



POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Actor Donal Bisht says she is yet to witness the ugly side of television industry

LEISURE P2



RHEA REQUESTS CBI PROBE

Actor Rhea Chakraborty has called for a CBI probe into Sushant Rajput's death

TWO STATES P7



CONSULAR ACCESS

Pakistan has provided consular access to Indian prisoner on death row Kulbhushan Jadhav

INTERNATIONAL P10

Twitter's security in doubt as hackers target famous users

TWITTER'S STATEMENTS CONFIRM FEARS THAT THE SERVICE ITSELF HAD BEEN COMPROMISED, SAY SECURITY EXPERTS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, July 16: Unidentified hackers broke into the Twitter accounts of technology moguls, politicians, celebrities and major companies Wednesday in an apparent Bitcoin scam.

The ruse included bogus tweets from former President Barack Obama,

Democratic presidential front-runner Joe Biden, Mike Bloomberg and a number of tech billionaires including Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and Tesla CEO Elon Musk.

Celebrities Kanye West and his wife, Kim Kardashian West, were also hacked. The fake tweets tweets offered to send \$2,000 for every \$1,000 sent to an anonymous Bitcoin address.

There is no evidence that the owners of these accounts were targeted themselves. Instead, the hacks appeared designed to lure their Twitter followers into sending money to an anonymous Bitcoin account.

The Biden campaign, for instance, said that Twitter's integrity team "locked down the account within a



few minutes of the breach and removed the related tweet." The FBI said it was aware of Twitter's security breach, but declined further comment.

In a tweet, Twitter noted that it was aware of a "security incident impacting accounts on Twitter." The San Francisco company said it is investigating and promised an update shortly. It did not reply immediately to requests for comment.

The apparently fake tweets were all quickly deleted, although The Associated Press was able to capture screenshots of several before they disappeared. The security problem was severe enough for Twitter to warn that many of its more than 166 million daily users might be unable to tweet or reset their passwords while the company tried to lock things down.

Among the political figures targeted, the hack mostly appeared to target Democrats or other figures on the left, drawing comparisons to the 2016 campaign. US intelligence agencies established that Russia engaged in coordinated attempts to interfere in those US elections through social media tampering and various hacks, including targeting the various cam-

paigns and major party organisations.

The hack might also be a simple demonstration of Twitter's weak security controls as the US heads into the 2020 presidential election, a contest in which the service is likely to play an influential role.

The Bitcoin account mentioned in the fake tweets appears to have been created Wednesday. By the end of the day, it had received almost 12.9 bitcoins, an amount currently valued at slightly more than \$114,000. At some point during the day, roughly half that sum in bitcoin was withdrawn from the account. Bezos, Gates and Musk are among the 10 richest people in the world, with tens of millions of followers on Twitter. The three men are worth a combined \$362 billion.



Sachin Pilot takes Congress to court



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, July 16: Sachin Pilot and 18 other dissident leaders Thursday moved the high court, challenging the notices from the Rajasthan Speaker over a Congress move to disqualify them from the state Assembly.

But as the matter was taken up for hearing by Justice Satish Chandra Sharma, their advocate Harish sought time to file a fresh petition. The judge granted them time to draft a new petition. The matter will now be heard by a larger, division bench.

Congress chief whip Mahesh Joshi, who had written to the Speaker seeking the MLAs' disqualification, also approached the court, asking to be heard before it passes any order. The 19 MLAs were sent notices Tuesday by the Speaker after the Congress complained that they had defied a party whip to attend two Congress Legislature Party meetings.

The Pilot camp, however, argues that a party whip applies only when the assembly is in session.

In its complaint to the Speaker CP Joshi, the

HC defers hearing

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan High Court has deferred the plea of the 18 MLAs led by Sachin Pilot against their disqualification from the Assembly, as the Pilot camp appealed to amend the plea. The petition was filed by PR Meena, an MLA from Pilot group on behalf of 18 other MLAs who were slapped notice for not attending two CLP meetings called recently.

Congress sought action against Pilot and the other dissidents under paragraph 2(1)(a) of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution.

The provision disqualifies MLAs if they "voluntarily" give up the membership of the party which they represent in the House. The Congress said in the letter to Speaker that the Supreme Court has "unequivocally held" in the past that the provision comes into effect when the conduct of an MLA leads to this inference.

In court, advocate Harish Salve argued that the MLAs wanted to challenge the Constitutional validity of the notices and needed some time to file it afresh. Among those sent notices are Vishvendra Singh and Ramesh Meena, who were sacked along with Pilot from the state Cabinet after their rebellion against Ashok Gehlot.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



My worry is not the decreasing tax collection, but your inability to save democracy by raiding our opponents!

Man moves around with severed head

Kalinganagar: Police arrested a man who was roaming near Duburi here carrying the severed head of a woman in his hand Wednesday evening. Kartik Behera (24) had allegedly beheaded Nandini Purty (60) of Chhatara village under Danagadi police outpost on suspicion of practicing sorcery. Sources said when Kartik's cousin Sanatan fell ill. The family members took him to Nandini to get him cured. After having a look at Sanatan, she said his days were numbered. When Sanatan breathed his last Wednesday, Kartik suspected Nandini did black magic on him and swore to avenge his cousin's death. Wednesday he killed Nandini with an axe.

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
SENSEX	36471.68	▲ 419.87
NIFTY	10740.00	▲ 121.80
DOLLAR	75.29	▲ ₹0.09
EURO	85.87	▼ ₹0.20
GOLD	₹49,005	▼ ₹154
SILVER	₹52,960	▼ ₹ 98

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	33.0°C	33.2°C
MIN	25.0°C	23.5°C
Humidity	97%	83%
Rainfall	0.6mm	2mm
Forecast		
Generally cloudy sky		

14-day lockdown in 4 dists

The lockdown has been imposed in Ganjam, Khurda, Jajpur and Cuttack districts and Rourkela Municipal area from tonight

POST NEWS NETWORK

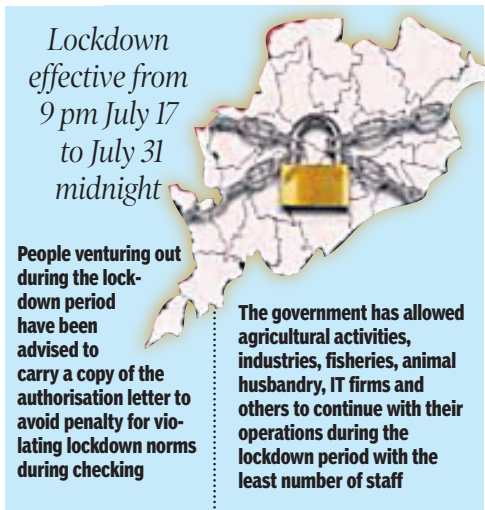
Bhubaneswar, July 16: In view of the rising cases of COVID-19 in certain areas of the state, the Odisha government Thursday re-imposed 14-day lockdown in four districts of the state and Rourkela Municipal limits to contain the spread of the disease.

Addressing a press meet through video-conferencing, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy announced the government's decision. The lockdown has been imposed in Ganjam, Khurda, Jajpur and Cuttack districts. The lockdown will come into effect from 9 pm July 16 and will remain in force till July 31 midnight.

"We decided to impose the lockdown to contain the disease and use the opportunity to do enhance monitoring and surveillance of the cases. During this lockdown, all shops, commercial establishments, offices and institutions shall remain closed, while mobility of people will be restricted," Tripathy said, seeking cooperation from one and all.

The Chief Secretary said that only essential services such as grocery shops, medicine shops and healthcare institutions will be allowed to open. People in emergency services will be allowed to venture out during the period.

The government has allowed goods vehicle to move freely during the period, but barred public transport – except those ferrying passengers from rail-



way stations, airports and bus stations.

The lockdown guidelines claim that shops selling vegetables, grocery and milk would remain open only between 6am and 1pm. "Home delivery of food, groceries, vegetables, egg, fish, meat and other essential items by restaurants and aggregators such as Zomato, Swiggy, OPOLFED, OMFED, Chilika Fresh will also be allowed," according to the lockdown norms.

The government has, however, allowed agricultural

RESTRICTIONS

WHAT WILL REMAIN OPEN

- Grocery shops
- Vegetable shops
- Selected government offices
- ATM machines
- Emergency workers
- Hospitals and Chemist shops
- Home delivery of foods and other products
- e-commerce deliveries

WHAT WILL BE CLOSED

- All shops
- Commercial establishments
- Private vehicles
- Dining in restaurants
- Public transport (except for stations, airport)
- Eateries and dhabas
- Educational institutions

activities, industries, fisheries, animal husbandry, IT firms and others to continue with their operations during the lockdown period with the least number of staff.

"Please carry a copy of the authorisation letter from the office while traveling during the lockdown, as the enforcement authorities will scrutinize the documents during checking," Tripathy said.

The government said that those violating the norms will be penalised. "Any person violating these norms will be liable for prosecution in accordance with the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005. Besides legal action under Section 1BB of the IPC and other legal provisions such as Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 can be initiated against the violators," Tripathy said.

Telemedicine service at 41 hospitals soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: With a view to provide doctor consultation without visiting hospitals, the state government has decided to start telemedicine service at 41 government-run hospitals from July 20, Health Minister Naba Das told the media here Thursday.

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, various government hospitals have closed down their OPD units causing immense sufferings to the patients who have been forced to go to medicos sitting under trees or elsewhere.

The facility will start in all 30 district headquarters hospital (DHH), seven government medical colleges, Ispat General Hospital in Rourkela, Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar, Acharya Harihar Regional Cancer

Centre in Cuttack and Sishu Bhawan also in Cuttack, Das said.

Plasma Therapy commences

Meanwhile, the state government Thursday commenced plasma therapy for the treatment of COVID-19 patients at a hospital in Cuttack, an official said.

The procedure was conducted on a 48-year-old patient at the Ashwini Hospital for the first time in the state, technical advisor to the health department Dr Jayant Panda said. "The patient has been administered B-positive plasma," he said.

The state government had earlier announced that the plasma therapy would also be introduced in the SUM Hospital and the Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences in Bhubaneswar.



Students wearing protective face masks clap along instead of singing during a music class at Takanedai Daisan elementary school in Funabashi, east of Tokyo, Thursday

India announces air travel bubbles with US, France

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: India has established individual bilateral bubbles with France and the US that will allow airlines of each country in the pact to operate international flights, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Thursday, adding that similar arrangement with Germany and the UK will soon be permitted.

Air France will be operating 28 flights between Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Paris from July 18 to August 1, the minister said at a press conference, adding that American carrier United Airlines will be flying 18 flights between India and the US from July 17 to July 31.

"They (United) are flying a daily flight between Delhi and Newark and a thrice-a-week flight between Delhi and San Francisco," Puri noted. The minister said India is planning to establish a bubble with the UK soon under which there would be two flights per day between Delhi and London.

"We have got a request from Germans also. I think the arrangement with Lufthansa is almost done...We are processing that request," Puri said. "Now we have many demands for air bubbles, but we need to be careful. We should permit that many only that we can handle," the minister noted.

From India, Air India will be operating flights to France and US under these bubbles. An air bubble is a bilateral arrangement with a set of regulations and restrictions in which the carriers of the two countries can operate international flights.

