



38 CHAMPIONS SCRIPT HISTORY IN HOCKEY.

1.3 BILLION INDIANS WALK AN INCH TALLER...

Indian Men's and Women's Hockey teams made a historic entry into the Semi-Finals at Tokyo Olympics.

Jai Hind!

CONGRATULATIONS TEAM INDIA!



Odisha is proud to have partnered with Hockey India in this remarkable journey

leisure



KIT HARRINGTON SAYS THERE'S NO BREAK FROM PARENTING

Game Of Thrones star Kit Harington and his wife Rose Leslie welcomed their first child five months ago. "They tell you and they don't tell you (about fatherhood). But you have no way of knowing that until it happens. This goes on forever. Like, you don't get a break from it," Harington said.

BLAKE CREDITS RESTAURANT FOR HER ROMANCE WITH RYAN

Actress Blake Lively, who has been married to actor Ryan Reynolds since 2012, has shared that their relationship began after a date night at a Japanese restaurant. The star couple went down memory lane over the weekend and revisited the sentimental venue.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
The stars urge you to focus on your finances and savings, and today, you might remain very busy doing just that. But take care, says Ganesh. You don't want a sulking spouse when you go home. Don't cancel any plans; go ahead and enjoy that new film.

TAURUS
Your think tank will be running on overdrive today. Your possessiveness might kick in to cause a conflict. Keep your anger under the carpet to avoid any unnecessary complications. Introspection will also play upon your thoughts, leading you to explore your problems and pry for solutions, predicts Ganesh.

GEMINI
Today may not be very meaningful and productive for you, though you will get to spend plenty of quality time with yourself in the afternoon, which may not necessarily be to your liking. By evening, you may feel a little extra sensitive. A lonely day, or as an optimist would put it, you've got the whole day to yourself; it could have been worse (For instance, a day alone with your nagging mother-in-law!).

CANCER
You are likely to be at your inventive best today, feels Ganesh. You are likely to taste success, much to the delight of your colleagues at work and loved ones back home. However, experience counts, and if you are a beginner at something, you may face problems in your new venture.

LEO
Agreed that home is where the heart is. But today, your home is where your troubles will be. The faster you try to run away from them, the quicker they seem to catch up with you, says Ganesh. So, scooting off may not be the best solution. Some people around you may try to blow things out of proportion; the best way to keep them in check is with a smile. For, a smile is the secret weapon of all winners, reminds Ganesh.

VIRGO
Open the mind gates and let your imagination flow, says Ganesh. At your creative best, you will pursue innovation and creativity today. Luck will be on your side and even those things that you took a risk on may lean your way. You energy levels will be unusually high and you will feel passionate about all that you undertake. A good day to organise social events for family and friends.

LIBRA
There is a very strong possibility of major improvements in your public standing and image today. But it all depends so much upon your personal character, and, therefore, you must guard it zealously, even with your own life. Those who seek to malign or dent your reputation will be disappointed, says Ganesh.

SCORPIO
Today promises to be an exceptional day for those involved in business. With sheer brilliance, you will steer deals right to your door step, and will display great finesse in negotiations and bartering. Bring out the leader in you and take charge when you introduce new products or market them in business, suggests Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
To do or not to do? That will be the question for most of today as you find yourself pulling out of one dilemma only to trip into the next one. Controversy will surround you and you may find yourself at the crossroads, where you are unsure of which direction to take. Turn to the wisdom of the experienced for proper guidance, advises Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
The most intimidating of ventures can prove successful if fortune favours you; you will be fortunate today, says Ganesh. Those of you dealing in stocks and shares can expect a profitable day ahead, but don't forget to give credit to your spouse; it will be their luck working wonders for you.

AQUARIUS
Bursting with new ideas, you want to make the world a better place! You will give your best in a team and will come up with great schemes and solutions. At gatherings and social dos, says Ganesh, you will remain your charming self, impressing people with an amazing social grace.

PISCES
Home is where the heart is, in which the troubles you need to deal with today are smouldering. Running away from your problems will simply have you out of breath; it would be wiser to take a stand and find solutions to petty conflicts without losing your perspective. Make no mountains out of mole hills, says Ganesh.



We don't deserve a media trial: Shilpa

MUMBAI: Actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra took to social media Monday to issue a statement, saying she and her family do not deserve a media trial.

Shilpa's statement comes at a time when her husband, businessman Raj Kundra has been granted judicial custody till August 10 in a case pertaining to alleged production and distribution of porn content.

The actress said she will not comment on the case as it is subjudice and also requested the media

for some privacy saying the past few days have been challenging for her 'on every front'.

Shilpa shared her statement on Instagram Monday, which reads: "Yes! The past few days have been challenging, on every front. There have been a lot of rumours and accusations. I am a proud law-abiding Indian citizen and a hardworking professional for the last 29 years. People have put their faith in ME & I've never let anyone down. So, most importantly, I request you to respect my family's and 'my right' to privacy in these times. We don't deserve a media trial. Please let the law take its course. Satyamev Jayate!"

Isolation affected me at a very subconscious level: CarryMinati

NEW DELHI: YouTuber CarryMinati overcame lockdown anxiety while shooting for his debut film *Mayday* starring Amitabh Bachchan and Ajay Devgn.

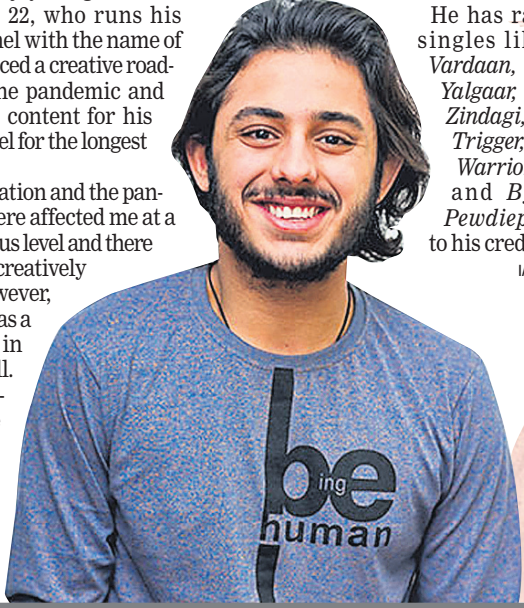
Ajeay Nagar, 22, who runs his YouTube channel with the name of CarryMinati, faced a creative roadblock during the pandemic and couldn't create content for his YouTube channel for the longest time.

He said: "Isolation and the pandemic somewhere affected me at a very subconscious level and there were days I felt creatively challenged. However, the film shoot was a game changer in the midst of it all. It was very therapeutic and gave me perspective I was seeking creatively".

Ajeay marked his foray in the

music score of a Hindi film with Abhishek Bachchan starrer *Big Bull*. He was also featured in Salim Sulaiman's soundtrack *Date Karle*.

He has rap singles like *Vardaan*, *Yalgaar*, *Zindagi*, *Trigger*, *Warrior*, and *Bye Pseudiepie* to his credit.



Amlan plays migrant worker in Lagaam

BHUBANESWAR: With no work and no way to feed themselves during the pandemic, migrant labourers had no choice but to defy the lockdown and return to their villages. Upcoming Odia film *Lagaam* showcases the struggle of a migrant worker who desperately wants to return home to be with his family during such difficult times.

Top actor Amlan will be seen essaying the role of this worker with Tamanna Vyas playing his love interest. The film also features Bobby Mishra,

Harihara Mohapatra, Pradyumna Lenka and Umakanta Muduli, among other important characters.

Directed by Pinu Nayak, the film's story and dialogues have been penned by Ranjit Kumar Sahu. Among other credits, Abhijit Majumdar has scored the music while the songs have been written by Tapu Nayak and Janmojoy Panda.

Ranjit will also don the producer's hat for the movie under the banner of Dipti Karan Films. The film's director says, "Audience will get to see romance, drama, comedy and suspense in the movie. The shooting has been completed and the post-production works are in full swing."

GAUHAHAR LOOKS BACK ON HER JOURNEY IN SHOWBIZ

MUMBAI: Model-turned-actress Gauahar Khan has managed to find her fan base in every section of the audience.

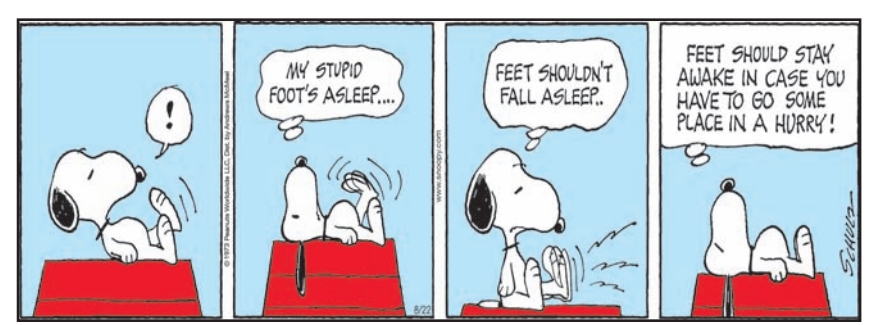
Be it in reality shows or making sensational screen presence in item songs or sharing screen space with stars like Ranbir Kapoor and Vidya Balan - Gauahar has done it all.

Even though she is mostly grabbing headlines for her social and personal life on social media, the actress says with time, her

parameters on choosing projects, especially films, has changed because she is looking to explore her acting skills now.

"Initially, for me, it was to use every opportunity with the best of my ability because I started from zero; today it is around 19 years that I am here in the business of entertainment. So much has changed! Really...now because of the OTT platform, actors like myself are getting the opportunity to showcase our acting talent; earlier in cinema chances were limited," explained the *Begum Jaan* actor.

PEANUTS



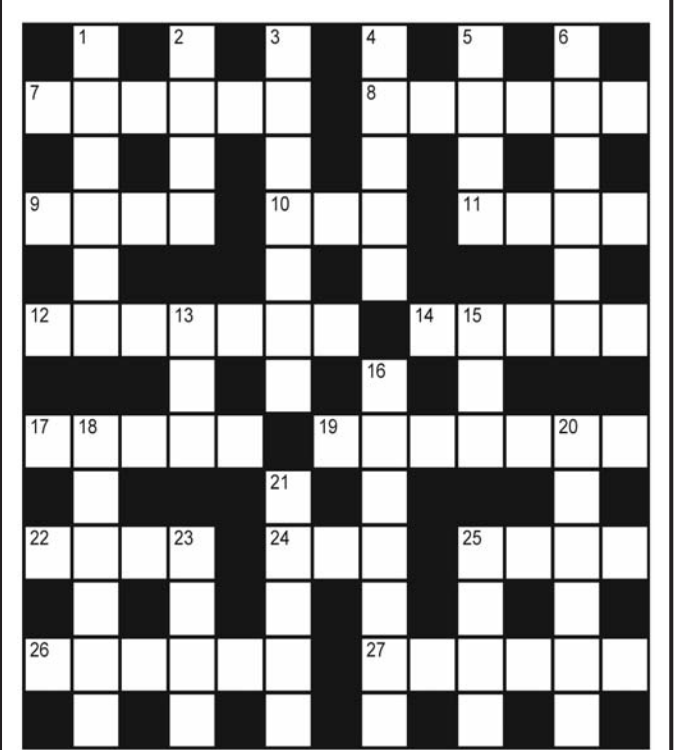
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



