order read.

The SSP also said digital evidence like CCTV footage, photographs, videos and audio clips, quadcopter images available in the records of the police, security forces, and security agencies be also referred during the verification.

"Any subject found involved in any such cases must be denied the security clearance," the SSP, CID-



SB, Kashmir said.

Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief Ravinder Raina Sunday welcomed the Jammu and Kashmir administration's decision to deny security clearance for passports and other government services to all those involved in stone-pelting or subversive activities. Raina said it is a great step and would serve as a severe blow to those elements conspiring against the country and fleeing abroad to escape accountability.

"They use passports to flee the country and also get absorbed in

government jobs besides getting contracts of (developmental) projects. As per the new order, they will not get the security clearance which is a good step and will serve as a severe blow to such elements," Raina said.

He said the J&K home department, police and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha are worthy of praise for coming out with such a "major decision" in the interest of the country amid a spurt in anti-terrorist operations that has led to the killing of a number of dreaded terrorists.

# BJP MP unfurls tribal flag at Raj fort, held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, August 1:** BJP MP Kirori Meena was detained Sunday after he unfurled a tribal flag on the wall of the Ambagarh Fort by hoodwinking the heavy police force deployed at the monument, a centre of dispute between the members of the Meena community and Hindutva organisations.

The white flag was unfurled at a parapet in the rear side of the fort, where the tribal leader along with around a dozen supporters reached after walking on the hilly terrain during rainfall in the early hours.

Tensions had escalated between the Meenas and Hindu organisations in June after a saffron flag atop the fort here was removed by a group of youths from the Meena community, allegedly led by independent MLA Ramkesh Meena. Cross FIRs were lodged at Jaipur's Transport Nagar police station July 22.

Police had tightened the security around the fort in view of an announcement by Kirori Meena that he would visit it August 1. Editor-in-chief of Sudarshan TV, Suresh Chavhanke, had also announced on social media that he will go to the fort to unfurl a saffron flag August 1.

While Ramkesh Meena had accused the RSS of trying to tamper with the tribal culture by placing



BJP MP Kirori Meena unfurling the tribal flag on the wall of the Ambagarh Fort in Rajasthan, Sunday.

a saffron flag, BJP leader Kirori Meena had opposed him, saying Meenas are Hindu too. Kirori Meena had demanded action against Ramkesh Meena for trying to disturb harmony.

Reacting to Kirori Meena unfurling the flag, Ramkesh Meena said he has no objection as long as the tribal flag is unfurled and not the saffron one.

Soon after the BJP Rajya Sabha MP released videos and photos of unfurling of the flag, police rushed to the spot and took him away from the fort. "I, along with dozens of youths of the Meena community have entered the fort and unfurled the flag in Ambagarh," he said in a video message.

Kirori Meena tweeted that he was "arrested", but police denied

this. Police officials said they took the MP to Vidhyadhar Nagar police station here to hold talks with him and he raised certain demands, including permission to the tribal people for worshipping at a Shiv temple located inside the fort, which is under the forest department.

Jaipur Police Commissioner Anand Srivastava said Kirori Meena was not arrested but he was detained for entering into a prohibited forest area.

Additional Police Commissioner Rahul Prakash said the BJP leader did not enter the fort and reached only up to its rear wall.

"The MP was not arrested. Talks with him were held on the issue during which he has made certain demands," the officer said.

Rajasthan BJP president Satish Poonia and former chief minister Vasundhara Raje condemned the police action against Kirori Meena.

"He always strives for nationalist thought and social harmony and action taken against him shows the petty mentality of the Congress government," Poonia tweeted.

Raje issued a statement demanding the release of Kirori Meena.

She said he has given a "strong reply to the Congress, which is doing politics in the name of religion."

# Schools, colleges offer fee discounts amid pandemic

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, August 1:** At a time when parents and schools are at loggerheads over the fee issue in many parts of the country, a few institutions in Rajasthan are trying to make it a win-win situation for both the parents and themselves.

Working on a corporate methodology, they have offered discounts and other attractive offers to generate revenue for themselves and benefit parents.

DPS Jaipur had announced a 10 per cent fee waiver if the parents deposit the entire term fee by July 31 this year.

A circular sent to parents on behalf of Aditi Misra, School Director, and Rita Taneja, Principal, had said: "A 10 per cent concession in the school fees if the entire year's fee is paid for the academic session 2021-2022, latest by July 31, 2021. We wish to inform that parents willing to avail the concession can do so as the last date is non-extendable."

Another private institution, Seedling School, is giving 10 per cent concession to parents on depositing the complete school fee for the 2020-21 session.

Vidhyashram has declared 10 per cent waiver on school fees for the year 2021-22.

Besides the schools, there are

private universities that are giving benefits to the parents during the ongoing pandemic.

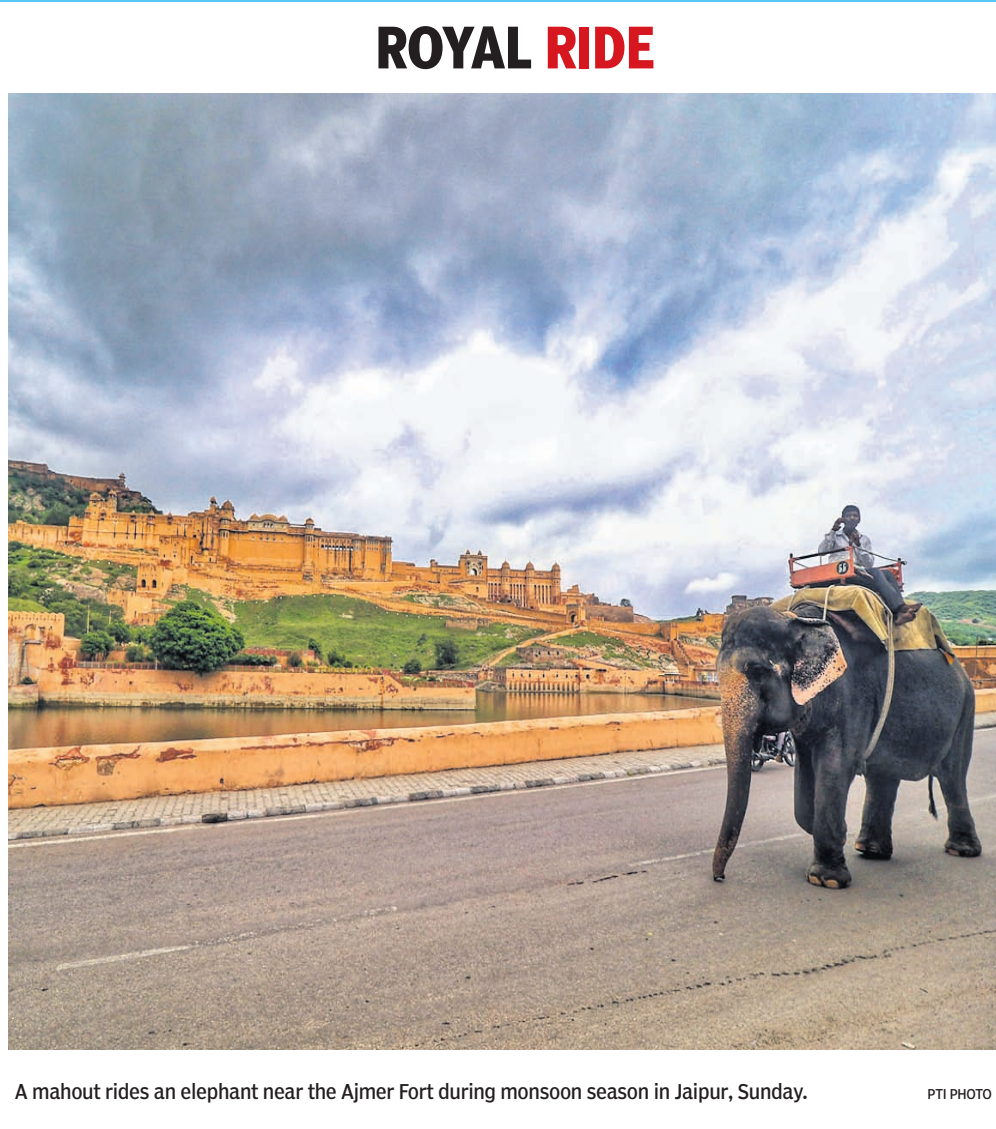
One such university is JK Lakshmiipat University which started giving admissions to undergraduate students on the basis of Class X results when Class XII results had not been declared.

They are giving 100 per cent undergraduate scholarship to students that covers academic and hostel fees based on Class X marks.

Their message says: "Don't let the financial constraints be a hurdle to your global education. JKLU encourages talent with 'Education at no cost' for deserving students. Also, meritorious students can avail a 15 per cent to 100 per cent fee waiver (academic and hostel fees) under UG scholarship in the first year of the programme."