Disengagement process in eastern Ladakh intricate: Army

THE CORPS COMMANDERS HELD 15-HR-LONG NEGOTIATIONS IN CHUSHUL ON THE INDIAN SIDE OF THE LAC FROM 11 AM TUESDAY TO 2 AM WEDNESDAY, COVERING VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE COMPLEX DISENGAGEMENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: China and India are committed to "complete disengagement" of troops, and the process is "intricate" that requires "constant verification", the Indian Army said Thursday after the fourth round of marathon military talks on de-escalation of the situation in eastern Ladakh.

The Army said senior commanders of the Indian and Chinese military reviewed the progress on implementation of the first phase of disengagement and discussed further steps

for "complete disengagement".

The Corps commanders held 15-hour-long negotiations in Chushul on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) from 11 AM Tuesday to 2 AM Wednesday, covering various aspects of the complex disengagement process including withdrawal of thousands of troops from the rear bases within a specific time frame.

"The senior commanders reviewed the progress on implementation of the first phase of disengagement and discussed further steps to ensure complete disengagement," Army



spokesperson Col Aman Anand said in a statement.

"The two sides remain committed to the objective of complete disengagement. This process is intricate and requires

constant verification. They are taking it forward through regular meetings at diplomatic and military level," he added.

The formal process of disengagement of troops began

INDO-CHINA STAND-OFF

July 6, a day after a nearly two-hour telephonic conversation between National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on ways to bring down tension in the area. Doval and Wang are designated special representatives for boundary talks.

On the fourth round of Corps commander-level talks, Col Anand said the engagement was consistent with the consensus reached between the special representatives of India and China July 5 to discuss complete disengagement.

The Indian delegation was

led by Lt Gen Harinder Singh, the Commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps, while the Chinese side was headed by Major General Liu Lin, Commander of the South Xinjiang military region.

"Rebuilding mutual trust after the June 15 incident will take time. Therefore, speedy disengagement may be difficult to achieve. More talks at military level would be needed to achieve complete disengagement," a senior official familiar with the details of the negotiations told this news agency.

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You may find yourself in a precarious position today, says Ganesha. You may feel challenged and swim against the current, which will be counterproductive. Nothing may seem to work out. Taking a break will ease the stress at such a time.

TAURUS
Almost as if crafted by Cervantes himself, you might wake up today feeling passionate and quixotic. Make up and make overs may be on the cards as you will have the urge to be groomed. Once you are done without yourself, you will shower others with attention, says Ganesha.

GEMINI
Even though it is for your own benefit, you will spend the day safeguarding the sentiments of others. Not too uncharacteristic, but unusual nonetheless. For most part of the day, you will be away from your family, mostly on a trip for business or leisure purposes.

CANCER
The workaholic Bull will have more on their plate than they can chew. They will be under so much work pressure that their otherwise robust shoulders may wilt under pressure.

LEO
Ever been surprised at your own abilities? Today you shall be, says Ganesha. With the perfect blend of amicable gestures and lack of inimical actions, you are poised to become the cynosure of all occasions.

VIRGO
Children will ring in applause and praises – in the classroom and off it too! Processing logic and reasoning will improve too. Ganesha asks you to keep calm and enjoy the joy ride, irrespective of anything that happens during the day.

LIBRA
Everyone has a dream, but only few have the fortune to realise them. Be among the lucky ones today as you see your dream project materialise and take its first steps towards a successful future. But all good things have humble beginnings.

SCORPIO
Ganesha predicts that you shall work towards building a better future. But do not expect radical or dynamic changes. Cruise control is the best way to go for now, says Ganesha. Patience in itself will reap rich benefits.

SAGITTARIUS
Murmurs of discontent will reach your ears, especially from those very near. But if you go about pleasing one and all, you may not defuse the bomb completely. Exercise caution, and a lot of patience, says Ganesha. Your tolerance will not only help you overcome the problem, but also help you in addressing dissent in your cadres.

CAPRICORN
The chances of you meeting financial success are few, but they are there nonetheless, says Ganesha. If you really want to improve your account balance and settle all the burgeoning debts, focus on what all needs to be done, and get it done without delay. You will make merry later in the day and will enjoy the company of your loved ones.

AQUARIUS
Today is a day of communication and associations. While at a family gathering, you will enjoy chatting nineteen to the dozen! But at work, you may be left teaching, explaining, negotiating, co-ordinating and arranging meetings. A productive but draining day, says Ganesha.

PISCES
Compromise is the name of the game when it comes to relationships, and you are adept at it. You realise the importance of losing an argument to win over a heart, and do so with panache. Indeed, this is an area where others emulate you, says Ganesha.



CARREY FEELS ZELLWEGER WAS HIS 'LAST GREAT LOVE'

Actor Jim Carrey says actress Renee Zellweger was the love of his life. He dated the *Case 39* actress for a year after meeting her in 2000. Now, while talking to Howard Stern on SiriusXM, Carrey said Zellweger was very special to him, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.

DONOVAN NARRATES DOCU-FILM ON EVEREST

Actor Tate Donovan has lent his voice for a documentary, *Expedition Everest*. The film is about the journey of a team of international scientists, climbers and storytellers to the top of the world's highest peak.



Hrithik's selfie leaves fans impressed

Mumbai: Hrithik Roshan made Thursday morning bright for fans, with a dazzling Instagram selfie and a one-word caption.

"Morning," he wrote on a new image that highlights the superstar's hazel-green eyes and a designer beard.

"Wow..so hot," a user commented.

"This picture reminds me of Kareena's dialogue of 'good looks, good looks and good looks' from *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*," another one wrote.

Friends in the film industry were impressed, too.

Actress Preity Zinta wrote: "Wow"

"What a lovely picture," actor Kunal Kapoor posted.

Hrithik is currently spending time with his sons and former wife Sussanne Khan at his home in Mumbai.



'YET TO WITNESS UGLY SIDE OF TV INDUSTRY'

New Delhi: Actress Donal Bisht has been in the TV industry for a while, but she says she is yet to witness its ugly side.

Known for shows like *Dil Toh Happy Hai Ji* and *Ek Deewana Tha*, Donal is set to feature in a musical web series that will highlight the struggles faced by budding and independent artistes in the music industry.

Asked if she would like to act in a series that showed the ugly side of the TV industry, she said: "Yes, if it spreads awareness for the upcoming talent then why not? There were films made in the past which were based on the

same concept but different industries were highlighted in it. If something interesting comes up regarding the TV industry then I would definitely like to be a part of it. But honestly, I am yet to witness the ugly side as I have not faced any of it in my career."

Meanwhile, she will be seen in musical web series *The Socho Project*.

"I am playing a diva. She is a pop star, and still wants to achieve more. She knows the nerve of the audience and works towards it accordingly," said Donal.



Payal pledges for organ donation

Mumbai: Actress Payal Ghosh has pledged to donate her organs after she lost a friend who was suffering from a kidney ailment and there were no donors available.

"I pledge to donate my organs once I am no more. I requested my family to give my organs once I am dead. It's great to donate so that they can save other lives. I lost a friend today. She was suffering from a kidney ailment and because of the lockdown, she could not get a donor," Payal said, adding that our organs can

help others lead a good life when we are no more.

"It's my earnest request to everyone to come forward and pledge to donate their organs once they are dead. Let's all make the earth a better place," she added.

The actress was last seen in *Patel Ki Punjabi Shaadi*, which was released in 2017.



'Best stories come out of real world'

Purva has been invited by the Royal Court, London and Curve Theatre, Leicester to read and present her new plays.

Mumbai: Director-playwright Purva Naresh says her writing has a ring of truth to it because best stories come out of the real world.

"My thoughts have always taken shape from what I see, feel, and interact with around me. I think the arts have always presented the opportunity to discover through various lenses what others sometimes fail to see," Naresh said.

"All of my writing has a ring of truth to it, and I

think that is what makes the plot and characters relatable yet insightful. The best stories are always out

Ok Tata Bye Bye is about a dedicated unmarried filmmaker couple that wants to shoot a documentary on the lives of sex workers but has to face a lot of difficulties and roadblocks



there in the real world," she added.

She has yet again presented a mirror image of a community that often falls prey to prejudice and scrutiny in Zee Theatre's *Ok Tata Bye Bye*.

The teleplay brings to

Purva's popular plays

- Afsane
- Bai se bi-scope tak
- Aaj Rang Hai
- Umrao
- OK Tata Bye-Bye
- Pret
- Aab-o-Daanaa
- Do Deewane Shaher Mein

inspired by the spirited young girls I interacted with and strongly felt that their story needed to be told. But I didn't want the plot or its characters to preach, instead, convey emotions that are univer-

sal and relatable, however far removed their realities may seem from ours," she said.

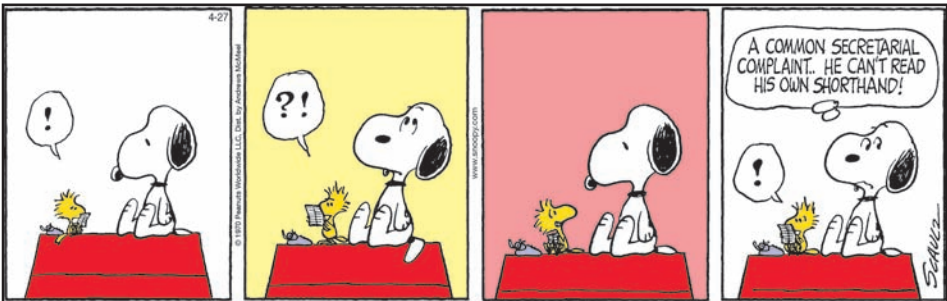
The teleplay that stars Geetika Tyagi, Jim Sarbh, Prerna Chawla, and Sarika Singh, and is available on TataSky Theatre.

Uttar Pradesh born Purva, who has been writing, directing, choreographing and producing dramas, has more than 10 plays to her credit and all of them have been staged in India and abroad.