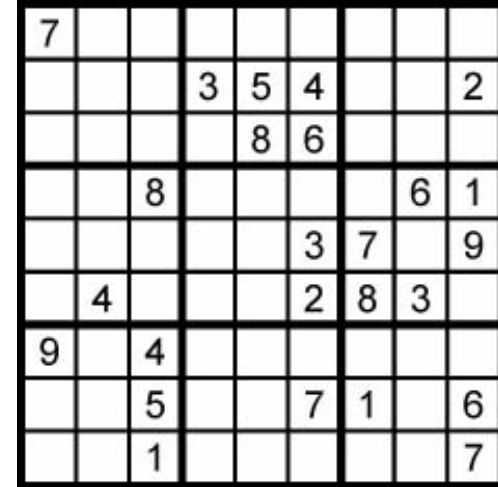
FUN post CROSSWORD



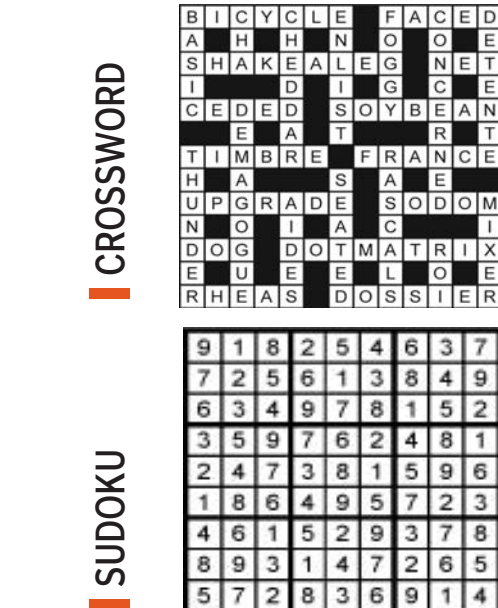
- Across**
- 7 Feeble
 - 8 Prompt the grey cells
 - 9 Bubble over
 - 10 Sty resident
 - 11 Pace
 - 12 Engraving
 - 14 Encompassing
 - 17 Bellyache
 - 19 Fin
 - 22 Border
 - 24 Drunkard
 - 25 Repeat
 - 26 On fire
 - 27 Songbird
 - 4 Hunt like a cat
 - 5 Self-satisfied
 - 6 Heart condition
 - 13 Jump
 - 15 ___ music
 - 16 Army unit
 - 18 Snub
 - 20 Breathe out
 - 21 Guide
 - 23 Lacerate
 - 25 Wickedness
- Down**
- 1 Open up
 - 2 Horizontal structure
 - 3 Comical

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



SEEKING PRIVACY

Actor Shilpa Shetty has issued a statement saying she and her family do not deserve a media trial

LEISURE



EXTRADITION PLEA

Kerala man moves SC seeking extradition of his daughter who was detained in Af after she left India to join ISIS

TWO STATES P6



US' \$1T INFRA BILL

After much delay, US senators have unveiled a nearly USD 1 trillion bipartisan infra package

INTERNATIONAL P8

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Learn from our sportspersons. They never demand a thing, manage on their own, win medals and thank us for their success!

Eves make history



EMOTIONS WRIT LARGE: Indian players begin celebration, while the Australians look dejected after the match, Monday

AGENCIES

Tokyo, August 2: A brave and determined Indian women's hockey team etched its name in the history books by entering the Olympic Games semifinals for the first time, stunning three-time champions and world no.2 Australia 1-0 in an intense last-eight tie here on Monday.

A day after the Indian men's team entered the Olympic semifinals following a 49-year gap, the world no. 9 women's side also produced a phenomenally gritty performance to make it way into the last four.

Drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur rose to the occasion when it mattered and converted India's lone penalty corner in the 22nd minute to surprise the Australians. Coming into the match, the odds were totally against India as in world no.2 Australia, a mighty unbeaten opponent, awaited them. "We are so happy, it is the result of hard work that we put in for several, several days. In 1980, we qualified for the Games but this time, we made the semifinals. It is a proud moment

Naveen Patnaik @Naveen_Odisha

Congratulations Indian Women's #Hockey Team on the spectacular win over Australia to seal the semifinal berth in #Tokyo2020. What a terrific game the team played against Australia! Keep the momentum going and wish the team best of luck.

#Cheer4India

progressed. Australia had the first shot at the goal but India goalkeeper Savita did just enough to deny Amrosia Malone, whose slap shot from inside the circle hit the post.

The Indians thereafter adopted an aggressive approach and caught the Australian defence off guard quite a few times. India's pace and determination seemed to have surprised the Australians as they panicked while defending and were lucky not to have conceded a goal in the first quarter.

In the ninth minute, skipper Rani Rampal's deflection from a Vandana Katariya shot hit the back post as Australia survived. A minute later, Broke Peris' shot from top of the circle just went wide past a fully stretched Savita. The Indians created another chance in the first quarter but an alert Australian goalkeeper Rachael Lynch came out of her line to deny Sharmila Devi from a one-on-one situation. The Australians pressed hard in the second quarter and secured their first penalty corner in the 20th minute which was defended brilliantly by India.

e-RUPI launched

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 2: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday launched e-RUPI, a person and purpose specific digital payment solution that is aimed at improving transparency and targeted delivery of benefits.

Over the years, several programmes have been launched to ensure that the benefits reach its intended beneficiaries in a targeted and leakproof manner, with limited touch points between the government and the beneficiary. The concept of electronic voucher takes forward this vision of good governance.

To begin with e-RUPI facility is available for health services and will be expanded to other segments. "Today the country is giving a new dimension to digital governance. ERUPI voucher is going to play a huge role in making digital transactions, and DBT more effective. This will help

Prime Minister Narendra Modi rolls out digital payment solution **e-RUPI**

- e-RUPI is a cashless and contactless instrument for digital payment developed by National Payments Corporation of India
- Connects sponsors of the services with beneficiaries & service providers in a digital manner without any physical interface
- Assures timely payments without involvement of any intermediary
- It can also be used for delivering services meant for providing drugs & nutritional support under mother and child welfare schemes, TB eradication programmes etc.

Corporation of India on its UPI platform, in collaboration with the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and National Health Authority.

STEEP FALL IN STATE'S DAILY COVID COUNT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 2: The state's Covid-19 toll Monday rose to 6,033 after 67 more patients succumbed to the infection while 1,032 fresh cases pushed the tally to 9,79,737, a health department official said. The state currently has 15,050 active cases while 9,58,601 patients have recovered from the disease. Khurda alone accounted for 12 fresh deaths, followed by Sundargarh at 11, Cuttack at 10, Puri at six and Dhenkanal at five.

According to the Health and Family Welfare Department, the fatality list does not reflect deaths occurring on a particular day. It gives details of the past deaths for which the audit process has been duly completed, and the cause of the death identified due to Covid-19. Over 1.61 crore samples have been tested for Covid-19 thus far, including 67,131 Sunday. The TPR for the day stood at 1.53 pc.

Polish visa to Belarus Olympian who fears for safety



Journalists gather at the Poland Embassy to report on Belarusian athlete Krystsina Tsimanouskaya after she visited the embassy in Tokyo, Monday.

home, where authorities relentlessly crack down on government critics. The runner said on her Instagram account that she was put in the 4x400 relay even though she has never raced in the event.

The runner was then apparently hustled to the airport but refused to board a flight for Istanbul and instead approached police for help. In a filmed message distributed on social media, she also asked the International Olympic Committee for assistance.

"I was put under pressure, and they are trying to forcibly take me out of the country without my consent," the 24-year-old said in the message. The rapid-fire series of events brought international political intrigue to an Olympics that have been more focused on operational dramas, like maintaining safety during a pandemic and navigating widespread Japanese opposition to holding the event at all.

Belarus' authoritarian government has relentlessly targeted anyone even mildly expressing dissent since a presidential election a year ago triggered a wave of unprecedented mass protests. And it has also gone to extremes to stop its critics, including the recent plane diversion that European officials called an act of air piracy.

In this context, Tsimanouskaya feared for her safety once she saw the campaign against her in state media, according to the Belarusian Sport Solidarity Foundation, the activist group that is helping her. "The campaign was quite serious and that was a clear signal that her life would be in danger in Belarus," Alexander Opeikin, a spokesman for the foundation, told the AP in an interview.

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JOINT TEAMS TO PLUG HOLES IN PROCUREMENT

FIELD VERIFICATION

- Dedicated toll free number 1967 set up for receiving telephonic grievances of farmers
- Joint verification teams to be formed to ensure 100 per cent field verification of farmers and their crop area
- The paddy cultivated area would be cross-verified with satellite data collected through ORSAC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 2: Following allegations of mismanagement in paddy procurement, Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra Monday directed officials to ensure paddy is procured from all genuine farmers in the state during the current kharif season.

Holding a high-level meeting with Collectors and senior officials, Mahapatra said, "No genuine farmer should be deprived of selling paddy to government during the kharif marketing season 2021-22." He directed Collectors to form sufficient number of joint verification teams involving field level officers from the departments of agriculture, cooperation, revenue and water resources for 100 per cent field verification of actual farmers and their crop area.

He also asked officials to prepare the final list of genuine farmers for paddy procurement by weeding out the possibilities of fake crop area registration, and sealing the scope for the entry of unscrupulous middlemen into the system.

Stressing the importance of field verification in the entire procurement process, the CS sought to conduct it with sincerity and accuracy. It was decided that field verification would be combined with verification of actual land records, land category (kizam), crop areas, types and source of irrigation, bank details, mobile numbers of farmers and other factors. The paddy cultivated area would be cross-verified with satellite data collected through ORSAC. After registration and verification, SMSes would be sent to farmers on the extent of the cultivated land registered for procurement. Payment to farmers would be done through their bank accounts, and all payments would be integrated with online public financial management system.

Cooperation secretary VV Yadav said interactive voice recording system would be set up to handle farmers' queries regarding registration and procurement. A dedicated toll free number 1967 had been set up for receiving the telephonic grievances of farmers.

SC notice to states on scrapped IT Act

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, August 2: The Supreme Court Monday issued notice to Odisha and other state governments and High Courts on a petition that challenged the continued use of Section 66A of IT Act even after the apex court struck down it in 2015.

A two-judge bench of the SC comprising Justices RF Nariman and BR Gavai sought response from the state governments following the Centre's stand that it is up to the state governments to refrain from filing cases under the impugned provision. The apex court also served the notice on the registrars of High Courts and sought their responses within four weeks.

The bench observed that it will look separately on the judiciary aspect as this matter pertains to not only courts but also police. "Let notices be issued to all states and Union Territories. This is to be done in a period of four weeks from today. List matter after four weeks," the bench said.

It is to be mentioned here that a petition has been filed by NGO People Union for Civil Liberties seeking directions to the Centre to advise all police stations against registering FIRs under Section 66A. It contended that the section has continued to be in use not only within police stations but also in cases before trial courts across the country.

Citing the findings of the Zombie Tracker Website, the petitioner contended that as on March 10, 2021, around 745 cases are still pending before district courts wherein accused are charged under Section 66A of IT Act.

Earlier July 5, the apex court had expressed shock at the cases being registered even after the provision was struck down. "Amazing. What is going on is terrible," the court had remarked.

“ If in work you meet with some difficulties, look sincerely into yourself and there you will discover their origin.

THE MOTHER



Debate Doublespeak

The plot of alleged snooping on journalists, politicians, civil society activists, ministers and government officials with the help of the Pegasus spyware is turning murkier day by day with the government and the ruling BJP putting a spanner in debates and questioning permissibility under parliamentary rules and practices. Instead of conceding its vociferous demand for a debate in the Parliament and a court-monitored probe, the government is accusing the Opposition of disrupting the monsoon session and lamenting over loss of hours that would have allowed transaction of important legislative business. To put it bluntly, it's a ruse intended to obfuscate the main issue, which is, making the government accountable in the Parliament for the Snoogate.

The most tell-tale evidence of the government's reluctance to face grilling in the Parliament is the scandalous behaviour of BJP MPs who dominate the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information and Technology, chaired by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor. The meeting had to be postponed 28 July for lack of quorum caused by the refusal of BJP MPs to sign on the attendance register! The BJP members of the panel who were said to be present in the meeting room reportedly did not sign the attendance register in protest against the chairman's announcement that the panel members would question officials from the Information and Technology Ministry and Home Ministry, who would be made to depose before it on the Pegasus issue. BJP members objected to this agenda on the spurious plea that the Congress is not allowing discussion on this issue in the Parliament, making the discussion by the panel redundant. The 32-member Parliamentary Standing Committee on IT was to discuss 'Citizens' data security and privacy,' according to a notification by the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

The panel, which has maximum members from the BJP, had summoned officials from the Ministry of Electronics, Information and Technology and the Ministry of Home Affairs. But, in a strange defiance, all the government officials skipped the meeting on one pretext or the other. This left little doubt about the government's intention, which is to stonewall all attempts to ferret out information on whether it had used the spyware. If it turns out to be true, then it will constitute a grave assault on the country's democratic institutions. An international media consortium has published reports that over 50,000 mobile phone numbers, including a few thousand from India, were on a list of potential targets for surveillance using Israeli firm NSO's Pegasus spyware. Opposition leaders including Rahul Gandhi, Union ministers Prahlad Singh Patel and Ashwini Vaishnav, businessman Anil Ambani, a former CBI chief and at least 40 journalists figure in the list of the leaked database of NSO. It is, however, yet to be established whether all the phones were hacked or not.