A parent, Pawan Kumar, whose son got 75 per cent fee waiver on admission, said: "This is a guiding light for other universities. My son scored 92 per cent in Class X and he got a 75 per cent fee waiver. Imagine how relieved a parent will feel if other universities too follow the same model."

While these educational institutes are setting an example by caring for parents during the pandemic, there are other institutions that have hiked fees, creating challenges for parents.



A mahout rides an elephant near the Ajmer Fort during monsoon season in Jaipur, Sunday.

PTI PHOTO

## ROYAL RIDE

# CONGRESS TO SORT OUT RAJASTHAN ISSUE IN DELHI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, August 1:** After taking feedback from Rajasthan leaders and MLAs, Congress General Secretary Ajay Maken has returned to Delhi and will meet top party leaders in a few days to discuss the issue and adjustments to be made in the state unit and the government.

The Congress top brass is keen to resolve the issue of Rajasthan after the changes in Punjab where Navjot Singh Sidhu has been made state chief. Congress sources say that there will be a major rejig in the Ashok Gehlot government and the state organisation.

Sources say that after Maken submits his report, a final call will be taken by interim party chief Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi and the General Secretary entrusted to implement the decisions.

Former Deputy Chief Minister and state chief Sachin Pilot is in New Delhi and has been meeting party leaders to push for Cabinet expansion and appointments in boards and corporation in the state to adjust his loyalists, a year after he revolted.

Maken, before returning to Delhi, had one-on-one interaction with all 115 Congress MLAs, and senior party leaders.

Indicating changes, he had said that some ministers have expressed



their willingness to resign and work for the party. "Some people want to leave cabinet positions and work for the organisation. We are proud of such people."

Asked about the possible role of Pilot, Maken had said: "Everyone trusts the high command and all have said in a united voice that they shall accept any role given by the high command."

Following Maken's meeting with the MLAs, Chhattisgarh Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu, who chairs the Congress manifesto implementation committee, and MP Amar Singh were in Jaipur on Saturday to evaluate the status of promises made in the party manifesto, as per the directions given by the Congress high command.

The meeting of the committee was held at the Chief Minister's residence, where Gehlot said that 64 per cent of the promises, or 321 out of 501, have been fulfilled.

# Kashmir farmer's son secures second rank in IES examination

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, August 1:** Tanveer Ahmad Khan, a farmer's son from Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, has brought laurels to the Union Territory by securing the second rank in the prestigious Indian Economic Services (IES) examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

Hailing from the remote Nigeenpora Kund village -- about 80 kms from here -- in south Kashmir, Khan did primary schooling from Government Primary School, Kund, and later from Government High School Waltengoo, officials said.

They said Khan passed Class 12 from Government Higher Secondary School, Razloo Kund and did Bachelor of Arts degree from Government Degree College Anantnag in 2016.

Khan has been a bright student from the very beginning, secured third rank in University of Kashmir entrance test and got himself admitted in the post-graduate course in economics at Kashmir University, the officials said.

Continuing with his brilliance, he achieved another feat by securing Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) during his last year of the post-graduate programme, they



said.

Being a JRF Fellow, he went to Institute of Development Studies, Kolkatta, for Masters in Philosophy (M.Phil) in Development Studies, which was awarded to him in April 2021. A son of a farmer, who also used to go to Kolkatta in winters to work as a seasonal rickshaw puller, Khan believes that hard work pays off when one is focused and nothing seems impossible.

"During the Covid period, I confined myself to the four walls of my room and started preparing for IES examination while doing my M.Phil. I never let Covid impact my schedule of studies," Khan said.

Khan, who achieved the feat in his maiden attempt only, remarks that it was a hard struggle, but he

never lost hope. "I worked very hard and considered my first attempt as my last attempt and in the end I achieved this feat," he said.

While appreciating the government for initiating several educational reforms, he suggested there was a dire need to revamp the basic education system.

"Government has initiated various steps for educational reforms and we should also focus on other aspects like research centers in all colleges with full-fledged faculty and priority should also be given to other lesser opted subjects," he said. In his message to the youth of J-K, Khan said they should think out of the box and look for alternate career choices.

# 'Valley's youths visiting Pak on valid papers, infiltrating back as terrorists'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, August 1:** The recent killing of terrorist Shakir Altaf Bhat and subsequent finding that he had left the country on a valid passport for studies in Pakistan in 2018 and returned as a terrorist set alarm bells ringing in the security establishment in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said here Sunday.

Security agencies made a quick estimate of passports issued between 2015 and 2019, and found that out of the 40 youths who had gone to Bangladesh or Pakistan for studies, 28 had infiltrated back into the country as trained terrorists, the officials said.

This is in addition to over 100 Kashmiri youths who travelled to Pakistan on valid visas for short durations, and have either not come back or disappeared after their return in the last three years.

The security agencies fear that they could be possible sleeper cells of terror groups operating from across the border.

The July 24 encounter in the heights of Bandipora led to the killing of three terrorists, including Bhat, a resident of the same district.

Security agencies believe that Bhat had targeted to assassinate Usman Majid, a former militant-



turned-politician who has withstood at least three such bids in the past.

Between April 1 to 6 of last year, some youths hailing from Shopian, Kulgam and Anantnag districts of south Kashmir were seen as part of the infiltrating groups of terrorists and all of them had travelled to Pakistan on valid documents and never returned thereafter, they said.

A massive exercise was undertaken by the security agencies along with the immigration officials at Wagah border as well as at the New Delhi airport during which it was found that at least 40 youths who had travelled to either Bangladesh or Pakistan for studies were missing

with their families not knowing about their wards, they said.

As a precautionary measure, even the youths from the valley who travelled on valid visas for a duration of over seven days over the last three years were questioned, the officials said.

The figures have surprised the officials as in some of the cases it was found that the youths never returned and in others they disappeared after their return, raising suspicion that they could have become "sleeper cells", waiting for instructions from their masters in Pakistan's spy agency ISI or handlers in terror groups located across the border.

The youths who had travelled

to Pakistan even two years back have been called for questioning and a proper analysis of their activities after their return was being carried out by the security agencies.

Those questioned by the security agencies were asked for a valid reason for their travel to Pakistan, the officials said, adding that the background of all these people was checked and verified thoroughly.

The Jammu and Kashmir police also issued a directive on Saturday asking its Special Branch, a unit mandated for verification, to "ensure that during verification related to passport and any other government scheme, the individual's involvement in law and order, stone pelting is specifically checked.

Also, the digital evidence like CCTV footage, photographs, videos and audios clips, quadcopter images available in the records of police stations should be referred to by the unit. Any subject found involved in any such cases must be denied any security clearance, the order said.

The officials believe that there is a six weeks' training course for new terror recruits and intelligence inputs suggest that some of the youths were provided a quick module of fabrication of improvised explosive devices using easily available material within a week's time, they said.



## of the day quote

The tension between Assam and Mizoram is a matter of grave concern. For the first time in the history of the country, a state has issued a travel advisory to its residents not to travel to another state



ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

They (NDA) have over 350 seats in the Lok Sabha. The BJP is ruling in many states. Why and what was the government trying to find through snooping? They are helping 'videshi takatein' (foreign forces) with this act



AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

These people (Congress) were the James Bond of spying (when in power). They spin a web of spying when in government and when in opposition create a hullabaloo alleging surveillance



MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | UNION MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Ex-Manipur Cong chief joins BJP

**New Delhi:** Former Manipur Congress president Govindas Konthoujam joined the BJP Sunday, saying he was impressed with the Modi government's development work for the region. He joined the BJP in the presence of Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh, state BJP chief A Sharda Devi, Rajya Sabha MP Anil Baluni and the party's in-charge for the state Sambit Patra, among others. Konthoujam later met BJP president J P Nadda.

### Heavy rains batter Delhi

**New Delhi:** Heavy rains lashed parts of the national capital Sunday bringing the mercury down, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The Safdarjung Observatory, considered the official marker for Delhi, recorded 28.2 mm rainfall, while the Ridge station registered 126.8 mm rainfall from 8.30 am Saturday to 8.30 am Sunday, officials said. The maximum temperature was recorded at 32.1 degrees Celsius, two notches below the season's average, they said.

### Navy rescues 7 fishermen

**Port Blair:** The Indian Navy rescued seven fishermen from a distressed fishing boat, off the coast of Car Nicobar, an official release said. INS Airavat was transiting through the strait at Car Nicobar Friday night when it received a distress call from the fishing boat which had developed a gearbox problem. It immediately proceeded towards the distressed vessel at its maximum speed to render assistance and successfully established contact with the fishing vessel, the release said.

### Two houses collapse in MP

**Rewa/Singrauli:** Six people were killed and four others injured in two incidents of house collapse due to heavy rains in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa and Singrauli districts Sunday, officials said. In Rewa, a 35-year-old man, his 60-year-old mother and two daughters, aged 7 and 8 years, were killed when their mud house collapsed in the morning, police officials said.

### Maoist killed

**Hyderabad:** A Maoist was killed in an exchange of fire between the police and extremists on the Telangana-Chhattisgarh border in Bhadradi Kothagudem district Sunday.