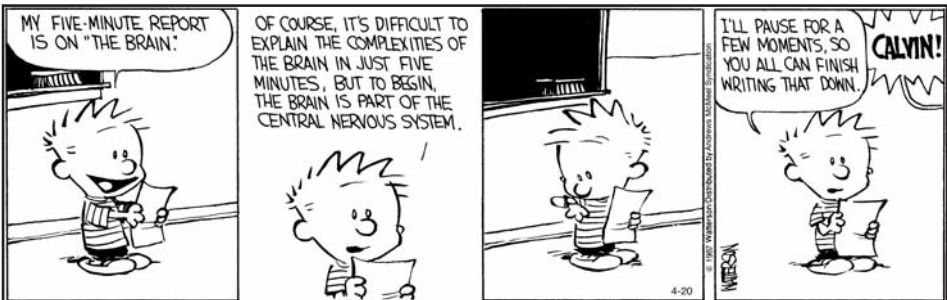
She has been invited by the Royal Court, London and Curve Theatre, Leicester to read and present her new plays.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

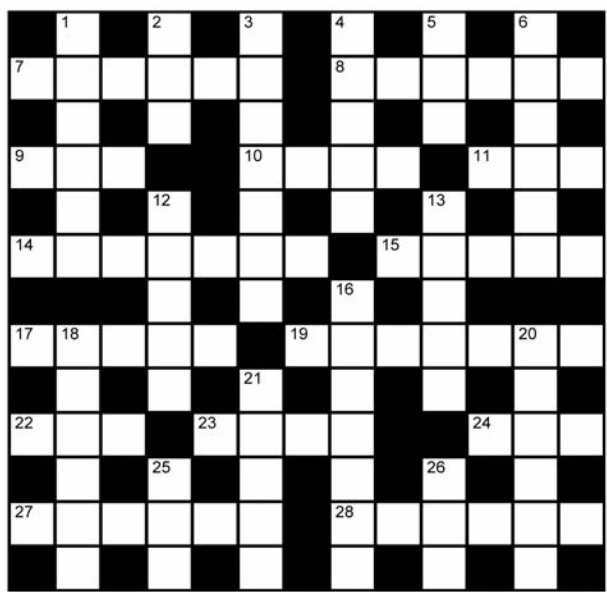


BREVITY



FUN post

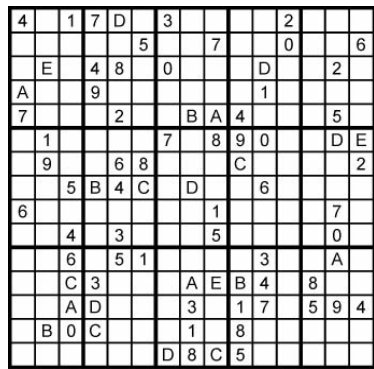
CROSSWORD



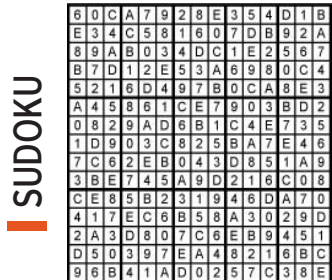
- Across
- 7 Kind of picture or sickness
 - 8 Fragrant oleoresin
 - 9 Triumphed
 - 10 Skater's jump
 - 11 Harbor craft
 - 14 Sets ablaze
 - 15 Big cat
 - 17 Camp craft
 - 19 Doctor's clue
 - 22 Greek vowel
- Down
- 23 Recipe direction
 - 24 Frigid
 - 27 Passion
 - 28 Tease
 - 1 Chinese tea
 - 2 Assistance
 - 3 Star in
 - 6 Orchiop
 - 4 Orchestra section
- 5 Antlered animal
 - 6 Ripen
 - 12 Metric weight units
 - 13 River horse, briefly
 - 16 Fireplug
 - 18 Modifies
 - 20 Mystical
 - 21 Shopping place
 - 25 Corn holder
 - 26 Morning moisture

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

Since 2015, Dutee got ₹4.09cr: Govt

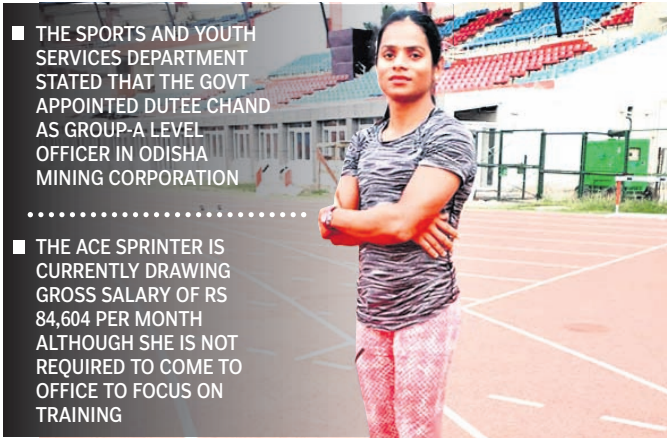
STATE GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS FINANCIAL AID TO THE ACE SPRINTER AMID TRAINING FUNDS ROW

Bhubaneswar, July 16: A day after ace sprinter Dutee Chand issued a clarification saying she isn't selling her luxury four-wheeler to raise training funds, the state government Thursday highlighted the financial support given to her over the years.

It was earlier reported that Dutee, who put up a now-deleted Facebook post asking potential buyers to get in touch with her manager, was forced to sell her car to raise funds for her Tokyo Olympics training.

The Sports and Youth Services department said, in statement, that a total of Rs 4.09cr has been given to Dutee since 2015.

"Rs 3 crore as financial incentive for medals won at Asian Games 2018. Rs 30 lakh for training and financial support during 2015-19. Rs 50 lakh for training support for Tokyo Olympics (released in two instalments August 2, 2019 and December 27, 2019)," the



statement read.

"The state government appointed Dutee Chand as Group-A level officer in Odisha Mining Corporation (A Gold Category PSU). She is currently drawing gross salary of Rs 84,604 (June 2020 salary) per month. She is not required to come to office so that she is able to concentrate full-time on training.

Accordingly, since her appointment in OMC, no official work has been allotted her. OMC provided Rs 29 lakh for training and financial incentives," the statement added.

On Wednesday, Dutee had said that she sold her sedan to get some 'breathing space'. "I took to social media to sell my car. I don't

have the resources to maintain luxury cars, though I love them. I never expressed that I am selling it to fund my training," Dutee said in a statement on her Twitter account.

"Odisha Government and my own KIIT University have always supported me. This does not deny the fact that my training is very expensive, especially for the 2021 Olympics. I just wanted to make a point that this money could be diverted for my training and a car can be bought post Covid once I receive the money from the state government," the ace sprinter said.

"With folded hands, I want to say that I was neither complaining nor making a show of my lack of finance because I am a daughter of the country and my well-wishers are there to keep me going. Bless me for my training at Kalinga Stadium so that my dream of getting a Gold for my country comes true," wrote the 24-year-old on social media.

State urges industrial cos to create Covid Care Centres

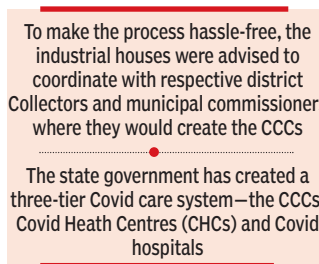
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Taking a step forward in Covid management, the state government Thursday urged industrial units to establish new Covid Care Centres (CCCs) for their employees.

This was revealed during an on-line interactive session of Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy and Industries Secretary Hemant Sharma with the chairmen and chief executives of the industrial houses from the Lok Seva Bhawan here Thursday.

Addressing the industry leaders, Tripathy said the state government has created a three-tier Covid care system—the CCCs, Covid Health Centres (CHCs) and Covid hospitals.

Asymptomatic or mild-symptomatic coronavirus positive persons are being taken care at CCCs. Other patients are being admitted to CHCs and Covid hospitals depending on the degree of infection and the kind of care they need, the Chief



Secretary said, adding that more than 80 per cent of the Covid cases need care at CCCs.

"Taking the asymptomatic or mild-symptomatic persons away from their home and detaching them from all social contacts is not good for their physical as well as mental wellbeing. At times, it becomes a traumatic for them. Considering this, government has decided to allow home isolation or institutional isolation in their own social setting," Tripathy said.

The Chief Secretary and Sharma discussed with around 40 leaders from big industries including MCL,

NALCO, OCL, Paradeep Refinery, NTPC, RSP, IOCL, HAL, STPI, IDCO, OPTCL, Tata Power, power distribution companies, OMC, Tata Steel, JSW, IMFA, DAMLIA Cement, HINDALCO, Laxmi Cement, ACC Cement, Vedanta Ltd, JK Paper and JSPL among others.

Sharma urged them to come up with the CCCs within a week. The government assured the industrial leaders to provide all technical guidance and training facilities and critical medicines. To make the process hassle-free, the industrial houses were advised to coordinate with the respective district Collectors and municipal commissioners where they would create the facilities.

Appreciating such decisions of the government in Covid fight, the industry leaders came forward to set up CCCs in their facilities for their employees and their family members. They mentioned that their employees were happy about such decisions of government, sources said.

494 more infections in state; deaths at 79

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: State's COVID-19 caseload crossed the 15,000-mark with 494 more persons testing positive for the viral infection Thursday, while two more fatalities pushed Odisha's death toll to 79, an official of the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

The fresh cases reported from 23 districts have taken the state's count to 15,392, said the official.

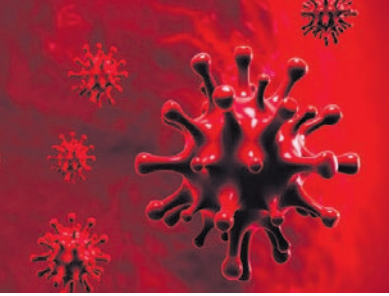
Of the 494 new cases, 322 were reported from quarantine centres,

Bargarh, Bhadrak, Gajapati, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Rayagada and Sundargarh, added the official.

Meanwhile, 401 persons recovered from the viral infection.

The number of active cases in state stands at 4,412, while 10,877 people have recovered from the disease.

The Capital city, meanwhile, reported 60 COVID-19 cases Thursday. While 40 were quarantine cases, 20 were detected through contact tracing exercise. On the other hand, 18 persons in the City who were earlier tested positive for COVID-19



The number of active COVID-19 cases in state stands at 4,412, while 10,877 people have so far recovered from the viral disease

while 172 are contacts of COVID-19 patients, the official pointed out.

Ganjam, state's worst-hit district by the viral infection, reported the highest number of fresh cases at 246, taking its caseload to 4,867. Khurda reported 64 new cases, Cuttack 38 and Balasore registered 21 cases of COVID-19.

Two patients—a 51-year-old man, who had morbid obesity, and a 34-year-old man, who was suffering from hypertension—died of COVID-19 while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Ganjam, the H&FW department said in a statement.

The fresh deaths have taken the number of coronavirus fatalities in the state to 79, while 24 patients have died due to other ailments, the official said.

Ganjam has reported 48 of the 79 COVID-19 deaths, followed by 13 in Khurda, eight in Cuttack, two in Puri and one each in Angul,

recovered from the viral infection Thursday, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) tweeted.

With this, Bhubaneswar has 504 active coronavirus cases while 403 persons have so far recovered from the disease. BMC has so far reported 919 COVID-19 cases and 11 deaths.

The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC), on the other hand, took to the Twitter to inform that 19 coronavirus cases were detected from its jurisdiction in the Silver City.

While five cases were from institutional quarantines, one from paid quarantine and 13 are home quarantine cases, said the civic body.

With this, CMC has 150 active COVID-19 cases, while 157 have recovered from the infection. The CMC has so far seen 314 COVID-19 cases and seven deaths in its jurisdiction.

Cybercrooks dupe 2 including SBI BM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Cybercriminals duped two people including a banker recently. Commissionerate Police has begun investigations into the case by registering two separate cases, 149/20 and 270/20 at Kharavela Nagar and Capital police station here respectively.

According to sources, Ajit Kumar Acharya of Pokhariput who currently works as the branch manager of State Bank of India's Satyanagar branch was duped by unknown miscreants by creating a fake Whatsapp account with the image of ex-regional manager of SBI's Phulbani Region as DP.

Meanwhile, the miscreant sent text messages to Acharya's Whatsapp account asking money for urgent medical purposes July 8. Later, he asked for more money on two occasions.

Acharya sent him the money in two installments. Upon enquiry, he found that it was a hoax. Acharya lodged a complaint with Kharavela Nagar police station. Similarly, a musician, Satya Shankar, in the city has lost around Rs 7 lakh in a cyber fraud incident.



To spread awareness on coronavirus, an artist draws graffiti at Nayapalli in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

OP PHOTO

Transgenders now covered under Madhu Babu Pension

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: The state government Thursday included the transgender community under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY) and released a notification in this regard.