The government's decision to push the matter under the carpet by dismissing it as a 'non-issue' and as such not worthy of discussion in the Parliament under Rule 267 is not in the interest of a healthy democracy. This rule allows debate on an issue suspending all other business of the House. Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu dismissed the Opposition's demand and said the issue could be discussed in the normal course of time thereby disallowing discussing a matter of great public interest. Other countries affected by the alleged surveillance such as France and Hungary have already ordered probes into the matter. India, the largest democracy in the world, can't afford to pay lip service to democracy the way the present government is doing.

In fact, the government's charge that the Opposition is disrupting democracy smacks of hypocrisy and doublespeak. For, it was BJP leaders of the likes of Arun Jaitley and Sushma Swaraj who had in the past stoutly defended 'disruption' of Parliament sessions as a sign of a vibrant democracy. Jaitley as Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha January 30, 2011 famously said, "Parliament's job is to conduct discussions. But many a time, Parliament is used to ignore issues and in such situations, obstruction of Parliament is in the favour of democracy." He even went on to say sometimes obstruction in Parliament brings greater benefits to the country.

Again September 7, 2012 then Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Sushma Swaraj asserted, "Not allowing Parliament to function is also a form of democracy, like any other form." She was reacting to the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's statement that the BJP's stalling of Parliament was a 'negation' of democracy. The Opposition was then protesting against alleged corruption in coal block allocation case under the UPA government. The same day, Jaitley too defended the disrupted session and contended it helped the country cleanse the telecom sector. He expressed hope that in future governments would be encouraged by this example to clean up the process of allocation of natural resources.

Now the very democratic system appears to be under attack due to alleged surveillance of its own people by the government with the help of a foreign tool.

Now let us observe the interesting part. Israeli company NSO has recently announced it would block the use of its spyware by some countries to which it had sold Pegasus. This clearly implies NSO has the overall control on its spyware. In other words, all phone data collected by all governments in their snooping activities on their own citizens could and would be available to Israeli intelligence. It is known that Israel shares most of its intelligence with the US and maybe a few other countries.

WISDOM CORNER

- “** Truth, like gold, is to be obtained not by its growth, but by washing away from it all that is not gold. **LEO TOLSTOY**
- “** The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart. **HELEN KELLER**
- “** One never notices what has been done; one can only see what remains to be done. **MARIE CURIE**

WORDSWORTH

Opodeldoc

The medieval physician Paracelsus described oppodeltoch, a word he seems to have conjured up from heaven knows where. One suggestion is that he derived it from bits of three other words: opopanax, bdellium, and aristolochia. All three names come from Greek. The first is a foetid gum-resin from the root of a plant resembling the parsnip whose name is from opos, juice, plus panax, all-healing; the second is a fragrant resin related to myrrh; the third means "well-born" and refers to a shrub that in Britain has sometimes been given the name common birthwort because it helped childbirth. Paracelsus applied the word to a type of medicinal plaster and it appears in English with that sense until the seventeenth century. After that, it shifted dramatically, under the revised spelling of opodeldoc, to refer to various sorts of liniment based on soap dissolved in alcohol, with herbs and aromatic oils added. A typical use was the one Mrs Beaton recommended in her Book of Household Management of 1861 for the treatment of a sprain: "The joint is to be rubbed twice a day with flannel dipped in opodeldoc, a flannel bandage rolled tightly round the joint, the pressure being greatest at the lowest part, and the patient allowed to walk about with the assistance of a crutch or stick." In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a number of patent medicines incorporated the word, including Doranstorff's Opodeldoc, Noakes's Aethereal Anodyne Opodeldoc, Imperial Anodyne Opodeldoc, and Cajeput Opodeldoc, about the last of which the American Henry Hartshorne wrote in The Household Cyclopaedia in 1881: "In several cases of lumbago and deep-seated rheumatic pains, it has been known to succeed in the almost immediate removal of the disease." The most famous was Dr Steer's Opodeldoc, made from Castile soap in alcohol, plus camphor, oils of marjoram and rosemary, and his special ingredient, ammonia. It was advertised in The Times of London in 1790: "The efficacy of this medicine in the Rheumatism, Lumbago, Bruises, Sprains, Cramps, &c. is universally acknowledged: it is equally serviceable in Numbness, Stiffness, and Weakness of the Joints, and in restoring a proper Circulation to the Limbs when in a Paralytic state."

FOCUS DOUBLING FARM INCOME

ELUSIVE TARGET

In 2016 the government led by Prime Minister Modi said that farmers' incomes would be doubled by 2022. It was meant to convey an ambitious target. It was also a departure from targeting production to income. To this end a committee was set up in April 2016, under the chairmanship of Dr Ashok Dalwai, an IAS officer who was Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. That committee submitted its massive 14-volume comprehensive report in September 2018. Popularly known as the DFI (doubling farm income) report, the entire report and related documents can be accessed at <https://agricoop.nic.in/en/doubling-farmers-income>. The aim was to reach double income for farmer households by 2023.

We are still 18 months away from that stated end date. Some of the metrics are not well defined. For instance, will it be doubling the income in nominal terms, or in real terms, i.e. adjusted for inflation? Secondly what is the start year? Will it be as of 2015-16? Will it be doubling the average income for all farmer households? That wouldn't be necessary, since a tiny fraction, especially those with large land holdings already have income far above the national average, so presumably those households are not in dire straits, and their income does not need to double. But more than 80 per cent of the estimated 140 million farmer households are small and marginal. Their incomes are far below the national average. They also constitute the bulk of India's poor. It is their income that must double.

A farm household earns income through three sources. These are cultivation, wages and other allied activities. This is as per the All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey conducted by NABARD in 2016-17. Cultivation brings in only 43 per cent of the monthly income, and wages bring 30 per cent. This is the average for all households. If you focus on small and marginal farmers, who constitute 82 per cent of the agricultural rural households, then their main source is wages and other allied activities.



According to a national survey of farmers conducted many years ago, 40 per cent of the respondents said that they would gladly leave farming if only there were good quality jobs available in industry or services. This is the crux of solving the agricultural income challenge

So, it is important to remember that small and marginal farmers along with landless workers depend on wage labour for their income. Not surprisingly, two-fifth of agricultural output comes from those who cultivate the land that does not belong to them -- either tenant farmers or landless workers. This category of cultivators finds it difficult to get farm loans from institutional sources like banks. Also, these are workers who depend on MNREGA for supplementary income. During Covid, the demand for MNREGA employment has significantly shot up. The PM-KISAN scheme which gives ₹6,000 of supplementary income to farm households does not cover all small and marginal farmers, and certainly not landless workers. Thus, out of an estimated 140 million farm households, the scheme is able to reach 80 to 90 million households. This is an important supplement, but not enough.

As per the NABARD survey the average farm household income is about ₹9,000 per month, and for non-farm rural household it is ₹8,000. The monthly consumption expenditure is about ₹7,000. More than half of all farming households are in debt, with an average outstanding loan size of ₹1 lakh. The source of the loan could be banks, moneylenders or friends

and family. With meagre savings, there is simply no way that the farm household can hope to service the loan, and eventually repay it fully. Hence the cycle of taking new loans to repay old loans continues, with often usurious interest rates. One health episode, during a pandemic or due to a natural calamity like flooding, can wipe out whatever financial resilience the household might have.

Last year, agriculture GDP grew by 3.4 per cent even though the economy was in deep recession. In fact, this was India's first non-agriculture led recession. Agriculture and allied activities constitute only 15 per cent of aggregate income. For sustained increase in farm household incomes, the DFI committee identified a seven-pronged strategy. The first six were about farming: increasing productivity of crop, of live-stock; increasing efficiency and reducing cost; increasing cropping intensity; increasing crop diversification toward cash crops and improving prices received. The last measure depends on the market, or on the Minimum Support Price regime followed by the government. Thankfully for the farmer producer, the global agricultural price index is at a decadal high. How much of these global price increases help the

Indian farmer is yet to be seen. This year India has broken into the ranks of the top ten agricultural exporters of the world. The main exports are cotton, rice, soya and meat. If the government keeps export prices deregulated then this can certainly prove beneficial. It is important to note that the livestock economy i.e. milk, eggs, poultry and meat constitute one-third of agriculture GDP. It is here that much more policy focus is required to increase farmers' incomes. As for the seventh strategy, it calls for making conditions easier for farmers to leave and migrate to non-farming activity.

According to a national survey of farmers conducted many years ago, 40 per cent of the respondents said that they would gladly leave farming if only there were good quality jobs available in industry or services. This is the crux of solving the agricultural income challenge. The big part of the solution lies outside of agriculture. With a robust growth in manufacturing, in employment intensive sectors such as construction, agro-processing, textiles and garments, leather industries, and even in services such as tourism and retail, that will make a large impact on the incomes of farm households.

The farmers' agitation against the three national laws passed by the Parliament in September 2020 is now in its ninth month, and shows no sign of relenting. Clearly the main concern is what happens to MSP when the compulsory procurement of foodgrain from the northern states gets diluted. There is also concern about the relative bargaining and contracting power of the small farmer vis-a-vis the large private purchaser. In an economy still reeling from Covid, and industrial investment and employment still not vigorously picking up, the high inflation in agriculture will not be enough to raise farmers' incomes by much. The goal of doubling the income of farmers by 2022-23 is still elusive.

The writer is an economist and Senior Fellow, Takshashila Institution.

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SPECTRUM NATION

Boost public spend in higher education

The Union education minister recently tweeted "...Let us work together to realise the aspirations of a 21st-century Atmanirbhar Bharat and to make India a vibrant knowledge economy." We would like to remind the minister that Atmanirbhar Bharat can be achieved only if we make use of our demographic dividend effectively. We have a reasonably well functioning primary education structure with gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 99 per cent. However, we cannot say the same about our higher education.

India has also committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations by 2030. According to the relevant SDG for higher education, we have the responsibility for ensuring affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education. Moreover, we also have to make tertiary education progressively free, in line with the existing international agreements. But, the reality is far away from the expectation.

Until the mid-2000s, government-owned institutions made up a majority of the higher education institutions in India. However, private institutions currently account for twice the number of government

institutions. Notwithstanding the contribution of private universities, we have to make a case for reviving and strengthening public universities. The role of public universities has to be overemphasised particularly at a time when the country is struggling with rising economic inequalities. The government needs to invest in higher education and skill development more when people lose jobs and overall economic activities slow down. The government cannot shift this responsibility to the private sector.

Over the years, the policies of the Centre and the states have been slowly eroding the role of public universities. We are witnessing a gradual decrease in investment in public universities, while there is a phenomenal growth in private investment in the field of education.

Since these private institutes do not receive government funding they depend on student fees. The average tuition fee charged by private institutes, for most of the courses, is more than 3 to 5 times the fees charged by government institutes. Even the government expenditure on scholarship decreased from 0.43 per cent of higher education spending in 1990-91 to 0.11 per cent in 2014-15. Higher fees, lower scholarships,

and costly loans have made higher education beyond the reach of a large number of youngsters. No wonder, 83 per cent of the total unemployed people in the country in 2019 were in the 15-29 age-group. If we want to be Atmanirbhar it is time for us to rethink, revisit, and revise our policies relating to government funding of higher education.

People may argue that higher education is a private good, so why public investment? Such an argument may not hold much water as higher education not only benefits the individual student, but also the communities. Moreover, people with better education lead more stable family lives, enjoy better health, and live longer and all these help in improving the overall happiness index of a country. It is worth mentioning that our happiness index has been deteriorating for several years. In fact several researches have shown that educational attainment is a significant contributor to the country's ability to emerge as a global leader.

In 2000, China had a GER of 7.6 per cent in higher education as compared to India's 9.5 per cent. Over the last two decades, however, the country has achieved a GER of 50 per cent, while India still lags behind at 26 per cent.

China is now reaping the dividends from the huge government investment in education.

