



WATER BABY

Actor Shruti Haasan took to Instagram, where she shared a throwback picture of herself from an underwater photo-shoot

LEISURE

P2



SEROLOGICAL SURVEY

A serological survey for comprehensive analysis of the spread of Covid-19 in Delhi has commenced

TWO STATES

P7



EXTRADITION NOT EASY

Mumbai attack convict David Headley can't be extradited to India, a US attorney tells a federal court

INTERNATIONAL

P10

IN DELHI, 'KEEP DOORS, WINDOWS CLOSED'

WINGED MENACE: As crop-destroying desert locust swarms are spotted in Delhi, the govt issues precautionary advisory. National capital's IGI Airport has also been kept on high alert

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 27: After swarms of crop-destroying desert locusts reached the outskirts of Delhi Saturday, the city government directed the district magistrates to make all possible arrangements to distract them.

People have been directed to keep their doors and windows closed and cover outdoor plants with plastic sheets. The District Magistrates have also been asked to be on high alert.

"District Magistrates are advised to deploy the adequate staff to make all possible arrangements for guiding the residents to distract the locusts," the advisory by agriculture joint director AP Saini stated.

The government said that they can be distracted by way of making high decibel sound through beating of drum utensils, playing high volume music on music systems, firing crackers and burning of neem leaves.

Over the past few months, locust swarms have attacked and destroyed crops in various states, including Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh.

Three-kilometre-long swarm of



desert locusts reached the outskirts of Delhi after entering Gurgaon Saturday morning. Earlier, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai called an emergency meeting to discuss the situation pursuant to the locust attack in neighbouring Gurgaon.

According to a Union Agriculture ministry report, 84 districts of Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, spread over an area of 1,14,026 hectares, had been in the grip of locusts till June 21, 2020.

National capital's IGI Airport has been kept on high alert following swarm of locusts were spotted near to the key installation. The spotting took place near to NH 8's stretch which connects the national capital to Gurgaon around 11.00 a.m., sources said.

Accordingly, the airport was kept at high alert as operations could have been affected due to the incoming locust swarm. However, due to a change in wind direction the swarm has moved in a completely different direction altogether.

"As of now operations are completely normal, but we are maintaining a look-out and coordinating with different agencies," sources said. Last month, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had issued safety guidelines regarding flight operations in view of the threat posed by locust attack in certain parts of the country.



For 21 days in a row, fuel prices move northward

The cumulative increase since the oil companies started the cycle June 7 now totals to ₹9.25 for petrol and ₹10.85 for diesel in Odisha



FUEL PRICES IN BHUBANESWAR
PETROL ₹80.94 (+ ₹0.25)
DIESEL ₹78.55 (+ ₹0.21)

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi/ Bhubaneswar, June 27: For the 21st consecutive day Saturday, diesel price was hiked by 21 paise a litre. Petrol price too has gone up by 25 paise a litre. In the current phase of rate hike, petrol has gone up by ₹9.12 a litre while that of diesel has gone by a higher margin of ₹11.01 a litre, nationally.

In Delhi, where the diesel costs more than petrol, both the fuels are now priced above ₹80. While petrol is selling at 19-month high level, diesel is at all-time high level. Rates have been

increased across the country but the final retail selling price differs from state to state depending on the incidence of local sales tax or VAT.

In Mumbai, petrol price went up from ₹86.91 per litre to ₹87.14, while diesel rate was hiked to ₹78.71 from ₹78.51.

While diesel rates have been hiked for the 21st straight day, petrol price has been raised on 20 occasions in three weeks.

The cumulative increase since the oil companies started the cycle June 7 now totals to ₹9.25 for petrol and ₹10.85 for diesel in Odisha.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I'm disappointed. We worked really hard to win the best entertainment channel award.

State's Covid toll mounts to 18; cases reach 6,350

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 27: The state reported one more Covid-19 fatality Saturday, taking the toll to 18 as 170 more people, including an NDRF jawan, tested positive for the virus, pushing the tally to 6,350.

In a statement issued Saturday, the health department said a 68-year-old Covid-positive man died in Ganjam district. The victim was also suffering from co-morbid conditions of hypertension and diabetes, it said.

CUMULATIVE TESTS: 2,49,902
TOTAL CASES 6,350
RECOVERIES 4,606
ACTIVE CASES 1,719

With this, the Covid deaths reported from Ganjam district increased to nine. Four deaths were reported from Khurda, three from Cuttack and one each from Bargarh and Puri. The state had reported its first Covid death in Bhubaneswar April 6, the official said.

Besides this, seven other Covid-positive persons have also died but the reason of their deaths was due to other diseases, the official said.

Of the 170 fresh cases, 143 were reported from quarantine centres where people returning from other states are lodged for preliminary observation, while 27 others were locals. Of the fresh cases, 169 were reported from 14 districts while one belonged to the NDRF.

As many as 58 cases were reported from Ganjam district, followed by 19 each in Khurda and Nabarangpur, 16 each from Gajapati and Rayagada, 14 from Cuttack, six each from Puri and Kendrapara, five from Malkangiri, three each from Jajpur and Nayagarh, two from Sambalpur and one each from Koraput and Bargarh districts, the I&PR department said.

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP MAX	37.2°C	35.8°C	
TEMP MIN	26.4°C	24.0°C	
Humidity	95%	79%	Forecast
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	Partly cloudy sky

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 27: The Indian military is amassing more men and material as a precautionary deployment along the 3,488-km-long border with China.

The deployment, perhaps one of the biggest in the recent years, comes at a time when India and China are locked in a hitherto unprecedented standoff – for eight weeks now – at multiple points along their border.

Sources said that Indian Army has deployed three more divisions in eastern Ladakh region to bolster its position on the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Apart from tanks and artillery, the Army has deployed their advanced very quick-reaction surface-to-air missile defence systems, including Akash missiles which have the capacity to take down combat aircraft and drones.

It was stated that four weeks ago an important division had started acclimatising for high-altitude warfare and two weeks later, parts of it were deployed at the 18,000-foot-high Depsang plains, a plateau located north of the

AGENCIES



Galwan valley. Similarly, reserve forces have been moved to forward locations to match up the Chinese deployments.

Asked whether it is full deployment, a senior Indian Army officer said: "It is a mirror deployment."

Indian Army spokesperson, Colonel Aman Anand was, however, unavailable for comments. In a separate domain, the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force are also on full operational alert. The IAF has deployed a number of SAGW systems to Ladakh.

The movement of additional men

INDIAN MILITARY AMASSES MORE MEN, MATERIAL AT BORDER WITH CHINA

MIRROR DEPLOYMENT

Indian Army deploys 3 more divisions in eastern Ladakh region

Advanced very quick-reaction surface-to-air missile defence systems, including Akash missiles, which can take down combat aircraft and drones, deployed

4 weeks ago an important division had started acclimatising for high-altitude warfare

2 weeks later, parts of it were deployed at the 18,000-foot-high Depsang plains, a plateau on the north of Galwan valley

have built camps and deployed vehicles and troops.

At Patrol Points 14 at Galwan, 15 at Kongka La and 17 at Hot Springs, the Chinese Army has been deployed to a large extent.

In response, the Indian Army has also upped the deployment in these positions.

Chinese People's Liberation Army troops have even returned to Patrolling Post 14 in Galwan Valley where the barbaric June 15 attack, in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed, occurred.

Nine urban co-op banks in state may come under RBI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 27: President Ram Nath Kovind promulgated the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020, Saturday. The amendment will bring all urban and multi-state co-operative banks under the supervision of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

In Odisha, there are 17 urban cooperative banks, of which nine are functioning and others are on liquidity stage. If the state government implements the decision, the nine urban cooperative banks will come under the su-

pervision of RBI, said a government official.

About 1.98 lakh depositors are there in the above nine banks. These banks are having ₹1.55 crore deposits and have provided loans to the tune of ₹686 crore.

Former state finance minister Panchanan Kanungo welcomed the move and said, "It has been a long-standing demand. It will bring transparency and strengthen the co-operative banking system. Otherwise, the cooperative banks easily escape after doing irregularities like what happened during chit fund scam."

MORE P11

2 held for couple's murder over sorcery

THE DECEASED WERE IDENTIFIED AS SOMA MADHI (50) AND HIS WIFE SUKRI MADHI (45)

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, June 27: A couple was allegedly murdered over suspected sorcery at Pednalguda village in Malkangiri district, Saturday. Police have detained two persons in this regard.

The deceased were identified as Soma Madhi (50) and his wife Sukri Madhi (45). Police have detained two persons for the crime. Reports said that the duo was found murdered Friday.

Some locals allegedly killed the couple on suspicion over committing sorcery, sources said.

Upon receiving information about



the double murder Malkangiri IIC Tam Prasad Nag and other police officials rushed in and seized the bodies.

Police started an investigation to the double murder and detained two persons of Pednalguda for interrogation.

It may be mentioned here that such cases, every now and then,

have been reported in tribal-dominated pockets of the district.

About a couple of days ago, a woman and her daughter were suspected of hexing at Binayakpur under Motu police limits. The two were attacked at night. While the woman died on the spot, her daughter was critically wounded and admitted to the Koraput district headquarters hospital.

June 15, a man beheaded his aunt on the suspicion of practicing witchcraft. The incident took place at Karakachia village under Khunta police limits Mayurbhanj district. The horrifying crime once more highlighted the deep-rooted su-

perstitions embedded in the minds of people living in rural areas. The accused was identified as 28-year-old Budhiram Singh and the deceased as 60-year-old Demphar Singh. Sources said, Budhiram's four-year-old daughter had fallen sick a week ago and died. Budhiram blamed his aunt for her death. He thought his daughter had fell victim to Demphar's sorcery.

Such gruesome cases still go unabated due to poor awareness and superstitious beliefs even if the state government has made stringent legal provisions under the Odisha Prevention of Witch Hunting Act, 2013.

INDIA'S GEORGE FLOYDS

AGENCIES

Chennai, June 27: Outrage at the death of a father-son duo in the custody of Tamil Nadu police earlier this week mounted Saturday, with thousands on social media comparing the incident to the death of George Floyd in the United States. J Jayaraj, 59, and Bennicks Immanuel, 31, were subjected to a brutal thrashing, which resulted in rectal bleeding and eventual death, according to a letter to government officials written by Jayaraj's wife J Selvarani. The letter, based on eyewitness testimony and reviewed by Reuters, seeks action against the police officers involved.

Police in Sathankulam, a town located 50 km (31 miles) south of the port city of Thoothukudi in southern Tamil Nadu state, said in a FIR reviewed by Reuters that Jayaraj and Bennicks were picked up Friday, June 19 for breaching coronavirus lockdown rules.

Bennicks died Monday after complaining of breathlessness and Jayaraj died Tuesday, Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami, who oversees the police in the state, said in a statement Wednesday. Two policemen involved in the incident had been suspended, he added.

"We will take action over this incident as per the law," Palaniswami said. Hundreds of thousands of



Jayaraj and Bennicks were subjected to a brutal thrashing, which resulted in rectal bleeding and eventual death, says Jayaraj's wife J Selvarani

tweets were sent out using the hashtag #JusticeforJayarajandBennix, that was among the top Twitter top-

ics trending in India Friday and among the top 30 trending globally, with celebrities and politicians con-

Questions have been raised over the judicial magistrate D. Saravanan's role in granting custody without conducting the mandated medical check-up

The Madurai bench of Madras High Court took suo motu cognizance of the matter and June 24, a bench ordered the SP, Thoothukudi, to inquire and submit a status report

Two sub-inspectors have been suspended so far

demning police action.

"The George Floyd of India are far too many," tweeted Gujarat MLA Jignesh Mevani.

"Will Indians march on streets in thousands, like America?" Mevani asked his nearly 7,50,000 Twitter followers, referring to events following the death in police custody May 25 of George Floyd, a Black man. Nearly 15 cases of custodial violence and torture were reported in daily on average, with nine people dying in judicial or police custody every 24 hours, according to the latest annual report by NHRC for the year 2017/18. The NHRC said in its report that some custodial deaths were reported after considerable delay or not reported at all, adding violence in custody was so rampant "that it has become almost routine."

MORE P2

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
Today ideas will flood your mind, but it is good that you will be able to carry them out efficiently. However, Ganesh warns you not to take rash decisions. Wise people will help you along the way. Pay heed to the advice of experienced people.

TAURUS
The stars are very auspiciously disposed towards you, announces Ganesh. You have an exceptionally bright and enjoyable day ahead of you. All events and situations will work in your favour. If you are pursuing higher studies you will perform brilliantly.

GEMINI
It is a day filled with joy and happiness on the home front. You will spend a lot of time with children. You will complete long pending household projects as well as take an interest in ironing out differences between family members, says Ganesh.

CANCER
There is a chance today to benefit from women-folk. Though you are methodical and disciplined in your work, you will feel rudderless. Yet you will get relief from this monotony and feel jovial, says Ganesh.

LEO
You will not be able to reap the rewards of your hard work fully today. You will take all matters very seriously today. You will feel a sense of responsibility and will try to find lasting solutions to problems today. It is a good day to put to rest some worries that have been haunting you for some time now, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
You will enchant people with your adaptability and your desire to get with your surroundings. For those who are in love, something unexpected may take place, but there is no need to panic as by and by things will turn out to be in your interest.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that today in your office you should be very careful in your work. It is likely that your superiors will not be happy about your work or your ability today. Those of you who are businessmen should try and delay sending off tenders today. Those who have given their job interviews may not get a favorable response to it.

SCORPIO
There's always a first time, and today is the day when you would seal a profitable deal for your new business venture. However, close the deal only if it is beneficial for a long term. Be cautious and watch your steps carefully to avoid any unfortunate situation.

SAGITTARIUS
Your far-sightedness and brilliance will not only impress your peers, but also help you to rope in big clients and huge projects. Cheers to that! Thanks to your systematic and disciplined approach, you are entitled to be the 'most desirable' employee of the company.

CAPRICORN
Print and electronic media will attract your attention, if you're just planning to begin your career. Your spiritual and philosophical approach give you inner peace, and also inspire you to visit a holy place. Overall, you will have a balanced day, today, says Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
You will feel deeply inclined towards development and research, today. Actions speak louder than words, and your efforts and overall growth will speak plenty about your character. Your romantic side will come to the fore today.

PISCES
For those who are salaried, today should be a progressive day for you. Important meetings at the work-place will benefit from your presence and the suggestions you have to make. This should enhance your relationship with your superiors.



WHITE ACTORS DROPPED

The Indian origin character Apu Nahasapeemapetilon will no longer be voiced by actor Hank Azaria in the popular animated show, *The Simpsons*. "Moving forward, The Simpsons will no longer have white actors voice non-white characters," the makers said in a statement, reports *mirror.co.uk*.

NO PRE-SHOOT RITUAL FOR MCAVOY

Actor James McAvoy says there was a pre-shoot ritual that he used to follow, but then he stopped because he found it 'just stupid'. McAvoy is known for his roles in movies like *The Last King Of Scotland* and the *X Men* franchise in which he played Charles Xavier aka Professor X.



B-Town condemns Tuticorin custodial deaths

Mumbai: Cineworld has condemned the alleged police brutality on a father-son duo and their eventual death in judicial custody, in Tamil Nadu's Tuticorin district.

The father-son duo of Jayaraj and Benicks, aka Fenix, died in judicial custody earlier this week after alleged police torture.

Condemning the incident, Priyanka Chopra shared: "Reeling from what I am hearing. Absolutely stunned, sad and angry. No human being deserves such brutality, whatever be the crime. The guilty must not be allowed to go unpunished."

"This might just be one case out of many but it takes only one case to begin the snowball effect. #JusticeforJayarajAndFenix," tweeted Taapsee



Pannu. "Hope this is investigated thoroughly and justice prevails," shared Anushka Sharma in her Instagram story. "We go to the police when we are in danger. How can they BE the danger?"