As per the notification issued by the Social Securities and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department, the government made amendments to Rule 6 (eligibility criteria) of the Madhu Babu Pension Rules 2008.

The department has included a new criterion to include the transgender as one of the eligible categories. According to the notification, the beneficiaries should have certificate issued under Section 6 of

the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019. It also mandated that the income of the beneficiary must not exceed Rs 40,000 per annum and should not have a member paying income tax or a government servant.

"This was one of the progressive policies of the government. Eligible candidates from the community can avail the facilities from the government on fulfilling all the prescribed criteria," SSEPD department secretary Bhaskar Jyoti Sarma told Orissa POST.

Transgender advocacy groups have welcomed the step. "We welcome the step of the government to assist the community. However, the disbursement of pensions to them could be delayed as the rules of

Transgender Act, 2019 are yet to be formulated and issue of ID cards to them as per the act will take time," said Biswa Bhushan Pattanayak, Assistant Director, SAATHI, Bhubaneswar.

He also requested the government to include Section 7 of the Transgender Act to also include such transgender who undergo sex change operation.

The community members meanwhile welcomed the step. "This is a welcome step. This shows that the government is now recognising the community. This is likely to work in reducing the discrimination in society and expedite their social acceptance," said Meera Parida, a transgender right activist from the state.

Khurda bar staffer's murder case solved

6 HELD FROM NAYAGARH WITH BLOOD-STAINED SHIRT, CRIME WEAPON



POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, July 16: Blowing the lid off the sensational murder of a bar employee here July 14, the district police claimed to have arrested six persons from near Ranpur forests in Nayagarh and recovered weapons 'used in the killing' from their possession, Thursday.

According to Khurda superintendent of police (SP) Ajay Pratap Swain, Mrutyunjay Nayak (29), his brother Dhananjay Nayak (28), Amit Kumar Pradhan (23) and Nandan Behera (20), Rakesh Sahoo (23) of Daleiputa and Debakanta Das (25) of Lokeswarpur under Khurda Town police limits here have been taken into custody for killing Amiya Barik, an employee of a bar under Khurda Town police limits here, July 14 evening. The SP, in a media briefing, said that the footage from the CCTV installed near the crime scene and a few eyewitnesses helped crack the case. The accused are history-sheeters as they have multiple criminal cases registered against them with Nayapalli police.

"We tracked the mobile phones of the accused to track them. We've recovered a blood-stained shirt and

murder weapons as well. The luxury car in which they had come to the bar and fled as well besides a motorcycle has also been recovered from them," Swain said.

The incident took place when Nayak, along with a few of his friends, had come to booze at the bar July 14.

"While parking the car, they had a heated exchange of words with a security guard at the parking lot. Soon after, they left the place to buy some sharp weapons from a nearby hardware store. On return, they failed to find the security guard and instead attacked Barik who was standing near the parking lot with one of his colleagues. Barik's colleague, however, managed to flee the scene," the SP informed.

Barik suffered multiple stabbing injuries and succumbed at the spot. Soon after, a case (243/20) was registered in this regard and five special teams were formed to track the culprits.

Swain said, "After the incident, the accused initially fled to Kandhamal and then to Brahmapur via Boudh. On being informed by the Nayagarh police, we nabbed them from near Ranpur forests. Charge-sheet will be filed within a month."

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Satyavama Behura spouse of No. 4374314N NK Susil Kumar Behura presently residing at Vill: Raiberuan, Post: Sisua, Teh: Astarang, P.S.: Astarang, Dist.- Puri, PIN - 752109 (Odisha) have changed my name from Satyavama Behura to Satyavama Swain vide affidavit dated 02.07.2020 before Notary Public, Nimapada.

Sd./- Satyavama Swain

ECoR thrust on timely disposal of scrap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: East Coast Railway (ECoR) has taken proactive steps to ensure timely disposal of scrap. Scrap disposal through e-Auction has resumed immediately after the Unlock in the month of June by the ECoR.

A total of 11 e-Auctions have been conducted by ECoR in all the three divisions in June. In the month of July also, six e-Auctions have been conducted till date.

Materials Management department of ECoR is conducting e-Auction through its dedicated IREPS (Indian Railways E-Procurement System) portal since 2013, which is



In the last financial year, ECoR has disposed scrap which was about 34 per cent higher in value terms, than the target set by the Railway Board

a transparent process for disposal of scrap material and this gives equal opportunity to all the bidders in a transparent manner, free from any manual intervention. Over 3,700 vendors were registered on the portal.

In the process of e-Auction, lots are published online on IREPS plat-

form and bidders are allowed to bid online. If the highest bid received, is higher than pre fixed reserve price then the bid is accepted by the system and the lot is declared as sold to the participant. The complete process is online.

In the last financial year, ECoR has disposed scrap which was about

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Elephant casualties in Keonjhar on rise

THE FOREST DIVISION HAS REPORTED DEATHS OF 51 PACHYDERMS FROM 2010 TILL DATE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, July 16: The forest department spends cores of rupees on protection of elephants in Keonjhar, but casualties of the animals are on the rise in the mineral-rich district, a report said.

Lapses in monitoring of the movement of elephants under Keonjhar forest division recently came to light. The department suspended a forester and a forest guard June 18 for negligence in duty after two elephants were found electrocuted by poachers in Joda section of Champua range June 14.

The killing raised serious questions on the field intelligence and patrolling as forest officials of Joda section were clueless about the incident till locals informed them.

Apart from poaching, accidents and electrocution, the animals have been facing a threat from the shrinking of the forest cover and loss of habitat owing to mining.

The report said over last two



RED ZONE

Nine elephants died in 2012-13

Four each in 2013-14 and 2014-15

Six in 2015-16

Two each in 2017-18 and 2018-19

Six in 2019-20

Five in 2020-21

According to official data, there are 92 elephants in the Keonjhar division. To track the movement and ensure their safety, the department has engaged 110 people while 19 vehicles were pressed into service

Concerned over elephant casualties, environmentalist and honorary wildlife warden Harekrushna Mohant said, "Unabated mining, and declining forest cover resulted in loss of habitat and shortage of fodder

ourary wildlife warden Harekrushna Mohant said, "Unabated mining, and declining forest cover resulted in loss of habitat and shortage of fodder. Increasing movement of mineral-laden vehicles, encroachment of forests, infrastructure development like roads and railways and industrial units in the forested pockets have posed serious threat to the elephants. With the habitat loss, the animals stray out of forests and enter villages, leading to man-elephant conflicts."

Experts suggested that underpasses, overpasses, check gates and bridges should be incorporated into a development plan in the forested pockets to mitigate elephant casualties. DFO Santosh Joshi said for protection of elephants, special squads have been formed for 24x7 monitoring while local people are being sensitized to the need for elephant safety so that man-elephant conflict can be avoided.

"Each elephant herd is being tracked by a team," he added.

Odia girl Diptirani storms into Miss India semifinals

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jeypore, July 16: Hailing from Jeypore town in Koraput district, Diptirani has qualified for competing in the Miss India 2020 pageant organised by Zerone Production House.



After registering for Zerone Production House's Miss India 2020, she cleared all the rounds and reached the semifinals of the competition.

"It was actually my childhood dream to be a model. My parents have supported me a lot. I have worked hard to participate in this. I am trying to represent Odisha at the national level and if I get a chance, it will be an honour to represent India. Also, I want to promote my city Jeypore through my success," said an excited Diptirani.

Diptirani tasted success in Odia TV shows like 'Mun bi Heroine', 'Mithamitha Katha', 'Mun Hero Mun Odisha' and 'Eka Bharat Srestha Bharat'.

The model said after the competition she will try to enter Ollywood as it is her base and people have given her so much love and affection for acting in different Odia reality shows.

Fight against Covid-19: Ganjam tally inches to 5K

POST NEWS NETWORK

Ganjam, July 16: The migration-prone Ganjam district is close to registering 5,000 COVID-19 positive cases. The COVID-19 hotspot district reported 246 new cases Thursday. The current COVID-19 cases in Ganjam district stand at 1,845 while 2,971 people have recovered from the disease.

The death toll in the district went up to 48 with two new fatalities at the TATA COVID-19 hospital at Sitalapalli in this town reported within 24 hours.

Some relief is expected as the district administration has managed to turn 84 per cent of the villages, coronavirus free zones.

On the other hand, a door-to-door screening has started in rural pockets as 16 per cent of villages are still under the red-zone category.

According to the plan, "Mission Ganjam", the focus has been kept on contact tracing, testing and quarantines. The screening is being carried out by 60 doctors' teams to identify people with influenza-like symptoms.

As the corona positive cases are rising continuously in urban area, Ganjam Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange declared a five-day shut-

CHHATRAPUR: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday praised a female teacher from Hinjili area in Ganjam district for defeating COVID-19 and rejoining duty immediately after recovery.

Sangeeta Panigrahi, a teacher by profession, had been working at a quarantine centre. During her duty, her swab sample was collected and sent for testing. A day later, her report came out to be positive for coronavirus.

Sangeeta was then immediately shifted to COVID-19 hospital at Sitalapalli. While she was undergoing treatment there, Chief Minister Patnaik, ST secretary VK



Sangeeta Panigrahi

Pandian and Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange wished her a speedy recovery over phone.

By dint of her indomitable determination, she finally defeated the

virus and proved herself to be a real COVID warrior.

After recovery, she did not prefer to remain confined to her house in fear of the virus. She has again joined her duty.

Naveen took to Twitter to appreciate her work and said that the frontline COVID-19 warriors' determination and sacrifice is unimaginable.

"She works day in and day out to save people's lives. Even after her recovery, she has not desisted from her responsibility. Sangeeta Panigrahi has set an example for others to imitate," Naveen said in his congratulatory message to her.

3-day shutdown in Birmitrapur from today

SUNDERGARH: The district administration decided to declare a 3-day shutdown in Birmitrapur Municipality area amid a rise in COVID cases in the region.

The shutdown will be in force from 6am of July 17 to July 19 night in all eleven wards under the municipality area.

During the shutdown, activities

such as medical establishments, clinics, nursing homes, including medicine stores, movement of ambulances and all medical personnel shall be allowed.

Telecom services, petrol pumps, print and electronic media identified by police, water supply, sanitation, electricity supply will go on as usual.

2 more docs, 2 nurses of VIMSAR infected

SAMBALPUR: RDC(Northern Range) Niranjana Sahu reviewed the ongoing Covid prevention exercise in Sambalpur district Thursday, even as two more doctors and two nurses of VIMSAR were found infected with Covid Thursday.

The spread of Covid Infection in VIMSAR and VISSUT was focal point of the discussion at the review meeting, attended by Collector Subham Saxena, SP Kanwar Vishal Singh and CDMO Sashi Bhushan Patel.

Meanwhile, some areas in Sambalpur town were declared as containment/buffer zones. The restrictions were enforced from 7 am Thursday till further orders.

Gurudwara Colony, Burla, Telgupada, Ward-7 Burla are in containment zones while E and F type quarters lines of Forward Colony, Ward-4, Burla, Nuapada, OHPC Colony, Friends Colony, Binayak Hospital and Sourav Vihar are in buffer zones. The administration prohibited vehicular movements in these areas.