July has also gone but vaccine shortage has not gone

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

## RAINFALL 7% BELOW NORMAL IN JULY: IMD

After its vigorous revival in the first week of July that saw floods, cloudburst and landslides in several parts of the country, the Southwest Monsoon ended with a seven per cent deficit for the month, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Sunday



# Army, PLA set up hotline for Sikkim sector

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 1:** In a confidence-building measure, the Indian and the Chinese armies Sunday activated a new hotline in the North Sikkim sector to facilitate their local commanders to speak directly and address any issue or differences on the ground along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), officials said.

The establishment of the hotline between the Indian Army in Kongra La in North Sikkim and China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) at Khamba Dzong in the Tibetan Autonomous Region came a day after the two armies held a nine-hour meeting with a focus on the disengagement process in remaining friction points in eastern Ladakh.

The Indian Army said the hotline has been established to further the "spirit of trust and cordial relations along the borders". The setting up of the hotline coincided with PLA Day. It said the inauguration of the new hotline was attended by ground commanders of the two armies and a "message of friendship and harmony" was exchanged through it. "A hotline was established between Indian Army in Kongra La, North Sikkim and PLA at Khamba Dzong in Tibetan Autonomous Region to further the spirit of trust and cordial relations along the borders. The event

coincided with the PLA Day August 1," it said in a statement. The two sides have already have hotline facilities for ground commanders in eastern Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh sectors. "The armed forces of the two countries have well-established mechanisms for communication at ground commanders level. These hotlines in various sectors go a long way in enhancing the same and maintaining peace and tranquillity at the borders," the Army said. "The inauguration was attended by ground commanders of the respective armies and a message of friendship and harmony was exchanged through the hotline," the Army said.

Officials said with the setting up of the hotline, the ground commanders will be able to speak directly and resolve any differences if they crop up.

In May last year, both the armies had a face-off in North Sikkim's Naku La, a region located at an altitude of 16,000 feet.

The establishment of the hotline assumed significance as it came amid a continued standoff between the two armies in a number of friction points in eastern Ladakh. In the 12th round of high-level military talks, India Saturday pressed for an early disengagement of troops and weapons in the remaining friction points such as Hot Springs and Gogra.



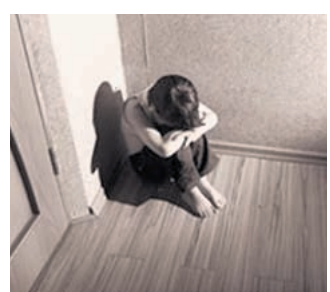
# Over 24K kids died by suicide from 2017 to 2019: NCRB data

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 1:** Over 24,000 children in the age bracket of 14-18 years committed suicide from 2017-19, with failure in examination being the reason in over 4,000 such cases, according to government data.

The consolidated data of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) on children's suicide was recently presented in Parliament. According to the data, as many as 24,568 children, including 13,325 girls, aged 14-18 years, died by suicide between 2017-19.

In 2017, as many as 8,029 children in the age group of 14-18 years died by suicide. The number rose to 8,162 in 2018 and then further increased to 8,377 in 2019, it said. The highest number of deaths by sui-



cide among children in this age bracket was reported from Madhya Pradesh at 3,115 followed by West Bengal at 2,802, Maharashtra at 2,527 and Tamil Nadu at 2,035.

Failure in examination was given as the reason behind the suicide of 4,046 children, while marriage-related issue was the reason behind the suicide of 639 children, in-

cluding 411 girls, according to the data. About 3,315 children died by suicide for reasons related to love affair, while illness was given as reason behind the suicide of 2,567 children. Physical abuse was given as reason for 81 children's death.

Death of a dear person, drug abuse or alcohol addiction, illegitimate pregnancy, fall in social reputation, unemployment, poverty and ideological causes or hero worshipping were other reasons given for the death of these children by suicide. Raising alarm over the probability of worsening of situation due to Covid-19 pandemic, child rights activists stressed on inclusion of life skill training in school curriculum and making mental health part of mainstream healthcare and wellness agenda.

deputy secretary in 2003. But insiders discount this theory saying Vaishnav had no access to Vajpayee at any point of time or any such tip as he was quite below in the hierarchy. It is said that Modi was looking for a pool of bright boys like Vaishnav who have multiple experiences. Vaishnav's actual qualification was that he was also very close to Naveen Patnaik as well. In fact, Vaishnav set up his units in Gujarat and Odisha. Secondly, PK Mishra helped Vaishnav in setting them up. Modi found virtues in Vaishnav and he worked as Modi's backroom boy in his 2014 War Room like many such high-skilled persons.

### Modi-Pawar bonhomie

What is the secret behind Modi-Sharad Pawar bonhomie? Not many are aware that it goes back to the UPA era when Modi was facing the ire of Central agencies and Congress 'hawks' were seeking Modi's custodial interrogation. Sharad Pawar is reported to have

opposed at the highest level in the government any such move on the ground that political battles be better fought in the electoral arena rather than through agencies. Modi did face CBI's grilling but the UPA did not go to the extent of arresting him. Modi also got one relief after the other from courts. This apart, the personal rapport also developed when Gujarat cadre IAS officer PK Mishra had been promoted to the rank of Secretary at the Centre but no Union minister was willing to take him in his ministry. It was at this juncture that Modi reported to have called up Pawar to help Mishra as he was holding many portfolios. Pawar got Mishra appointed as Agriculture Secretary under him in 2006. Since then, both have had a perfect bonhomie.

### Clock ticks after 27 yrs

There is a long list of politicians, officers and journalists paying the price for being dirty with Modi during the Gujarat riots. The latest

## INDIA BATTLES COVID-19

**New Delhi, August 1:** India saw a single-day rise of 41,831 new Covid-19 cases, taking the tally to 3,16,55,824, while the cumulative vaccine doses administered in the country has crossed 47 crore, according to Union Health Ministry data updated Sunday.

The death toll climbed to 4,24,351 with 541 daily fatalities. Registering an increase for the fifth consecutive cases, the active cases have climbed to 4,10,952 and comprises 1.30 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate was recorded at 97.36 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed.

An increase of 2,032 Covid cases has been recorded in the total number Covid-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours. Also, 17,89,472 tests were conducted on Saturday, taking the

It went past 60 lakh September 28, 70 lakh October 11, crossed 80 lakh October 29, 90 lakh November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark December 19.

India crossed the grim milestone of two crore May 4 and 3 crore June 23. The 541 new fatalities include 225 from Maharashtra and 80 from Kerala and 68 from Odisha.

A total of 4,24,351 deaths have been reported so far in the country, including 1,32,791 from Maharashtra, 36,562 from Karnataka, 34,076 from Tamil Nadu, 25,053 from Delhi, 22,756 from Uttar Pradesh, 18,136 from West Bengal and 16,293 from Punjab. The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities. "Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said.

## Border dispute: Mizoram to 'relook' FIR against Assam CM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Guwahati/Aizawl, August 1:** The Mizoram government Sunday said that it is considering withdrawing the FIR lodged against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in connection with the July 26 border clash that left six Assam Police personnel dead and scores of others injured.

Mizoram Chief Secretary Lalnunmawia Chuauango said in Aizawl that following the advice of Chief Minister Zoramthanga, the administration would "relook" the FIR registered against the Assam Chief Minister.

He said that Zoramthanga did not approve of the inclusion of Sarma's name in the FIR, adding that he too was not properly aware of Sarma's name being included in the FIR before it was lodged.

Chuauango also said that the state government had taken up the issue of "economic blockade in Assam", which stopped supplies, including transport fuels, with the Union Home Ministry.

"We have understood that the MHA would be able to convince the Assam government to lift the blockade in southern Assam."

"Mizoram's 95 per cent supplies come through the National Highway-306, which is the lifeline for our state," he told the media.

Besides Sarma, who is accused of "attempt to murder and criminal conspiracy", six other officials, including an Assam IGP, DIG and the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police of Cachar district, were named in the FIR lodged at the Vairengte police station in Kolasib district July 26.

## K'TAKA CABINET EXPANSION

### Bomma leaves for Delhi amid speculation

AGENCIES

**Bangalore, August 1:** Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai left for Delhi Sunday to hold consultations with the BJP central leadership on expansion of his cabinet.

"Most probably there is a meeting tomorrow. I will meet our party president J P Nadda," Bommai told reporters before leaving for the national capital by a flight. Earlier in the day, he said the cabinet expansion exercise may not take a week's time and a direction from the leadership was likely by Monday.

Bomma took oath as the Chief Minister July 28 after the resignation of his predecessor B S Yediyurappa July 26.

He is the lone Cabinet member in the government.

Meanwhile, many ministerial aspirants called on Bommai and raised the pitch for a cabinet berth. Former agriculture minister B C Patil, who met Bommai, maintained that his meeting was related to an irrigation project in his constituency.