#JusticeForJayarajAndFenix," shared Parineeti Chopra. Disha Patani shared a cartoon showing police beating up two people. It is captioned: "The unchained animals". "This has to stop. #policebrutality" wrote filmmaker Zoya Akhtar condemning the incident. Actors Rajkumar Rao, Kriti Kharbanda, Gauhar Khan and several others shared a video of a radio jockey from Chennai who describes how the father-son were killed alleging police brutality. The father-son duo of Jayaraj and Benicks were booked for not closing their mobile shop in time June 19. They were lodged in the Kovilpatti jail June 21.

Jayaraj died June 22 night and his son Benicks June 23 morning in judicial custody. The family alleged police assault led to their deaths. IANS

Swara defends controversial scene

Mumbai: Actress Swara Bhasker has responded to an objection raised by Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) Chief Prasoon Joshi, over a scene in her latest web series *Rashbhari*.

Prasoon Joshi had tweeted pointing out a scene in the web series has 'irresponsible content.'

Swara Bhasker took to Twitter to explain the purpose of the scene to the CBFC Chief and pointing out that maybe he misunderstood it.

"Respected sir, maybe you are misunderstanding the scene. The way you are describing the scene, it is just the opposite. The child is dancing at her own will. Her father feels embarrassed after seeing

this. The dance is not provocative. She is simply dancing and has no idea about how society will sexualise her too. This is what the scene shows. #Rashbhari," tweeted Swara Bhasker in Hindi.

Swara's tweet comes as a response to Prasoon Joshi's tweet which reads: "Saddened by Web series #Rashbhari's irresponsible content portraying a little girl child dancing provocatively in front of men drinking. Creators and audience need to seriously rethink Freedom of expression or freedom of exploitation? Let's spare children in the desperate need for entertainment." IANS



Now painting challenge to beat lockdown blues

One of the works brings home a message that how windows have been opened for the nature to breathe after humans were compelled to stay home

POST NEWS NETWORK

BHUBANESWAR: The coronavirus-induced lockdown has forced people to rely heavily on the Internet and social media to stay connected with their dear ones. Many people are coming up with online challenges to battle isolation blues. The latest addition to the list is 'online painting challenges' by the painters.

The challenge is simple and about exploring the painting skills of artists to explain the difficult times. It is being loved by the painters amid the lockdown.

Contemporary artists are nominating each other to express their feelings on canvasses during these dark hours. The names include Nibedita Mohanta, Rutuparna Maharana, Deepak Mohanta, Dibya Rout, Subhendu Jena, Sujit Mohanta, Sunil



A work of Dasaratha Mohanta

Hembram and Dasaratha Mohanta.

Speaking to **OrissaPOST**, sand artist and painter Dasaratha Mohanta of Mayurbhanja said, "An artist can speak a lot silently using his/her painting tools. Needless to say that art is a medium of expressing emotions, truth and positive and negative aspects of our society. During this pandemic I have challenged my co-artists to express themselves reflecting the present times." Dasaratha has conveyed his feelings through his painting of a child in her mother's womb during

the pandemic.

Similarly Jajpur-based painter Rutuparna Maharana's *Tale of birds* is a depiction of the miseries of feathered animals.

"The virus has taken a toll on every aspect of life. Now we are realising how it feels to be confined to our homes for a long time. Therefore, I have made an attempt to highlight the plight of the winged creatures that are not meant to live in cages," said Rutuparna.

Painter Nibedita Mohanta from Baripada, in her creation, has tried to explain the impacts of the pandemic on human civilisation.

Her work also sends a message that how windows have been opened for the environment to breathe after humans were compelled to stay home following the imposition of the lockdown. The attempts made by the artists have earned appreciations from the critics, art lovers and their friends.

Art critic Rajiv Sahoo said, "Online art challenge is a good platform for the emerging artists. All of them look promising and deserve proper grooming to thrive in future."

'I am a water baby'

Mumbai: Actress Shruti Haasan calls herself a 'water baby'.

Shruti, daughter of veteran stars Kamal Haasan and Sarika, took to Instagram, where she shared a throwback picture of herself from an underwater photo-shoot. "Water baby #throwback," she captioned the image.

She also shared a photograph of her face, where she showed her two

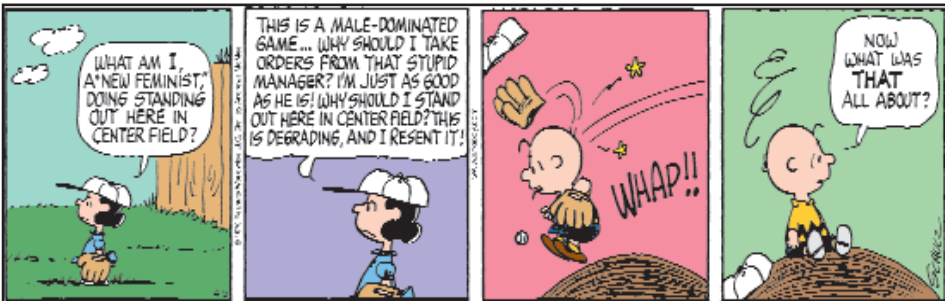
birthmarks in her eye and urged everyone to celebrate all the things that make them what they are.

"Yes, those are birthmarks in my eye - no it's not some weird reaction - no it's not a disease - yes they get lighter and darker just like freckles - yes it's very common - yes I have had them for years and years and I think they're super special ?? and YES you should celebrate all the things that make you YOU," Shruti wrote.

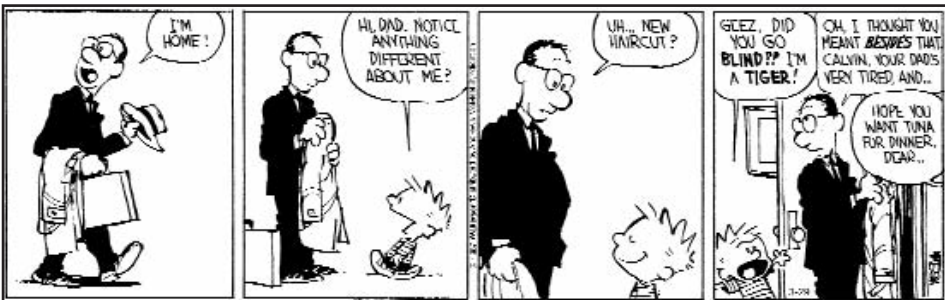
Shruti made her Hindi film debut in 2000 with the film *Luck*. She was later seen in films like *Dil Toh Baccha Hai Ji*, *Ramaya Vasthavayya* and *Behen Hogi Teri*. IANS



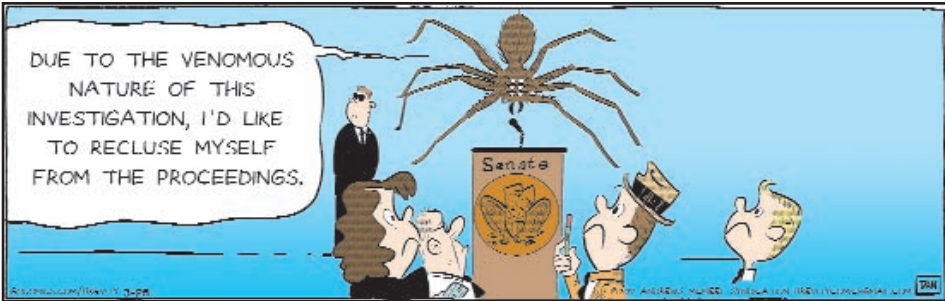
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

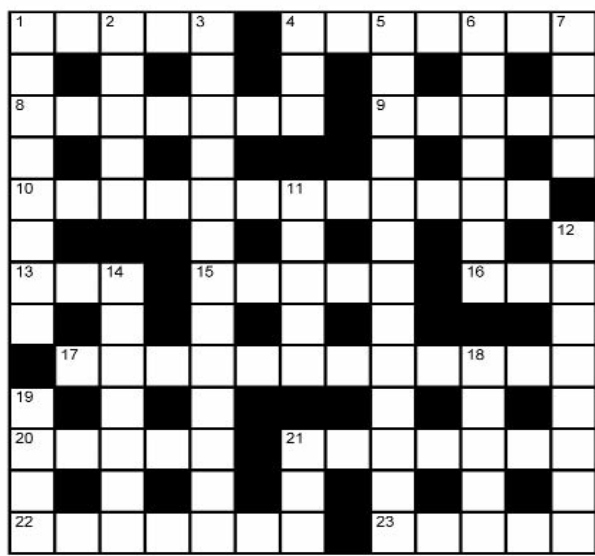


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Ranch youngsters
- 4 Musical intervals
- 8 Bungalow
- 9 Be of one mind
- 10 Stressful (5-7)
- 13 Harbour craft
- 15 Squirrel's stash
- 16 Gorilla
- 17 French economic doctrine (7-5)

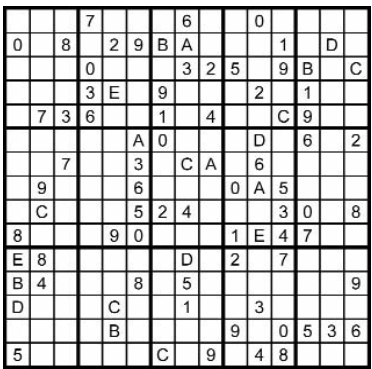
Down

- 20 Barbaric
- 21 Remedy for the ill (4,3)
- 22 African pests
- 23 Pub game
- 1 Palm droppings
- 2 Carafe size
- 3 NASA projectiles (5,8)
- 4 Lyric poem

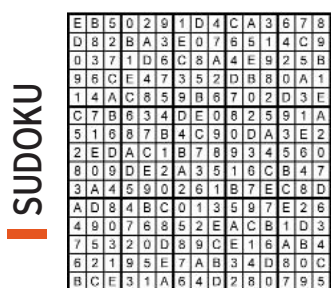
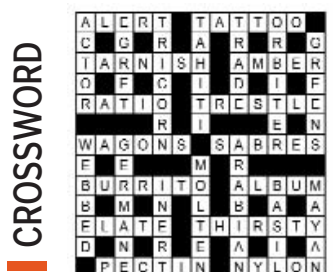
- 5 Sports meet (5-3-5)
- 6 Lanai, in Hawaii
- 7 Put one's foot down
- 11 Be wild about
- 12 Top dogs, in the military
- 14 Small particle
- 18 Lay to rest
- 19 Highlander
- 21 Commuting option

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

State to develop app to file RTI applications

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 27: As part of the 5T initiative, the state government has decided to develop a mobile application for filing and monitoring RTI applications. The information and public re-

a problem for the users of the portal. By using the mobile application, people without depending upon cyber café and other internet sources can use the mobile application to upload their issues, the sources said. The mobile app will have login

like the Central RTI portal. Currently, the government is using manual reporting system. This reporting mechanism is dependent upon the mail and postal delivery systems. The postal department takes long time to deliver the report to concern person. Therefore, the



FOCUS TRANSPARENCY

- The need for a mobile application is high as most of the places in Odisha do not have proper internet connectivity
- The application will be named as Biju Transparency App (BIJUTAPP) which will be in English and Odia languages
- The app will have login for common users and public authorities, online filling & receiving of RTI applications, uploading of necessary documents while filling the online applications, updating of RTI proactive disclosures & e-filing and SMSes & mail integrations.
- The government has also going to redevelop state RTI portal-<http://rtiodisha.gov.in> to make it more user friendly
- The portal will have e-filing tool like the Central RTI portal

lation (I&PR) department will engage a firm to develop the applications. According to sources, the application will be named as Biju Transparency App (BIJUTAPP) which will be in English and Odia languages. This application will be developed in sync with the respective web applications. The need for a mobile application is high as most of the places in Odisha do not have proper internet connectivity. This became

Cong slams govt for Rath Yatra ‘goof-up’ in SC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 27: The Odisha Congress, Saturday, blamed the state government for the alleged mishandling of a case before the Supreme Court pertaining to conduct of Rath Yatra in Puri. Odisha Congress Spokesperson Satya Prakash Nayak accused the state government of ignoring the views of Puri Gajapati King Dibyasingha Deb, who is the chief of the Temple Managing Committee.

“The Odisha government has goofed up massively in Rath Yatra episode. The explosive statements from Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb are evident of the irresponsible and anti-devotee mindset of the government. The apex committee of the temple has been empowered by law. Gajapati Maharaja is the legal head of the panel,” he said.

He also added, “Deb alleged that he believed that the state government has gone to SC to ensure conduct of the Rath Yatra but the stance taken by the government lawyers before the SC stunned him. He alleged that his views were not presented before the SC.”

Nayak said that the state allegedly supported the arguments of the rival party – Odisha Bikash Parisad. This hints that there was established conspiracy in the case, he said, adding that the state government has adopted a dual policy on Rath Yatra.

“Gajapati Maharaja’s statement hints that the state had a ‘match fixing’ with the NGO over the matter. The Gajapati King has written to the state government thrice over the issue but the latter didn’t respond,” Nayak alleged.

He also said, “Let the people know when there was a plan was to conduct the Lord’s Rath Yatra without devotees, who informed the SC that around 10 to 12 lakh people would congregate in Puri if the Car Festival is held. The counsel for the state government was misled by the State Advocate General. It seems misleading information was provided to the court. Who should be held responsible for this?”

The BJP also raised questions over the entire episode. Odisha BJP spokesperson Prithiviraj Harichandan said that the state failed to listen to the concerns of the temple administration.

for common users and public authorities, online filling & receiving of RTI applications, uploading of necessary documents while filling the online applications, updating of RTI proactive disclosures & e-filing and SMSes & mail integrations.

The government has also going to redevelop state RTI portal-<http://rtiodisha.gov.in> to make it more user friendly, the source said. The portal will have e-filing tool

e-filing too will be developed so that people will not need to post the application after online filing.

Moreover, the portal will have e-reporting model for the Public Information Officer (PIO) so that they can get any type of statistics and subjective data from top to bottom offices.

Over 12,000 government offices will be connected in this portal and all will submit data and report in a single format, the source added.

‘Odisha to remain as edu hub’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 27: All departments and higher education institutions should cooperate with the government in its war against the coronavirus, Higher Education (HE) Minister Arun Sahoo said.

Speaking at a webinar organised by FICCI Odisha State Council, Friday, Sahoo said, “COVID-19 situation in the state is under control, but the next one or two months could be challenging. The current

pandemic will be over in a few months. The state government can assure that Odisha would remain as the education hub of the eastern region.” Officials of HE department, academicians, research scholars and students attended the webinar. Chairperson of FICCI Odisha State Council Monica Nayyar Patnaik said that COVID-19 has affected higher education. Patnaik said that online education during current crisis has become the only option. In a special session, acade-

Erratic rainfall till July first week



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 27: India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday said the prevailing weather condition would continue in the state till July first week.

“Rainfall activity has come down in the state. Very few places are receiving heavy rain due to thunderstorm while light to moderate rain is happening in many places. Such weather condition will continue till July first week,” said Bhubaneswar Met Centre director HR Biswas.

The rainfall activity is likely to intensify in the state from July second week, he added.

The MeT Centre said heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj, Sunday. Besides, thunderstorm with lightning will occur at a few places of the districts of coastal Odisha, Kandhamal. Rayagada, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Dhenkanal during next 24 hours.

The IMD has issued yellow warning (thunderstorm) for north interior Odisha, Cuttack, Jajpur, Kendrapara Bhadrak and Balasore, Monday.