The high GER at primary level in India may be attributed to large government school infrastructure which provides free education to students under the Right to Education. Higher education also needs more public investment to improve the GER. The latest Union Budget has reduced the allocation for higher education by ₹1,116 crore. We are at a loss to understand how can we become Atmanirbhar if we keep on reducing government investment in education?

Will the new Union education minister, who had seen the impact of public investment in strengthening the large public sector organisations in the oil and energy sector, make the higher education sector more vibrant by increasing public investment, bringing in transparency, and creating more public universities?

Will he set the ball rolling in that direction by initiating the steps toward converting the Utkal University, his alma mater, into a Central University? It is too early to say. Let us wait and watch.

The writer is a Professor in XIMB. Views are personal.



DV Ramana

WE ARE AT A LOSS TO UNDERSTAND HOW CAN WE BECOME ATMANIRBHAR IF WE KEEP ON REDUCING GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION?

Secure the judges

Sir, Knowing well that many judges prefer to be left alone most of the times, the hit-and-run 'murder' of Dhanbad additional district and sessions judge Uttam Anand is shocking. It has sent a dangerous message to the judiciary. So far judges were not physically harmed for the verdicts they gave in a courtroom except for a very few instances. Assuming Uttam Anand was killed for reasons other than personal, the incident is a chilling warning to the top echelons of judiciary that the life of a judge is no more foolproof. The judge is said to have rejected the bail application of an unwanted element who was close to a former legislator. He was also seized of some important criminal matters pertaining to the Dhanbad mafia. The jurisdictional police presumed the judge was hit by an unknown vehicle. They did not care to go deep into the matter. Even after the video of the incident went viral, it is said the police were in two minds about registering a case of murder. They were 'waiting' for a formal complaint from the judge's family. Were they under pressure? Police say they are further investigating. But the alacrity with which the legal fraternity took stock of the situation was commendable. Senior lawyers repeatedly made references in the Supreme Court, and the Chief Justice of India spoke to Jharkhand High Court Chief Justice. Ideally a high court monitored probe has to be undertaken. The murder should be probed from all angles, and the culprits have to be quickly nabbed. Judge Uttam Anand's killing should propel the state governments and the high courts to reassess the security mechanism in place for trial court judges. Fear of retribution is the last thing a magistrate or a sessions judge wants.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA (MAHARASHTRA)

Border tensions eased

Sir, It is reassuring that Assam and Mizoram have agreed to ease tensions along their troubled interstate border following a discussion with Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Tensions flared up between the two neighbours after an exchange of fire between the police forces of both states July 26 which left six Assam cops and a civilian dead and 60 others, including Superintendent of Police of Cachar district Nimbalkar Vaibhav Chandrakant injured. The border conflict is decades old, but of late, things have taken a turn for the worse.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rusalgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

GI tag to 'Rasabali' will facilitate Kendrapara's development



Earlier this sweet used to be prepared only inside temples and offered to the Lord. With the passage of time, it came out of the temple premises and now it is being sold in hotels, restaurants, fairs and festivals across the state

The GI tag goes a long way in improving the brand value of a product. Once accorded, the business of the particular item/product increases manifold and, reduces the chances of its duplication

BJD MPs Subhash Singh, Munna Khan and Mamata Mohanta met the Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal at his office in New Delhi August 1 and handed over a memorandum seeking geographical indication (GI) tag for Kendrapara's famous sweet dish 'Rasabali'

he informs. Informing about the benefits of the GI tag, Bhuban Mohan Jena, a local intellectual, says the tag goes a long way in improving the brand value of a product. Once accorded, the business of the particular item/product increases manifold and, at the same time, the chances of its duplication are less. The product also gets instant publicity which in turn helps economic development of the place of origin. "Kendrapara district is famous for Shri Baldev Jew temple, Rasabali and Bhitarkanika National Park. When the sweet gets the GI tag, it will give us, not to mention the people of Odisha, great satisfaction," he adds.

Researchers Niranjan Mekap and Anita Sabat say the tradition of offering 'Rasabali' as 'bhog' to lord Baldevjiew in Tulasikshetra was started during the rule of Maharaja Anang Bhima Deba and the practice still continues. Chandi Purana, Dandi Ramayan and Gangabanshanucharita mention about the sweet and its association with Kendrapara. They claim that Kendrapara is the sweet's place of origin.

Notably, BJD MPs Subhash Singh, Munna Khan and Mamata Mohanta met the Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal at his office in New Delhi August 1 and handed over a memorandum seeking geographical indication (GI) tag for Kendrapara's famous sweet dish 'Rasabali'.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, August 2: With Odisha MPs taking initiative to accord geographical indication (GI) tag to Kendrapara's famous sweet 'Rasabali', people have become eager to know more about this mouth-watering delicacy.

Offering details on preparing the sweet, Baishnab Panda of Keshpur market, who has been in the business of preparing 'Rasabali', says, "Earlier the sweet used to be prepared only inside temples and offered

to the Lord. With the passage of time, it came out of the temple premises and now it is being sold in hotels, restaurants, fairs and festivals across the state. And the sweet is always in great demand. Children as well as elders are fond of it."

"This sweet item is not so easy to prepare. It requires expertise. Country cheese, ghee, milk, sugar, big cardamom and green cardamom (elaichi) go into its preparation. The exact proportions of the ingredients and a set of skilled hands can only give it its original taste,"

Maa Biraja temple to reopen from August 4



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, August 2: The district administration here has decided to reopen Maa Biraja Temple for devotees from August 4. The temple was closed for three months due to pandemic-related curbs.

The decision came as the state government started the unlock process with declining numbers of Covid-19 infections in the second wave of the pandemic.

Maa Biraja Temple will reopen for devotees from Wednesday. The devotees will be allowed for darshan and worship of deity with strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols, informed Jajpur Collector Chakravarti Singh Rathore Monday. However, they cannot take flowers or make offering to the deity.

All the religious institutions including the Biraja Temple in Jajpur district were closed since May this year.

As per fresh orders issued by the Office of Special Relief Commissioner, the district magistrates and municipal commissioners are authorised to allow public worship in religious places with appropriate Covid-19 restrictions and due observance of Covid-19 protocols, based on local assessment of the situation and due consultation with relevant stakeholders.

On July 31, SRC Pradeep Jena announced complete unlock with effect from August 1, 2021. The state was under lockdown since May 5, 2021 with staggering number of Covid cases during the second wave of the pandemic.

Fear of dengue, malaria looms large in Angul

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, August 2: Even though the Covid-19 situation is improving in Angul district, fear of malaria and dengue outbreak has gripped the residents. Malaria and dengue have so far claimed 54 lives in this district in the last 10 years. While 28 people succumbed to malaria, 26 died of dengue.

However, this year the district is yet to report any malaria or dengue case. Even then, the district administration is taking all precautions to prevent the outbreak of the diseases.

According to sources in the state Health department, Pallahara, Athmallik and Kishorenagar blocks have earned notoriety with a large number of malaria cases. On the other hand, dengue cases are usually prevalent in Talcher, Banarpal, Chhendipada and Angul blocks.

Officials of the district administration are constantly trying to develop awareness regarding the two types of fevers. They have launched a 'Nidhi Rath' (an awareness vehicle) that is moving around in the district informing people about the preventive measures necessary against malaria and dengue. ASHA and health workers have also been engaged to create awareness among the people, particularly those living in remote areas.

In 2011, a total of 10,316 people tested positive for malaria in the district and two succumbed to the disease. The details of malaria patients and deaths in the subsequent years for malaria are as follows: 7,676



FILE PHOTO

patients, one death in 2012; 11,553 patients, five deaths in 2013; 27,600 patients, seven deaths in 2014; 29,853 patients, five deaths in 2015; 17,272 patients, two deaths in 2016; 9,854 patients, three deaths in 2017; 647 patients, no deaths in 2018; 26 patients, no deaths in 2019; and 109 patients, three deaths in 2020.

Dengue claimed 23 and three lives in the district in 2011 and 2013 respectively. However, there were no dengue deaths in 2012.

In the years 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 the number of dengue cases reported in the district were 54, 56, 45, 14, 34, 35 and two respectively. Not a single fatality was reported in these seven years.

"People have become more health cautious, thanks to Covid-19. So they are extra careful and that may be one of the reasons why malaria and dengue cases have not been reported so far," said Swarup Padhi, a local resident here.

"However, in Angul town the administration is not as serious

as it ought to be. Garbage continues to pile up at many places across the town. The administration is focusing on rural pockets, but at the same time, it should also think about the condition in the town," Padhi added.

Another resident of this town, Biswajit Biswal said awareness can only help people keep the diseases at bay. "Even today, people are not keeping their surroundings clean and are also not using mosquito nets," Biswal pointed out.

In this regard, CDMO, Angul, Dr Trilochan Pradhan said the malaria and dengue situation is not as alarming as it was in the past. "We have managed to check the diseases to a great extent. There will not be any outbreak of malaria and dengue cases during this rainy season, if people ensure their surroundings are neat and clean. Presently, teams have been visiting hilly, inaccessible pockets and creating awareness among the people there," he informed.

HEALTH INFRA



Collector Abdaal M Akhtar inaugurating a blood component separation unit at Saheed Laxman Naik Medical College and Hospital in Koraput, Monday

Hinjilicut street vendors say 'I am vaccinated'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, August 2: 'I am vaccinated'. Flex hoardings saying this one line message can be found pasted or pinned up on the baskets of street vendors or push carts of sellers in Hinjilicut of Ganjam district these days.

In a tweet Monday, the Ganjam Collector's office shared photographs of three such vendors. "Vendors in Hinjilicut started their activities

with confidence after Covid-19 vaccination," read the tweet.

What prompted the vendors to display such a message is to inform their customers that they have been vaccinated so that the latter can buy articles from them without any fear of contracting the virus.

At the same time, they are encouraging others to get vaccinated since vaccine is the only weapon available to win the battle against



Covid-19. During the first wave, the district was at the top of the list, reporting the highest number of

Covid cases daily. However, the district administration took some stringent steps. With lockdowns and shutdowns, the administration managed to bring the situation under control.

The administration tackled the situation during the second wave using their past experience. By this time, people were also well aware about the disease. The second wave did not cause as much harm as the first wave did.

Dengue spreads in Jagatsinghpur

JAGATSINGHPUR: Jagatsinghpur district has so far reported nine dengue cases, leaving the residents, who are already in panic due to Covid-19, in fear and apprehension.

It is feared that the number of patients will increase in the coming days as Jagatsinghpur district is a low-lying area and during the monsoon, water remains stagnant at different places providing perfect breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes. Statistics collected from 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 shows that the district reported 333, 235, 1,056, 249 and eight cases respectively.

Talking about the situation, district Malaria officer Dr Kshetrabasi Dash said Dharadharpur village of Raghunathpur block, Tarapur, Badatihada, Jagatsinghpur municipality, Patenigaon, Balia of Kujang block, Pipal of Kujang block, Jireilo village of Ersama block and Odiso Abidhanandapur reported one patient each.

Meanwhile, the district Health department has made available facilities for blood tests at the district headquarters hospital and Paradip government hospital to detect dengue patients. Those who are testing positive for dengue are being admitted to the dengue wards of these hospitals. At the same time, facilities are in place at these hospitals to shift serious patients to SCB Medical and College Hospital in Cuttack.

When contacted, ADMO (Medical), Dr Ajay Swain said the dengue ward at the DHH has three beds with various facilities. "So far, only two patients have been shifted to SCBMCH. Similarly, two patients have been discharged after their treatment," he informed.

However, the local residents alleged the Jagatsinghpur municipality and the block administration are not taking steps necessary to check the spread of dengue.

When contacted, Collector Siddharth Shankar Swain said the district has not reported any malaria and dengue cases in 2021. "That does not mean that we will let our guard down. All should be careful and take precautions as the neighbouring districts have

been reporting dengue cases. All Sub-Collectors have been directed to keep a close watch on the situation and take steps to create awareness among the people in their respective areas. The health workers are also working sincerely," said Swain.