Asked whether he spoke to the CM about a ministerial berth, he said, "The CM is aware of it. He has already spoken about it (cabinet expansion) to the media that he will do it at the earliest. So I did not discuss with him on this issue."

Patil also took exception to terms like 'outsiders' and 'Bombay Boys' used to describe the 17 MLAs, who broke away from Congress and the JD(S) to topple the coalition government led by H D Kumaraswamy in 2019, were disqualified from the Assembly and later joined the BJP. Of them, a majority of MLAs won the by-polls and 11 were made Ministers.



### Hidden talent of Ashwini Vaishnav

Many theories are doing the rounds as to why Prime Minister Narendra Modi developed a fancy for Ashwini Vaishnav to the extent that he telephoned BJD chief and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to spare a Rajya Sabha seat for him. The BJD could have won all three RS seats but spared one for Vaishnav in 2019. What was Modi's connection with Vaishnav? One theory is that Vaishnav gave vital tips to Modi when he was working in the PMO under Vajpayee as

deputy secretary in 2003. But insiders discount this theory saying Vaishnav had no access to Vajpayee at any point of time or any such tip as he was quite below in the hierarchy. It is said that Modi was looking for a pool of bright boys like Vaishnav who have multiple experiences. Vaishnav's actual qualification was that he was also very close to Naveen Patnaik as well. In fact, Vaishnav set up his units in Gujarat and Odisha. Secondly, PK Mishra helped Vaishnav in setting them up. Modi found virtues in Vaishnav and he worked as Modi's backroom boy in his 2014 War Room like many such high-skilled persons.

opposed at the highest level in the government any such move on the ground that political battles be better fought in the electoral arena rather than through agencies. Modi did face CBI's grilling but the UPA did not go to the extent of arresting him. Modi also got one relief after the other from courts. This apart, the personal rapport also developed when Gujarat cadre IAS officer PK Mishra had been promoted to the rank of Secretary at the Centre but no Union minister was willing to take him in his ministry. It was at this juncture that Modi reported to have called up Pawar to help Mishra as he was holding many portfolios. Pawar got Mishra appointed as Agriculture Secretary under him in 2006. Since then, both have had a perfect bonhomie.

in the series is RB Sreekumar who was Additional DGP Gujarat Police and led a unit when riots broke out in Godhara. The CBI has re-opened a probe in falsely implicating ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan and others way back in November 1994 in Kerala. Sreekumar was Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau, Kerala then. It was on the basis of his 'top secret' report that the Kerala Police arrested Nambi, two Maldivian women and others in the infamous 'ISRO Spy Ring'. Nambi Narayanan was ISRO's rising star and working on critical cryogenic technology. Though CBI gave Nambi a clean chit in December 1994 itself and filed a closure report acquitting all, the Supreme Court upheld the closure report terming it malicious and based on 'notions of fancy.' Nambi was given a compensation of Rs 1.9 crore from various agencies including the Kerala government in 2018. But Sreekumar escaped any penalty and the case has now been re-opened by the CBI after SC's special permission for Sreekumar for his dubious fake IB report which caused immense damage. The CBI

may not have re-opened Sreekumar's case 27 years later had he not committed the hara-kiri in Godhara. He ostensibly filed a false affidavit and statements before the Nanavati-Mehta Commission and JM Lyngdoh Committee about the dubious role of law and order authorities under Modi. The Supreme Court, however, found all such claims to be false. But the ghost of the ISRO case is now haunting Sreekumar as the CBI has got a mandate from the Supreme Court now.

### Why crib now?

Have a look at who all have the legal right to snoop! The Intelligence Bureau, CBI, Enforcement Directorate, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Central Economic Intelligence Bureau, Narcotics Control Bureau, Income Tax, Customs, NIA, National Technical Research Organisation and many CPOs have the authority to tap into your computers, mobiles and other devices. With 36 states and UTs snooping, the number of agencies is touching 60. The bizarre

situation is that successive governments, be it Congress, BJP or Third Front parties, have been acquiring legal teeth to tap more and more people in the name of national interest, public order, tax evasion, etc. An old hand who spent his life in the IB said more than 1 Lakh telephones are under observation at a given time legally or illegally by these agencies. There were times when entry of journalists to the PMO was for a song. It changed after the assassination of India Gandhi and the advent of the SPG. Even then, the access to the PMO was a lot easier in an earlier era. If someone's frequency in the PMO goes up or is seen often in the PM's company, the agencies put the person on the radar. The message is clear that anybody who has been somebody in the corridors of powers, has to be verified for the safety of the King and may be tapped to verify what's cooking. The moral of the story: The King has to be saved, means don't matter. So why crib in 2021 over Pegasus software being used for snooping?

# international



Today, I stand on behalf of the New Zealand government to offer a formal and unreserved apology to Pacific communities for the discriminatory implementation of the immigration laws of the 1970s that led to the events of the Dawn Raids  
JACINDA ARDERN | PRIME MINISTER, NZ

## COVAX AID TO SL

Sri Lanka received 728,460 doses of AstraZeneca from the COVAX program Saturday. The consignment was flown as part of the total contribution of more than 1.4 million doses provided by Japan through the COVAX's dose sharing, said UNICEF in a statement



## of the day quote

The Covid vaccine's protection against the Delta variant may have somewhat declined, but the current vaccine still has a good preventative and protective effect against the Delta variant  
FENG ZIJIAN | CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, CHINA

The people want participative democracy, not just representative democracy. You have to have faith in the people, you have to have confidence in the people and their free choice, not be afraid of the people  
ANDRÉS MANUEL LÓPEZ OBRADOR | PRESIDENT, MEXICO

Our government and military will keep a close eye on whether the South Koreans go ahead with the aggressive war exercises, or make a big decision. Hope or despair? That's not up to us  
KIM YO JONG | INFORMATION DEPARTMENT OF WPK, N KOREA

# Junta promises polls in 2023

LAST WEEK THE JUNTA CANCELLED THE RESULTS OF THE POLLS, ANNOUNCING IT HAD UNCOVERED OVER 11 MILLION INSTANCES OF VOTER FRAUD

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Nay Pyi Taw, August 1:** Myanmar's junta chief said Sunday that elections would be held and a state of emergency lifted by August 2023, extending the military's initial timeline given when it deposed Aung San Suu Kyi six months ago.

The country has been in turmoil since the army ousted the civilian leader in February, launching a bloody crackdown on dissent that has killed more than 900 people according to a local monitoring group.

In a televised address junta leader Min Aung Hlaing said "we will accomplish the provisions of the state of emergency by August 2023. I pledge to hold multiparty elections without fail."

The army has justified its power grab by alleging massive fraud during 2020 elections won by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy in a landslide, and has threatened to dissolve the party.

ASEAN foreign ministers are to meet Monday, when diplomats say they aim to finalise a special



envoy tasked with ending violence and promoting dialogue between the junta and its opponents.

**Months of protests**  
Across Myanmar small groups of demonstrators marched Sunday, six months after soldiers launched their putsch with pre-dawn raids ending a decade-long experiment with democracy.

Protesters in the northern town of Kale held banners reading "strength for the revolution" while demonstrators let off flares at a march in the commercial capital

Yangon. Tens of thousands of civil servants and other workers have either been sacked for joining rallies or are still on strike in support of a nationwide civil disobedience campaign.

"In the six months since the coup, the people of Myanmar have demonstrated remarkable courage and conviction in the face of widespread violence," said the US embassy in Myanmar on its official Facebook page Sunday.

"The United States remains firmly committed to supporting the people of Myanmar in their aspirations for



Junta leader, Min Aung Hlaing, has taken on the role of Prime Minister in a newly formed 'caretaker government'  
The general's announcement would place Myanmar in the military's grip for nearly two and a half years

a democratic, inclusive future of their own choosing."

In a report on the 2020 polls, the Asian Network for Free Elections monitoring group said the elections were "by and large, representative of the will of the people".

## OIL TANKER STRIKE

# Israel, Iran tensions enter stormy waters

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Dubai, August 1:** Israel's Prime Minister Sunday directly blamed Iran for a drone attack on an oil tanker off the coast of Oman that killed two people as Tehran denied being involved in the assault.

The comments by Premier Naftali Bennett and Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh come after the strike Thursday night on the oil tanker Mercer Street, which marked the first-known fatal attack after years of assaults on commercial shipping in the region linked to tensions with Iran over its tattered nuclear deal.

While no one has claimed responsibility for the attack, Iran and its militia allies have used so-called "suicide" drones in attacks previously.

Sunday, Khatibzadeh described

the allegation Iran carried out the attack as "baseless" during his last news conference.

"Such blame games are nothing new," Khatibzadeh said. Those who are responsible for this (attack) are the ones who made it possible for the Israeli regime to set its foot in this region."

He added "This is not strange, the well-known anti-Iran lobby in the US uses any opportunity to make ... Accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran."

In Jerusalem, Bennett directly blamed Iran for the attack at a weekly Cabinet meeting.

The American nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and the guided missile destroyer USS Mitscher were escorting the Mercer Street as it headed to a safe port, the US Navy's Middle East-based 5th Fleet said in a statement early Saturday.