CITY IN COVID TIMES



(From top)
A mechanised sweeping machine cleans a stretch of road near Janpath during the coronavirus-induced shutdown; otherwise busy PMG area wears a deserted look and people face inconveniences near Master Canteen Square as public transport remains off the road due to the weekend shutdown in Bhubaneswar, Saturday
OP PHOTOS



₹3.9L collected for lockdown violations in Cuttack

MORE TESTING KEY TO CHECK PANDEMIC, SAY EXPERTS



The media briefing in progress

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 27: The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Saturday claimed that Rs 3,99,300 had been collected from erring citizens of the city for violation of COVID 19 rules over last few months. CMC Commissioner Ananya Das, in a press conference, Saturday said the offences included not wearing masks or not maintaining social distancing during lockdown and COVID 19 outbreak.

“In the last few months we have collected around Rs 3 lakh as penalty from the erring citizens who defaulted on wearing masks in public or not maintaining social distancing,” she said.

Agriculture Department Principal Secretary Saurabh Garg said a review meeting for the preparedness of the city against COVID 19 was organized Saturday. He also appreciated the roles of ward committees and Puja committees for supporting the civic body in management of COVID 19 crisis.

According to Garg, 59 ward committee panels and 179 Puja and Sahi committees of the city have been roped in to volunteer for COVID 19 management and early warning and awareness.

“The CMC is taking their help in their fight towards COVID 19. Police are also in contact with them and they are being trained and informed through video conferencing. They are monitoring the health conditions of communities,” he said.

Garg also said that around 10,000 senior citizens have been identified in the city for whom volunteers are working to home-deliver their essentials to keep them safe and not expose them to vulnerable conditions.

“The CMC has constituted 10 Rapid Action Teams (RATs) to go and manage the COVID cases. This comprises MBBS and Ayush doctors. They have also planned work for the vulnerable community. Police have formed teams to manage 10,000 senior citizens. Their home-deliveries are taken care of to prevent them

BHUBANESWAR: Experts working on the COVID 19 outbreak opine that the state government needs to change its strategy to tackle the crisis by escalating the number of tests in the light of development of more indigenously-built testing systems.

“The strategy in our country is test, track and treat. Identify the infection by testing, track the contacts and treat patients at early stages, by which we can control the transmission of infections and decrease the death rate. Now we have enormous indigenous testing capacity in our country,” said Dr Manoj Kumar Sahu, Head of Department, Gastereology, SUM Hospital.

Dr Sahu has been associated with the World Health Organization (WHO) on Eradication of Hepatitis, also on prevention of Corona infection. He added, “All states need to increase the number of tests. RT



PCR and rapid antigen tests for identification of active infections and antibody test for sero-prevalence of the disease. When we know the actual status of the disease, the strategy might change accordingly.”

The state, meanwhile, has already planned to increase the testing by making more test kits available for rapid antibody tests. The Indian Institute of Life Sciences has planned to escalate the testing through new kits given by the government, the institute had told the media recently.

This comes after the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) sought increasing testing across the country. ICMR approved kits are likely to reach Odisha within a week. The testing is likely to be used for door to door COVID screening.

from coming outside,” he said.

According to the civic body, the region has seen a return of 5101 people up till now from outside. “We are doing their tracking and allowing them to opt for home quarantine. 3,892 people are either under home quarantine or have finished

with it. There are 949 cases of institutional quarantine,” Das said. The CMC commissioner said Cuttack currently has 18 quarantine centres with 1,290 beds. “This is to go up to 1500 beds too. Seven quarantine centres with 171 beds are operative,” she said.

Covid fight to rope in peer leaders in slums

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jun 27: In view of the rising COVID-19 cases in the capital city, the civic authorities here have decided to rope in peer leaders of Socially Smart Project of Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) as Covid Sachetakas, to increase awareness among people.

Peer leaders of the BSCL’s project are youths that are involved in community development, largely in slum areas. A collaborative initiative of BMC, BSCL and United Nations Population Fund and the peer leader development has been operational since 2017. A two-day training by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and doctors for these leaders at Saheed Nagar Kalyan Mandap concluded Saturday.

“The BMC has decided to involve these peer leaders in helping our fight against the pandemic. Their job will involve going door to door and educate people about social distancing, hand hygiene and symptoms of COVID. They will also work to identify people with probable symptoms of Covid and inform ZCO and other officials for further support,” informed BMC Commissioner, Prem Chandra

Chaudhary. Sources at the BMC said the civic authority’s move to rope in extra hands has come in the wake of the increasing spread of COVID-19 in the city. The total Covid cases in the city currently stand at 283. They included 148 recoveries and 131 active cases while three deaths were reported.

Moreover, a few of these cases have now started to come out of slums where potential outbreak is possible owing to poor social distancing. As many as four cases have been reported from Laxmi Bazaar slum in the city with two females, aged 31 and 38 years, testing positive for Coronavirus apart from two males aged 50 and 18. All of them are linked to an earlier-reported positive case.

With an aim to help the authorities efficiently battle against COVID-19, Deepanjali Swain, a trainee, of Jagannath Basti Press Colony, said, “It is a unique opportunity to contain the spread of virus at our community level. People in our slums are not very careful and can be seen playing cards in groups. Many of them also do not use masks. We will form a group and move from house to house and create awareness on the various aspects of the pandemic.”



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Dhenkanal jumbos in grip of herpes infection

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, June 27: The spread of herpes infection has gripped elephants in Dhenkanal reserve forest under Hindol range killing three and infecting many over the past one and a half years.

The infection is on the rise and with no preventive measures the forest department appears ill prepared.

As elephants are social animals, the probability of mass infections cannot be ruled out in coming days. If the infection spreads, it could wipe out the entire elephant population of Hindol forest range, locals apprehended.

Between January 2019 and June 2020, three pachyderms died in Hindol range due to herpes infection, of which one was a female and the two others were calves.

The calf who died at Kapilash elephant rescue centre a year back was suspected to have had been infected by herpes. The forest department officials did not clarify on the reasons of the calf's death and tried to suppress the matter, according to a source.

Further, a female jumbo that died a few days back was also infected by herpes, the post-mortem report confirmed. It has been al-



It is alleged that the forest department is reluctant to purchase antiviral injection due to its high prices

WORRYING TREND

- Between January 2019 and June 2020, three pachyderms died in Hindol range due to herpes infection, while many are infected by the virus
- The infection is on the rise and with no preventive measures the forest department appears ill prepared
- As elephants are social animals, the probability of mass infections cannot be ruled out in coming days

leged that forest officials despite having knowledge of the animal's serious infection did not provide it adequate treatment.

Similarly, another infected calf from the forest had infiltrated into Rasol region last

year. The animal died due to the alleged apathy of the forest department. Senior veterinary doctors from Satkosia had advised for immediate treatment of the sick calf. But the calf died a day after being rescued, owing

to gross neglect by forest officials.

A complete course of antiviral injection for herpes treatment costs around Rs 20,000 to Rs 25,000 in the open market. It is alleged that the department is reluctant to purchase antiviral injection due to its high prices which has given rise to more number of jumbo infections in Dhenkanal.

Reacting to this, senior veterinary doctor of Satkosia Dr Kishore Sahu said, "Generally, Asian elephants get infected by herpes-1 virus and their African counterparts by herpes-2 virus. Herpes-1 infection is fatal for calves and causes swelling of throat and mouth as well as wounds all over the body."

"The jumbos fail to intake food and gradually become weak, thereby leading to their untimely death. In the absence of adequate treatment, an adult elephant dies within 1 to 20 days of getting infected," Dr Sahu explained. Dhenkanal Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Bimal Prasanna Acharya said, "We have informed the department higher-ups about herpes infection found in a female elephant that died of late." Acharya did not comment further citing he has already been transferred to Bhubaneswar-based Nandankanan Zoological Park.

COVID CONTROL Ganjam admin urges villagers to not enter urban areas for 15 days



Tweet

Collector & District Magistrate, Ganjam
@Ganjam_Admin

We request people in Rural area not to visit Urban area for next fifteen days if not any emergency. Avoid crowds. Use mask 🧤 Keep two metre distance from other person. Wash hands. @CMO_Odisha @HFWOdisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, June 27: Concerned over the increasing COVID-19 infections in Ganjam district, Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange urged rural people in the district to not enter urban areas of the district for the next 15 days.

The decision has been taken as a preventive measure to contain the spread of coronavirus in the rural areas.

Kulange tweeted, "We request people in rural areas to not visit any urban area for the next 15 days if not an emergency."

The Collector advised the people to follow the three basic guidelines of COVID-19 -- social distancing, use of masks and regular hand wash for 20 seconds or use of sanitisers to stay safe and fight the deadly virus.

"We have to avoid crowd, use mask and constantly maintain social distancing to control coronavirus," Kulange said.

With 58 new COVID-19 cases reported in district Saturday, the total number of cases in Ganjam reached 1,195.

₹80K collected from COVID-19 norm violators

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, June 27: An amount of Rs 80, 800 was collected from 404 COVID guideline violators in 24 hours here, Berhampur SP Pinak Mishra said in a tweet Saturday.

Even as coronavirus is fast spreading its tentacles in Berhampur, people here still seem to be not serious enough about the invisible enemy.

The administration has been creating awareness among people on how can the virus be kept at bay and asking people to wear masks and maintain social distancing at shops. In its attempt to discourage people from flouting norms, fines are being collected from violators. The police caught 404 violators between Friday 6am to Saturday 6am and collected Rs 80, 800 from them.

1,700 kg of ganja seized in Koraput

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Koraput, June 27: In a major haul, Odisha police have seized 1,700 kilograms of ganja and arrested 26 people in this connection from Koraput district, an official said Friday.

Police said the banned drug was procured from Machkund area of the district, from where it was being smuggled to other states.

"Owing to the lockdown, ganja smugglers are supplying the contraband in vehicles meant for transporting essential commodities to give the police the slip. However, we have intensified our raid in the past few months and have enhanced our patrolling on suspected ganja corridors in the district," Koraput SP Mukesh Kumar Bhamoo said.



MGNREGS employment norms go for a toss in Jaipur district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rasulpur, June 27: Even as the government has laid stress on proper execution of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) during the COVID-induced lockdown, irregularities have scuttled its purpose in Rasulpur block of Jajpur district, a report said.

People of Atlapur in this block alleged that owing to an unholy nexus between officials and contractors, official guidelines were thrown to the winds in the execution of a project under MGNREGS.

"While job card holders in the locality have been sitting pretty, the contractor engaged cheap workers from outside," they pointed out.

It was learnt that Rs 2 lakh was allocated for restoration of an embankment in Atlapur panchayat. Surprisingly, the estimated cost mentioned in the information plaque is Rs 5 lakh. The scheme of



It was learnt that ₹2 lakh was allocated for restoration of an embankment in Atlapur panchayat. Surprisingly, the estimated cost in the information plaque is ₹5 lakh

the project was named as 'Brahmani river embankment road'.

Officially, it was stated that the work was started February 13, 2020 and completed June 5, 2020. The bill of the project has been cleared. However, there is no mention about use of tractors in the documents submitted for clearance of bill.

The villagers also alleged that the contractor has used sand instead of soil in the project.

Moreover, outside workers were

engaged in sand transport while local workers were sitting idle, the villagers said, demanding a probe into the illegalities. When asked about the illegalities, Anil Kumar Biswal, engineer of the department concerned, said Rs 5 lakh was wrongly mentioned as cost of the project. However, he could not reply about the irregularities in the work.

In other panchayats, fake muster rolls are prepared in MGNREGS projects, it was alleged.

THE ART OF ANGLING



Children angling in a construction pit, which was flooded after floodwater was released from Hirakud dam in Sambalpur

OP PHOTO

In absence of bridges, risky boat rides a normal here

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, June 27: With the state government's 2004 boat rules being flouted and passengers being ferried to various destinations in boats with no safety gears in place, yet another major boat mishap is only a matter of time in Kendrapara district.

Past mishaps are still fresh in people's mind. A boat capsized in Mahanadi June 19 near Pitapat village under Mahakalapara block but the five labourers who were travelling in the boat cheated death as they managed to swim ashore.

In another mishap that took place at the same place March 1, 2013, 13 young cricketers of Jagatsinghpur district met watery graves as the boat capsized. As many as 10 women and children were killed after their

boat drowned at Nipania January 2, 2019.

The casualties could have been avoided had the boats had safety gears like life jackets and ring buoys.

Seventeen panchayats are encircled by rivers in this district.

And these panchayats are yet to be connected by bridges.

Even today, people of these panchayats are commuting by boats putting their lives in harm's way. Visitors going to tourist spots near the Bhitarkanika National Park like Hukitola, Habalikhati, Batighar and Barunei also commute in boats putting their lives at risk. According to social activist Abhitabh Chand, all the boats engaged in ferrying passen-

All the boats engaged in ferrying passengers should have been insured as per the 2004 boat rules. But this is not the case here

ABHITABH CHAND | SOCIAL ACTIVIST



gers should have been insured as per the 2004 boat rules. But this is not the case here. Let alone insurance, most boats are operating without even fitness certificates. "God forbid no mishap should take place. But if it happens and some people drown,

they will not get any compensation. More than 60 boats are operating in Bhitarkanika National Park area," Chand said.

Echoing the same, Narendra Sahu, a resident of Gupti in Rajnagar block, said there are more

NORMS VIOLATION

SEVENTEEN PANCHAYATS IN KENDRAPARA DISTRICT ARE ENCIRCLED BY RIVERS AND ARE YET TO BE CONNECTED BY BRIDGES

EVEN TODAY, PEOPLE OF THESE PANCHAYATS COMMUTE BY BOATS PUTTING THEIR LIVES IN HARM'S WAY

IN MOST BOATS, THE BOATMEN ARE MINORS AND INEXPERIENCED AND THEY TAKE IN MORE PASSENGERS THAN THEIR CAPACITIES

THE LACK OF SAFETY GEARS LIKE LIFE JACKETS AND RING BUOYS MAKES THE BOAT RIDES ALL THE MORE RISKY

nors and inexperienced. Besides, they take in more passengers than their capacities. Expressing his concern, Bibhuti Rout, a resident of Mahakalapara, said people are forced to use boats as means of a communication in the absence of bridges. For people of Bahakud and Kharinasi, bridges have become a dream. Hundreds of families residing on the banks of Mahanadi, Brahmani and Baitarani are travelling in country boats. But the district administration has forgotten to conduct checks, Rout said.

DFO Bimal Prasanna Acharya, meanwhile, said direction has been issued for the insurance of both boatmen and boats.

Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Basant Kumar Rout said boatmen have been made aware of the rules and regulations. If any boat is found not following the rules, the administration will take action against them, the ADM said.

There is a thirst for Love which no human relation can quench. It is only the Divine's love that can satisfy that thirst.

THE MOTHER

Pseudo nationalism

Even critics of the Prime Minister and his party have been taken aback by his position on China's intrusions. Of all the things that he has advertised himself, even the Modi haters had accepted that he was a nationalist, whether or not they agreed with nationalism or ultra nationalism of the sort he promotes.

But nobody, including them, expected him to run away from an invasion of Bharat Mata, as he has done.

Modi has made only one public statement on the matter of China and that was to say: "Na koi wahan hamari seema mein ghus aaya hai, na hi koi ghusa hua hai, na hi hamari koi post kisi dusre ke kabze mein hain."

This was used by China to claim control over all of Galwan Valley, where it has intruded.

Modi's words have become such an embarrassment that they have been removed from the official PMO video.

Modi has not spoken on the issue after this, and appears to be pretending that there is no intrusion. Satellite imagery confirms that the tent our men died trying to remove has now become a series of Chinese structures on our side.

Reports, which have not been denied by the government, say China has made a fourth intrusion at Depsang where it is 18 km inside India. Our response is so muted as to be shocking. Everyone in the government seems to be worried, and there has been a long statement from the foreign ministry and an interview with the Indian ambassador in Beijing asking China to respect the Line of Actual Control. But at the same time nobody is saying China has intruded, because they fear contradicting Modi.