Wife, daughters kill man for opposing illicit affair

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, July 16: A woman from Siling village under Samal police limits in Angul district killed her husband late Wednesday night after he protested her extra-marital affair. The woman, sources said, is in relationship with another man of the same village. Her two daughters also helped in finishing their father.

The victim has been identified as Sunad Pradhan (51). The accused were Sunda's wife Bharati (45), daughter Bunu (24) and Lunu (20).

Police said that the sister of the victim has lodged an FIR at the police station. In it she has alleged that her sister-in-law and two nieces have illicit relationship with a man of that village. However, Sunad re-



cently found out about the matter and voiced his protests over the issue.

Sunad had a heated argument with his wife and daughters Wednesday night. In the course of the argument, some men entered the house and beat up Sunad. His wife and daughters also took part in the thrashing. They then banged Sunad's head against the wall repeatedly leading to his death.

After allegedly killing Sunad, the trio surrendered at the local police station. Police have registered a case and launched a probe into the matter.

7 including minor held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Patnagarah/ Belpada, July 16: Police Thursday arrested seven persons including a minor in connection with the murder of a father-son duo at Mundagaon village under Belpada police limits in Bolangir district.

This was stated here by Patnagarh SDPO Suresh Kumar Nayak and IIC Sachidananda Bariha at a press meet at Belpada police station Thursday. The accused were identified as Balmiki Rout, Mangal Rout, Fakir Rout, Bipin Rout, Sankarint Rout, Kaenti Rout and a minor. The accused were forwarded to court while the minor was produced before a juvenile justice board.

The murder took place following a fight between Banchhor and Rout families over non-pay-

ment of dues of a tractor driver.

The SDPO said Motilal Banchhor owed Rs 10,000 to Mangal Rout who was working as a driver of his tractor. Rout repeatedly demanded his money but Banchhor kept on dilly-dallying on the payment. The incident occurred

when family members of Banchhor had gone to Rout's house to calculate the dues when Rout's family members attacked them with sharp-edged weapons.

In the attack, Motilal died on the spot while his son Chandramani succumbed in the hospital. His two sons Kailash and Hemant were admitted to hospital and are undergoing treatment. Mangal and his two kin also sustained critical injuries and were admitted to hospital.



Goods train rams truck at Paradip

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, July 16: The driver of a truck had a lucky escape when a goods train rammed the vehicle in the restricted area of the Paradip port Thursday morning. The truck driver escaped with minor injuries and has since been taken to a hospital.

According to sources, the ill-fated truck was crossing the railway tracks when the train rammed it. A portion of the vehicle was completely damaged as it came under the wheels of the train. Eyewitnesses said that the driver managed to jump out of the cabin in the nick of time. Otherwise he would certainly have been killed.

On being informed, officials rushed to the spot and initiated



restoration. Officials are also trying to ascertain how the truck managed to get into the restricted area. They are waiting for the driver to recover so that they can talk to him. Usually a special permission is needed for vehicles to enter into the restricted zones in the port area. An investigation has been launched to ascertain the cause of the accident.

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Regional Manager, Central Warehousing Corporation, Regional Office, Patna invites application from retired CWC, Employee (Supdt.) for appointment of consultant at CW, Rayagada & CVW, Berhampur (Odisha). The details may be seen / downloaded from CWC's website www.cewacorp.nic.in

Sd/- REGIONAL MANAGER

Blood goes waste as HIV-testing machines conk out

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, July 16: Even as there is a spurt in the number of COVID-19 cases in the state, blood donors in the district are in low spirits.

They allege that blood units they are donating can no longer be administered to patients because the HIV testing machine at the blood bank has gone out of order.

The blood bank has three HIV testing machines. The rule is that the collected blood units undergo an HIV test and then allowed for transfusion. But as of now, two of the three machines have developed problems and stopped functioning. Similarly, another machine procured a year ago has also been lying dysfunctional.

According to volunteers, organising blood donation camps is very difficult during the pandemic. Yet, they organize such camps so that patients should not die due to paucity



■ The blood bank has three HIV testing machines. The rule is that the collected blood units undergo an HIV test and then allowed for transfusion. But as of now, two of the three machines have developed problems. Similarly, another machine procured a year ago has also been lying dysfunctional

■ According to volunteers, organising blood donation camps is very difficult during the pandemic. Yet, they organize such camps so that patients should not die due to paucity of blood

■ CDMO Dr Sujata Mishra said mechanics visited the blood bank and some parts are to be replaced with new ones. The machines will take one or two days to start performing

of blood. However, their efforts go down the drain as HIV test of the collected blood units cannot be performed as the machines are out of order.

"The recently procured machine has a warranty period. Yet, no step is being taken to get it repaired," alleged irate volunteers.

When contacted, the staff of the blood bank said though the mechanics have been contacted, they fail to turn up due to prevailing COVID-19 situation.

Meanwhile, the District Citizen Forum vice chairman Pankaj Kumar Nayak demanded a new HIV testing machine to be immediately provided

to the blood bank.

When asked, chief district medical officer Dr Sujata Mishra said mechanics had visited the blood bank Wednesday. Quoting the mechanics, she said some parts are to be replaced with new ones. After repairing, the machines will take one or two days to start performing.

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8th July, 2020

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“There is nothing mind can do that cannot be better done in the mind's immobility and thought-free stillness.”

SRI AUROBINDO



A mug's game

The state government last week announced a slew of austerity measures in view of the falling revenues and to pool resources for meeting contingency spending arising out of multiple anti-Covid-19 programmes launched by the government. Expenses of every department barring the Health and Family Welfare have been stopped. All air travel and first class train journey by officers have been disallowed. A complete ban has been put on purchase of new vehicles. Officers have been told to reduce travelling and monitor programme implementation through video-conferencing instead. All expenditures for renovating government buildings and guest houses and re-furnishing of offices have been stopped. Expenditures beyond ₹5 lakh for repair and renovation of government office buildings and over ₹2 lakh for repair and renovation of government residential quarters would not happen without special approval. There has been a complete ban on meetings, seminars, workshops and holding of official lunch and dinner in hotels with government funds. Officers have been told to go for video-conferencing mode instead. A ban has been put on leave travel allowance of government employees. No new state scheme or projects to be taken up by the administrative department except for Health and Family Welfare department. A complete freeze has been put on fresh recruitment while permission has been given for hiring for existing posts.

The cost-cutting measures announced in the wake of the pandemic are only a repetition of an extant policy that the government had brought in to tamp down spending in 2001 – years after the Biju Janata Dal government came to power. In fact, checking the runaway expenses leading to a mounting debt burden was a priority area for the new government. Even though the memorandum was still in force, the government allowed every department to splurge money on luxuries. Scores of populist schemes were introduced without statutory monitoring for political considerations. Thousands of crores of rupees were spent on unplanned programmes. The government allowed itself to violate its own circular. The Finance department is responsible for such gross financial indiscipline. The department allowed wasteful expenditures by senior bureaucrats who spent big on their tours, foreign jaunts and remodeling of office chambers, among others. The Finance department approved proposals for purchase of costly vehicles when there were curbs on purchase of luxury cars. Bureaucrats were allowed to blow money on office decorations and fancy furniture as if these were their rights. All such wasteful expenditures would not have taken place without the consent of the Finance department. The result was the total debt burden of the state shot up from below ₹20,000 crore in 2001 to above ₹1lakh crore now. The per capita debt load has gone up to ₹20,000.

India has been going through an unforeseen economic recession. Countries across the world are jacking up public spending to create opportunities and employment. The Centre on is part has earmarked ₹20 lakh crore to be spent under different welfare programmes and to help people overcome the crisis triggered by the pandemic. The coronavirus has exasperated the contemporary economic slump. Millions of people have lost jobs. The rate of unemployment is at a record high. The general despondency among public is not going to go in near future, at least until the discovery of a vaccine. In such times, a blanket ban on state spending on schemes and development programmes may not make much economic sense. A ban on wasteful government expenditure is welcome. But banning all expenditures regardless of their implications for the poor could have been avoided. A public announcement banning all government spending will exasperate the depression. Cutting down the flab is welcome, but extending the ban across all spending including welfare and development may be a mug's game.

WISDOM CORNER

“As a calf follows its mother among a thousand cows, so the (good or bad) deeds of a man follow him.”

CHANAKYA

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.”

CHINESE PROVERB

“Nobody has the power to take two steps together; you can take only one step at a time.”

OSHO

WORDSWORTH

Sudoku

Sudoku refers to a puzzle consisting of a 9-by-9 grid of squares, each divided into nine 3-by-3 squares. Some of the squares already contain a number. The aim is to fill in the remainder so that every horizontal and vertical line, and every 3-by-3 square, contains the numerals 1 to 9 with no repeats. The puzzle first appeared in the USA in the early 1980s under the name Number Place and was taken up by the Japanese publishing house Nikoli in 1984. Its current Japanese name is formed from the original title at that time, which may be translated as “only single numbers allowed”. The short form is a compound of the Japanese words su and doku, which respectively mean “single” and “number”. It has recently become a widespread and addictive craze here in the UK (the derived term sudokumania has been coined for it). It has now returned to the USA and has also become common in other countries. The first puzzles were featured in The Times back in November 2004 and soon after in the Daily Mail and several other newspapers, though the craze really took off around May 2005.


Suffonsified

The phrase seems to be a variation on a polite rejoinder that was once quite widely known and is still around. A host might ask if you have had enough to eat. Rather than just say that you had had enough, being fearful that so bald a statement might be taken as unrefined or ill-bred, you might instead say, “I’ve had an elegant sufficiency”. This presumably has its origin in some catch phrase old enough that it has had time to disseminate widely, since I’ve seen examples from Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Australia, and the USA. A possible source is a poem called Spring by James Thomson, dating from the middle of the eighteenth century, very widely quoted during that century and the following one: “An elegant sufficiency, content, retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books, Ease and alternate labor, useful life, progressive virtue, and approving Heaven; These are the matchless joys of virtuous love.”

Sugar and sure

The early history of sugar is obscure, especially the way it was said. But variations in the way it was spelled in old documents suggest strongly that the u was said as a diphthong. Help with IPA, very much the way we now say the word you, and that the initial s was said like that, not as sh. Sometime in the Middle English period the initial letters su shifted to the pronunciation they now have. If you relax the mouth and tongue somewhat when you are saying the older form, your pronunciation shifts to the modern one, as you’ll realise if you try out the two sounds in turn; the modern version is actually rather easier for slack-jawed English speakers to say.

LOL
BLONDE



who should go, so finally the brunette delivers a very touching speech, ending with the words, "I'll get off." The blondes, all moved by the brunette's speech, start clapping. Problem solved.