## SHORT TAKES

### US logs highest cases since Feb

**Washington:** Amid a resurgence, the US has registered the highest number of single-day Covid-19 cases since February this, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said in its latest update. According to the update Saturday, a total of 101,171 new cases were reported across the country July 30, reports Xinhua news agency. As of Sunday morning, the country's overall infection tally has increased to 34,974,823, while the death toll stood at 613,133.

### Pak says no to Afghan refugees

**Islamabad:** Pakistani National Security Advisor (NSA) Moeed Yusuf has said that the country cannot accept additional Afghan refugees and the international community is obliged to make arrangements for them inside Afghanistan. Yusuf said that if a civil war erupts in Afghanistan, the asylum seekers should not be pushed towards Pakistan. The NSA and Faiz Hameed, head of Pakistan's spy agency ISI, had embarked on a visit to the US for discussions over Afghanistan and bilateral issues.

### Thai protesters asks PM to resign

**Bangkok:** Anti-government protesters in Thailand took to the streets in cars and motorcycles Sunday, demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha over his handling of the spread of Covid-19. In Bangkok, drivers honked horns and motorists raised three-finger salutes - a gesture of resistance inspired by "The Hunger Games" movie - as they headed along a 20 km (12 miles) route stretching from the Democracy Monument in the centre of the capital out to Don Muang International Airport.

### Greece forest fire

**Athens:** Around a dozen homes were destroyed and five people were hospitalised with breathing problems Saturday in a forest fire near Patras, Greece's third largest city, authorities said. Some 145 firefighters, 50 trucks, eight firefighting planes and helicopters have been mobilised to extinguish the fire in the Zeria region in the Peloponnese, about 210 kilometres west of Athens, the firefighting service said.

## OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENT



INS Tabar entered Port Stockholm. The ship was received by Brig Gen Peder Ohlsson, Deputy Chief of Royal Swedish Navy and Group Captain Pankaj Mittal, Indian Defence Attache

# Teen pilot eyes aviation record

AGENCIES

**London, August 1:** A 19-year-old is paving the way for girls in STEM by setting the record for the youngest woman to fly solo around the world next month.

Belgian-British Zara Rutherford sets off on her 51,000 kilometre (32,000 miles) journey in her bespoke Shark ultralight plane, the world's fastest microflight, August 11.

Once complete, Rutherford will be the youngest person to fly a microflight around the world and the youngest woman to fly solo around the world. The current world record for the latter is held by Shaesta Waiz who completed the journey aged 30.

Rutherford hopes she will pave

## FLYING SOLO



the way for girls and women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and inspire others to follow in her footsteps.

"I wanted to fly around the world, have the girls see me and think, I'd love to fly one day too," she told Reuters. "There is a difference in

aviation between men and women. So my goal is to bring the records closer and then hopefully inspire other girls to try and beat my record and then go and start competing with the boys."

Rutherford's parents, Beatrice de Smet and Sam Rutherford, are both pilots themselves, although her mother had mixed feelings when her daughter announced her gap year plans. "When she first told me about it, my heart skipped a beat. It took me a bit of time to digest. And now I'm so proud and fully, fully behind her," she said.

The teenager will be funding the trip herself, with the help of sponsors, and she hopes to complete the journey in around two to three months.

# India leads UNSC for August

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 1:** India today assumed the Presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the month of August. It has several important items on its agenda for the world body's functioning under this period, especially those focusing on areas of its core interests.

Flagging off its tenure, India thanked France, its immediate predecessor in the position, for leading the Council in July.

"During our Presidency in August, India is organising three high-level signature meetings, focusing on our priority areas: maritime security, peacekeeping, and

counterterrorism," India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador TS Tirumurti, said in a video message straight from the Security Council.

"India will also be organising a solemn event in the memory of peacekeepers," he said. The Council, he said, plans several important meetings, including those with representatives of Syria, Iraq,

Somalia, Yemen, and other countries of the Middle East. "I'm confident that India's Presidency will contribute to strengthening international peace and security further," Ambassador Tirumurti said.

Expressing happiness over India taking over the Security Council Presidency, the French Ambassador in New Delhi, Emmanuel Lenain, said his country would work with India in tackling several issues faced by the world today.

# Rockets hit Afghanistan airport, flights suspended

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kabul, August 1:** Flights in Afghanistan's Kandahar airport were suspended Sunday after rockets struck the nation's second main international airport, a local official confirmed.

"The initial information found Taliban militants fired three rockets at the Kandahar International Airport and two of them struck the runway late Saturday night," the official told Xinhua news agency.

"Local authorities were inspecting and trying to repair and reopen the runway as soon as possible," the official said, adding that there were no casualties.



Kandahar city, the capital of the southern namesake province, has been the scene of fierce clashes recently as Afghan government security forces continued heavy fighting to prevent Taliban militants from advancing.

Saturday, three civilians were killed and 10 civilians were wounded during heavy battles in Kandahar city, according to officials Sunday.

# Protests spur in Italy, France as citizens reject vax passes

MANY SAY VACCINE PASS REQUIREMENTS ARE A SOURCE OF INEQUALITY THAT WILL FURTHER DIVIDE SOCIETY, AND THEY DRAW UNEASY HISTORIC PARALLELS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Verona, August 1:** Shouts of "Liberty!" have echoed through the streets and squares of Italy and France as thousands show their opposition to plans to require vaccination cards for normal social activities, such as dining indoors at restaurants, visiting museums or cheering in sports stadiums.

Leaders in both countries see the cards, dubbed the "Green Pass" in Italy and the "Health Pass" in France, as necessary to boost vaccination rates and persuade the undecided.

About 80,000 people protested in cities across Italy last weekend, while thousands have marched in Paris for the past three weekends, at times clashing with police.



More than 200,000 marched across France Saturday, 14,000 of them in Paris, in the biggest show yet.

In France and Italy, demonstrations against vaccine passes or virus restrictions in general are

bringing together otherwise unlikely allies, often from the political extremes. They include far-right parties, campaigners for economic justice, families with small children, those against vac-

## ITALY'S 'GREEN PASS'

In Italy, just one vaccine dose is required, and it applies to outdoor dining, cinemas, stadiums, museums and other gathering places from Aug 6

A negative test within 48 hours or proof of having recovered from the virus in the last six months also provide access

Vaccine demand in Italy increased by as much as 200% in some regions after the government announced the Green Pass

## FRANCE'S 'HEALTH PASS'

The French health pass is required at museums, movie theatres and tourist sites, and comes into effect for restaurants and trains Aug 9

To get it, people must be fully vaccinated, have a recent negative test, or proof they recently recovered from Covid-19

In France, nearly 5 million got a first dose and more than 6 million got a second dose in the two weeks after President Emmanuel Macron announced that the virus passes

## Slot booking system hacked in Italy

Hackers have attacked and shut down the IT systems of the company that manages Covid-19 vaccination appointments for the Lazio region surrounding Rome, the regional government said Sunday. "A powerful hacker attack on the region's CED is under way," the region said in a Facebook post. It said all systems had been deactivated, including those of the region's health portal and vaccination network, and warned the inoculation programme could suffer a delay. Italy's postal police and Rome prosecutors are looking into the matter and could open an investigation to find out who is behind the attack.



India and US relationship is so complementary. Their interest is also technology-based. Our cultivation, collaboration lies in technology  
OMKAR RAI | DIRECTOR GENERAL, STPI

## SAP BETS ON INTERNET-LED BIZ

SAP is looking at expanding its presence in new segments like internet-led businesses in India while continuing to bolster its role in sectors like oil and gas, public services and retail, a top executive said. SAP Indian Subcontinent President and MD Kulmeet Bawa said that the environment has been extremely volatile because of the pandemic



## of the day quote

We achieved our production ramp-up from last week of July and have streamlined supplies in line with market activity. Barring few locations, dealer outlets were mostly operational last month, albeit with lesser capacity

RAJESH GOEL | SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR (MARKETING & SALES), HCL

Kushaq was launched with the vision of substantially growing our volumes in India, and it is very encouraging to see our plan taking shape. Despite a challenging environment, we have managed to have a really successful launch

ZAC HOLLIS | BRAND DIRECTOR, SKODA AUTO (INDIA)

As on date 12 states and 2 UTs where PVR is present in India and Colombo, Sri Lanka, have allowed cinemas to reopen with varying norms relating to social distancing. We are reopening our cinemas on a staggered basis starting July 30 onwards

GAUTAM DUTTA | CEO, PVR

# Auto majors post double-digit sales growth in July

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 1: Leading auto makers, including Maruti Suzuki India, Hyundai and Tata Motors, Sunday reported high double-digit growth in their domestic passenger vehicle sales in July riding on stabilisation of macro-economic factors and better consumer sentiments.

Similarly, Honda, Nissan, MG Motor and Skoda also reported healthy growth in their sales last month leveraging on improved market mood amid prevailing lower coronavirus infection rate, despite supply constraints of semi-conductors.