The defence ministry has said anonymously to reporters that the army has been given a free hand. But this doesn't mean anything. The army cannot decide whether or not we are at war with China. This is a political decision. It is Modi who must decide that India will use force to kick the Chinese out, like Nehru decided, and only after that does the military come into the picture.

Saying the forces have a free hand in this situation is abdication of duty and responsibility and passing off political accountability to the military.

The government is treating this as a localised policing issue though clearly the intent of the Chinese is strategic. India is facing danger but the government is not prepared or willing to acknowledge it.

Because we are speaking in so many different voices we have lost the opportunity to mobilise international support on China's aggression. If we had been transparent about the aggression we could have put Xi Jinping on the back foot. Instead what has happened is that China has publicly used Modi's statement about no intrusion and not only blamed India for the stand-off but expanded its claim over our land.

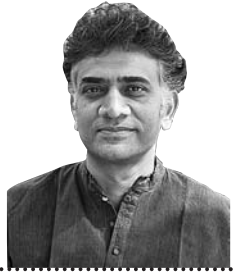
Modi's very vocal backers have gone silent over this because even they have been taken aback by the incompetence with which this is being handled. And, to go back to where we started, on an issue on which nobody thought Modi would be soft. After all the brave words from him when the UPA was in power with respect to China's temporary intrusions, to have him waffle and dissemble when they are making the intrusion permanent is unexpected.

What does that say about his nationalism? We can call it pseudo nationalism. It is fake. The dictionary defines nationalism as a patriotic feeling, and extreme devotion to one's nation. It is an ideology that promotes sovereignty and resists foreign influence.

What we are seeing unfolding in Ladakh is the opposite of that. It is pseudo nationalism of the sort that only talks big and attacks its own citizens while cowering in the presence of the foreign bully. It is surprising to me that being as political smart as he is, Modi does not grasp the value of resistance here.

It does not matter if we are a poorer, smaller and less powerful nation than China. We cannot be pushed around without resistance as is now happening. The bully wants the victim to not look him in the eye. It makes pushing them around easier.

Modi must realise the value of our unity at this time. Even those who do not like him ('Modi haters') will rally to his call if he says that the country's sovereignty is being threatened by China's aggressive intrusions. The other political fights in our democracy will be put aside and can wait till we see off this immediate and external threat



Aakar Patel

Modi must realise the value of our unity at this time. Even those who do not like him ('Modi haters') will rally to his call if he says that the country's sovereignty is being threatened by China's aggressive intrusions. The other political fights in our democracy will be put aside and can wait till we see off this immediate and external threat



Kent Harrington

LIKE THE LEADING CHARACTER IN A LONG-RUNNING TELEVISION SERIES, NORTH KOREAN LEADER KIM JONG-UN HAS KICKED OFF THE LATEST CRISIS ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA WITH FAMILIAR THEATRICS

SPECTRUM CONSUMER MARKET

Premiumisation: Key play for India

Taponeel Mukherjee

THE PREMIUMISATION TREND IMPLIES THAT INVESTORS AND BUSINESSES ALIKE MUST FOCUS EVEN MORE ON CREATING "PREMIUM" BRANDS

WISDOM CORNER

- The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
- Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to reform (or pause and reflect). MARK TWAIN
- When someone loves you, the way they talk about you is different. You feel safe and comfortable. JESS C. SCOTT

LOL Researching this insect

A prominent Polish scientist conducted very important experiment. He trained a flea to jump upon giving her a verbal command ("Jump!").

In a first stage of experiment he removed flea's leg, told her to jump, and the flea jumped. So he wrote in his scientific notebook: "Upon removing one leg all flea organs function properly."

So, he removed the second leg, asked the flea to jump, she obeyed, so he wrote again: "Upon removing the second leg all flea organs function properly."

Thereafter he removed all the legs but one, the flea jumped when ordered, so he wrote again: "Upon removing the next leg all flea organs function properly."

Then he removed the last leg. Told flea to jump, and nothing happened. He did not want to take a chance, so he repeated the experiment several times, and the leg less flea never jumped. So he wrote the conclusion: "Upon removing the last leg the flea loses sense of hearing."



Sir, India 'taming the wild horse' Pakistan on more than one instance, via diplomacy and military, has brought the latter to its knees. Therefore, it has taken recourse to an indirect, lily-livered, strategy of torturing Indian soldiers or officials. After two Indian diplomatic officers in Pakistan were tormented by that country's ISI, India has downgraded diplomatic ties with it. Pakistan has been asked to cut its High Commission strength in India down to half. Earlier, in May, New Delhi, in a quick move, had rusticated two Pakistani High Commission officers for serious espionage activities. A smarting Pakistan, having lost face on several global platforms regarding its nefarious deals, including in the United Nations, appears flummoxed. It is the same country that expelled India's High Commissioner Ajay Bisaria on India's move on Kashmir. New Delhi's returning 'tit-for-tat' is befitting. It is unfortunate that many 'purists' have gone overboard advocating a 'dialogue' between the two neighbours. Well, people of both countries are yearning for peace. No ordinary citizen wants bilateral confrontation, let alone a war. Yet, Pakistani political leaders' and the military deserve nothing less than contempt. If at all talks have to take place, Islamabad should divorce its terror companions. Isolating Pakistan, a country on the brink of bankruptcy, is a deft move.

Ganapathi Bhat, EMAIL

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

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FOCUS WORLD KIM GOES BACK ON SCRIPT



Having banked his political gains from Trump's fecklessness, Kim is now unambiguously asserting North Korea's status as a nuclear power. To drive that point home, he has promoted the general in charge of the nuclear programm to serve as vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission

US Department of Justice indicted 28 North Korean and five Chinese officials and bankers for (successfully) circumventing the sanctions regime. Since 2014, the indictment alleges, the North's global network of front companies has – with China's help – funneled \$2.5 billion into Kim's nuclear weapons, missile, and high-tech programs.

Kim has been no less consistent in expanding North Korea's massive conventional military capacity. While its military hardware remains far inferior to the US-furnished armor and aircraft across the border, the North has nonetheless managed to upgrade both the accuracy and reach of its weapons.

It has also placed 70% of its 1.1 million-strong army within 60 miles of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), putting South Korea's capital well within its sights. By one estimate, the North could rain down 25,000 artillery rounds on the Seoul metropolitan area – including a major US military compound – in the space of just ten minutes.

To be sure, US and South Korean forces would have a major technological edge in an all-out war on the peninsula. But even a short-lived conflict would be devastating to Seoul, which, with some 25 million people, accounts for half of South Korea's population and 70% of its GDP.

Against this background, Trump's effort to extort South Korea to quadruple its financial support for US forces stationed there is astonishingly irresponsible. Although negotiations to renew the expired US-South Korean cost-sharing pact remain at an impasse, a new stopgap deal at least ends the furlough of 4,000 South Koreans who work at US facilities. But with South Korea temporarily assuming the cost of these salaries, the deal will hardly improve Trump's standing in the eyes of South Koreans.

Kim can take further comfort from the fact that Trump has also been browbeating Japan, demanding that it, too, boost its financial support for US forces within its borders. Though Japan is crucial to South Korea's defense, the two countries have a rocky relationship. Last year, South Korea threatened to pull out of a bilateral intelligence-sharing arrangement before reversing course under US pressure. As in South Korea, most Japanese have no confidence in Trump's handling of international affairs. Such factors inevitably will contribute to diplomatic disarray between the US, South Korea, and Japan, all of

which will benefit Kim.

In addition to undermining US alliances in the region, Trump is also doing Kim a favor by escalating tensions with China, which now will be less inclined to rein in its client state. With China accounting for over 90% of North Korea's trade, Kim has been cultivating a closer relationship with Chinese President Xi Jinping, who visited Pyongyang last June. That meeting and others suggest that China is neither surprised nor particularly concerned about Kim's behavior.

This is not to suggest that Kim has clear sailing ahead. Owing to US sanctions, limited food production, and various reform failures, North Korea faces formidable challenges at home. Following a speech at the Workers' Party of Korea's annual plenum in December 2019, public remarks issued by Kim in February and April suggest that he may have spent the first half of this year focusing on domestic priorities. By forcing the closure of the Chinese border, the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly hurt the North's faltering economy. And the fact that Kim has imposed tougher oversight on implementation of his previous economic reforms suggests that more domestic trouble may be on the horizon.

With or without economic problems, Kim is unlikely to deviate from his family's well-rehearsed oeuvre. Like past performances by his late father and grandfather, his repertoire will continue to feature threats of violence, sensational provocations, and potentially even military incidents like the shelling of South Korean islands a decade ago. All signs indicate more brinkmanship on the part of the North. The leading character in the Korean Peninsula's long-running psychodrama may still be new, but the play remains the same.

The writer, a former senior CIA analyst, served as National Intelligence Officer for East Asia, Chief of Station in Asia, and the CIA's Director of Public Affairs.

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comes rise in India, the premium product need not necessarily be the one considered premium in more developed economies. The ability to pick the point on the demand curve with significant demand and yet create a premium offering will be a critical factor for brands that eventually emerge as winners. Additionally, Indian tastes in a lot of segments are very well defined. For instance, Indian breakfast habits didn't budge much as certain people had expected when breakfast cereals were introduced to India. Primarily, catering products that suit the Indian sensibilities will be essential going forward.

In summary, the trend of premiumisation is one that is bound to happen with gradually rising incomes. The opportunity to create consumer value and business success in India will be immense. A keen eye on the market intricacies in the Indian context will be a vital factor separating the winners from the losers.

The author heads Development Tracks, an advisory firm. You can contact him at taponeel.mukherjee@development-tracks.com.

IAN5

Isolating Pak

Absolutely unfair

Sir, I am very sorry to ventilate this episode to the countrymen regarding the allocation of RGF in the country's annual Budget during the period of our former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, one of the renowned economists in the world. As a homage to the late Rajiv Gandhi and in support of the laudable objectives of the foundation, government has decided to contribute ₹100 crore to the foundation at the rate of ₹20 crore per annum for a period of five years beginning from the current year, the then Finance Minister had said in his Budget speech. The Rajiv Gandhi foundation was established in the memory of the great leader and to promote the ideals and objectives for which he lived and laid down his life, Singh had said. This is a disclosure that came to light as RGF comes under scrutiny following exposes that the Government of China and China Embassy were donors to the foundation. Though the amount could not be disbursed to RGF, it is very sad and unfair, especially because the tax payers' money cannot be squandered away.

Naresh Mandal, BHADRAK

of the day quote

Intensive Care Units (ICU) beds are being ramped up across the national capital for serious patients, while those in the home isolation have been sent pulse oximeters to measure their oxygen levels

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

In an alarming threat to our national security and territorial integrity, China has now occupied our territory up to 18 km inside the LAC, in the Depsang plains, up to the Y-Junction or the bottleneck, as per multiple reports

PALLAM RAJU | CONGRESS LEADER

It seems Congress leaders are spokespersons for China. They only talk against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and never dare to question China

PRALHAD JOSHI | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

One killed

Amaravati: A company official was killed due to Ammonia gas leak from an industrial plant in Andhra Pradesh's Kurnool district on Saturday, police said. The incident occurred at SPY Agro Industries Limited in Nandyal town. Company general manager Srinivas Rao was killed in the mishap. Four others who were also present with him rushed out. All of them were reported safe. Kurnool District Collector G. Veerapandian said the fire services personnel were trying to plug the gas leak.

DMK MLA tests corona positive

Chennai: The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) legislator R.T. Arasu has tested positive for coronavirus and has been admitted for treatment in a private hospital here. The DMK President M.K. Stalin in a tweet Saturday wished Arasu a quick recovery so that he can carry on with his public work. Arasu representing the Cheyyur assembly constituency is the second lawmaker from DMK party to be infected with the coronavirus. The first was DMK legislator J. Anbazhagan who lost his life recently.

CBI to probe cop suicide case

New Delhi: Almost a month after an SHO (Station House Officer) posted at Rajgarh police station in Rajasthan's Churu district committed suicide, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) took over the probe. The CBI registered a case on June 26 on the request of the Rajasthan government. The state government had demanded for a CBI probe on June 6 to investigate the suicide by Vishnu Dutt Vishnoi. The CBI has booked a case against unknown persons to probe the reasons behind suicide of Vishnoi. The body of the SHO of Rajgarh Police station was found hanging at his government residence May 23.

Jawan dies

New Delhi: A 43-year-old Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) official succumbed to the novel coronavirus Saturday taking the total number of deaths in the country's largest paramilitary force to eight, officials said. This is also the 24th death among the five Central Armed Police Forces -- CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP and SSF.

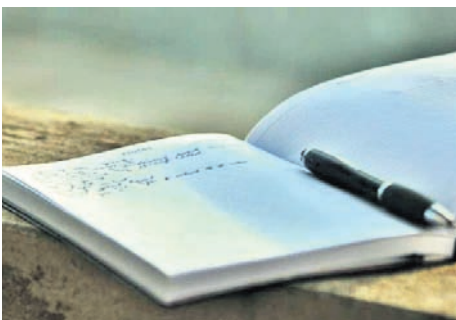


Today we stand at a transformative moment. A pandemic has devastated our globalised economic system. It has affected the way we live. While it is too early to say that the coronavirus has altered our way of life forever, it has reduced humanity's instinctive comfort in the presence of others

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

GOOD NEWS

Kerala has registered over one lakh people becoming literate in the last three years, the Kerala State Literacy Mission claimed Saturday



Huge surge in Covid cases

It took 110 days for coronavirus infections in the country to reach one lakh, while just 39 days more to go past the five lakh-mark. Medical experts have pointed to the ramped up Covid-19 testing, now available more extensively and at a reasonable price, as a big reason for the spike in cases recently

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 27: It took 110 days for coronavirus infections in the country to reach one lakh, while just 39 days more to go past the five lakh-mark. Medical experts have pointed to the ramped up COVID-19 testing, now available more extensively and at a reasonable price, as a big reason for the spike in cases recently.

Six days after recording four lakh infections, India's COVID-19 tally went past the five lakh-mark Saturday with the highest single-day surge of 18,552 cases, while the death toll climbed to 15,685, according to Union health ministry data.

The COVID-19 caseload increased to 5,08,953, while 384 fatalities were recorded in the last 24 hours, the updated figure at 8 am showed. This was the fourth consecutive day when coronavirus infection increased by more than 15,000, while there has been a surge of 3,18,418 infections from June 1 till 27. Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh are the top contributors to the rising tally.



It took 64 days for COVID-19 cases in India to touch the (May 19) one lakh-mark from 100 cases, and another fortnight to cross two lakh cases on June 3. It took 10 days for the tally to touch the three lakh-mark and another eight days for the cases to climb to four lakh. The nationwide lockdown was first imposed on March 25 for 21 days in a bid to contain the spread

of the novel coronavirus. The lockdown was first extended till May 3 and then again till May 17. It was further extended till May 31. The lockdown is now restricted only in containment zones across the country and will continue till June 30. A large number of social, economic, religious and sports activities are currently allowed to function under what the

Ministry of Home Affairs termed as 'Unlock 1'.

After the government initiated the unlock procedure to make-up for the economic cost of the lockdown, the COVID-19 cases started to gallop. Dr. Monica Mahajan, Director, Internal Medicine, Max Healthcare, said it is important to understand the reason for the exponential rise in cases.

The numbers are doubling at such a fast rate due to factors such as the high reproduction number of the virus (the number of cases, on average, an infected person will cause during their infectious period), she said. Also, with the lifting of lockdown norms people's behaviour has changed again as they are not acting as responsibly as before in terms of social distancing, and testing has become more liberal, Mahajan said.