FOCUS ECONOMY

TIME TO SPEND, NOT SAVE



The present situation demands more expenditure, as opposed to austerity, and has link with the concept of the “paradox of thrift” popularised by John Maynard Keynes. The theory has it that if households decide to save more and consume less during a slowdown or recession, then it will aggravate the economic decline

With shrinking revenue, the Union government has reprioritized its spending and taken a slew of new austerity measures to contain the fiscal deficit and overcome the mounting debt burden. The current fiscal, the government banned new public-funded schemes and freed creation of new posts. Various states including Odisha have also taken similar steps as the Centre had imposed limits on states' borrowing capacity in contravention of the principles of co-operative federalism. While the Centre has allowed states to increase fiscal deficit from 3 per cent to 5 per cent of the GSDP, fact is also that out of this 2 per cent, an additional borrowing space of 1.5 percent is conditional. In reality, austerity measures will effect a contraction of the economy, while the Covid-linked lockdown scenario would require perusal of an expansionary policy through higher spending. Since private spending got subdued due to supply disruptions, restriction of people's movement and business activities, an increase in government spending, more of job creation and new schemes are vital for a revival of the economy facing recessionary trends. While the world has announced a \$1100 billion package for revival, India has come up with around \$226 billion, of which fiscal outgo is around \$27 billion. Monetary measures like liquidity infusion and lower interest rates are aimed at addressing supply-side problems or supply disruption. But problems are from the demand side, especially a compression of demand. Supply disruption can be eased only when people move around freely. The present situation is demanding more of expenditure, as opposed to austerity, and has linkages with the concept of the “paradox of thrift” popularised by John Maynard Keynes. The theory has it that if households decide to save more and consume less during a slowdown or recession, then the resulting reduction in aggregate demand will aggravate the economic decline. In the present Covid-induced recession, people are forced to save more due to uncertainty about the future and the ban on free movement, economic activities and business transaction. As a result, aggregate demand has come down, leading to a further decline in growth. As such, the correct policy response is to increase government spending, and not resort to austerity measures. No investment will come and no industry will function if there is no demand for products. Hence, spending is vital. Each spending, whether public or private, creates job opportunities. While public expenditure leads to equitable growth, private sector expenditure is inequitable in nature. The government must spend money or have it spent in large quantities to create the demand needed to fuel economic growth. Hence, steps like a ban on recruitment as also stalling new schemes will have potentially catastrophic consequences. Any spending cut or job squeeze would hurt the economy, hinder recovery, undermine long-term growth, and increase inequality and discrimination. A major question is whether the implementation of immediate fiscal austerity during a fragile economic recovery is justified and whether it will help in deficit reduction. According to Paul Krugman, Nobel Prize-winning economist and columnist, cutting spending in a depressed economy is a bad idea. Past experience shows that austerity measures in times of demand compression or recession have backfired or boomeranged. Amid the 2007-08 financial crisis in the US that later spread to Europe, the principle of austerity as a cure was adopted by central banks and encouraged by economists. They believed that a tough fiscal policy was the only treatment for excessive debt and any easing would spell disaster. As countries started to act this way, many realised that such policies were self-defeating and counterproductive. Economies already hurt by the crisis were condemned to perpetual stagnation and shoulder even larger debt burdens. The IMF report reveals that the belt-tightening by the European governments has had a negative effect on the economies of these countries and unemployment scenario became more acute. An examination of how states fared during and after the economic downturn a decade ago hints that states which preserved or expanded their public sector workforce weathered the recession better and came out with fewer job losses, fewer private sector job cuts, and saw lesser growth in unemployment and faster job growth during the recovery. It is argued that a country wading in a sea of debt needs to tighten its expenditures. Although the austerity strategy can lead to deficit reduction and prevent insolvency in the case of an indebted individual, this may not necessarily be the outcome in the case of national indebtedness. The problem is accentuated when austerity measures are replicated by other countries or by various states. It is argued by fiscal hawks that an increase of expenditure without generating commensurate revenues will lead to a rise in fiscal deficit; and that large fiscal deficits will cause high interest rates, larger government debts, and inflation. Even if the deficit doesn't spark high interest rates and inflation, they erode business confidence. There are also those who argue that deficit should be contained as it hurts the welfare of future generations through a rise in debt. A nation that is heavily indebted needs to implement more borrowings to pay back its lenders. But the problem is not a rising debt. Problem is that beneficiaries of debt-driven growth are not the masses but rich and corporate honchos. This needs to be reversed first. In general, drastic cuts in government spending increase unemployment and may drag the economy down to a degree that the government's tax revenues fall. The GDP also declines and as a result fiscal deficit and borrowing as percentage of GDP also rise. This outcome defeats the intention of lowering government debt. It would be equally bad for the government, as a shrinking economy also means shrinking tax receipts. If the government is reluctant to borrow from market beyond a certain limit, it should resort to monetization of spending through monetization of some parts its deficit or through resort to spread of helicopter money. Central government should provide adequate funds to state governments so that they need not have to cut any spending and schemes, and can sustain jobs and growth momentum. Does austerity at this point make any sense? This may well be the issue of the moment, but right now a resort to austerity would be a huge mistake. There is need for developing a workable recovery programme. Otherwise, the ‘Great Shutdown’ could take the nation, and the world, to another Great Depression, with enduring low growth and high rates of unemployment. A depressed economy would be a disastrous proposition.

The writer is an Odisha-based columnist and economist.

SPECTRUM POLICING

Hell in uniform, killer cops on the prowl

Dr S. Saraswathi

THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION RECORDED 1,723 DEATHS IN JUDICIAL AND POLICE CUSTODY IN 2019. THOUGH THERE COULD BE MANY REASONS FOR DEATH, THE HIGH NUMBER IS A CAUSE FOR CONCERN AND REMEDIAL ACTION

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has stressed that every death in police custody with signs of torture should be investigated. The South Asia Director of Human Rights Watch has said that it is important for the authorities in India to embark upon robust efforts “to ensure police reform, accountability, and putting an end to the culture of immunity”. Two incidents – one in Tamil Nadu in a place notorious for custodial violence and the other in Uttar Pradesh – involving police handling of accused person(s) in their custody have rocked the entire nation in recent days. The first related to the death of a father and son in police custody for interrogation and the other to encounter killing of an arrested person. The TN case is entrusted to an eight-member CBI team for investigation. The Tamil Nadu case apparently arising from a minor offence of violation of lockdown rule on closing time of shops led to arrest of a shop owner and his son and shutting them in police lock-up. The allegation is about merciless torture of the traders in police custody to the extent of causing their death. The irony is that the incident happened close to the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture observed on June 26. The offence in this case is not grave by any stretch of imagination to require excessive use of police force. The UP case is a clear case of police excess after murder of eight cops by the accused. It is for the government and legal and judicial authorities to deal with the cases. They will do it with reference to existing laws and regulations and prescribed procedures. For the society, more important is the criminal law and procedure and the role, responsibility and authority of the police including methods of investigation and treatment of the accused and witnesses. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has categorically asserted a few days back that the age of third degree torture is over. He had been saying that the central government has “zero tolerance on custodial deaths, extra-judicial deaths, and police atrocities”.


A Member of Parliament has pointed out to the Home Minister that during 2019, the National Human Rights Commission recorded 1,723 cases of death of persons in judicial and police custody across the country. Though there could be many reasons for death, the number, if accurate is a cause for concern and remedial action. NHRC has registered over 400 cases of alleged death in police custody and over 5,000 cases of death in judicial custody. The MP has also referred to an analysis by the National Convention Against Torture for the period 2005-2018 which revealed that of the 500 deaths in police custody, only 281 cases were registered and 54 policemen were charge-sheeted and no one has been convicted. The UN Convention Against Torture was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1984 and came into force in 1987. India became a signatory in 1997, but has not yet ratified the Convention by a comprehensive law. By June 2020, the Convention had 170 state parties. Prohibition of torture has long been established as a universal code or jus cogens that all countries have agreed to abide by. The Committee Against Torture (CAT) is a body of human rights experts that monitors implementation of the Convention by State parties. To ratify the convention, the Prevention of Torture Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha in May 2010, but it lapsed. Its main provision was to make torture a punishable offence. The bill was again brought in the Lok Sabha in 2017 and 2018 as a Private Member's Bill, but could not be passed. Some MPs are now demanding promulgation of an ordinance to curb custodial violence and police brutality. Under NHRC Guidelines of 1993, every incidence of custodial death or rape must be reported to the Commission by the concerned State within 24 hours, and should be followed by post-mortem report, a video report, and a magisterial enquiry.

The writer is a former Director of ICSSR, New Delhi.

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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Oli's Ayodhya

Sir, Nepal Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli has claimed that the 'real Ayodhya' is in Nepal, not in India. He has been quoted as saying that Ayodhya of India is 'fake Ayodhya', and the real Ayodhya is in Thori near Kathmandu. The Ayodhya there is a village, West of Birgunj. Perhaps Oli's Ramayan replaces Valmiki's Ramayan in Nepal. The bizarre explanation given by him is, "Why would Lord Ram travel as far as Janakpur to marry Sita, had Ayodhya been in India". Of late, Oli has been in news more for the wrong reasons. He issued a new Nepal map claiming Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura as Nepal's territories. He has started playing into the hands of China. China is believed to have taken away 33 hectares of Nepal's land. Oli has also incurred the wrath of people from his own party for 'junking India' and 'joining China'. David Frawley has advocated re-merging of Nepal with India. A good suggestion.

Congress' plight

Sir, It should finally dawn upon every party worker that there is no way the Congress can detach itself from the Gandhi family. The ageing old guard is not open to fresh ideas; Young Turks like Jyothiraditya Scindia and Rajesh Pilot were made to feel unwanted by the party. Both Scindia and Pilot worked unflinchingly for the party in the 2018 assembly elections in their states. Ashok Gehlot and Kamal Nath were the picks of the high command. However, change is the need of the times. Can Pilot wean more legislators away from Gehlot now that he has been eased out?

Covid, healthcare

Sir, India's healthcare workers have been fighting a fierce battle against Covid-19 since February last. It is worrisome to learn that over 100 doctors have lost their lives to Covid-19 in India. Though there is no data on infection cases among healthcare workers, about 2,000 of them have contracted the disease in Delhi alone. This is indicative of the extreme vulnerability of healthcare workers to the disease. The current crisis must be used as a wake-up call to governments to provide occupational safety to healthcare workers. Their life is important.

SUSHANT SINGH RAJPUT DEATH CASE

Rhea requests Shah for CBI probe

ADDRESSING HERSELF AS RAJPUT'S "GIRLFRIEND" FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PUBLIC, CHAKRABORTY SAID "COMPLETE FAITH" IN THE GOVERNMENT, A CBI INQUIRY WOULD HELP BRING JUSTICE TO THE CASE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 16: Actor Rhea Chakraborty Thursday requested Union Home Minister Amit Shah to order a CBI inquiry to understand what "pressures" prompted actor Sushant Singh Rajput to take the extreme step of suicide.

Rajput, 34, was found dead in his Bandra apartment June 14. In the initial investigation, Mumbai Police had found that the actor was under medication for depression.

Addressing herself as Rajput's "girlfriend" for the first time in public, Chakraborty said though



she has "complete faith" in the government, a CBI inquiry would help bring justice to the case.

"Respected @AmitShah sir, I'm Sushant Singh Rajput's girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty. It is now over a month since his sudden demise. I have complete faith in the government, however in the interest of justice, I request you with folded hands to initiate a CBI enquiry into this matter," the 28-year-old actor wrote on Instagram alongside Rajput's photo.

"I only want to understand what pressures prompted Sushant to take this step. Yours sincerely, Rhea Chakraborty. #satyamevjayate," she added.

Earlier in the day, Chakraborty requested the cyber crime cell to look into rape and murder threats she was receiving ever since Rajput's death, with social media users blaming her for his suicide.

AAP starts campaign against high power bills in Maharashtra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jul 16: The Aam Aadmi Party's Maharashtra unit has launched a website to campaign against high power bills in the state, where consumers can also send their complaints to the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Council (MERC), an official said Thursday.