POLITICAL DEMO



Members of Aam Aadmi Party staging a demonstration demanding extension of city bus services from Bargharh to Ambapali, Monday

OP PHOTO

In a unique protest, villagers plant paddy on slushy road

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, August 2: Residents here have chosen a unique way to protest against the administration's failure to repair Malamanda-Boudhabihar road in Ganiapali panchayat under Gaisilet block in Bargarh district by planting paddy on the slushy road.

According to the villagers, the road used to be a 'kutcha' road. In 2014 the Rural Development department had started repairing the road by laying murrum on it. In 2018, work started to make the road a tarmac one started.

However, work was stopped after two kilometres due to some reasons. The road was brought under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in 2020. But its fate did not change.

Again the construction work was abandoned after completing another stretch of two kilometres. The road is now in a pathetic state, giving nightmarish experiences to the commuters.

The villagers have now taken up the problem with the adminis-



The road used to be a 'kutcha' road. In 2014 the Rural Development department had started repairing the road by laying murrum on it. In 2018, work started to make the road a tarmac one

A delegation of villagers submitted a memorandum to ADM Miridha Topo in the absence of Collector Manisha Banerjee at the district Collectorate. They warned to resort to a mass agitation if the road was not repaired within seven days

tration on several occasions but nothing has been done in this regard yet. Protest the apathy of the administration, they have chosen a unique way of planting paddy saplings on the road.

Later, a delegation of villagers including Tulasiram Seth, Debendra Sahu and a few others

went to Collector's office to submit a memorandum. Since Collector Manisha Banerjee was away on some work, they handed it over to ADM Miridha Topo.

They warned that they would be forced to resort to a mass agitation if the road was not repaired within seven days.

Kerala man seeks SC nod for daughter's extradition from Af

Ayisha was booked under UAPA after she left India to join terrorist organisation ISIS, while the Interpol had issued a Red Corner notice against her in March 2017

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 2: A man from Kerala has moved the Supreme Court seeking extradition of his daughter, along with his grandchild, who were detained in Afghanistan after she left India to join terrorist organisation ISIS. He apprehends, after the exit of the US forces from Afghan soil foreign terrorists could be hanged.

The plea filed by VJ Sebastian Francis said necessary action should be taken by authorities concerned to extradite his daughter Sonia Sebastian alias Ayisha and his granddaughter, who is seven-year-old. The plea said: "Internationally a lenient approach has been taken against the women foreign terrorist fighters like 1st detainee (Ayisha), this is owing to the stand taken by the countries that women only played ancillary roles and therefore could not pose any significant threat to national security."

The plea said the issue is urgent in as much substantial changes politically and adminis-



tratively are going to get effected in Afghanistan, after the US troops exit. The plea contended that the Centre not facilitating extradition of the detainees is illegal and unconstitutional and violates fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution. Stringent anti-terror law UAPA was registered against Ayisha, after she left India and the Interpol had also issued a Red Corner notice against her in March 2017. The plea said after reaching Afghanistan, Ayisha's husband was killed in the war. "The 1st and the 2nd detainee who ac-

companied A1 (the husband) and was actively not involved in the fight there after his death had to surrender to the Afghan forces on November 15, 2019, along with some other women..." The petitioner claimed that his daughter repents the decision to join the ISIS and she wanted to return to India and face fair trial before a court. Ayisha had made this statement during an interview with Stratnews Global, which was uploaded as a documentary titled "Khorasan Files: The journey of Indian Islamic State' Widows" on YouTube March 15, last year.

Will Firozabad be renamed Chandra Nagar?

THE YOGI ADITYANATH GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY CHANGED THE NAMES OF ALLAHABAD TO PRAYAGRAJ, FAIZABAD TO AYODHYA AND MUGHALSARAI TO DEEN DAYAL UPADHYAYA NAGAR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Firozabad (UP), August 2: The newly elected Zila Parishad of Firozabad has moved a proposal to change the name of the district to Chandra Nagar.

The Sadar block pramukh, Laxmi Narayan Yadav, who drafted the proposal, said that the ancient name of Firozabad was 'Chandwar Nagar' and Akbar had changed it to Firozabad in the 15th century. Firozabad Zila Parishad chairperson Harshita Singh said, "During the first district council board meeting Saturday, a proposal to change the name of Firozabad to Chandra Nagar was unanimously approved. We will be sending a detailed recommendation to the state



government in this regard. We will also pursue the matter with the state authorities to restore the original name of the district."

Firozabad is famous for its glassware, particularly bangles. The official website of the Firozabad district administration mentions, "The ancient name of this town was Chandwar Nagar. The name of Firozabad was given during the reign of Akbar by Firoz Shah, a military official of the Mughal emperor, in 1566. It is said that Raja Todarmal was passing through this town during a pilgrimage to Gaya. He was looted by robbers. At his request, Akbar sent Firoz

Shah here. The tomb of Firoz Shah and ruins of Katra Pathanan are the evidence of this."

The Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Congress district presidents have raised strong objections over the proposal.

The Samajwadi Party members said that the proposal was moved when none of the opposition members were present.

Congress district president Sandeep Tiwari said, "It is unfortunate that the ruling BJP members are not concerned about massive water-logging, potholed roads, inadequate water and power supply in the district. However, they want

to change the name of the district for political gains because elections are round the corner."

Noted historian and AMU professor emeritus Irfan Habib, however, said, "There is no historical evidence that Firozabad was known as Chandwar Nagar. The name Firozabad came into being during the tenure of Firoz Shah Tughlaq. The point that Akbar changed the so-called ancient name of Firozabad is incorrect."

The Yogi Adityanath government has already changed the name of Allahabad to Prayagraj, Faizabad to Ayodhya and Mughalsarai to Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Nagar.

Will continue my fight: Expelled Catholic nun

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, August 2: When a senior advocate in the Kerala High Court suddenly refused her brief in a case regarding her eviction from the home Congregation, Sister Lucy Kalappura did not get upset though she clearly knew that she was fighting a lonely do-or-die battle.

Before him, a handful of other advocates also had rejected outright her case against the Franciscan Clarist Congregation under the Catholic Church from where she was expelled recently for allegedly failing to give a 'satisfactory explanation' for her lifestyle in violation of its rules.

But, the unperturbed retired school teacher-nun was not ready to give up the fight as she argued the case on her own though she had very limited knowledge about legal jargons.

Though the Church justified its decision to expel her from the centuries-old Congregation, where she had been a member for the last four decades, the nun dismissed the charges and decided to fight it legally.

"I am fighting for justice and



I know it will be a long-drawn legal battle. I will take the fight till the apex court seeking to uphold my dignity as a nun and continue my stay at the convent of the Congregation which I am part of for nearly 40 years. I have complete faith in our judiciary

SISTER LUCY KALAPPURA

dignity. Justice and truth will prevail finally. So why should I fear? I will stand with my head held

high as I have not done anything wrong," Kalappura told PTI in an interview.

She also does not mind if someone calls her an "activist nun" as she believes that there is an activist within everyone's persona.

Learning driving, buying a car to meet travel needs, publishing her poetry collection and even penning an autobiography might have raised many eyebrows but Sister Lucy said it did not make any difference in her dedication and service to the Church and society.

Kalappura, who took part in a protest by nuns belonging to Missionaries of Jesus

Congregation seeking the arrest of Bishop Franco Mulakkal, accused of raping a nun, was expelled by the FCC under the Roman Catholic Church in August 2019.

Now, she is fighting a case at a Munsif court seeking her right to stay in the FCC convent at Karackamala in northern Wayanad district.

The High Court, which ruled last month that police protection against eviction from the convent could not be provided to her, also directed the civil court to take a decision expeditiously on her plea regarding her stay at the FCC convent.

However, the 56-year old nun, who recently retired as a mathematics teacher in an aided school in the high range Wayanad district after 24 years of service, doesn't seem worried about the outcome of the legal battle.

"I know it will be a long-drawn legal battle. I will take the fight till the apex court seeking to uphold my dignity as a nun and continue my stay at the convent of the Congregation which I am part of for nearly 40 years. I have complete faith in our judiciary," she added.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, August 2: Starting Monday, all those entering Tamil Nadu and Karnataka from Kerala especially at the Walayar border and Thalapadi border in these two states are finding it tough to cross the borders, after the respective state police have made a negative RT-PCR test mandatory for people travelling from Kerala.

The facility of conducting a RT-PCR test is available at the Walayar border. Meanwhile at the Thalapadi border, at Kasargode and the entry point to Mangalore in Karnataka, those who had records to show that they have taken both the vaccines were allowed, but after 8 a.m., things changed and the Karnataka police insisted that the RT-PCR test is mandatory.

One Keralaite who protested was taken into custody by the Karnataka police. But angry Kerala residents at the border soon swung into action and blocked all vehicles coming



from Karnataka and entering Kerala.

"We had contacted the Karnataka officials and they said that those who have taken both the vaccines will be allowed and now they have changed that rule and are insisting on a RT-PCR test which should be not later than 72 hours. The police are not even allowing accident victims who are travelling from Kerala to hospitals in Mangalore," said angry

protesters.

The sudden decision of these neighbouring governments to restrict free movement is on account of the rising number of daily cases in Kerala which saw a record over one lakh new cases in the past six days, while the test positivity rate continues to hover above 12 per cent, while the national average is 2.81 per cent.

Medicinal plants boon for Bundelkhand farmers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, August 2: The cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants like Lemongrass, Sataver, Ashwagandha, Khas and others is proving to be a boon for farmers in Bundelkhand region as these medicinal plants require less water and can stand the hot and humid weather conditions of the region.

Alok Kumar, chief scientist of the CSIR-Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP), has emphasized on strengthening the cultivation, processing and marketing of medicinal and aromatic plants in the Bundelkhand region.

He highlighted how medicinal plants can adapt to the climatic conditions of the region and bring financial gains to the farmers.

"In just eight months, a farmer

can yield 50 litres of lemongrass oils. Lemongrass cultivation needs no special arrangements to save the plants from extremely hot conditions nor does it need too much water," he said. A road map for the agrarian growth will soon be prepared for the region by the CSIR-CIMAP, he added.

"Bundelkhand can be developed as an ecotourism spot as it has a good forest cover. Also, scientific goat farming in which scientific practices are used for better milk production can help double the income of goat farmers in the region," the scientist said.

Experts from the Central Institute of Goat Farming Mathura and Central Institute for Research on Goats, Mathura also explained how goat farming can further help in increasing income of the people in Bundelkhand region.



Tourists visit the historic Taj Mahal during a cloudy day in Agra, Monday.

PTI PHOTO

UP schools to reopen from Aug 16 with 50% attendance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, August 2: Schools in Uttar Pradesh will resume Classes 9 to 12 from August 16, but with 50 per cent attendance, according to an order issued by the state government Monday.

Apart from this, instructions have also been issued for commencement of classes in higher educational institutes from September 1, the UP government said in a statement.

"Students of high (class 9 and 10) and intermediate (class 11 and

12) schools will participate in the 75th Independence Day celebrations August 15. And on August 16, teaching-learning will commence in the schools with half capacity, while adhering to the COVID-19 protocol," Additional Chief Secretary (Information) Navneet Sehgal told PTI

According to the UP government statement, the chief minister has instructed officials to begin preparations for commencement of new session of all educational institutes in view of the controlled situation of the coronavirus in the state.



The results of Classes 10 and 12 boards have been declared, and

admission for the under-graduate classes should start from August 5,

the chief minister was quoted as saying. In the educational institutes, provisions of sanitiser, infrared thermometers and masks have to be made, while social distancing and COVID-19 protocol have to be maintained, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said.

With the resumption of the educational institutes, it would be appropriate to organise special vaccination camps for students above the age of 18 years. The health department should make all the necessary arrangements in this regard, he said.

national

of the day note

Conduct only RTPCR tests as they are more accurate compared to other tests and continue door to door surveys, testing people with symptoms and monitor 104 services regularly for uninterrupted services

YS JAGAN MOHAN REDDY
ANDHRA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

To address the issue of the flood situation in western Maharashtra, there is a need for effective flood management. I received some suggestions about diverting the floodwaters to drought-hit areas. We are thinking about it also

UDDHAV THACKERAY
MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER

Great show of tenacity, resilience and confidence! I congratulate the Indian Women's Hockey team for cruising into the semifinal of #HockeyinTokyo2020. I am sure you will succeed in the next game too. My best wishes!