She said the price of the test has come down and test kits are more easily available, so more cases are being detected. Noted city-based lung surgeon Dr Arvind Kumar said definitely a big reason for cases going up is increased testing.

COOLING OFF



Children bathe on a hot day in Amritsar, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

UNDER LENS

ED GRILLS PATEL

The team members were seen carrying files and wearing masks and gloves as precautionary measures against coronavirus spread

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 27: An Enforcement Directorate (ED) team Saturday questioned senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel at his residence in Delhi in connection with the Sandesara brothers money laundering case, officials said.

They said a three-member team reached Patel's home at 23, Mother Teresa Crescent in the Lutyens zone of central Delhi around 11:30 am. The team members were seen carrying files and wearing masks and gloves as precautionary measures against coronavirus spread. Patel's statement is being recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the politicians' purported links with the Sandesara brothers are under the scanner, they said.

The ED had summoned Patel, 70, twice for questioning in the case but the Congress Rajya Sabha MP from Gujarat later cited prevailing COVID-19 guidelines that advises senior citizens to stay indoors in order to remain safe from the pandemic.

The agency then assured the Congress party treasurer that all care will be taken while he is questioned at its office but it was pointed out by his legal team that there are media reports about coronavirus cases being found in the ED Headquarters too.

The agency then told him that they are willing to visit his home as taking the probe forward in the case was important. Subsequently, the time for home visit was fixed and the agency informed Patel that they will send the investigating officer of the case to him for questioning.



Patel has earlier been the political secretary to UPA chairperson and Congress president Sonia Gandhi and considered one of the most powerful persons in the grand old party.

This money laundering case pertains to the alleged ₹14,500 crore bank loan fraud that is said to have been perpetrated by the Vadodra-based pharma firm Sterling Biotech and its main promoters -- Nitin Sandesara, Chetan Sandesara and Deepti Sandesara -- all of whom are absconding. The agency has said that this is a bigger bank scam in volume than the PNB fraud involving diamondaires Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi. The total fraud amount pegged in the PNB case is about ₹13,400 crore.

The Sandesaras are also facing separate probes by the CBI and the Income Tax Department for their alleged nexus with some high-profile politicians and charges of corruption and tax evasion, respectively.

At present, they are stated to be based in Nigeria, from where India is trying to extradite them. The ED registered a criminal case in connection with the alleged bank loan fraud on the basis of an FIR and a charge sheet filed by the CBI.

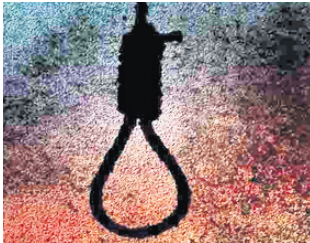
Depression more dangerous than corona in Jharkhand

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ranchi, June 27: The mental depression is proving to be more dangerous than coronavirus in Jharkhand these days. If data of suicides is taken into consideration during lockdown and Unlock 1.0, the average of people committing suicide everyday is 5.5.

According to data of the state government, 449 people have committed suicide in March, April and upto June 25. In June itself 134 people have committed suicide. One person is committing suicide every 4.50 hours. Psychiatrists say that the depression due to lockdown has made deep impact on minds of the people.

"During lockdown and Unlock 1.0 around 1,200 people suffering from



depression have approached our institute. During lockdown we were getting more than 150 phone calls every day from people suffering from depression. There were 20 per cent people who had given up hope to live and wanted to end their life," said a doctor at the Central Institute of Psychiatry here.

Dr Sanjay Kumar Mandal, a psychiatrist of CIP admitted a large number of people ap-

proached the institute during lockdown suffering from depression.

In state capital Ranchi, 55 people committed suicide from April 1 to June 25. Psychiatrists say that economic slowdown, fear of losing jobs, unemployment and other factors caused deep depression among people. The sense of insecurity prompted many people to commit suicide.

"People were locked inside homes during lockdown which led to rise in disputes among family members, and domestic violence witnessed spurt. These factors promoted many people to commit suicide as they were unable to control their emotions. The right counselling within family could have saved many lives" said psychiatrist Ajay Kumar.

Monsoon showers happiness

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 27: Sowing of crops in the current kharif season has gained momentum due to good monsoon. The area under sowing of all kharif crops increased by 104 per cent over the previous year, while the area under oilseeds increased by 525 per cent from the previous year and the sowing of pulses increased by about 222 per cent. The planting and sowing of paddy, the main crop of the Kharif season, has been 35 per cent higher than the previous year.

According to the data released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on Friday, the kharif crops in the crop year 2020-



21 (July-June) have been sown in 315.63 lakh hectare, which is 161.11 lakh hectare or 104.25 per cent more as compared to the same period last year.

So far, paddy has been planted in 37.71 lakh hectare this year, which is 9.35 lakh hectare or around 35 per cent higher than the previous year.

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The area under pulses increased by 13.37 lakh hectare, or 221.72 per cent, to 18.48 lakh hectare from last year. The acreage of tur in pulses has increased by 8.04 lakh hectare to 9.97 lakh hectare since last year. At the same time, area under urad and moong has increased to 2.75 lakh hectare and 5.30 lakh hectare respectively.

Students clueless as Covid hits placements

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, June 27: The COVID-19 crisis is tough for everyone, especially the fresh pass-outs from the world's best known colleges who are clueless on how to pursue their dreams as the virus has turned everything topsy turvy leading to uncertainty about a bright future.

Mormukut Rathore, a hospital-ity student from Jaipur, was lucky to get admission in Glion Institute of Higher Education in Switzerland.

"I went to pursue BBA in Hospitality Management with Specialization in Finance & Hotel Development which was a three and a half year course and was completed this year in February.



Even after spending around ₹1.5 crore on my education, it seems I have nothing in my hand", he says.

Mormukut, however, is lucky to have a family business in hotels. "I am using this time as an opportunity to build a strong foundation at

each of our hotels, and prepare for accelerated recovery when the crisis subsides. On the education side, I have been doing a couple of online courses and learning more," he says.

"The pandemic has challenged the hospitality industry strongly and

some of my placement offers are on hold until further notice while others have been postponed to next year." Another student Pranaav Parth went to New York University to pursue his Bachelors" in Public Policy and Economics. The duration of the course was 4 years.

Although he will complete his course in May 2021, he is worried as most firms have postponed recruitment for the time being. He says, "I am interning with a venture capital firm in Dubai. This is my final summer before graduation which is considered to be the most important professionally since industries like investment banking and consulting have set up recruiting pipelines that hire college students

based on their internship performance. All of those plans have gone awry as firms postponed or cancelled their internship programmes. Although I am happy where I am, there's no option on the horizon."

Student Karni Singh too faces an uncertain future after completing his four-year course in Bachelor of Technology in Automotive Engineering, SRM Institute of Science & Technology, India this June as he has no job in hand. He is now going for higher studies in the upcoming field of electric vehicles to acquire the necessary skills in this field. He has already spent ₹30-40 lakhs on his education but he understands the fact that times are tough.

YASHWANT SLAMS FUEL PRICE HIKE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, June 27: Former Union finance minister Yashwant Sinha Saturday alleged that the Centre is resorting to "profiteering" by increasing fuel prices on a daily basis.

"On one hand, the Centre announced a ₹20-lakh crore package to uplift the economy, while on the other, it "robbed" people who travel by motorbikes, scooters and other vehicles," he said. While diesel rates were hiked for the 21st straight day on Saturday, petrol prices have been increased on 20 occasions in three weeks.

"There are occasions when the price hike in petrol and diesel (prices) becomes imperative. But I can tell you on the basis of my experience that it is nothing but sheer profiteering in today's circumstances," Sinha said at a press conference here.

"It is unfortunate and saddening to know that the government is resorting to profiteering," he said. Sinha said it is well known that "crude oil price is soft in the international market".

Saturday, the price of petrol was hiked by 25 paise per litre and diesel by 21 paise per litre, taking the cumulative increase in rates in three weeks to ₹9.12 and ₹11.01, respectively.

June 7, oil companies had restarted revising prices in line with costs after ending an 82-day hiatus during which they adjusted steep excise duty hikes by the government against the fall in benchmark international oil rates.

WOMAN HELD FOR ELOPING WITH GIRL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guna (MP), June 27: A 20-year-old woman was arrested for allegedly eloping with her minor partner and "marrying" her at Guna town in Madhya Pradesh, police said Saturday.

The matter came to light, when a resident of Budhe Balaji area approached the Kotwali police station on Monday with a complaint that his 17-year-old daughter had gone missing, additional superintendent of police T S Baghel said.

On investigation, it was found that a relative from a village Shivpuri district, who was living with the family, was also missing, he said. A team was sent to the village and the duo was caught on Friday, the official said, adding that the woman had married the minor, who claimed that she had eloped of her own volition.

of the day quote

Most of the categories of employment mentioned at the event are facing problems. Self-employed people are in tremendous crisis due to lack of direct financial support from the government. The condition of small and medium scale industries is so bad that it is estimated that 62 per cent of MSMEs will cut jobs and 78 per cent will cut wages

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

Punjab is moving towards "bankruptcy" and "lagging behind in development" under its regime and the ruling party has "failed" to fulfill its key promises of waiving complete farmers' loan and jobs for unemployed youths

NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR | UNION AGRICULTURE MINISTER

Suppose RGF returns the Rs 20 lakh, will PM Modi assure the country that China will vacate its transgression and restore status quo ante

P CHIDAMBARAM | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Five ex-Cong MLAs join BJP

Ahmedabad: Five former Congress MLAs from Gujarat, out of the total eight who had resigned as legislators in March and June- ahead of the Rajya Sabha elections- joined the BJP Saturday. Former Congress MLAs Jitu Chaudhary, Pradyumnasinh Jadeja, J V Kakadiya, Akshay Patel and Brijesh Merja joined the BJP in the presence of party's state unit president Jitu Vaghani and other senior leaders. Of these five former MLAs, Patel, Merja and Chaudhary had resigned as legislators earlier this month, soon after the Election Commission announced June 19 as the new date for the Rajya Sabha election in the state.

2 cops suspended

Palamu (Jharkhand): Two policemen were suspended in Jharkhand's Palamu district Saturday on the charge of accepting bribes, a police officer said. The authorities took action against the two after they allegedly accepted Rs 2,000 as bribe from a motorcyclist who was riding without wearing a helmet, Superintendent of Police Ajay Linda said.

Jawan injured

Raipur: A CISF personnel was injured after suspected Naxals attacked him with a stone and decamped with his walkie-talkie in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh Saturday, police said. The Naxals also took away his and his colleague's mobile phones, police said. The incident took place in the morning when two staffers of the CISF, which guards the mines area of the National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) in Kirandul and Bachel areas of the district, were out on routine patrolling, Dantewada Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava said.

Girl raped

Balia (UP): A man has been arrested in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Balia district for allegedly raping an eight-year-old girl by luring her with the offer of a toffee, police said Saturday. Station house officer of Revti police station Shailesh Singh said, "On June 22, the eight-year-old girl had gone to a shop to buy some items, where a person lured her by offering a toffee and later raped her."



Covid-19 is spreading rapidly into new parts of the country. The Government Of India has no plan to defeat it

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

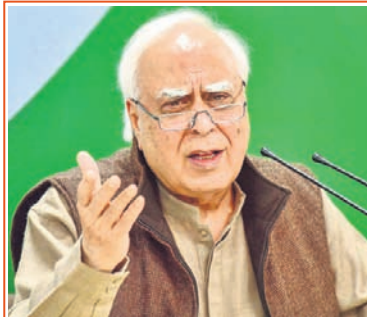
LAC ISSUE: CONG TARGETS PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 27: The Congress Saturday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to publicly condemn China for its "brazen incursions" into Indian territory and urged the government to take "strong and quick action" to resolve the Line of Actual Control (LAC) issue.

Senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal said at a virtual press conference that the prime minister should address the nation and promise that anyone capturing Indian territory would be pushed back. He said the entire nation and the entire opposition would stand behind him and his promise. Alleging that the last six years have seen the biggest diplomatic failure under the Modi government, the former Union minister said "some quick action" should be taken to resolve the LAC issue with China.

"Some quick action is required," he said seeking early resolution of the border dispute with China, while noting that diplomacy and economic blockade with China would not work. "Yes, the action should be strong (against China). The quality, nature and the timing of that action has to be decided by the gov-



SIMMERING TENSION

■ The Congress leader alleged that China has erected tents and structures near PP-14 in Galwan Valley, the place where 20 Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives

■ Alleging that the last six years have seen the biggest diplomatic failure under the Modi government, the former Union minister said "some quick action" should be taken to resolve the LAC issue

ernment," he said when asked what "quick action" he was asking for. Sibal said it was for the government to decide and not the opposition.

The Congress leader alleged that China has erected tents and structures near PP-14 in Galwan Valley, the place where 20 Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives. He added that satellite imagery also reflects construction of new black top roads by Chinese forces on the Galwan riverbed, erection of large numbers of military tents and presence of bulldozers and other heavy equipment. "What is our government doing about it? The PM must clear the air and condemn these brazen Chinese incursions," he said. Asking why the prime minister does not openly and publicly condemn the "brazen acts of infiltrations, in-

cursions and occupation" of Indian territory by China, he said, "I want the PM to publicly condemn China. We will support the prime minister."

Sibal said the situation is such that the PM's statement that nobody intruded into India is being used by the Chinese globally. "We want the prime minister to address the nation and promise that if anyone has captured Indian territory, we will push them back. If you say so, the public and the entire opposition will stand behind you and your promise," he said.

There has been a standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in the eastern Ladakh area for over a month and a bloody clash took place between them on the night of June 15 in the Galwan Valley, resulting in the death of 20 Indian soldiers.

India rejects Pakistan's plan

The Kartarpur Corridor was temporarily closed March 16 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that originated in China's Wuhan city

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 27: The government Saturday rubbished Pakistan's "readiness" to reopen the Kartarpur Corridor for Indian Sikhs, by calling it an attempt to create "a mirage of goodwill".

Taking to Twitter, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Saturday, announced: "As places of worship open up across the world, Pakistan prepares to reopen the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor for all Sikh pilgrims, conveying to the Indian side our readiness to reopen the corridor on 29 June 2020, the occasion of the death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh." The corridor was temporarily closed March 16 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that originated in China's Wuhan city. Official sources in New Delhi said that Pakistan is trying to "create a mirage of goodwill" by proposing to reopen Kartarpur Corridor on June 29, at the short notice of two days, while bilateral agreement provides for information to be shared by India with Pakistan side at least



seven days before the date of travel. This would need India to open up the registration process well in advance, the sources said. Besides, Pakistan has not built the bridge on their side across the flood plains of the Ravi river despite having committed to it in the bilateral agreement. With the advent of monsoon, the sources said, it would need to be evaluated whether pilgrim movement is possible through the corridor in a safe and secure manner. Official sources said cross border travel has been temporarily suspended as part of measures to prevent and contain the spread of coronavirus.

"Further view would be taken in consultation with health authorities and other stakeholders concerned," an official said. The 4.2 km corridor links Dera Baba Nanak town in Gurdaspur district with Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara in Shakargarh tehsil in Narowal district of Pakistan.

India and Pakistan in October 2019 signed an agreement to operationalise the Kartarpur Corridor to allow Indian pilgrims a visa-free visit to the holy gurdwara, believed to have been built on the site where Guru Nanak died in the 16th century, and located some 4 km inside Pakistan.

Covid: Green signal to dexamethasone

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 27: Dexamethasone, an inexpensive and widely used steroid, was included in the treatment protocol for COVID-19 patients in moderate to severe stages of illness by the Union health ministry Saturday.

The updated 'Clinical Management Protocols for COVID-19' advises the use of dexamethasone, which is already used in a wide range of conditions for its anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressant effects, as an alternative choice to methylprednisolone for managing moderate to severe cases of COVID-19.