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India's (MSI) domestic sales increased by 39% to 1,41,238 units last month as against 1,01,307 units in July 2020, the company said in a statement.



While sales of mini cars comprising Alto and WagonR stood at 19,685 units as compared to 17,258 units in the same month last year, those of compact segment, including models such as Swift, Celerio, Ignis, Baleno and Dzire, rose to 70,268 units as against 51,529 cars in July last year.

MSI said its sales of its utility ve-

hicles, including Vitara Brezza, S-Cross and Ertiga, stood at 32,272 units last month as compared to 19,177 in the year-ago month.

Rival Hyundai Motor India reported 26% jump in its domestic sales at 48,042 units as against 38,200 units in July 2020, driven by

strong performance of newly launched model Alcazar and other products like Creta, i20 and Venue.

A positive growth momentum is clearly visible in the passenger vehicle industry with the stabilisation of macro-economic factors, good monsoons and increase in consumer shift towards personal mobility

TARUN GARG | DIRECTOR (SALES, MARKETING & SERVICE), HYUNDAI MOTOR INDIA LTD

(Sales, Marketing & Service) Tarun Garg said.

Homegrown auto major Tata Motors also continued its impressive growth momentum in the passenger vehicles segment posting

domestic sales of 30,185 units in July as compared to 15,012 units in the same month last year.

Another player, MG Motor India reported a two-fold increase in retail sales at 4,225 units last month as compared to sold 2,105 units in July 2020. The company also recorded its highest-ever bookings and retail sales of ZS EV in July.

"A lot of people ask about EV potential in India and my typical answer is: People are ready and they need good solutions/ options from OEMs (original equipment manufacturers). One proof point: We booked all-time high 600+ ZS EV in July alone!!," MG Motor India President and Managing Director Rajeev Chaba said in a tweet.

Elaborating on the overall sales in July, MG Motor India Director (Sales) Rakesh Sidana said the Hector and ZS EV further gained momentum during the month.

# MCL's coal production reached 10.87 MT in May

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: A leading coal producer Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) produced 10.87 million tonne (MT) of coal in the month of May during financial year of 2021-22. The company had targeted to achieve 12.22 MT of coal production during the second month of current financial year.



A subsidiary of Coal India Limited (CIL) produced significantly from opencast mining. Company's monthly report claimed that MCL produced 108.29 lakh tonne of coal in opencast mining whereas the company produced 0.414 lakh tonne from underground mining in same month.

MCL had posted 10.63 MT in coal production in the month of April during current fiscal. The company fell short to achieve monthly target in April as it produced 11.82 MT of coal during the first month of current financial year.

The company aims to cater the coal demand. According to officials, apart from a couple of months, when industries were under Covid-induced lockdown, the demand for coal has remained encouraging.

The company, which produced 148.01 million tonne during 2020-21, has kept a target to produce 163 million tonne coal to meet the growing energy demand of the country. In the current financial year, MCL has been able to liquidate around 6 million tonne coal from the stock, which was around 23 million tonne at the end of last financial year.

MCL has also planned to supply 100 MT coal from Talcher coalfields, as it moves steadily to achieve the coal production and despatch targets in financial year 2021-22.

# July's GST collection at over ₹1.16L cr; 2nd highest this fiscal

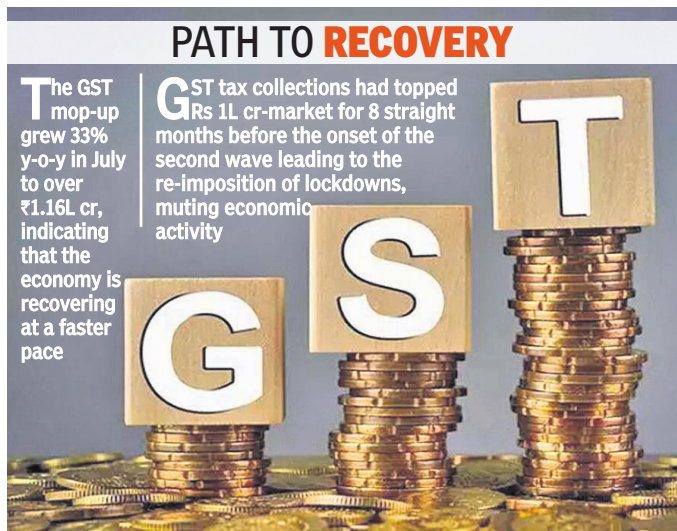
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: In signs of acceleration in economic activity, India's tax collections on goods sold and services rendered returned to over ₹1 lakh crore in July after the second wave of Covid-related restrictions caused a blip in the previous month. Goods and Services Tax (GST) mop-up grew 33% year-on-year in July to over ₹1.16 lakh crore, indicating that the economy is recovering at a faster pace. In July 2020, the collection was ₹87,422 crore.

This is the second highest collection so far this fiscal after a record ₹1.41 lakh crore mop-up in April. The finance ministry in a statement said robust GST revenues are likely to continue in the coming months as well.

The gross GST revenue collected in the month of July 2021 is ₹1,16,393 crore of which Central GST is ₹22,197 crore, State GST is ₹28,541 crore, Integrated GST is ₹57,864 crore (including ₹27,900 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess is ₹7,790 crore (including ₹815 crore collected on import of goods).

The revenues for the month of July 2021 are 33% higher than the GST revenues in the same month



last year and include GST returns filed between July 1-31 as well as IGST and cess collected from imports for the same period.

GST tax collections had topped ₹1 lakh crore-market for 8 straight months before the onset of the second wave of Covid-19 infections led to the re-imposition of lockdowns in different states, muting economic activity.

"GST collection...Dropped below ₹1 lakh crore in June 2021 as the collections during the month of June

2021 predominantly related to the month of May 2021; and during May 2021, most of the states/UTs were under either complete or partial lockdown due to COVID. With the easing out of COVID restrictions, GST collection for July 2021 has again crossed ₹1 lakh crore, which clearly indicates that the economy is recovering at a fast pace. The robust GST revenues are likely to continue in the coming months too," the ministry said in a statement.

## SHORT TAKES

### Royal Enfield reports 9% rise in total sales

New Delhi: Two-wheeler market Royal Enfield Sunday reported a nine per cent rise in total sales to 44,038 units for July. The company had sold 40,334 units in the same month last year, Royal Enfield said in a statement. Domestic sales stood at 39,290 units last month, a growth of 4% as against 37,925 in July 2020, it added. Exports grew 97% last month to 4,748 units as compared with 2,409 units in the year-ago month, the company said.

### Prime Day marks most SMBs selling

New Delhi: Prime Day 2021 marked the most Small Medium Businesses (SMBs) selling on Amazon.in ever, as they saw an overwhelming response from Prime members. With customers from over 96% pin codes of India placing orders and with the month leading up to Prime Day marking the highest viewership for Prime Video and highest number of listeners for Prime Music, Prime members enjoyed the best of what Prime Day has to offer with the unique SMB selection, new launches, great savings, and engagement with various Prime benefits.

### Patent approvals rise to 28,391 in FY21

New Delhi: The number of patents granted has increased from 6,326 in 2015-16 to 28,391 in 2020-21, while trademarks registration has risen from 65,045 in 2015-16 to 2,55,993 in 2020-21, the commerce and industry ministry said Sunday. It also said that while 4,505 copyrights were granted in 2015-16, a total of 16,402 were given in the last fiscal. It added that the government is committed to bolstering the ecosystem of patents, design, trademarks and GI systems to encourage innovation.

### Skoda sales surge over 3-fold in July

New Delhi: Skoda Auto India Sunday reported over three-fold increase in sales in July at 3,080 units compared to 922 units in July 2020. The surge in sales is fuelled by the launch of compact SUV Kushaq which will be one of the important growth drivers of the brand going forward, the Czech carmaker stated. "Kushaq was launched with the vision of substantially growing our volumes in India," Skoda Auto India Brand Director Zac Hollis said.

# Archana Joshi takes charge as new GM, SER

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata, August 1: Archana Joshi, an officer of Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) of 1985 Batch, assumed the charge of General Manager, South Eastern Railway July 30, 2021. Prior to joining as General Manager, Joshi was working as Additional Member, Tourism & Catering, Ministry of Railways, Railway Board. She is the first lady officer to become the General Manager of South Eastern Railway. She is also the first lady IRTS Officer to become a General Manager.

Joshi, an alumnus of Punjab

University, Chandigarh did her Post Graduation in Sociology and is a Gold Medalist in her subject. She thereafter completed her M. Phil in Public Policy and Administration. Joshi has worked in different Zonal Railways — Northern Railway, North Western Railway, West Central Railway and North Eastern Railway in various capacities as Additional General Manager, Chief Commercial Manager, Chief Operations Manager, Senior Deputy General Manager etc. She has also worked as Divisional Railway Manager, Kota, and West Central Railway.