The party has launched 'Hisaab Da', a website where consumers can file their complaints about high electricity bills and compare them with the power tariffs under the Delhi government, a release issued by the party stated. "In Maharashtra, we have had some of the highest tariffs in the country, coupled with the issue of load shedding in rural areas. Such high power bills are unacceptable," the party said.

Maha's 1st woman SEC Neela succumbs to Covid

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, July 16: Multi-faceted personality and retired IAS officer Neela Satyanarayana - who created history as the first woman State Election Commissioner (SEC) - succumbed to Covid-19 at a hospital, official sources said here Thursday.

An IAS officer of the 1972 batch, Satyanarayana, 71, held many important posts in the state government and finally crowned her 42-years of bureaucratic service with the post SEC.

Popular as "a people-friendly IAS officer", she was reputed for her fearless approach, never bending before the political class vis-a-vis public interest during the course of duties across several departments in the state government. Besides, Neela



An IAS officer of the 1972 batch, Satyanarayana held many important posts in the state govt and finally crowned her 42-years of bureaucratic service with the post SEC

Satyanarayana made mark as a prolific writer; poet, lyricist, singer,

HEARING IN PALGHAR LYNCHING CASE FROM JULY 28

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Palghar (Maharashtra), July 16: A day after the Maharashtra CID filed its charge sheet in the sensational Palghar lynching case in which three people were killed, a Magistrate Court in Dahanu, has set the date for hearing in the matter to July 28, official sources said here Thursday.

The charge sheets signify the end of the investigations into the sensational case in which two 'sadhus' and their driver were lynched near Gadchinchale village in the district.

On Wednesday, the state Crime Investigation Department (CID) Dy. Superintendent of Police Vijay Pawar, filed two separate charge sheets of around 11,000 pages, in two separate cases, naming a whopping 126 accused in both cases, before the Dahanu Magistrate Court, officials said.

The CID has invoked Indian Penal Code, Disaster Management Act, Epidemic Diseases Act, Maharashtra Police Act and Maharashtra Damage to Public Property (Amendment) Act, with charges pertaining to murder, armed rioting, using criminal force to prevent a public servant from discharging his duties, etc.

AGENCIES

Bhopal, July 16: The case of police atrocity on members of a Dalit family in Guna district has heated up the politics of Madhya Pradesh.

The Congress has gone belligerent on the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government accusing it of persecuting Dalits and the poor, even as the administration in a strong move removed the IG of Gwalior division, the Guna Superintendent of Police and the District Magistrate.

The Dalit family was brutally beaten up by the police during an anti-encroachment drive. Videos on social media showed a man, his wife and two children at the receiving end of the police action. The man was seen being dragged by the police after being beaten up as the woman and the children begged and grovelled in the dust of the open field, where he was engaged.

The man faced the brunt of police action for occupying the piece of land meant for college building in Cantt area of Guna. This incident dates back a few days ago. The Dalit couple had then consumed insecticide. The video of the incident went viral on the social media and now, the matter has taken on political hue with the Congress targeting the state government for being anti-Dalit.

The government also swung into action and removed the administrative staff after ordering an inquiry.

Political analysts say that the incident happened in the area from where Jyotiraditya Scindia, who moved to the BJP in March after toppling the Congress government, has been MP and the assembly by-



polls are going to be held in 16 constituencies in the Gwalior-Chambal division soon.

It is for this, the Congress has started training guns at the Shivraj government. Former Chief Minister Kamal Nath, who is also the MPCC president, has questioned the excesses that were inflicted to the Dalit family and asked, "Will Shivraj government show such courage to redeem thousands of acres of government land occupied by the so-called public servants and influencers in these areas? Such an incident cannot be tolerated. Immediate action should be taken against the culprits, otherwise the Congress will not remain silent."

Retweeting a tweet of the Congress party, the former chief minister said, the Congress has always supported the poor and farmers in their fight against injustice. "This inhuman act of the Shivraj government has exposed the dictatorship in him. This is the beginning of the end of the Shivraj government in Madhya Pradesh," he said.

Jyotiraditya Scindia, now Rajya Sabha MP from the BJP, quickly damage controlled with the statement that Guna SP and Collector have been removed, and the incident is being investigated. "I am confident that action will be taken against all those responsible for this heinous crime," he said.

Home Minister Narottam Mishra said that there is a rule of law in Madhya Pradesh. "As soon as we came to know about the unfortunate incident in Guna, we took prompt action. This is not the Congress government. Immediate action was taken in this case. IG, Collector and SP have been removed as soon as we came to know of the incident," Mishra said. Former Madhya Pradesh Congress president and former Union Minister Arun Yadav said that the police are ruthlessly attacking the unarmed Dalit farmers in the state while big criminals roam freely. The cries of these innocent poor people will lead to the fall of the Shivraj government, he said.

Kamal Nath to become LoP in MP Assembly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, July 16: Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath is set to become the Leader of Opposition (LoP) when the monsoon session of the state Assembly begins from July 20.

"We have sent a letter to the Assembly secretariat stating that our leader in the House is going to be Nath," said Congress spokesperson Bhupendra Gupta on Thursday. Nath was elected as leader of



the Congress Legislative Party after the 2018 elections when the party came to power in the state, Gupta

said. Nath had to resign as chief minister in March this year after the Congress government lost majority with the exit of 22 MLAs who joined the BJP along with senior leader Jyotiraditya Scindia.

With 91 MLAs, the Congress would be the main opposition party in the house. Assembly principal secretary A P Singh said he had learnt about the letter sent by the Congress. "I have not received it yet. It might be with our Dak (postal) section right now," he added.

Girls outshine boys, overall 90.66% pass

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, July 16: As many as 90.66 per cent - 12,81,712 students of the total 14,13,687 - were declared pass in the HSC examinations conducted by the Maharashtra State Secondary & Higher Secondary Education Board (MSSHSEB), top officials said here Thursday.

The students wrote the exams in Arts, Commerce, Science and Vocational Education streams across the nine Divisional Boards, said MSSHSEB Chairperson Shakuntala Kale.

Announcing the results, she said that of the total number of candidates, there were 6,35,519 girls and 7,78,168 boys, but the girls outraced the boys with 93.88 per cent passing compared to the

boys' passing percentage of 88.04. Among the nine boards, the Konkan Division grabbed the top honour with 95.89 per cent students passing, followed by Pune Division (92.50), Kolhapur Division (92.42), Amravati Division (92.09), Nagpur (91.65), Latur Division (89.79), Mumbai Division (89.35), Nashik (88.87) and Aurangabad (88.18).

The students in the Science Faculty led with 96.93 per cent passing followed by Commerce Faculty (91.27), Vocational Education (86.07) and Arts Faculty (82.63). According to MSSHSEB Secretary Ashok Bhosale, compared to last year (2019)'s 85.88 per cent, the performance of students improved by 4.78 per cent to 90.66 per cent passing this year despite the Covid-19 fears and its effects.

MAHA HSC RESULT



Passengers push a bus after it broke down on a flooded road following heavy rain, at Wadala in Mumbai, Thursday PTI PHOTO

Only 20 persons allowed at weddings, funerals in Indore

AGENCIES

Indore, July 16: In an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Indore, the district administration has prohibited gathering of more than 20 people at weddings and funerals, an official said Thursday. As per an order issued by district collector Manish Singh, which came into effect immediately, not more than 20 people can take part in weddings and funeral processions.

As per the previous order issued in the last week of June, the district administration had allowed 50 guests to attend a wedding, apart from 10 service providers like bands, hairdressers, etc.

The official said that as per the fresh order, not more than 10 people can attend the wedding anniversary celebrations and birthday parties organised at home. Religious functions and public ceremonies have been banned in the run up to the festive season, he

said. Meanwhile, at least 136 persons tested positive for coronavirus in Indore in the last 24 hours, taking the tally in the district to 5,632, chief medical and health officer Praveen Jadia said. While 280 persons have died in the district so far, 4,087 have recovered from the infection, he added.

This is for the first time in a month that the figure of fresh Covid-19 cases has crossed the mark of 100.

A local health bulletin said as many as 2,658 samples were tested for Covid-19 Wednesday, of which 2,517 were tested negative for the infection. As many as 1,265 active Covid-19 cases are reported and are being treated at different hospitals in the district.

The number of coronavirus cases in India neared one million on Thursday as infection numbers rose in the countryside, pushing authorities to reinstate lockdowns across several states.



Maha retains second spot in maternal mortality rate

AGENCIES

Mumbai, July 16: Maharashtra has retained its second position among states with low maternal mortality rate, according to the Sample Registration Survey (SRS) whose findings were published Thursday.

An official statement here, quoting the survey, said, Maharashtra's maternal mortality rate has gone down to 46 from 68 three years ago and the state has fulfilled the sustainable development goal in this regard set by the United Nations.

The maternal mortality rate refers to deaths due to birth or pregnancy-related complications per



1,00,000 registered live births. The statement said Kerala, whose rate is 43, has topped the list of states in the survey carried out during 2016-18 by the Office of The

Registrar General of India. Maharashtra Public Health Minister Rajesh Tope said that the development gives relief to the state which is leading in efforts to contain the

Maha's maternal mortality rate has gone down to 46 from 68 three years ago and the state has fulfilled the sustainable development goal in this regard set by the UN

spread of COVID-19. According to the statement, Tamil Nadu (60), Telangana (63) and Andhra Pradesh (74) also have found place among the first five states in the country with low mortality rate. Indians

mortality rate, according to the survey, is 113 and it has gone down by 7.4 per cent compared to the 2015-17 study, it said. It is a relief to know that Maharashtra has retained second position in the list of states with low mortality rate at a time when the state is leading in the country in containing the spread of COVID-19.

The success is due to the efforts taken by the healthcare system of the state, Tope said, according to the statement. Meanwhile, now the pandemic and strict lockdown in India have affected reproductive services such as maternal health, family planning, and abortion services adversely.

of the day quote

False rumours spread to malign. Pilot: 'I am not joining BJP'. I guess then legislators at a hotel in Manesar is merely a vacation in Haryana's comfort zone under BJP's watchful eye. What about 'ghar wapsi'

KAPIL SIBAL | CONGRESS LEADER

As per this report, Mumbai Congress leaders have demanded action against me. Because, I wanted a probe into Shiv Sena leaders' land scam...Is speaking against Shiv Sena an anti-party activity? Is Mumbai Congress merged into Shiv Sena?

SANJAY NIRUPAM | CONGRESS LEADER

The ruling YSRCP government in the last one year has been relentlessly pursuing anti-people policies, and in the process pushing the state towards 'jungle raj'

JAYADEV GALLA | TDP LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Six die in TN

Chennai: Six persons including a three-year-old girl died when the car in which there were travelling veered off the road and fell into a ditch on Thursday morning in Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu, police said. Two injured children have been admitted to hospital. The car was coming from Tirunelveli district to Chennai and near Tindivanam the car veered off the road as the driver lost control. The dead include the driver and five others. The Villupuram police is investigating the case.

Shanties gutted

New Delhi: At least 70 shanties were gutted in fire at Shahbad Dairy area of Delhi's Rohini, police said. At least 26 fire tenders were rushed to the spot after the incident was reported on Wednesday night and the fire fighting officials managed to control the raging blaze at around 2 a.m. on Thursday. "We received a call at 11.30 p.m. on Wednesday night. These were small shanties where people mostly did the scrap work. No causality has been reported so far due to the fire," said a senior police officer.