Keeping pace with the evolving knowledge about COVID-19, especially in terms of effective drugs, the change has been made after considering the latest available evidence and expert consultation, the health ministry said.

Union Health Secretary Preeti Sudan has also forwarded the updated protocol to all states and Union Territories to make necessary arrangements for availability and use of the new protocols and the dexamethasone at the institutional level also, it said.

The health ministry had June 13 also allowed the use of antiviral drug remdesivir for restricted emergency use.

CHINA WILL HAVE TO PAY HEAVY PRICE: EXPERTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 27: China will have to pay a "heavy price" for decades for resorting to aggressive military behaviour towards India in eastern Ladakh as it will isolate the country globally, strategic affairs experts said Saturday.

They said the economic cost of China's misadventure in the last couple of months in eastern Ladakh and South China will be "massive" as it has "exposed" Beijing's "real face" when the entire world is fighting coronavirus.

The experts have also referred to China's tariff war with the US,

growing bickering with Australia on trade-related issues and the fast deteriorating situation in Hong Kong. "China has made a huge mistake by resorting to aggressive military behaviour in eastern Ladakh. By triggering the standoff when the world is fighting the coronavirus pandemic, China has exposed itself globally," former Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Gurmit Singh said.

"The cost for China will be huge. It will be heavy. It will keep paying the cost for several decades for killing Indian soldiers in Galwan valley on June 15. China has lost its goodwill in India and elsewhere," he



added. Referring to brutal attacks on Indian soldiers in the Galwan valley, he said the action has reinforced the view that China's People's Liberation Army is "just a political"

force and that it does not conform to military standards.

Former Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Subrata Saha too said China is getting itself isolated by its

J'KHAND EXTENDS LOCKDOWN

The Jharkhand government has decided to extend the lockdown till July 31 to contain the spread of coronavirus in the state. All schools and religious places will remain closed during this period



UTTER SILENCE



Security personnel stand guard at a closed market in Dibrugarh, Saturday. Authorities have announced a complete lockdown

PTI PHOTO

CORONA CURE CLAIM

Another jolt to Ramdev

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, June 27: In another jolt to yoga guru Ramdev, an FIR has been lodged here against him, Patanjali Ayurved CEO Acharya Balkrishna and three others for allegedly making misleading claims that the herbal medicine company has found a cure for COVID-19 called Coronil.

The complaint was filed at Jyoti Nagar police station in Jaipur Friday. Avnish Parashar, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), south, Jaipur, said: "Ramdev, Acharya Balkrishna, Balbir Singh Tomar, Anurag Tomar and Anurag Varshney, were booked under Section 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code and relevant sections of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954, as per the FIR lodged by an advocate Balbir Jakhar."

Two of the accused including Balbir Singh Tomar and Anurag Tomar, are the chairman and the director of the Jaipur-based NIMS University.

The fifth accused, Varshney, is a scientist at Patanjali Ayurved. Jakhar said the accused have endangered the common people's lives by making false claims of finding a COVID-19 vaccine as they neither informed the Rajasthan government nor the Centre about the clinical trials of Coronil.

Patanjali Ayurved, Tuesday launched Coronil tablet and Swasari vati medicine claiming that they can cure COVID-19 within seven days. However, the AYUSH ministry expressed unawareness



► The complaint was filed at Jyoti Nagar police station in Jaipur Friday

► Patanjali Ayurved, Tuesday launched Coronil tablet and Swasari vati medicine claiming that they can cure COVID-19 within seven days

about the development and Patanjali was stopped from advertising the medicine within a few hours after its launch.

Patanjali earlier also claimed that the two Ayurveda-based medicines have shown 100 per cent favourable results during clinical trials on COVID-19 patients except those on a life support system. The clinical trials were reportedly held in NIMS Jaipur.

While Ramdev claimed making a thorough clinical case study on patients admitted at NIMS, its Chairman, B.S. Tomar on the other hand said, "No clinical trial in our hospital was made for the drug as there was no serious case of patients admitted. Only 100 asymptomatic patients in our hospital were given a few ayurvedic medicines under the Patanjali banner. We did not ask for medicine to cure coronavirus but had only these ayurvedic immunity boosters who helped recovery of asymptomatic cases faster by 35 per cent."

NADDA HITS OUT AT SONIA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 27: BJP President JP Nadda Saturday lashed out at Congress president Sonia Gandhi for the alleged fund gate involving the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF), labelling it as "sin".

"I want to ask Soniji not to try and avoid the original questions under the garb of Corona or the situation at China border," said Nadda. Asking 10 pointed questions to Gandhi, Nadda started with, "The nation of 130 crore people wants to know about the deeds done by the Gandhi family, what work you did while in governance and how you betrayed the people." Nadda alleged cast insinuation while he went on using, "What was the need to be a part of RCFP? How did India's trade deficit with China rise from \$1.1 billion to \$36.2 billion?"

In a no holds barred attack on the Congress Chief, the BJP President questioned, "What is the exact relationship between INC and the Communist Party of China? What is the tacit understanding? What is the signed and unsigned MoU? The country wants to know."

Raising the issue, Nadda asked, "The RGF worked in close association with China Association for Internationally Friendly Contact. This organization is a vehicle used by the Central Military Commission of China. The purpose of this Commission is to infiltrate and influence the voices of leaders of other countries." CAIFC was dubbed as a front for intelligence gathering in an August 2018 US report.

Nadda also raked up the issue of money being "diverted from PM National Relief Fund to RGF between 2005-2008". Turning the table against Rahul Gandhi who once coined the term "suit boot ki sarkar" to corner Modi government for its alleged pro-business outlook, the BJP Chief asked bluntly, "The RGF took hefty donations from major Indian corporates, but their rhetoric was for the poor people. Wasn't this quid pro quo of the purest form?"

Digging deeper into the PMNRF funding RGF, Nadda claimed, "Who is the auditor of the PM National Relief Fund? The auditor was Thakur Vaidyanathan and Aiyar Co. This was founded by Mr Rameshwar Thakur; who happened to be Union MoS of Finance. He was Rajya Sabha MP for two terms and was governor of four states."

of "fight to finish" conflict. He also referred to China's deepening trade crisis with Australia.

The Indian and Chinese armies are locked in a bitter standoff in multiple locations in eastern Ladakh for the last six weeks, and the tension escalated manifold after 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a violent clash in Galwan valley on June 15.

Following the Galwan vally clashes, the Army has sent thousands of additional troops to forward locations along the Line of Actual Control in various sectors including in Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim.

of the day quote

We have been clear that anyone who assaults the police or any of our emergency service workers who keep us safe should feel the full force of the law



BORIS JOHNSON | UK PRIME MINISTER

A global initiative to speed up the development and production of COVID-19 tests, vaccines and treatments will require more than \$30 billion over the next year



TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WHO CHIEF

Balochistan is on the brink of a rupture and will be uncontrollable if another Baloch leader is assassinated



ASIF ALI ZARDARI | FORMER PAKISTAN PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Israel strikes Hamas facilities

Jerusalem: Israeli warplanes carried out air strikes on Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip in response to a rocket attack, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said Saturday. Hours after two rockets were fired into southern Israel, IDF aircraft conducted an airstrike late Friday against a rocket manufacturing workshop and a weapons manufacturing facility, Xinhua news agency quoted the IDF as saying in a statement. There were no immediate reports from the Gaza Strip on the extent of damage or injuries.

Two killed in Illinois shooting

Chicago: Two people were killed and one critically injured after an employee of a coffee-dispenser manufacturer opened fire at the company's warehouse in Springfield, the capital of the US state of Illinois, police said. The shooting took place at the Bunn-O-Matic plant Friday morning. The suspect, Michael Collins (48), then fled the scene and was later found dead in his car of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, with two handguns besides his body.

3 dead in Mexico City attack

Mexico City: A group of gunmen opened fire on Mexico City Chief of Police Omar Garcia Harfuch and his bodyguards, injuring him and killing two officers and a civilian, according to authorities. The Mexican capital city's police said that Garcia Harfuch was admitted to the hospital for surgery after sustaining multiple injuries in the attack Friday, reports Xinhua news agency. The attack occurred at 6.35 local time a.m. as the police chief was travelling in a residential neighbourhood to the west of the city.

2.5mn Yemeni kids facing hunger

Sanaa: Around 2.4 million children below the age of 5 in Yemen were facing hunger and malnutrition due to a shortage of humanitarian aid funding amid the coronavirus pandemic, according to the Unicef. In a statement Friday, the organization said that within the next six months around 30,000 Yemeni children younger than five years could suffer from severe and potentially "life-threatening" acute malnutrition, taking the number of overall malnourished children in this age category to 2.4 million.



Obviously the African-American community has suffered from racism for a very, very long period of time

ANTHONY FAUCI | WHITE HOUSE HEALTH ADVISOR

UN MARKS 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHARTER SIGNING

The UN Charter "brought rules and hope to a world in ruins" Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told a virtual ceremony, commemorating 75 years since the organisation's foundational text was signed



'Headley cannot be extradited to India'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, June 27: Mumbai terrorist attack convict David Headley cannot be extradited to India, but Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman co-conspirator Tahawwur Rana faces extradition, a US attorney has told a federal court while opposing his bail plea. Rana, 59, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headley, was recently rearrested June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed. He is a declared fugitive in India.

According to the federal prosecutors, between 2006 and November 2008, Rana conspired with Headley, also known as "Daoud Gilani", and others in Pakistan to assist Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Harakat ul-Jihad-e-Islami, both US-designated terrorist organisations, to plan and carry out the Mumbai terrorist attacks. Pakistani-American LeT terrorist Headley was involved in plotting the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. He was made an approver in the case, and is currently serving a 35-year prison term in the US for his role in the attack.

The US is yet to file India's request for Rana's extradition, but is expected to do it soon. It is evident that the offences for which Rana was tried in the Illinois court will differ from the Indian offences



HEADLEY WAS MADE AN APPROVER IN THE CASE, AND IS CURRENTLY SERVING A 35-YEAR PRISON TERM IN THE US FOR HIS ROLE IN THE ATTACK

mentioned in the complaint.

Rana in his defence has argued that US decision not to extradite his co-conspirator, Headley, to India is inconsistent and bars his extradition. However, Assistant US Attorney John J Lulejian told a federal court in Los Angeles Friday that unlike Rana, Headley immediately accepted responsibility for his conduct and pleaded guilty to all of the charges in the Superseding Indictment.

"Because Headley fulfilled the required terms, the plea agreement established that Headley would not be extradited to India. Rana's situation is different because he neither pleaded guilty nor cooperated with the United States." "As a result, he is unable to avail himself of the benefits afforded to Headley

through his negotiated plea. Thus, he cannot complain that he faces extradition, while his co-defendant does not," the US attorney said.

Rana's bail application is due for hearing next week. Early this week, his attorney told the court that the 26/11 convict is not a flight risk and has proposed a \$1.5 million bond for his release.

"Rana should be released on a robust bond: secured by approximately \$1.5 million in property pledged by family and friends and under the supervision of his daughter, Lemaan Rana, a matriculating medical student and Ph.D. candidate," Amy Karlin, the Interim Federal Public Defender, said in the court submission on behalf of Rana. India seeks his arrest on a number of offences, including the

MUMBAI ATTACK

Pakistani-American LeT terrorist David Headley was involved in plotting the 2008 Mumbai terror attack along with Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman co-conspirator Tahawwur Rana

Rana, 59, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headley, was recently rearrested June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack

conspiracy to commit murder, conspiracy to commit forgery for the purpose of cheating, and murder under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). He is sought for his role in 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai.

The US attorney urged the court to continue his detention pending the extradition proceedings to India. Describing Rana as a flight risk, the attorney said that no matter what bond package he offers, Rana poses an unacceptable flight risk.

If the US extradites Rana to India and he is convicted of the charges, he may be eligible for the death penalty. Given what is at stake, Rana has an extreme incentive to flee and avoid facing these extradition proceedings, Lulejian said.

Biden surges ahead of Trump in some polls



A New York Times/Siena College poll released this week shows Biden with a strong, 14-point advantage, at a time when Trump is still fighting the pandemic, as well as dealing with the economy

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, June 27: Democratic presumptive presidential nominee Joe Biden was ahead of President Donald Trump in some polls, but experts have said the winner of the 2020 race to the White House was still far from a done deal.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and recent civil unrest, Trump has come under severe criticism on a number of fronts.

A New York Times/Siena College poll released this week shows Biden with a strong, 14-point advantage, at a time when Trump is still fighting the pandemic, as well as dealing with the economy, badly hit by the nationwide lockdown.

The lockdown triggered by the pandemic has put millions of Americans out of work, and the jobless rate now stands at levels not seen since the Great Depression nearly 90 years ago.

Many Americans still support Trump, as his administration rolled back years of red tape and regulations that slowed economic growth. But now, the thriving econ-

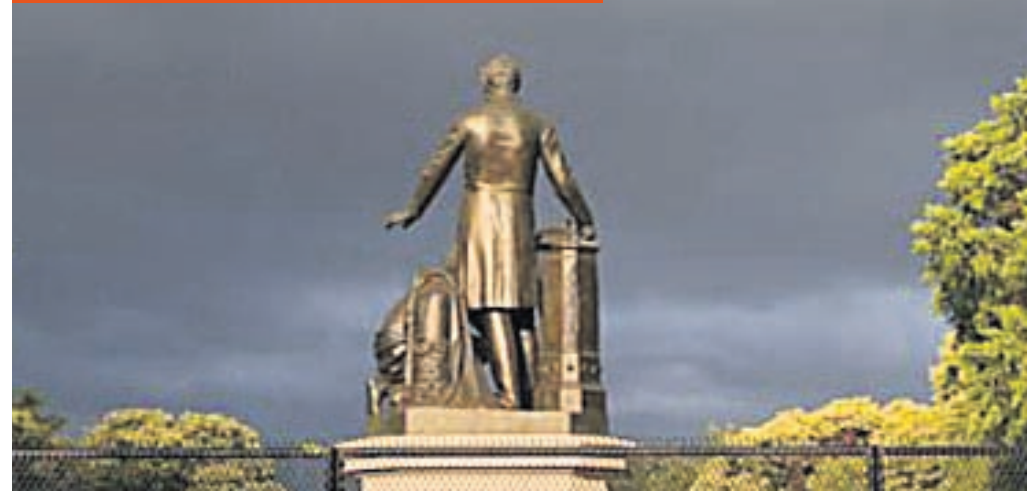
omy with a constant growth and a low level unemployment rate in the past recent years has been erased, and the president is racing against the clock to get the economy moving forward again in the next crucial months before November's elections.

While Trump has maintained the economy will bounce back in a so-called "V shape", many economists were sceptical. Moreover, Trump's personal style may be a turn-off to many voters, although his supporters love his outspoken and sometimes outlandish persona.

"The emotional basis for Trump's campaign is: things are bad, this is the fault of bad people... Such people are trying to stop me from fixing what's wrong. Join me and I'll crush them and then I'll make things better," Clay Ramsay, a senior research associate at the Center for International and Security Studies at University of Maryland, told Xinhua.

However, there are several X factors, one of which is that polls showing Biden ahead might not predict the general election.

COLOURS OF DISCONTENT



A rainbow appears over a statue of Abraham Lincoln ahead of a racial inequality protest calling for the removal of the statue at the Emancipation Memorial at Lincoln Park near the US Capitol in Washington

REUTERS PHOTO

Nepal-India border issue figures in NCP meeting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, June 27: Nepal-India border dispute and a proposed \$500 million US grant assistance to Kathmandu were among the major issues discussed during the ongoing meeting of the ruling Nepal Communist Party's powerful Standing Committee here Saturday, sources said.