# PSBs mobilise record fund of ₹58,700cr from markets in FY21

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: Notwithstanding economic disruptions caused by the pandemic, public sector banks (PSBs) have managed to raise a record ₹58,700 crore from markets in FY2020-21 through a mix of debt and equity to enhance capital base.

This included ₹4,500 crore raised by Mumbai-based Bank of Baroda from qualified institutional placement (QIP). Punjab National Bank mobilised ₹3,788 crore through share sale on private placement

basis during the financial year ended March 31, 2021.

At the same time, Bangalore-based Canara Bank raised ₹2,000 crore from QIP, as per data collated from regulatory filings.

Series of successful QIP reflect confidence of both domestic and global investors in PSBs and their potential, said a senior official of a public sector bank.

In addition, 12 PSBs raised funds from Tier I and Tier II bonds taking the total fund mobilisation to ₹58,697 crore, highest amount garnered in any financial year.

Various reforms undertaken by the government including recognition, resolution and recapitalisation resulted in progressive decline in non-performing assets (NPAs) and subsequent rise in profit.

NPAs of PSBs had declined to ₹7,39,541 crore as on March 31, 2019, ₹6,78,317 crore on March 31, 2020 and further to ₹6,16,616 crore as on March 31, 2021 (provisional data). Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) at the same time increased sequentially to a high of 84 per cent.

# India's 5G space booming with global, domestic firms pitching in

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 1: India's 5G dreams may have been delayed amid the pandemic but this has not been able to detract the equipment makers from engaging in terms of equipment manufacturing and network development. Further, both domestic and global players are set to benefit from the non-participation of Chinese majors Huawei and ZTE in the 5G trials.

Global equipment majors such as Ericsson are not the only ones in the game. Even domestic players have risen up to the occasion and are now actively pursuing tie ups along with growing their technical prowess. Tech Mahindra, Sterlite Technologies Ltd and state-run ITI Ltd are among the Indian companies which have come up with 5G expertise.

The latest announcement of Tata Sons' subsidiary Panatone Finvest

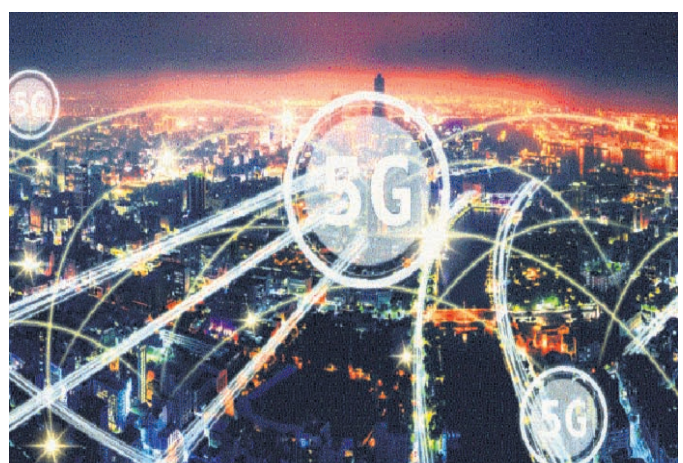
acquiring controlling stake in telecom equipment maker Tejas Networks would toughen the competition.

Panatone Finvest will buy a 43.3 per cent stake in Tejas Networks for ₹1,850 crore and along with other Tata Group companies, Panatone would make a public announcement to acquire up to another 26 per cent stake in Tejas.

In a regulatory filing, Tejas said that it sees a very large opportunity in the telecom sector both in India and global markets with the new cycle of investments in 5G and fiber-based broadband rollouts.

In June, telecom giant Reliance's Jio partnered with US chipset maker Qualcomm to manufacture critical equipment for the 5G ecosystem in India.

Jio has also indigenously developed 5G Radio integrated with Jio's 5G core network and is in its development of in-house Massive



MIMO and indoor 5G small cells in advanced stages.

Tech Mahindra is also understood to be going with robust plans in terms of 5G technology. The company recently reported strong earnings for the first quar-

ter of FY22 and analysts are of the view that with the government's plan to stick to India-made 5G rollout, the company is expected the gain a significant portion of that "5G tech" pie.

As several partnerships in the

## In June, telecom giant Reliance's Jio partnered with US chipset maker Qualcomm to manufacture critical equipment for the 5G ecosystem in India

telecom space have been announced, last month Bharti Airtel and Tata Consultancy Services announced partnership for the implementation of 5G solutions, starting pilot from January 2022.

TCS will implement the 5G solutions it has developed for Airtel. Tata Group has developed 5G solutions using Open-Radio Access Network (O-RAN), a part of telecom network architecture.

Earlier this year, Bharti Airtel announced that it has become the

first telecom service provider in the country to successfully demonstrate and orchestrate live 5G service. The demonstration took place in Hyderabad.

Last year, Bharti Airtel extended its multi-year contract with Ericsson for deploying 5G-ready radio network, strengthening their long-standing partnership.

Vodafone Idea in June announced to collaborate with Cisco to improve its existing 4G network and, in the future, 5G use cases for offering better quality experience for its customers.

The telco said that it would work with Cisco to design and build a cost-efficient network architecture to drive greater speed to market as it taps opportunities in 4G, 5G, Cloud, and IoT. Finnish mobile and equipment maker Nokia may be seen in India's much awaited 5G scenario.

# Sindhustan

# INDIA END 49-YEAR WAIT

## MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM IN SEMIFINALS AFTER BEATING GREAT BRITAIN 3-1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Tokyo, August 1:** A determined Indian men's hockey team advanced to the Olympic semifinals for the first time in 49 years, beating Great Britain 3-1 in the quarterfinals here Sunday. It is a triumph which leaves the side within touching distance of a medal that has proved elusive for over four decades.

The eight-time former Olympic champions scored three field goals through Dilpreet Singh (seventh minute), Gurjant Singh (16th) and Hardik Singh (57th) to seal the win. Great Britain's lone goal was scored by Sam Ward from a penalty corner in the 45th minute.

India will take on World Champions Belgium in the semifinals Tuesday. Belgium however has always proved to be a bogey team for India.

India's last of the eight Olympic gold medals came way back in the 1980 Moscow Games. However, there were no semifinals in that edition as only six teams participated in the event. The last time India featured in the semifinals of the Olympics was in 1972 Munich Games where they lost 0-2 to arch rivals Pakistan. Belgium defeated Spain 3-1 in another quarterfinal to seal their place in the last four round.

Great Britain enjoyed the early share of exchanges, earning their first penalty corner as early as the third minute but India defended well to keep the danger away.

The Indians got their footing into the match as



**LET'S CELEBRATE:** Dilpreet Singh (right) is over the moon after scoring India's first goal against Great Britain at the Tokyo Olympics, Sunday

time went by and took the lead through Dilpreet, who beat Great Britain goalkeeper Oliver Payne after being fed by Simranjeet Singh. It was Simranjeet who created the chance after he stole the ball from a rival defender: just outside the latter's circle.

The Indians didn't let their rivals settle down and doubled their lead seconds into the second quarter through Gurjant. It was Hardik who created the opportunity by intercepting a pass just outside

the Great Britain 'D'. He then sent the ball to an unmarked Gurjant, who kept a calm head to put the ball into the net through the legs of Payne. In the 35th minute, Gurjant had another chance to extend the lead but his reverse hit from a tight angle was easily saved by Payne.

Thereafter, it was all Great Britain as they pressed numbers in front in search of goals.

Leading by two goals, the Indians dropped back and tried to defend the lead but the move proved costly

as minutes from the end of the third quarter Great Britain secured four back-to-back penalty corners the last of which was put into the back of the net by Ward.

In the fourth quarter, Britain launched an all out attack for the equaliser: They earned three penalty corners, but Sreejesh saved all. India extended their lead against the run of play when Hardik scored with a rebound from a counter-attack. After his initial shot was saved by Payne.

### CHANCE FOR RANI-LED SIDE TO CREATE HISTORY ONCE MORE

## Indian eyes face tough Oz test



**HISTORY BECKONS:** The Indian women team have a chance to enter the semifinals if they manage to overcome Australia

AGENCIES

**Tokyo, August 1:** The Indian women's hockey team's grit will be put through a severe test when they face World No.4 Australia here Monday in the quarterfinals. The Indian eyes would be hoping to create history by reaching the semifinals of the Olympics for the first time. However, to do that, they will have to play out of their skins.

The Indian eyes have shown resilience to qualify for the last eight stage winning two matches on the trot against higher-ranked Ireland and South Africa and finishing fourth in Pool A. However, the Aussies will be a different propo-

**INDIA HAVE EARNED 33 PENALTY CORNERS SO FAR, BUT MANAGED TO CONVERT ONLY FOUR**

**IF THE EVES MANAGE TO REACH THE SEMIFINALS, THEY WILL BE THE FIRST INDIAN WOMEN'S TEAM TO DO SO**

**AUSSIES ARE CURRENTLY RANKED 4TH IN THE WORLD WHILE INDIA ARE 10TH**

sition all together.