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN
MADHYA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

MP: 2 dead as rains pound many areas

Bhopal: Defence aircraft Monday launched rescue operations to evacuate people stranded in some flooded villages in Shivpuri district of Madhya Pradesh as heavy rains continued to lash large parts of the state, especially Shivpuri and neighbouring Sheopur districts, leaving two people dead, officials said. Torrential rains continue to pound the two districts in the night. Nearly 60 people, who were stranded in a flooded building located near the Vijaypur bus stand in Sheopur district following heavy rains, were rescued after over seven hours by this noon.

300 stray dogs poisoned in AP

Eluru (Andhra Pradesh): The killing, allegedly by poisoning, of more than 300 stray dogs by a village panchayat in Andhra Pradesh's West Godavari district has sent local animal rights activists into a fury. The gruesome incident first came to light July 29 when animal rights activist Sri Latha Challapalli received a tip-off.

Zika: Central team rushed to Maha

New Delhi: Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has rushed a multi-disciplinary team to Maharashtra to monitor a Zika virus case reported and assist the Uddhav Thackeray government in effective management in case of an outbreak amid an ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Pune city reported the Zika case, after neighbouring Kerala reported a few. Maharashtra Sunday reported its first-ever case of Zika virus infection.

PMO official resigns

New Delhi: A senior bureaucrat in the Prime Minister's Office, Amarjeet Sinha, has resigned from his post, sources said Monday. A retired IAS officer, Sinha was an advisor in the PMO and handled projects related to the social sector. A Bihar-cadre IAS officer of 1983 batch, Sinha had superannuated as the rural development secretary in 2019 and was then appointed to the PMO. He is the second top officer to quit the PMO in recent months after former cabinet secretary P K Sinha, who worked there as principal advisor, resigned in March.



TMC's poll slogan 'khela hobe'(there will be a game) has become immensely popular among people
MAMATA BANERJEE
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

WB HOCH TRAGEDY: LIFE TERM FOR KEY ACCUSED

A court here Monday awarded life imprisonment to Khora Badshah, the main accused in 2011 hooch tragedy that claimed 172 lives. Badshah was handed over his sentence Monday based on the complaints filed in connection with the 64 deaths that were registered in Magrahat police station



Covaxin effective against Delta+: ICMR

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, August 2: The domestically developed Covaxin is effective against the Delta plus variant of Covid-19, claims Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in its study released Monday. Covaxin is developed by the Bharat Biotech in collaboration with ICMR and National Institute of Pune.

The study states: "The sera of individuals who were fully immunized (with 2 doses) didn't show significant fold-reduction in the NAb titer against Delta, Delta AY.1 and B.1.617.3."

Delta Plus is a mutated form of the Delta variant and was first discovered in India. It is characterised by increased transmissibility and spike protein mutations.

The study points that Delta variant with its characteristic spike protein mutations has mutated further into four sub-lineages with an additional mutations which are associated with higher transmission and probable immune escape.

Last week, Union Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh informed parliament last week that 70 cases of the Delta



Plus variant were found by IN-SACOG, a group of 28 laboratories involved in genome sequencing. Covaxin along with other two vaccines - Covishield and Russia's Sputnik - has formed the trio for India's massive vaccination drive against the virus.

The research further states, "A significant increase in the NAb titer against B.1 variant in recovered cases with vaccination and breakthrough cases was observed compared to the Covid-19 native vaccines. Similarly a significant in-

crease in NAb titer was also observed among these two groups against Delta, Delta AY.1 and B.1.617.3 variants."

"This demonstrates the possible role of memory cells in immune boosting with post-infection or infection after immunization. The comparative analysis of all the groups revealed that the B.1.617.3 variant seems to be less susceptible to neutralization followed by Delta AY.1 and Delta variants."

The study on efficacy analysis further establishes Covaxin to be 93.4

STILL IN TALKS WITH GOVT: J&J

Bangalore: Johnson & Johnson (JNJ.N) said Monday it was still in talks with the Indian government over its Covid-19 vaccine after the country's drug regulator announced the company had pulled its proposal seeking an accelerated approval for local trials. India had, in May, scrapped local trials for "well-established" foreign coronavirus vaccines as it tried to hasten vaccination rollouts to fight a second wave of infections.

per cent effective against severe symptomatic Covid-19 cases and 63.6 per cent protection against asymptomatic Covid-19. India registered 40,134 fresh COVID-19 infections, pushing its virus tally to 3,16,95,958, while the number of active cases recorded an increase for the sixth consecutive day, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Monday.

The death toll from the pandemic climbed to 4,24,773 with 422 daily fatalities.

LS passes Bill to amend general insurance law

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 2: Proceedings of Lok Sabha were disrupted for the 10th straight working day Monday with a relentless opposition raising slogans on the Pegasus spying row and the farmers' issue and amid the din, the House passed a Bill that allows the government to pare its stake in state-owned insurers.

Since the Monsoon session of Parliament commenced July 19, opposition members have been storming the Well of the House raising slogans mainly on the Pegasus spying row and the farmers' issue. Speaker Om Birla also expressed his anguish at repeated disruptions, saying crores of rupees have been wasted.

He said members should provide directions to the society but instead they were holding placards and raising slogans.

Leader of Congress party in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman sparred on the provisions of the bill before it was cleared by a voice vote.

The bill to amend the general

insurance law to allow the government to pare its stake in state-owned insurers was passed without a debate. The bill is aimed at generating required resources from the Indian markets so that public sector general insurers can design innovative products.

Moving the bill for consideration and passage, Finance Minister Sitharaman said that she wanted to respond to the concerns raised by the opposition members but could not do so as the House was not in order.

Accusing the opposition of disturbing the proceedings of the House and avoiding discussion on the bill, she said if "they are serious, they should sit down, debate and ask questions. Since you are afraid that truth will come out, you don't want discussion."

She was responding to allegations made by Congress leader Chowdhury who described the amendment bill as "anti-people and anti-national".

Sitharaman sought to counter the criticism by stating that private sector companies were providing better insurance to people at a lesser premium.

Rainfall in Aug, Sept likely to be normal: IMD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 2: Rainfall over the country as a whole during the second half (August to September period) South-West monsoon season is most likely to be normal with a tendency to be on the positive side of the normal.

Monthly rainfall for August is most likely to be normal - 94 to 106 per cent of Long Period Average (LPA), India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director General Mrutyunjay Mahapatra said.

He was addressing a virtual press conference to declare southwest monsoon rainfall forecast for the second half of the season and for August.

The LPA of the August to September period rainfall over the country as a whole for 1961-2010 is 428.3 mm.

The IMD said this year, it expects the rainfall to be 95 to 105 per cent of the LPA for August to September.

The spatial distribution suggests that below normal to normal rainfall is likely over many parts of the northwest, east and north-east parts of the country and normal to above normal rainfall is most likely to be experienced over most parts of peninsular India and adjacent central India, he said in a statement.

Explaining the details about the probabilistic forecast for August, the LPA of the August rainfall over the country as a whole for the period 1961-2010 is 258.1 mm.

The spatial distribution of probabilistic forecasts for tercile categories (above normal, normal and below normal) for the August rainfall suggests that below normal to normal rainfall is likely over many areas of central India and some areas over northwest India.

Normal to above normal rainfall is most likely over the most parts of peninsular India and Northeast.

FUN TIME



People jump into the Yamuna river after its water level increases in Vrindavan of Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

243 SUSPECTS DETAINED, 17 HELD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhanbad/Ranchi, August 2: Police detained 243 suspects and arrested 17 persons in connection with the death of judge Uttam Anand in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district, besides seizing 250 auto-rickshaws, a senior official said Monday.

Two police officers were also suspended, including one for making the CCTV footage of the incident public, he said. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Sanjiv Kumar said that 243 persons were taken into custody after raids in different police station areas of the district Sunday evening. They are being interrogated, he added. "Police have also searched 53 hotels of the district and ar-

J'KHAND JUDGE DEATH CASE



rested 17 persons in connection with the incident. FIRs have been lodged against them in different police stations," he said. Though the police recovered the autorickshaw that hit the judge when he was out on morning walk, in a special drive,

250 autorickshaws that had documents irregularities were seized, the officer said.

There are about 16,000 autorickshaws registered with the Transport Department in Dhanbad, sources said. Sub Inspector Adarsh

Kumar was suspended for making the CCTV footage public, Kumar said. Pathardih police station's officer-in-charge Umesh Manjhi was suspended on Saturday for lodging FIR about an autorickshaw theft two days after the accident, he said. Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Saturday decided to hand over the probe to the CBI. The Jharkhand government had set up a Special Investigation Team to crack the judge's death case, which triggered a nationwide outrage.

The leaked CCTV footage showed that the judge was jogging on one side of a fairly wide road at Randhir Verma Chowk Wednesday morning when an auto-rickshaw veered towards him, hit him from behind and fled the scene.

'India, China to resolve remaining issues expeditiously'

THE TROOPS OF TWO HIMALAYAN GIANTS HAVE DISENGAGED FROM BOTH THE BANKS OF PANGONG TSO IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 2: India and China agreed to resolve remaining border issues in an 'expeditious manner' in accordance with the existing agreements and protocols and maintain the momentum of dialogue and negotiations, the Indian Army said Monday in a joint statement after the 12th Round of India-China Corps commander level meeting.

India and China military delegates deliberated for almost nine hours to resolve border crisis at Moldo in the Ladakh region July 31.

The Indian Army stated that this round of meeting was held following the meeting of the Foreign

Ministers of India and People's Republic of China July 14 in Dushanbe and the 22nd meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) held June 25.

"The two sides had a candid and in-depth exchange of views on resolution of remaining areas related to disengagement along the Line of Actual Control in the Western Sector of India-China border areas," said Indian Army in the statement.

The force further stated that the two sides noted that this round of meeting was constructive, which further enhanced mutual understanding. They agreed to resolve these remaining issues in an ex-

LAC ROW



peditious manner in accordance with the existing agreements and protocols and maintain the mo-

mentum of dialogue and negotiations. "The two sides also agreed that in the interim they will con-

tinue their effective efforts in ensuring stability along the LAC in the Western Sector and jointly maintain peace and tranquility," the force added.

The talks between two countries happened after a gap of three months. Indian military delegates discussed disengagement at friction areas like Hot Springs, Gogra and 900 square km Depsang plains.

Indian delegation was led by Leh-based XIV Corps chief Lt Gen PGK Menon and Additional Secretary (East Asia) in the Ministry of External Affairs, Naveen Srivastava.

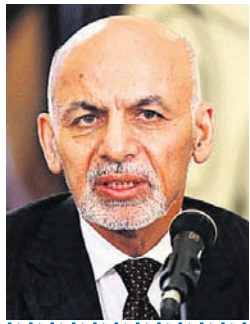
The Chinese military delegation was led by Commander of the PLA's Western Theatre Command

Xu Qiling, who was appointed earlier this month.

The build-up in Depsang was not being considered part of the current standoff that started in May last year as escalation here took place in 2013. India has insisted during recent military commander meetings to resolve all issues across the Line of Actual Control.

In April, during 11th round of Corps Commander level talk, the focus was also on disengagement on friction points at Gogra, Hot Springs and Depsang. Till now, apart from 12 round of Corps Commanders-level talks, the two forces have also held 10 Major Generals level, 55 Brigadiers-level talks and 1,450 calls over the hotlines.

international



We either sit knee to knee at the real negotiating table or break their (Taliban) knees on the battleground
ASHRAF GHANI | AFGHAN PRESIDENT

PANDA LOANED TO FRANCE ZOO GIVES BIRTH TO TWINS

A giant panda on loan to France from China gave birth to two female twin cubs early Monday. China, for decades, gifted friendly nations with its unofficial national mascot in what was known as 'panda diplomacy'



of the day quote

Taliban fighters waiting to cross the border from Pakistan to Afghanistan... anyone still denying that Pakistan is engaged in an 'act of aggression' against Afghanistan is complicit in proxy war & war crimes
CHRIS ALEXANDER | EX-CANADIAN POLITICIAN

Action is needed, and it must come from the Administration. Science and reason demand that they must also extend the moratorium in light of the delta variant. Doing so is a moral imperative
NANCY PELOSI | US HOUSE SPEAKER

There are people who hurt Tunisia. I ask myself how they could make 1,500 youths leave. They give them money so that they leave. Those people exploit misery and want a remake of what happened in 2011. They are hurting Tunisia's relations with Italy, Europe and other countries
KAIS SAIED | PRESIDENT, TUNISIA

China's death toll 3X higher

The massive floods, described by meteorologists as a once-in-a-lifetime event, has resulted in apocalyptic scenes in Zhengzhou, with its public avenues and subway tunnels getting submerged in surging waters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, August 2: The death toll from last month's unprecedented flash floods triggered by the heaviest rainfall in a thousand years in central China's Henan province has climbed to 302, three times higher than the previous official figures.