Nepal last week completed the process of redrawing the country's political map through a Constitutional amendment, incorporating three strategically important Indian areas.

India has termed as "untenable" the "artificial enlargement" of the territorial claims by Nepal after its Parliament unanimously approved the new political map of the country featuring Lipulekh,

Kalapani and Limpiyadhura areas which India maintains belong to it.

On Saturday, most of the speakers of the 48-member Standing Committee deliberated on the Nepal-India border issue and described the government's recent move to redraw the country's political map incorporating Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura through Constitution amendment as "measures to consolidating Nepal's national unity and sovereignty", according to sources.

They, however, raised questions on the government's inability to hold talks with India on the border issue. Speaking at the meeting, Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali claimed that India did not show any interest in holding a dialogue with Nepal on the border issue despite Kathmandu's repeated

efforts, according to senior leader of the NCP Ganesh Shah, who was also present at the meeting.

"Nepal seeks to resolve the border dispute through political dialogue and will continuously initiate for talks to resolve the matter through dialogue," Gyawali said. Even Indian television channels and print media are highlighting the border issue, he told the meeting.

India has said that Nepal's action violates an understanding reached between the two countries to resolve the boundary issues through talks. "This artificial enlargement of claims is not based on historical fact or evidence and is not tenable. It is also violative of our current understanding to hold talks on outstanding boundary issues," spokesperson in the MEA Anurag Srivastava said earlier this month.

'Russia offered bounties to radicals to kill US soldiers'

A report said the US determined months ago that a Russian military intelligence unit linked to assassination attempts in Europe had offered rewards for successful attacks last year

REUTERS

Washington, June 27: US intelligence has concluded that the Russian military offered bounties to Taliban-linked terrorists in Afghanistan to kill American troops and other coalition forces, the New York Times reported.

Citing officials briefed on the matter, the Times said the United States determined months ago that a Russian military intelligence unit linked to assassination attempts in Europe had offered rewards for successful attacks last year: Islamist terrorists, or armed criminal elements closely associated with them, are believed to have collected some bounty money, the newspaper said.

The White House, the CIA and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence declined requests from Reuters for comment on the Times report.

US President Donald Trump has been briefed on the intelligence finding, the Times said. It said the White House has yet to authorize any steps against Russia in response to the bounties.

Of the 20 Americans killed in



combat in 2019, the Times said, it was not clear which deaths were under suspicion. After nearly 20 years of fighting the Taliban, the United States is looking for a way to extricate itself from Afghanistan and to achieve peace between the US-backed government and the terrorist group, which controls swathes of the country.

On February 29, the United States and the Taliban struck a deal that called for a phased US troop withdrawal. US troop strength in Afghanistan is down to nearly 8,600, well ahead of a schedule agreed with the Taliban, in part because of concerns about the spread of the coronavirus, US and NATO officials said in late May.

Boeing 737 MAX test flight likely next week

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

New York, June 27: US regulators are getting close to undertaking a test flight of Boeing's grounded 737 MAX and could schedule the key step for as soon as next week, two sources said.

The long-delayed test flight by the Federal Aviation Administration is a critical step in recertifying the plane for service but the exact timing remains fluid.

The plane has been grounded globally since March 2019 following two deadly crashes.

Boeing has upgraded software for a flight handling system that was quickly identified as a major factor in crashes of Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines planes that together claimed 346 lives.

But the recertification of the jet has been delayed by subsequent issues identified up by air safety regulators.

"The team is making progress toward FAA certification flights in the near future," an FAA spokesman said Friday.

"The FAA is reviewing Boeing's documentation to determine whether the company has met the criteria to move to the next stage of evaluation. We will conduct the certification flights only after we are satisfied with that data."

24 Islamic State militants killed in Iraq

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Baghdad, June 27: A total of 24 Islamic State (IS) militants were killed in a security operation and airstrikes in Salahudin province in north of Baghdad, the Iraqi military said Friday.

The Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS), backed by the Iraqi and international coalition aircraft, carried out a two-day operation against IS hideouts in the mountainous area of al-Khanouga in the northern part of the province, the CTS said in a statement.

The operation resulted in the killing of 16 IS militants in the first day and eight others in the second, the statement said without exactly specifying the days. The Iraqi and coalition airstrikes destroyed a number of IS hideouts and several caves and tunnels, where the militants were holed up.

The operation came as the extremist IS militants have intensified their attacks on the security forces, including Hashd Shaabi forces, and civilians in the formerly IS-controlled Sunni provinces, resulting in the killing and wounding of dozens.

The security situation in Iraq has been improving since Iraqi security forces fully defeated the IS militants across the country.

of the day quote

The export orders are on a medium performance-level now but the order-enquiry for the next quarter is good. On the whole, the market situation of textiles is gradually recovering amid the massive impact of COVID-19

PRABHU DAMODHARAN | CONVENOR, ITF

Once accounts are red-flagged, it is imperative for banks to also then conclude it either ways in a reasonable period of time to ensure that appropriate actions are initiated. Timely intervention will enable banks to protect and ring-fence good business within the account

SANJAY DOSHI | FINANCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY LEADER, KPMG IN INDIA

Analysis shows that an extended period of lockdown, along with the increase in the number of (COVID-19) infected cases, is restraining the return of supply side normalcy

ARUN SINGH | CHIEF ECONOMIST, DUN & BRADSTREET INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Sheer profiteering by Centre: Sinha

Patna: Former Union Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha Saturday alleged that the Centre is resorting to "profiteering" by increasing fuel prices on a daily basis. On one hand, the Centre announced a ₹20-lakh crore package to uplift the economy, while on the other, it "robbed" people who travel by motorbikes, scooters and other vehicles, he said. While diesel rates were hiked for the 21st straight day Saturday, petrol prices have been increased on 20 occasions in three weeks.

NHPC net profit dives 60 pc

New Delhi: State-owned hydro power giant NHPC reported over 60 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to ₹238.64 crore in March quarter, mainly due to lower revenues. Its consolidated net profit was ₹602.91 crore in the fourth quarter previous fiscal, the company said in a regulatory filing. Total income was ₹2,382.36 crore in the period under review, compared to ₹2,450.08 crore in the year-ago period. Consolidated net profit for 2019-20 stood at ₹3,324.72 crore, compared to ₹2,835.79 crore in 2018-19.

GM wants judge removed

Detroit: General Motors asked a federal appeals court Friday to overturn an order that requires its CEO to meet with the head of Fiat Chrysler by next week to try to settle a lawsuit related to corruption by union leaders. GM also asked the appeals court to remove US District Judge Paul Borman from the case. GM is suing crosstown rival FCA alleging that it got an advantage by paying off union leaders to reduce labour costs during contract talks.

ITC Q4 profit rises 9.3%

New Delhi: FMCG-to-hospitality major ITC has reported a 9.28% growth in its consolidated net profit for the January-March quarter at ₹3,926.46 crore. During the same quarter of the previous fiscal, FY 2018-19, the company had reported a net profit of ₹3,592.80 crore. For the full fiscal year basis, the company's profit after tax grew by 21.4% to ₹15,136.05 crore, aided by reduction in corporate income tax rates during the year.



Atmanirbhar Bharat does not mean that nothing will be imported but that India will have the capacity to produce globally competitive goods and services

UDAY KOTAK | PRESIDENT, CII

US-based Carlyle buys 20% stake in Piramal Pharma for over ₹3,700 cr

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 27: US-based global investment firm Carlyle Group Inc has agreed to buy a 20% stake in the pharmaceutical unit of Indian conglomerate Piramal Enterprises Ltd for about \$490 million (over ₹3,700 crore), the companies said in a statement Saturday.

The capital raise will accelerate Piramal Pharma's organic and inorganic growth plans, the Ajay Piramal-led Piramal Enterprises and Carlyle Group said in the joint statement.

"... CA Clover

Intermediate II Investments, an affiliated entity of CAP V Mauritius Ltd, an investment fund managed and advised by affiliated entities of The Carlyle Group Inc has agreed to invest fresh equity capital for a 20 per cent stake in Piramal Pharma Ltd..." it said.

The transaction values the pharma business at an enterprise value (EV) of USD 2.775 billion (over ₹20,980 crore), with an upside component of up to USD 360 million (over ₹2,720 crore) depending on the company's FY'21 performance, the statement said.

"Based on the EV (excluding the upside component), exchange rate



This fresh growth investment into our pharma business will be used as growth capital for the pharma businesses to expand capacity across our sites as well as to tap attractive acquisition opportunities within and outside India

NANDINI PIRAMAL | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PIRAMAL ENTERPRISES

and pharma net debt as on March 31, 2020, the estimated equity capital investment for Carlyle's 20% stake in Piramal Pharma would amount to USD 490 million (over ₹3,700 crore)," it added.

The final amount of equity investment will depend on the net

debt, exchange rate and performance against the pre-agreed conditions at the time of closing of the deal.

The transaction is expected to close in 2020, it added.

"This is an affirmation of the strength of our ability to build new, attractive and scalable businesses with a significant runway for continued organic growth and opportunities for consolidation," Piramal Enterprises Chairman Ajay Piramal said.

This infusion of funds "will further strengthen our balance sheet and provide us with a war chest for the next phase of our strategy," he added.

Asked about the stake Piramal Enterprises will hold in the company post the transaction, Ajay Piramal told PTI it will have 80 per cent stake.

On whether Piramal Enterprises Ltd (PEL) will list Piramal Pharma going forward, he said: "We have publicly stated in the past, that in the medium term we will separate the two PEL businesses. This is a step closer towards that endeavour."

PEL has two businesses - pharma and financial services.

Piramal Enterprises Executive Director Nandini Piramal said, "This fresh growth investment into our pharma business will be used as growth capital for the pharma businesses to expand capacity across our sites as well as to tap attractive acquisition opportunities within and outside India.

FOREX RESERVES FALL BY OVER \$2BN

India's foreign exchange reserves fell by \$2.078 billion during the week ended June 19. According to RBI's weekly statistical supplement, the overall forex reserves decreased to \$505.566 billion from \$507.644 billion reported for the week ended June 12. India's forex reserves comprise FCAs, gold reserves, SDRs and reserve position with the IMF



Requested Comm Min to allow export of PPE kits: Gadkari

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 27: MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari Saturday said he has requested the Commerce Ministry to allow export of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits, as the country is producing it in large quantities.

Addressing a webinar on the occasion of International MSME Day, Gadkari, who also holds the portfolio of Road Transport and Highways, said about two months ago that India imported PPE kits from China via a special aircraft but now the country's industry and MSMEs were manufacturing lakhs of PPE kits per day.

"Now, already I have requested the commerce ministry" to allow export of PPE Kits from India, the minister said, adding that it was being considered. Stressing that PPE has export potential, he said that people are getting orders for PPE kits from Dubai, Canada, the US and European countries.



Recently, Indian apparel export industry body AEPG had also urged the government to lift the ban on exports of PPE kits as its production has reached 8 lakh units per day.

Gadkari also launched the report of the GAME National Task Force for MSMEs, entailing industry wide recommendations to boost the units and entrepreneurial dynamism in India.

RBI extends enhanced borrowing limit under MSF till September 30



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 27: Amid the ongoing economic woes created by the coronavirus pandemic, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to extend the enhanced borrowing facility provided to the banks to meet their liquidity shortages till September 30.

The RBI, as a temporary measure, had increased the borrowing limit of scheduled banks under the marginal standing facility (MSF) scheme from 2% to 3% of their Net Demand and Time Liabilities (NDTL) with effect from March 27, 2020.

Under the MSF, banks can borrow overnight funds at their discretion by dipping into the Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR).

This relaxation, which was granted till June 30, 2020, has now been extended till September 30.

"On a review, it has now been decided to extend this enhanced limit till September 30, 2020," the RBI said in a circular.

Banks may continue to access overnight funds under the MSF

The RBI has increased the borrowing limit of scheduled banks under the MSF scheme from 2% to 3% of their Net Demand and Time Liabilities with effect from March 27, 2020

against their excess SLR holding, it added. The marginal standing facility rate currently stands at 4.25%.

The RBI has also extended the relaxation on the minimum daily maintenance of the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) at 80% for a further period of three months till September 25, 2020.

The minimum daily maintenance of the CRR, March 27, was reduced from 90% of the prescribed CRR to 80% till June 26, 2020.

This was done in view of the continuing of hardships faced by banks in terms of social distancing of staff and consequent strains on reporting requirements.

No logic in bringing co-op banks under RBI lens: OSCB prez

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 27: The Government of India Saturday brought cooperative banks under the regulatory framework of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) by amending the 70-year-old Banking Regulation Act through a Presidential Decree. President Ram Nath Kovind promulgated the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020 which will ensure helping co-operative banks to access the capital.

The new ordinance seeks to protect the interests of depositors and strengthen cooperative banks by improving governance and oversight by extending powers already available with the RBI.

However, Odisha State Co-operative Bank (OSCB) claimed why there was a need to bring cooperative banks under regulatory framework of RBI. The president of OSCB Akshaya Kumar Mohanty said, "We majorly provide loans to farmers, and we hardly gets repayment



AKSHAYA KUMAR MOHANTY
PRESIDENT, OSCB

from these lonees. And the deposits are also safe with us. Therefore, we don't calculate why cooperative banks were brought under RBI framework. There is no logic in the new ordinance."

Instead, Mohanty said, urban cooperative banks should be brought under regulatory framework of RBI. "Urban cooperative banks offer loans to other firms rather than farmers. If these banks would come under

the regulation, the interests of depositors would be secured," he said.

There are 17 central co-operative banks and just one state co-operative bank in Odisha. "OSCB has set a target to disburse Kharif crop loans of amounting ₹9,000 crore to farmers till September 30, 2020. Co-operative banks (Central level + OSCB) in Odisha have deposits of over ₹10,000 crore," said the President.

The amendments do not affect existing powers of the State Registrars of Co-operative Societies under the state co-operative laws.

The Ordinance by the President also amends Section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act, to enable making of a scheme of reconstruction or amalgamation of a banking company for protecting the interest of the public, depositors and the banking system and for securing its proper management, even without making an order of moratorium, so as to avoid disruption of the financial system.

IDBI Bank to sell stake in insurance JV to partners

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 27: IDBI Bank Saturday said its board has approved the sale of more than half of the bank's 48 per cent stake in IDBI Federal Life Insurance Co Ltd (IFLI) to current joint venture partners for ₹595 crore.

In a regulatory filing, IDBI Bank said it will sell 23% stake to Ageas Insurance International N.V and 4% to Federal Bank.

After the deal, the Belgian insurer Ageas stake in IFLI will increase to 49%, while Federal Bank's stake would go up to 30%. Post stake sale, IDBI Bank will have 21% stake in IFLI.

"The board of directors, at its meeting held Friday, June 26, 2020, has approved to sell IDBI bank's stake in IDBI Federal Life Insurance Company Limited (IFLI) to the extent of 23% to Ageas and 4% to Federal Bank at a combined value of about ₹595 crore," it said.