The best-ever show by the women's team at the Olympics came 41 years ago at Moscow when they finished fourth among six teams. However, then the hockey

event was played in the round-robin format. There were no quarterfinals and semifinals like the present tournament.

In spite of the odds stacked heavily against the Indian side, coach Sjoerd Marjine said Sunday that the Australians will be under pressure. "The pressure will be on Australia as they are one of the highest-ranked teams in the competition. We will be able to play freely, which is very important for us. Our own focus is on approaching each game one at a time and to keep improving with every match. We will take the field tomorrow (Monday) and try to express ourselves there," Marjine pointed out.

The Rani Rampal-led side showed grit and determination to bounce back after three consecutive defeats. It is this determination which may test the Australians. However, the Indians will have to utilise the chances that come their way. And for that reason hat-trick woman Vandana Kataria will have to lead from the front.

Also the team have to utilise the penalty corners that come their way. In the five pool games, India have earned 33 penalty corners, but have converted only four. Star drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur will have to come to the party, if the Indians have the aspiration to beat Australia.

### SPECIAL GIFT FOR 'EMOTIONAL' DAD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, August 1:** PV Sindhu needed an extra dose of motivation following her semifinal loss at the Tokyo Games and that came from her father PV Ramana, whose wish for a 'gift' was duly fulfilled by his world-conquering daughter.

Ramana expressed his happiness over Sindhu securing her second successive Olympic medal. He said he had asked her to concentrate on her game against He Bing Jiao in the bronze medal play-off and 'just think that you are giving me a gift'.

Ramana said he had consoled Sindhu after her semifinal loss. "Yesterday I had told her you gave your best and no problem. Concentrate today (Sunday) and just think that you are giving me a gift and play on the court. So, I am very happy," an emotional Ramana said.

"I am happy that she is the first Indian woman to win two consecutive medals at the Olympics - a silver and a bronze. That way she has brought name and for the country," Ramana said. "Playing the third-fourth match is always painful. So I had to motivate her Saturday," he added.

"I shall thank Park (her South Korean coach Park Tae Sang) who has taken great pain, the government of India, BAI, her supporters, everybody has given her encouragement, I am grateful to the media also," Ramana further stated.

**“It was a fresh game altogether, we both had losses yesterday (Saturday) and came back. For us, it was very important in getting a medal for the country and at the Olympics. It's not easy. It's a big thing. There were really long rallies but I had to be patient and calm. Even though I was leading, I did not relax”**

PV SINDHU

## 2nd Indian sportsperson to win two successive Olympic medals

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 1:** The country rejoiced at badminton ace PV Sindhu winning her second Olympic medal with the sports fraternity hailing her feat and President Ram Nath Kovind lauding her for setting 'a new yardstick of consistency, dedication and excellence'. Sindhu became Sunday only the second Indian and first woman to win two Olympic medals. She secured a bronze after a straight-game win over World No.9 He Bing Jiao of China in the women's singles third-place play-off here. The Indian shuttler won 21-13, 21-15. People from all walks of life took to various social media platforms to congratulate Sindhu. Here's what they said:



**Abhinav Bindra (Shooter):** You make us super proud!!! Your feat is really extraordinary.

**Sachin Tendulkar:** What an achievement to win 2 Olympic medals@Pvsindhu! You have made the whole nation very very proud.

**Bajrang Punia (Wrestler):** History has been created as it's a back-to-back Olympic medal for India's @Pvsindhu1. She wins the BRONZE.

**Anil Kumble:** Congratulations @Pvsindhu1. Proud of your achievement.

**Virender Sehwal:** Isaayi Muslim Sikh Hindu, Sabko jodein #PVSindhu. First Indian woman to win

**Ram Nath Kovind:** PV Sindhu becomes the first Indian woman to win medals in two Olympic Games. She has set a new yardstick of consistency, dedication and excellence. My heartfelt congratulations to her for bringing glory to India.

**Narendra Modi:** We are all elated by the stellar performance by @Pvsindhu1. Congratulations to her on winning the bronze at @Tokyo2020. She is India's pride and one of our most outstanding Olympians.

**Naveen Patnaik:** Well done! Congratulate @Pvsindhu1 on her historic win to secure the Bronze medal in #Tokyo2020 #Badminton final. Her triumph, the consecutive Olympic medals and grit is both exemplary and inspiring. Wish her my best.

**Anurag Thakur (Sports Minister):** SMASHING VICTORY PV Sindhu!!! You dominated the game & made history #Tokyo2020! An Olympic medalist twice over! India is so proud of you & awaits your return!



### INDIAN BOXER BRAVES STITCHES TO FIGHT WORLD CHAMPION

## Gutsy Satish effort ends in bloody loss

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Tokyo, August 1:** A bruised Satish Kumar (+91kg) put up a gutsy performance against reigning World Champion Bakhodir Jalolov but it was not enough to upstage the rampaging Uzbek as the Indian boxer made a quarterfinal exit from the Olympic Games here Sunday. Taking the ring with multiple stitches on his forehead and chin after sustaining cuts in the pre-quarters, Satish lost 0-5 but the scoreline was not reflective of his brave performance.

Satish sustained the cuts during his pre-quarterfinal showdown against Jamaica's Ricardo Brown.

The 32-year-old Army man stood his ground, occasionally managed to land a shot with his right hand but Jalolov dominated the proceedings all through, relying on his imposing demeanour and excellent counter-attacking game to sail through. Satish's forehead cut expectedly opened up during the third round but he fought through even with that.



**THAT HURTS:** India's Satish Kumar takes one flush on the chin during his bout against Bakhodir Jalolov at the Tokyo Olympics, Sunday

Jalolov, a 27-year-old footballer-turned-boxer, acknowledged his rival's bravery at the end of the bout after securing his maiden

Olympic Games medal. He is also a three-time Asian champion, all those gold medals coming in succession to him since 2017.

Satish had earlier scripted history by just qualifying for the Games as he was the first super heavyweight from India to achieve the feat.

With Satish's defeat, the Indian men's boxing campaign came to an end in the Games.

Initially, there were doubts whether Satish would compete with stitches all over. However, he had no doubts about entering the ring despite the handicap.

"My chin has seven stitches and my forehead has another six. I knew I wanted to fight. Otherwise I would have lived with that regret of what if. Now I can be at peace and also probably a little content with myself that I gave my best," Satish said after the bout.

"My wife had told me not to fight. My father also said that it is too much to watch me fight like this. That's not unexpected, family can't see you hurt. But then they understood that I wanted to do this at any cost for my satisfaction," said the father of two school-going children.

### TOKYO OLYMPICS ROUND UP



#### Fastest man

**Tokyo:** Lamont Marcell Jacobs won the men's

Olympic 100 metres race Sunday night, crossing the line in 9.8 seconds to bring the sprint gold to Italy for the first time. Jacobs topped America's Fred Kerley and Canada's Andre DeGrasse to take the spot held for the past 13 years by the now-retired Usain Bolt.

#### Swimming's golden stars

**Tokyo:** Securing his place as one of the biggest stars of the Olympics here, swimmer Caeleb Dressel won his fourth gold medal with a victory in the 50-metre freestyle here Sunday with an Olympic record time of 21.07 seconds. An hour later, Dressel helped the United States break their own world record to win the last swimming gold from the men's 4x100m medley relay. However, Emma McKeon left quite a mark too in the pool with seven medals, the most by any woman in a single Olympics. A few minutes after Dressel climbed from the pool, McKeon completed her own



**MAKING A MARK:** Caeleb Dressel of the United States (centre) wins the 50 metres freestyle competition at the Tokyo Olympics

freestyle sweep. She touched in 23.81s to take the women's 50 freestyle, adding to her victory in the 100. Then McKeon entered truly rarified territory in the women's 4x100 medley relay leading the Australians to a victory over the two-time defending champion Americans. It was her fourth gold of the Games in addition to the three bronze medals she had earlier won.

#### Biles opts out again

**Tokyo:** Simone Biles will not defend her Olympic gold medal on floor exercise. USA Gymnastics announced Sunday that the six-time Olympic medalist has opted not to compete on floor, where

she won gold in Rio de Janeiro and was placed second in qualifying last week. Jennifer Gadirova of Britain will replace Biles in the finals, which are scheduled for Monday. Biles is dealing with a mental block that in gymnastics is referred to as 'the twisties'. In other words, Biles is having trouble figuring out where her body is in relation to the ground when in air. Biles has been dominant on floor exercise during her elite career, winning five World Championships along with her triumph in Rio.

#### Zverev takes gold

**Tokyo:** Alexander Zverev followed up his comeback win over Novak Djokovic by winning the men's singles gold here Sunday at the Olympics. The fifth-ranked German overwhelmed Russian opponent Karan Khachanov 6-3, 6-1 for the biggest test of his career. Zverev's previous best performance was reaching the final of last year's US Open. The women's singles gold went to Switzerland's Belinda Bencic who beat Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic 7-5, 2-6, 6-3 and then dedicated her victory to Roger Federer.