The Chinese government Monday ordered a probe into the handling of the calamity.

In Henan province's capital, Zhengzhou - which was the worst-hit - a total of 292 people were confirmed dead and 47 still missing, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported, quoting local officials.

The previous death toll, announced by provincial authorities Friday, was 99. Now, the provincial death toll stands at 302, while 50 others are still missing.

More than 14.53 million people in 150 county-level regions had been affected by the torrential rains. Over 1.09 million hectares of crops were damaged, and over 30,600 houses collapsed across the province, the report said.

Since July 16, record rainstorms had inundated Henan. In Zhengzhou, 617.1 mm of rainfall fell

HENAN PROVINCE FLOODS



over a three-day period, which is close to the city's average annual rainfall amount. The city also registered a record hourly precipitation rate of 201.9 mm.

In the aftermath of the worst flood in the region, the local government came under severe criticism for not being transparent about the loss of life and damage caused by the deluge.

As the death toll shot up, the State Council (China's Cabinet) announced Monday that it has de-

decided to set up an investigation team to assess the response to the devastating flood in Zhengzhou.

The team will be headed by the Ministry of Emergency Management and include officials and experts from relevant departments, an official statement said.

The investigation aims to summarise the experience and lessons drawn from the response and propose measures that can be taken to improve disaster prevention and relief in the future.

Trillion dollar infra Bill goes for Senate debate



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, August 2: After much delay, US senators have unveiled a nearly USD 1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package, wrapping up days of painstaking work on the inches-thick bill and launching what is certain to be a lengthy debate over President Joe Biden's big priority.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act clocked in at some 2,700 pages, and senators could begin amending it soon. Despite the hurry-up-and-wait during a rare weekend session, emotions bubbled over once the bill was produced on Sunday night. The final product was not intended to stray from the broad outline senators had negotiated for weeks with the White House.

"We haven't done a large, bipartisan bill of this nature in a long time," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer. He said a final vote could be held "in a matter of days".

A key part of Biden's agenda, the bipartisan bill is the first phase of the president's infrastructure plan. It calls for \$550 billion in new spending over five years above projected federal levels, what could be one of the more substantial expenditures on the nation's roads, bridges, waterworks, broadband and the electric grid in years.

Senators and staff laboured behind the scenes for days to write the massive bill. It was supposed to be ready Friday, but by Sunday even more glitches were caught and changes made. To prod the work, Schumer kept senators in session over the weekend, encouraging the authors to finish up work.

SHORT TAKES

Indian student in China found dead

Beijing: A 20-year-old Indian student studying in a university in the Chinese city of Tianjin has been found dead in his room and the cause of his death is not yet known, officials here said Monday. Aman Nagsen, who hailed from Gaya in Bihar, was a student of Business Administration in the Tianjin Foreign Studies University. He was found dead July 29. The cause of his death is under investigation, officials said. He was one of the few Indian students who remained in China through the coronavirus pandemic.

Germany to jab all kids over 12

Berlin: Germany will start offering coronavirus vaccinations for all children and teenagers aged 12 and older, top health officials said Monday. German Health Minister Jens Spahn said after a meeting with the 16 German state health ministers that "We keep our promise: everybody who wants can get vaccinated in the summer - we have enough vaccines for all age groups."

Turkey wildfire: 10K evacuated

Bozalan: For the sixth straight day, Turkish firefighters battled Monday to control the blazes that are tearing through forests near Turkey's beach destinations. Overall, some 10,000 people have been evacuated in Mugla province alone, Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said Monday. Fed by strong winds and scorching temperatures, the fires that began Wednesday have left eight people dead. Residents and tourists have fled vacation resorts in flotillas of small boats or convoys of cars and trucks.

UK updates Covid smartphone app

London: The UK government Monday announced a tweak to its Covid-19 smartphone app in order to combat concerns around a so-called 'pingdemic', caused by its over-sensitivity in alerting individuals to self-isolate after being in the vicinity of someone who goes on to test positive for the deadly virus. Currently, the app looks for close contacts five days prior to a positive test.

S Korea seeks to improve ties despite North's threat

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, August 2: South Korea said Monday it'll keep pushing to improve ties and resume talks with rival North Korea, despite the North's threat to rekindle animosities if Seoul holds its summer-time military drills with the United States.

On Sunday night, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned the drills would seriously undermine efforts to restore mutual trust between the Koreas and becloud prospects for better ties if the training is launched as scheduled this month. Her statement raised a question about the sincerity of North Korea's recent decision to reopen long-stalled communication channels with



South Korea.

South Korea's Defence Ministry said Monday the exact timing, size and other details of the drills haven't been fixed and that they were the issues that must be determined by South Korean and US authorities. Spokesman Boo Seung-Cham repeated his previous statement that Seoul and Washington are examining factors like the pandemic's current status, diplomat efforts to curb North

Korea's nuclear ambitions and South Korea-US military readiness.

Lee Jong-joo, a spokeswoman at the Unification Ministry, said Seoul views the communication channels' restoration as a starting point for restoring long-suspended ties between the Koreas. She said Seoul will steadily seek to resume talks with North Korea, but without haste.

North Korea sees regular military drills between South Korea and the United States as an invasion rehearsal and often responds them with its own weapons tests. In the past few years, however, South Korea and the US have cancelled or downsized some of their training to support the now-dormant diplomacy on ending the North Korean nuclear crisis or because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

US expands Af refugee programme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, August 2: The Biden administration Monday expanded its efforts to evacuate at-risk Afghan citizens from Afghanistan as Taliban violence increases ahead there of the US Military pullout at the end of the month.

The State Department said it is widening the scope of Afghans eligible for refugee status in United States to include current and former employees of US-based news organisations, US-based aid and development agencies and other relief groups that receive US Funding. Current and former employees of the US Government and the NATO military operation who don't meet the criteria for a dedicated program for such workers are also covered.

However, the move comes with a major caveat applicants must



leave Afghanistan to begin the adjudication process that may take 12-14 months in a third country, and the US Does not intend to support their departures or stays there.

Nevertheless, the State Department said the move will mean that "many thousands" of Afghans and their immediate families will now have the opportunity to be permanently resettled in

the US as refugees. It did not offer a more specific number of those who might be eligible for the program.

"The US Objective remains a peaceful, secure Afghanistan," it said in a statement.

"However, in light of increased

levels of Taliban violence, the US government is working to provide certain Afghans, including those who worked with the United States, the opportunity for refugee resettlement to the United States."

The creation of a "Priority 2" category for Afghans within the US Refugee Admissions Program is intended for Afghans and their immediate families who "may be at risk due to their US Affiliation" but aren't able to get a Special Immigrant Visa because they did not work directly for the US Government or didn't hold their government jobs long enough.

The US Objective remains a peaceful, secure Afghanistan. However, in light of increased levels of Taliban violence, the US government is working to provide certain Afghans, including those who worked with the United States, the opportunity for refugee resettlement to the United States
US STATE DEPARTMENT

SWISS CELEBRATION



A traditional high altitude bonfire burns on the occasion of the Swiss National Day on the Stanserhorn mountain near Stans, Switzerland
PTI PHOTO

ASEAN diplomats mull envoy, aid to Myanmar

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manila, August 2: Southeast Asia's top diplomats were meeting Monday to appoint a special envoy to help deal with the political crisis and violence gripping Myanmar and finalise an emergency plan to help control a coronavirus outbreak that many fear is spiralling out of control in the military-ruled nation.

The foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations were also expected to announce after their video meeting some progress in four years of painstakingly slow negotiations with China to craft a nonaggression pact aimed at preventing conflict in the disputed South China Sea.

The 10-nation bloc, frequently dismissed by critics as an ineffec-

tive talk shop, has been under increasing international pressure to act on the troubles unfolding in Myanmar, an ASEAN member whose the military in February toppled the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

The grouping, however, is hamstrung by its policy of noninterference in the domestic affairs of member nations as well as its requirement to reach a consensus among members.

In Monday's online meeting the ministers were to decide who among at least three nominees from Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia should be designated as the bloc's special envoy to try to broker a settlement between the country's ruling generals and rival parties led by Suu Kyi, a Southeast Asian diplomat told the Associated Press.

Serbia benefits from 'quarantine tourism' as Indians visit

IT HAS BECOME A POPULAR STOPOVER DESTINATION FOR INDIANS BECAUSE IT OFFERS THEM VISA-FREE ENTRY IF THEY HAVE BEEN VACCINATED AND TEST NEGATIVE FOR THE VIRUS

AGENCIES

Belgrade, August 2: Serbia is benefiting from Covid-19 'quarantine tourism' as thousands of Indians make a two-week stopover on the way to other countries.

India has registered more coronavirus cases than any other country except the United States. Its citizens are barred from entering many countries during the pandemic unless they spend two weeks in another country en route.

Serbia has become a popular stopover destination for Indians

because it offers them visa-free entry if they have been vaccinated and test negative for the virus.

They are also required to spend at least the first seven days of their stay in Serbia in isolation, depending from conditions set by their destination countries. They must also take another coronavirus test at the end of their quarantine.

Jagdish, who is from the Indian city of Visakhapatnam, stayed in Serbia's capital, Belgrade, en route to the United States.

Jagdish, who declined to give his full name, said he had waited



in India for some time for things to open up.

But things were not opening up ... We chose Serbia because we do not need a visa ... and it (Belgrade) is also a beautiful city to explore, Jagdish said.

Hotel owners said thousands of Indians came to Belgrade in July. I would not call this 'quarantine tourism', but in the end it comes to that ... there are plenty of hotels which are full, said Ilija Smiljanic, manager of Mark Group hotels.

In June, Serbia recorded a 48.4%

annual increase in tourist arrivals and the number of overnight stays increased by 39.3%, the Statistics Office said.

Tourism accounts for around 2.5% of the country's gross domestic product. Serbia suffered a loss more than 1 billion euros (\$1.19 billion) in revenues last year because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Since last December, Serbia has vaccinated almost a third of its 6.7 million population. Serbia has recorded more than 722,220 people Covid-19 cases and 7,118 deaths from the virus.

business

of the day quote

With funding comes responsibility: to build and scale iconic products of the future that delight our customers, to constantly innovate and experiment, to create value for our shareholders, to not mis-sell in an industry which is known for its bad sales tactics

GAURAV MUNIAL
CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, UNACADEMY

The enhanced production of LMO (by steel players) by reducing usage of gaseous oxygen led to reduced production of steel by about 5,00,000 tonnes during the period April-June, 2021

RAM CHANDRA PRASAD SINGH
UNION STEEL MINISTER

India is a repository of young Millennials and Gen Z talent. At Samsung, we envision this lab to become a hub of young minds igniting India's innovation ecosystem, building capabilities among the students to make them industry-ready, and also promote industry-academia collaboration

DIPESH SHAH | MANAGING DIRECTOR, SRI-B

SHORT TAKES

Adani Wilmar plans to raise ₹4,500cr

New Delhi: Business conglomerate Adani Group's edible oil firm Adani Wilmar Monday filed draft papers with markets regulator Sebi to launch its initial public offer (IPO) to raise up to ₹4,500 crore for funding its expansion. Adani Wilmar, an equal JV between Adani Group and Singapore-based Wilmar, was formed in 1999. It sells cooking oils under the Fortune brand and other food products.

Pfizer, Moderna raise vaccine prices

London: US drug makers Pfizer and Moderna have increased the prices of their mRNA-based vaccines against Covid-19 for the European market, the media reported. According to the new contracts, a Pfizer shot will now cost 19.50 euros against 15.50 euros previously, while a Moderna jab has been priced at 21.49 euros a dose, from about 19 euros in the first procurement deal, The Financial Times reported.