BIZ BUZZ

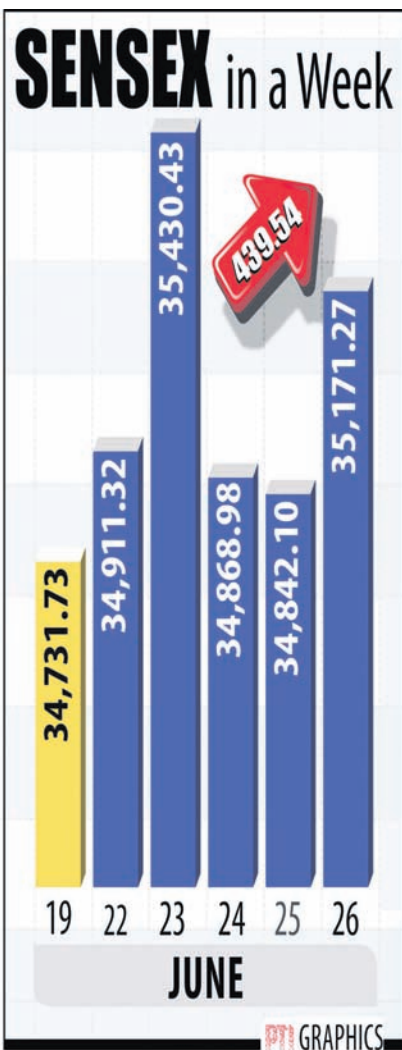
Thai low-cost airline NokScoot shuts down



Bangkok: Thailand's low-cost carrier NokScoot has announced that it was shutting down due to mounting economic losses in recent years that became unsustainable after a complete halt in operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. NokScoot was established as a joint venture between Singaporean airline Scoot and Thailand's Nok Air six years ago, reports Efe news. In a statement released Friday, Scoot which owns 49% stake in NokScoot announced that the low-cost airline's Board of Directors had approved the company's liquidation, although the decision has to be passed in a general meeting of shareholders within two weeks. The Singapore-based airline said that NokScoot had accumulated losses ever since it was founded in 2014 due to intense competition in its sector and the situation had grown worse due to the global health crisis.

Hitachi, Microsoft ink multi-year deal

Tokyo: Hitachi and Microsoft have announced a multi-year strategic alliance to accelerate the digital transformation of the manufacturing and logistics industries across Southeast Asia, North America and Japan. Hitachi will integrate its industry-leading solutions such as Lumada, and its Internet of Things (IoT)-ready industrial controllers HX Series, with the Microsoft cloud platform, leveraging Azure, Dynamics 365 and Microsoft 365 to help businesses increase their workforce productivity and operational efficiency. The first joint solutions will be available in Thailand in July, the companies said in a statement. "Through this collaboration with Microsoft, we will be able to accelerate our customers' digital transformation and continue to deliver social, environmental and economic value," said Jun Abe, Vice President and Executive Officer, CEO of Industry and Distribution Business Unit, Hitachi.



Oil imports see biggest drop in over a decade

IN THE PERIOD OF APRIL-MAY 2020-21, INDIA'S OIL IMPORT BILL HAS FALLEN TO A MEAGRE \$5.4BN AS AGAINST \$19.3BN IN THE SAME PERIOD A YEAR AGO

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 27: India is on its way to make its biggest savings in the oil import bill this year with COVID-19 related disruptions and sluggish demand conditions squeezing down the country's crude payments to a fourth of previous year's level in the first two months of current fiscal.

In the period of April-May 2020-21, India's oil import bill has fallen to a meagre \$5.4 billion as against \$19.3 billion in the same period a year ago. Apart from lower oil prices, the quantum of imports in the two month period has also fallen to 31 million tonne (MT) from 39 MT last year.

The fall has been more stark in the month of May this year when the oil import bill stood at a mere \$2.3 billion as compared to \$9.5 billion last year. In fact, India's crude



oil import in May fell 22.6% to 14.6 MT, the biggest single month drop since 2005, as both fuel demand and refinery production was hit by COVID-19 disruptions.

Interestingly, between April and May, global crude oil prices have

bounced back 60% from a level of average \$20 a barrel in April to over \$30 a barrel in May. But compared to May, 2019's average crude price of over \$70 a barrel, the current price are still at less than the halfway mark.

SLUGGISH DEMAND

■ The fall has been more stark in the month of May this year when the oil import bill stood at a mere \$2.3bn as compared to \$9.5bn last year

■ India's crude oil import in May fell 22.6% to 14.6 MT, the biggest single month drop since 2005

"The conditions this year are ideal for India to bring its oil import bill close to the halfway mark of FY'20 levels. But it will depend on how oil producers respond to current disruptions and how long the current coronavirus crisis continues and controls the demand conditions. Oil price have risen this month to over the \$40 mark, but could rise further if a concern about the prolonged presence of

the virus gets re-established," said an oil sector expert.

As per the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell's (PPAC) provisional estimates, India's oil imports bill is expected to settle just over \$100 billion mark in FY'20. If it falls closer to \$50 billion mark in FY'21, the government would be able to cover its increased spending to pump up the economy in Covid times easily. Already taxes on petroleum products have been jacked up to mobilise additional resources for these unplanned expenditures.

While India imported crude oil worth \$112 billion in FY'19, its import bill has transited substantially lower in the previous three financial years with oil import bill standing at mere \$64 billion in FY'16 when oil prices slipped on over supplies, especially with the entry of US shale oil.

PORTUGUESE BACK IN FORM AS JUVENTUS CRUSH 10-MAN LECCE 4-0



CR7 lifts Juve

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rome, June 27: Cristiano Ronaldo is back in form. He set up two goals and converted a penalty to help Juventus beat 10-man Lecce 4-0 Friday and boost their chances of claiming a record-extending ninth successive Serie A title.

Ronaldo had struggled since football resumed in Italy, but his return to form pushed Juventus seven points clear of second-placed Lazio, which hosts Fiorentina Saturday.

“What’s important is that we continue to get results,” Juventus coach Maurizio Sarri said when asked about their increasing advantage at the top of the table.

“We struggled at the beginning and then we managed to get going at the end of the first half. But I saw a good mentality because even when the match was over, we still continued to attack.”

Lecce remained in the relegation zone but is level on points with Genoa, which occupies the last position of safety.

Lecce started brightly but its chances of getting anything from the match diminished when defender Fabio Lucioni was shown a straight red card for a last-man challenge on Rodrigo Bentancur, leaving the visiting side in 10 men for nearly an hour.

“Until the sending off the match was balanced,” said Lecce coach Fabio Liverani, who also bemoaned the number of players he is missing through injury.

“Maybe if we had had every player available I could have made different moves. At the moment I have a maximum of 14 players available. But I am sure that with a bit of fortune, getting some players back, we can have our say in matches against direct rivals.”

Juventus scored all of its goals after the red card and in the second half, but struggled to break down the visitors. Ronaldo had several chances but sent an overhead kick past the left post and somehow headed over an empty goal from two yards out.

However, the Portugal international set up Juve’s opener eight minutes after the break as he cut the ball back to Paulo Dybala who curled into the roof of the net from the edge of the area.

Ronaldo then got on the score-sheet himself with his second penalty in as many matches after he was tripped by Luca Rossettini.

Ronaldo also set up Juve’s third in the 83rd minute, back-heeling the ball for Gonzalo Higuain to score shortly after coming off the bench. Matthijs de Ligt headed in a Douglas Costa cross two minutes later to cap a great night for Juventus.

Gerrard pays tribute to captain Henderson



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Liverpool, June 27: Former Liverpool skipper Steven Gerrard paid a heart-warming tribute to current captain Jordan Henderson after the latter guided the club to a historic Premier League title.

Liverpool were crowned champions of the league after Manchester City lost to Chelsea 1-2 at Stamford Bridge. This meant that the defending champions couldn’t overhaul Liverpool’s point tally with

seven matches to go and the Reds were crowned league winners.

This is Liverpool’s first top-flight title in 30 years and their maiden Premier League crown. Even Gerrard, who is widely regarded as the best captain in Liverpool’s history, failed to achieve what Henderson managed to do. Gerrard acknowledged Henderson’s feat and shared an image of the two together on Instagram and his post read: “Couldn’t of (sic) passed it to a better person. Proud of you, mate.”

Suarez lauds former teammate Jordan

Liverpool: Barcelona striker Luis Suarez has labelled Jordan Henderson as ‘one of the best captains’ in Liverpool’s history while expressing his delight at seeing his former club win the Premier League. “It’s a pleasure for me to speak with you and the Liverpool fans. I am so excited as well because I played for a few years there and I have so many friends there,” Suarez told Liverpoolfc.com. Henderson is the only player remaining at Anfield since Suarez’s time on Merseyside – which concluded in the summer of 2014. “When I saw last year (him winning) the Champions League, I was so happy for him. Why? Because as some people know he had some problems with his dad and he had really good moments and some bad moments in Liverpool,” the 33-year-old said. “When he lifted the trophy, the dream is done but this season I (will be happy to) see him lifting the (Premier League) trophy because he is a really good person. I speak sometimes with him and I said to him, ‘You have a really good chance this season’ and he is so excited. We watch some (Liverpool) games when we can and we see that Jordan, he is the captain from the midfield. He (Henderson) speaks a lot and for his teammates this is so important, when they have confidence with the captain. For me, Jordan is one of the best captains in Liverpool’s history,” Suarez added.

Not being part of 1992 WC glory hurts Waqar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lahore, June 27: Former Pakistan speedster Waqar Younis has recalled the heartbreaking moment in 1992 when he missed the World Cup in Australia due to an injury.

The fast-bowler had to miss the showpiece event Down Under because of a stress fracture in his back right before the tournament. Waqar had to watch his team lift the trophy from home and he has stated it wasn’t a happy moment for him.

“That (tournament) was not the best time for me. I got injured. I broke my back, got a stress fracture in my back, just before the World Cup started,” Waqar said

during the ‘Cricket Badger Podcast’ as per Cricket Pakistan.

“I was on tour, with the team, and in one of the warm-ups something went wrong in my back and I couldn’t really walk after that World Cup for a long time.

“That was probably the worst time because I was (at the) top of my game, I was bowling really well. And me being in the team, Pakistan were favourites to win that World Cup. Pakistan still won the World Cup, but missing out on that glory, was probably a not-so-happy moment for me,” he added.

Waqar also spoke about how his teammates made him feel like he was part of the squad after their return to Pakistan with trophy. Despite

that, Waqar stated he had a mixed-bag feeling, considering he couldn’t play any part in team winning the prestigious cup.

“I was very, very happy. I still remember the day they came back to Pakistan, they landed at Lahore, I was there, I was there to receive them with the chief minister of the time,” Waqar recollected.

“It was heartening as well as heart-breaking. It was a mixed feeling, but I was more happy. They recognised me that I missed out – they lifted me up and put me up on the truck, and gave me all the respect and love that I missed out on. I was hurting, in a way, but also it was very, very pleasing,” he added.



Ojha opens up on Kumble

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 27: Former India spinner Pragyan Ojha has said that spin great Anil Kumble had contrasting personalities on and off the pitch. Ojha, who took 113 Test wickets in his brief five-year international career, said that Kumble was as aggressive on the field as he was calm off it.

“When he was on the ground, Kumble used to be very aggressive, both with the opponent and with his own players,” Ojha told ‘Wisden’ in an interview. “Off the field, you won’t be able to relate. I was taken aback, ‘Am I talking to the same person who I saw on the ground?’ He used to compete hard, but off the field, he was very soft-spoken.”

Ojha played his entire international career under the captaincy of MS Dhoni. His time with the Indian team coincided with the old guard of Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman phasing out and the arrival of the likes of Virat Kohli



and Rohit Sharma.

“Sachin paaji used to be very calm, composed. He never used to give any reaction. He had a different approach. Anil bhai had a different approach. Dhoni and Kohli, they want to win games for the country, but their approach is completely different,” he said.

“Someone like VVS Laxman would listen to Suprabhatam and then go and bat. That is his aggression. Someone like a Kohli will be listening to loud, Punjabi music, showing body language – not gestures – and he likes to show he is in your face. It is not wrong in any way, it was just different.”

PUJARA GRATEFUL TO DRAVID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 27: India’s Test batting mainstay Cheteshwar Pujara cannot describe in words the influence that Rahul Dravid has had on his life but says he will always remain grateful to him for teaching the importance of switching off from cricket.

Often compared to Dravid, who was considered the ‘Wall’ of Indian cricket, Pujara said he is thankful to Dravid for teaching him how to keep personal and professional lives separate.

“He helped me understand the importance of switching off from cricket. I had the same thought, more or less, but when I spoke to him, it gave me a lot of clarity about it and I was sure of what I needed to do,” he told ‘ESPNCricinfo’.

“I also saw in county cricket how they keep personal and professional lives separate. I value that advice a lot. Many people consider me to be focused. Yes, I am focused, but I also know when to switch off. There is life beyond cricket.”

In his illustrious international ca-

reer, Dravid amassed 13288 runs in 164 Tests and 10889 runs in 344 ODIs. He also captained India in 79 ODIs, winning 42 of them, which includes the world record of 14 successive wins while chasing.

“I cannot say in one line what Rahul bhai means to me. He has always been an inspiration, and will remain one,” Pujara said.

His mental fortitude and batting technique is often compared to Dravid but Pujara said ‘despite my enchantment with him’ he never tried to ‘copy him’.

“There is a similarity in our games, but that’s not because of my fascination with him. That came mainly through my experiences with Saurashtra, where I learned that scoring a hundred alone isn’t enough, you have to carry your team,” he said.

“That is how I learned responsibility – it is about helping my team to raise a big total, and for that I ought to attach importance to my wicket. I learned that from my junior cricket days with Saurashtra, which was a weaker team in domestic cricket.”



Viswanath recalls hurtful past



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 27: Former Indian batsman Gundappa Viswanath Saturday revealed that he was ‘very hurt’ after his distinguished career came to an abrupt end following a poor Test series against Pakistan in 1982-83.

Along with Sunil Gavaskar, he was one of the mainstays of the Indian battling line-up through the ‘70s, playing some fine knocks against the best pace attacks of that era.

However, a poor outing in a six-Test series against Pakistan cut short his career as he was dropped for the tour of the West Indies and subsequently could not make it to the 1983 World Cup squad.

“I was very, very hurt when I was dropped. At that time, in all the three times (innings) I took wrong decisions. It is part of the game. But in that (situation) in two innings, if I had scored well, they would not have removed me,” Viswanath said on ‘Star Sports 1 Kannada’ show

‘Diggajara Danthakathe’. “Kapil’s captaincy was not announced but it was almost known to everyone.”

Known for his legendary square cuts and flicks, Viswanath, the first superstar batsman from Karnataka to play for India, played a pivotal role in the state’s Ranji Trophy triumphs.

He quickly rose from domestic to international cricket because of his batting prowess. He came to the limelight under the captaincy of Erapalli Prasanna for Karnataka and under Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi for India.

“Thanks to Prasanna who pushed for me initially. It helped me play for the state. Pataudi was playing for Hyderabad in the Ranji Trophy. As a part of Karnataka team, we had to play against him. He (Pataudi) saw me closely there.

“For a match playing for President’s XI, New Zealand had come in 1968 and I got a chance to play Chandu Borde was the captain and we had a good partnership,” he said.

“He (Chandu Borde) recommended me to Pataudi and that’s how I came into prominence much earlier than what I expected,” the 71-year-old Viswanath recalled.

He scored a century on debut against Australia in Kanpur in 1969, the first of the 14 hundreds he would go on to score during an illustrious career spanning over 14 years while fetching 6000 runs.

Roberts slams Hetmyer for his ‘no’ to Eng tour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 27: West Indies pace legend Andy Roberts has slammed batsman Shimron Hetmyer for opting out of the England tour because of health concerns amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Along with senior pro Darren Bravo, Hetmyer pulled out of the tour of UK and forced the Roger Harper-led selection committee to make some last-minute changes.

“They would have played an integral part of the batting. As much as we don’t like the way Hetmyer has been playing, he is one of the batsmen for the future. But somebody has to get into his head and let him realise that you can’t score runs sitting in the pavilion,” Roberts said in an episode on Michael Holding’s YouTube channel.

Holding, Roberts’ equally illustrious pace bowling partner through the 1970s and ‘80s, had called the two batsmen’s move ‘unfortunate’.

According to Roberts, the challenge for most West Indies batsmen was they ‘don’t really train and practise enough to work the ball into gaps. We believe in boundaries’.