Zomato rolls out 'Pro Plus'

New Delhi: Online food delivery platform Zomato Monday said it is launching a limited edition 'Pro Plus' membership for its select customers. "We have 1.8mn Zomato Pro members as of today. And one of the most requested features from our customers has been 'Unlimited Free Deliveries' (something like Amazon Prime). So...in a few hours, we are launching our Limited Edition 'Pro Plus' membership for select customers..." Zomato Founder and CEO Deepinder Goyal said in a tweet.

Steel production impacted in Apr-Jun

New Delhi: The country's steel output took a hit during the April-June period of 2021 due to the emergence of the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic, Parliament was informed Monday. During the second wave of pandemic, the public and private sector steel plants together supplied 2,30,262 tonnes of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) between April 1 to July 25, 2021, Union Steel Minister Ram Chandra Prasad Singh said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

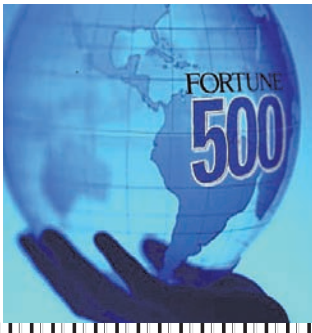


We need to recognise that our strategy for moving towards net zero emission has to be consistent with the economic and infrastructure conditions prevailing in the country

RC BHARGAVA
CHAIRMAN, MARUTI SUZUKI

FORTUNE 500 PROFITS FALL

The Fortune Global 500 companies experienced an overall 5% drop in revenues in 2020, the largest since 2016, while their aggregate profits were down 20%, the biggest decline since 2009. Last year's list contained six airlines; with their revenues down 60% in 2020, not a single one made it to the new list



SIAM postpones Auto Expo 2022 due to Covid-19

THE LAST EDITION OF THE BIENNIAL AUTOMOBILE SHOW TOOK PLACE IN FEBRUARY 2020

New Delhi, August 2: The country's leading automobile show, the Auto Expo, which was scheduled to take place in February next year at Greater Noida, has been postponed due to the Covid-19 situation and apprehensions of a possible third wave, industry body SIAM said Monday.

The last edition of the biennial automobile show took place in February 2020.

"The magnitude of the risk of spread of infection is extremely high in a business-to-consumer (B2C) show like the Auto Expo which is visited by large crowds and maintaining social distancing



would be difficult. It has therefore been decided to postpone the Auto Expo – The Motor Show for now," Society of Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) Director General Rajesh Menon said in a statement.

The exact date for the next edition of Auto Expo – The Motor Show would be finalised later this year keeping in view the COVID situation and in alignment with the OICA Calendar of global Auto shows, he added.

Menon noted that safety of exhibitors, visitors and all stakeholders involved and present at the Auto Expo is the top most priority for SIAM.

It is in this context that the Indian automobile industry and SIAM recognises the inherent risks in organising the Auto Expo due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and the apprehensions of a possible third wave, he said.

Elaborating further, Menon noted that there is uncertainty around

how COVID-19 would develop in the coming months and at the same time organising Auto Expo would need a lead time of preferably a year.

"Also, Auto Expo is like a festival of celebration, for the Indian auto industry and we look forward to receiving maximum people with no fear of spread of infection," he added.

The Auto Expo 2020 saw total footfalls of over six lakh visitors. The country's flagship auto show had witnessed around 70 product launches and unveils, 352 product displays from 108 exhibitors.

Keeping in pace with the trend of eco-friendly vehicles, the expo had also witnessed the launch of 35 electric vehicles.

Hiring activity rises 11% in Apr-Jun: Survey

New Delhi, August 2: Overall recruitment activity witnessed an 11% growth during April-June, as the job market began showing signs of recovery from the Covid-19 second wave, says a survey.

According to the Indeed India Hiring Tracker, that maps quarterly job market activity to June 2021, hiring increased by 11% over the previous quarter, with stand-out growth in Information Technology (61%), financial services (48%), and BPO/ITeS (47%).

This survey was conducted by Valuvox on behalf of Indeed among 1,500 employees and 1,200 businesses across nine cities in the month of June 2021.

"As businesses continue to find a rhythm of working through multiple pandemic challenges, the tracker reflects the resilience of India's labour market," Sashi Kumar, head of sales, Indeed India said.

Kumar further noted that "with hiring activity seeing a month-on-month increase, it was interesting to see businesses pivot their hiring priorities from operation roles to sales roles.



AGENCIES

'July manufacturing PMI returns to expansion zone'

New Delhi, August 2: India's manufacturing sector activities witnessed the strongest rate of growth in three months in July amid improved demand conditions and easing of some local Covid-19 restrictions, a monthly survey said Monday.

The seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose from 48.1 in June to 55.3 in July, pointing to the strongest rate of growth in three months. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"It's encouraging to see the Indian manufacturing industry recover from the blip seen in June. Output rose at a robust pace, with over one-third of companies noting a monthly expansion in production, amid a rebound in new business and the easing of some local Covid-19 restrictions," said Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at IHS Markit.

Lima further noted that "should the pandemic continue to recede, we expect a 9.7 per cent annual increase in industrial production for calendar year 2021."

On the recruitment front, there was a marginal increase in employment in July that ended a 15-month sequence of job shedding.

"Although marginal, the rise in employment was the first since the



GROWTH REBOUND

The seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing PMI rose from 48.1 in June to 55.3 in July, pointing to the strongest rate of growth in three months

On the inflation front, there was a softer but still sharp increase in input costs

Odisha records 54% growth in GST collection in July

Bhubaneswar, August 2: The state recorded 54 per cent growth in Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection in July as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year, officials said Monday.

According to an official statement issued by the office of the state GST commissioner, Odisha collected GST worth ₹3,615 crore in July 2021 as against ₹2,348 crore in July last year. This growth rate of GST in Odisha is the second highest among all major states in India after Maharashtra, the statement said.

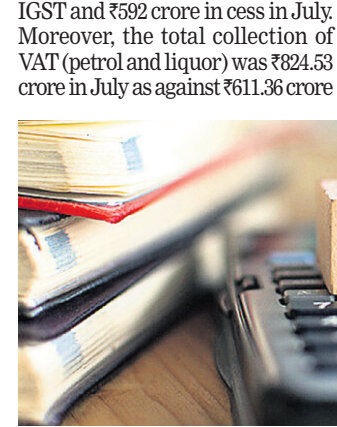
GST collection till July end of this financial year is ₹13,661 crore, as against ₹7,540 crore collected till July last year; thereby recording a growth of 81 per cent. The state collected ₹927 crore in CGST, ₹1,028 crore in IGST and ₹592 crore in cess in July. Moreover, the total collection of VAT (petrol and liquor) was ₹824.53 crore in July as against ₹611.36 crore

The state collected GST worth ₹3,615cr in July 2021 as against ₹2,348cr in July last year

collected in July 2020, recording a growth of 34.86 per cent.

Collection from petroleum products stood at ₹674.53 crore during July 2021 as against ₹501.36 crore in corresponding period of previous year, registering a growth of 34.54 per cent. Similarly, collection from liquor stood at ₹150.01 crore during the same month as against ₹110.43 during July 2020. Revenue collection from liquor recorded a growth of 36.36 per cent.

CT & GST organisation has been focusing on increasing the tax base of GST with regular survey and registration. About 9,386 numbers of new registrants have been brought under the GST during the current financial year.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Furniture Godown opens new outlet

Bhubaneswar, August 2: Leading furniture retail house, Furniture Godown Monday unveiled its third extension outlet at Patrapada in City. This outlet is built up in 12,500 sq ft area. Furniture Godown provides vast variety of furniture by the leading manufacturing companies.

Its design range is from traditional to contemporary spreading across 52,000 sq ft retail showroom space. Furniture Godown enjoys the expansion in furniture retail business in Odisha. Its management team has a vast experience and expertise of over 25 years in home



furniture, office furniture, modular, interiors and furnishings with manufacturing units (Make in Odisha) providing one stop solution for all furniture requirements. The entire sales staff are well trained & well groomed to cater to the customer needs and requirements with updated product knowledge of the Industry.

Exports up 47.91% in July to USD 35.17bn

New Delhi, August 2: The country's exports grew 47.19 per cent to USD 35.17 billion in July on account of healthy growth in petroleum, engineering, and gems and jewellery segments, according to provisional data of the commerce ministry. Imports during the month also rose by 59.38 per cent to USD 46.40 billion, leaving a trade deficit of USD 11.23 billion.

Exports of petroleum, engineering, and gems and jewellery in July increased to USD 3.82 billion, USD 2.82 billion and USD 1.95 billion, respectively, the data showed.



However, exports of oilseeds, rice and meat, dairy and poultry products recorded negative growth in the month under review.

Imports of petroleum, crude, and products soared by 97 per cent to USD 6.35 billion. Similarly, imports of gold zoomed 135.5 per cent to USD 2.42 billion, while pearls, precious and semi-precious stones inbound shipments stood at USD 1.68 billion in July. However, imports of transport

equipment, project goods and silver posted negative growth in the month.

Further, exports to the US, UAE, and Belgium increased to USD 2.4 billion, USD 1.21 billion and USD 489 million in July.

Exports during April-July 2021-22 rose by 73.86 per cent year-on-year to USD 130.56 billion, as against USD 75.10 billion in the same period last year.

"Till July, India's merchandise exports have achieved 32.64 per cent of USD 400 billion. Target for the remaining eight months is USD 269.44 billion or USD 33.68 billion per month," the commerce ministry said.



"Maha Bachat is one of the most loved and awaited retail events of the year. At Big Bazaar our aim is to always give back maximum value to our family members. This time we had such a strong offer with atta, dal and rice, essentials that every household needs, that we wanted to give our customers a chance to pre-book it in advance," said Pawan Sarda, CMO - Digital, Marketing & e-Commerce, Future Group.

RIL slips 59 places on Fortune list, SBI jumps 16 notches



New Delhi, August 2: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's oil-to-telecom conglomerate Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) slipped 59 places to rank 155th on the 2021 Fortune Global 500 list released Monday. Reliance took a beating on the rankings as revenues dropped owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is its lowest ranking since 2017.

Walmart continues to top the Fortune list with revenue of USD 524 billion, followed by China's State Grid at USD 384 billion. With USD 280 billion revenue, Amazon came in at the third spot, replacing Chinese giants. China National Petroleum was ranked fourth and Sinopec Group fifth.

Reliance's revenue fell 25.3 per cent to USD 63 billion, mostly because oil prices plunged in the second quarter of 2020 when the global spread of the pandemic wiped away demand. Other Indian oil compa-

Walmart continues to top the Fortune list with a revenue of \$524bn, followed by China's State Grid at \$384bn. With \$280bn revenue, Amazon came in at the third spot, replacing Chinese giants

nies on the list too slipped ranks as their revenues tumbled because of the fall in oil prices.

State Bank of India (SBI) moved up 16 places to rank 205 but Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) dropped 61 places to 212th rank. This is the second straight year of SBI im-

proving its ranking. It had moved up 15 places last year.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) was ranked 243rd, 53 notches lower than last year's ranking. Rajesh Exports was another firm that improved its ranking with a massive 114 positions jump to 348th rank. Tata Motors slipped 20 places to rank 357 and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) fell to 394 from 309 last year. Fortune said companies are ranked by total revenues for their respective fiscal years ended on or before March 31, 2021.

While SBI had a revenue of USD 52 billion, IOC had revenue of USD 46 billion and Rajesh Exports USD 35 billion.

"Walmart claimed the top spot for

the eighth consecutive year, and for the 16th time since 1995," Fortune said. Mainland China (including Hong Kong) once again has the most companies on the list at 135, up 11 from last year. Adding Taiwan, the total for Greater China is 143.

The US is up one with 122, and Japan held steady with a total of 53 firms. "Fortune Global 500 companies generated revenues totaling more than one-third of the world's GDP. They generated USD 31.7 trillion in revenues (down 5%), USD 1.6 trillion in profits (down 20%) and employ 69.7 million people worldwide," it said.

Apple (No. 6) netted USD 57 billion in profits, and is the Fortune Global 500's most profitable company in 2021, ending Saudi Aramco's (No. 14) two-year reign.