Militant killed

Srinagar: An unidentified militant was killed when troops foiled an infiltration bid along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, an Army official said. He said the alert troops eliminated the intruder when they noticed suspicious movement across the LoC in Keran sector. "Terrorists tried to infiltrate but were intercepted by our troops. One terrorist was killed," the official said, adding an AK rifle was recovered. The operation was in progress when the last reports came in, he added.

Woman found dead in Shimla

Shimla: A 23-year-old woman working as an assistant to a high court lawyer was found dead at her rented accommodation here Thursday, the police said. Prima facie, it seemed that she died due to electric shock, they added. The woman is a resident of Solan district and lived at a rented house here. An expert team from the state forensic science laboratory (SFL) has been asked to visit the spot for inspection, they said. The additional superintendent of police (ASP) and the Sadar SHO visited the spot and the body has been sent to IGMCH hospital for post-mortem, the police added.



As far as tests are concerned, Goa is doing good. Covid care management is also good
SATYA PAL MALIK | GOA GOVERNOR

Gap in cured and active Covid cases quadruples in 30 days

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 16: India remains the third worst COVID-19 affected country in the world after the US and Brazil with over 9.68 lakh confirmed cases and the gap though between patients who have recovered and those still infected by the virus has almost quadrupled in the last one month.

The trend was noted from June 16 and July 16 (Thursday) by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). As per the data, a total of 63.25 per cent COVID-19 patients have recovered so far while the active cases are 34.18 per cent.

Accordingly, in the one month, there is a gap of 29.7 per cent between the recovered patients and active novel coronavirus cases. There were a total of 52.47 per cent recovered cases on June 16 while the active cases were 44.65 per cent. It showed a gap of around 7.82 per cent then. As per MoHF graph, from mid-June 2020 after crossing the 50 per cent mark in recovery rate, there is a steady increase in the recovered patients and decline in the number of active cases. Simultaneously, there has been a steady dip in the active cases.

"63.25 per cent of the COVID-19 patients have recovered so far and



As per the data, a total of 63.25 per cent COVID-19 patients have recovered so far while the active cases are 34.18 per cent

Accordingly, in the one month, there is a gap of 29.7 per cent between the recovered patients and active novel coronavirus cases

from around 45 per cent in mid-June 2020 to around 34.18 per cent, as of now."

A total of 20,783 people cured of COVID in the last 24 hours has taken the total number of recovered cases among COVID-19 patients to 6,12,814, said the Ministry data, adding the gap between recovered patients and active COVID-19 cases has further increased to 2,81,668.

A graded, pre-emptive and proactive approach under the 'Whole of Government' strategy has been adopted by the Central govern-

ment along with the states and UTs for prevention, containment and management of COVID-19, the Ministry said.

"The collective efforts are regularly reviewed and monitored at the highest level. The targeted measures have contributed to a steady decline in the number of active cases."

As on date, the actual caseload of COVID-19 patients in the country is only 3,31,146. These contribute to a little more than a third (34.18 per cent) of total cases detected so far.

The data further shows that only two states- Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu- constitute 48.15 per cent of the country's total active case load. Maharashtra remained the worst-hit state, with 2,75,640 cases and 10,928 casualties followed by Tamil Nadu with a total 1,51,820 cases, including 2,167 deaths.

Of the total 36 states and Union Territories (UTs), the data says, only 10 states constitute 84.62 per cent of the total active case load.

States with more than 10,000 cases included Gujarat (44,552), Uttar Pradesh (41,383), Rajasthan (26,437), Madhya Pradesh (19,643), West Bengal (34,427), Haryana (23,306), Karnataka (47,253), Andhra Pradesh (35,451), Telangana (39,342), Assam (18,666), and Bihar (20,612).

Dubai hosp waives ₹1.52 cr Covid bill of Indian worker

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, July 16: A hospital in Dubai has waived the ₹1.52 crore bill of a labourer from Telangana, who was treated there for Covid-19.

Odnala Rajesh, who was under treatment at the Dubai Hospital for 80 days, reached Hyderabad in the early hours of Wednesday and left for his village in Jagtial district. The 42-year-old was admitted to Dubai Hospital on April 23 and had tested positive for Covid-19. He recovered after 80 days of treatment and the hospital handed him a bill of 7,62,555 Arab Emirate Dirham (Rs 1 crore 52 lakh).

Gundelli Narasimha, president of the Gulf Workers' Protection Society in Dubai, who took the worker to the hospital and was visiting him regularly, brought the matter to the attention of Sumanth Reddy, an Indian Consulate volunteer in Dubai. Reddy and Ashok



Kotecha of BAPS Swaminarayan Trust requested Harjeet Singh, Consul (Labour) of Indian Consulate in Dubai, to help the poor worker. Harjeet Singh wrote a letter to the Dubai Hospital management, requesting them to waive the bill on humanitarian grounds. They responded positively and waived the bill.

Dubai Hospital is a multi-specialty hospital and is a part of the Dubai Department of Health and Medical Services.

Ashok Kotecha provided free flight ticket to Rajesh and his escort Dyavara Kankaiah and paid ₹10,000 for pocket expenses. They reached Hyderabad by an Air India Express flight.

Assam flood situation grim

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, July 16: Amid the rising COVID-19 cases, the flood situation in Assam remained grim Thursday, as five more deaths were reported from four districts, taking the death toll due to the deluge to 71, while around 40 lakh people across 27 of the state's 33 districts have been affected.

According to officials of forest department and Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), at least 76 animals were killed, while 121 animals were rescued as

95 per cent of the world-famous Kaziranga national park, home to more than 2,200 one-horned Indian rhinoceros, was inundated.

An ASDMA official said that over the past more than a month, 71 deaths due to the floods were reported from Sonitpur, Biswanath, Tinsukia, Lakhimpur, Bongaigaon, Kamrup, Golaghat, Sivasagar, Morigaon, Tinsukia, Dhubri, Nagaon, Nalbari, Barpeta, Dhemaji, Udalguri, Goalpara and Dibrugarh districts, while 26 others have been killed in separate landslides since May 22.

The officials said that more than seven rivers, including the mighty Brahmaputra, are flowing above the danger mark in many places in more than 12 districts.

Quoting reports from the districts, they said that the floodwater has submerged 3,218 villages, affecting around 40 lakh people and 131,368 hectares of crop area in 27 districts.

The District Administrations have set up 748 relief camps and distribution centres in 25 districts, where around 50,000 men, women and children have taken shelter.

ROAD COLLAPSE

LJP targets Bihar govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: The Lok Janshakti Party Thursday joined the opposition in attacking the Bihar government over the collapse of a road in floods, saying it raises questions on the claim of "zero corruption" and demands action against the "guilty".

The state government has insisted that it is an approach road to a new bridge connecting Gopalganj to East Champaran which has been washed away, and not the bridge itself as alleged by opposition leaders like Rashtriya Janata Dal's Tejashwi Yadav. In a tweet, LJP president Chirag Paswan targeted the Bihar government headed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

"Part of a bridge built at the cost of ₹264 crore has collapsed today. Any work done with public money should be carried out maintaining quality standards. Incidents like this raise questions in the public eye over zero corruption. The LJP demands a high-level probe to punish the guilty quickly," he said.

His tweet is seen as yet another instance of Paswan criticising Kumar's government in which the BJP is a partner. Though the LJP is a Bharatiya Janata Party ally, it is not part of



LJP president Chirag Paswan

the Bihar government led by Janata Dal (United) chief Kumar.

Sharing an image of the caved-in portion of the road on his Twitter handle, leader of the opposition Tejashwi Yadav demanded resignation of Kumar, who had inaugurated the Sattarghat bridge on June 16.

The Bihar government, however, quickly came out with a clarification that it was not the bridge itself that had collapsed.

The state's Road Construction Department issued a statement, saying the caved-in portion of the road was situated "two kilometres away from the bridge" and that it was the approach route for an 18-metre-long causeway that leads to the Sattarghat bridge.

Incidentally, the department is a part of the ministerial portfolio of senior BJP leader Nand Kishore Yadav in the state government.



HISTORIC OSMANIA HOSPITAL FLOODED

Rain and drainage water entered into state-run Osmania General Hospital in Hyderabad Wednesday, turning the oldest and one of the biggest healthcare facilities in Telangana into a cesspool

2 killed, 15 rescued as buildings collapse

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, July 16: Two persons were killed and 15 others rescued from debris of two buildings that crashed in the city and its suburbs Thursday afternoon the BMC Disaster Cell said. A few others could also be trapped, it added.

In the first case, two persons were killed and 13 others were dug out of debris of a three-storied tenement that crashed due to heavy rains at Malvani in Malad West. Four-five persons are feared to be trapped there. The Mumbai Fire Brigade and disaster teams are trying to rescue them.

The victims have been identified as 23-year-old woman Anjum S. Shaikh and an 18-year-old Faizal W. Sayyed. The rescued people were treated for minor injuries and discharged by Hayat Hospital nearby. In the second accident, the rear part of a five-storied Bhanushali Building collapsed at the Fort in South Mumbai due to rain, which lashed the city since the past four days.

No postal ballot for voters above 65 yrs



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 16: After criticism from various political parties, the Election Commission Thursday said that it has decided not to extend the facility of postal ballot to electors above 65 years of age in the coming Bihar Assembly elections and in bypolls due in near future.

The Commission, in a statement, said that it "has been constantly monitoring the electoral preparedness" for the coming by-elections and the Bihar polls "in view of this unprecedented environment".

"The Commission has already limited the number of electors to one thousand for each polling station for ease of voting, especially for elderly and vulnerable sections of electors, in Covid-19 situations." However, facility of optional postal ballot to electors who are above 80 years of age, disabled voters, the electors engaged in essential services and voters who are Covid-19 positive/suspect in quarantine will be extended, it said.

The commission said in view of its restrictions on number of voters at a polling station, Bihar is creating approximately 34,000 additional polling stations (45 per cent more), which will increase the total number of polling stations to around 1,06,000.

"This would entail formidable logistical challenges of mobilizing 1.8 lakh more polling personnel and other additional resources including requirement of much larger number of vehicles in the state of Bihar. Similar challenges would be there for the coming by-elections also," it said.

UNLOCK 2.0



A shopkeeper waits for customers at a gift shop during Unlock 2.0 in Kolkata, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

Girl raped outside Covid ward

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, July 16: A security guard of Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH), the largest hospital in Bihar, has been arrested for allegedly raping a minor girl outside a Covid ward in the hospital, police said.

A police official said Thursday, that July 8, the minor girl was seen wandering at Barh railway station. The child helpline rescued the 15-year-old girl and handed over to the PMCH for Covid test.

It has been alleged that on the night of July 8, the ward's security guard Mahesh Prasad (40) took the victim to the bathroom and raped her.

The victim did not reveal this to anyone out of fear. When the members of Child Helpline came to see her on Wednesday, she narrated the ordeal. Aarti Jaiswal, in-charge of Patna Mahila Police Station, said an FIR has been lodged in this connection on the basis of victim's statement and the accused has been arrested. She said that the victim has been medically examined, the report of which is yet to come. Police is investigating the entire case, she added.

DECENTRALISED APPROACH

IIT-M startup develops portable hospital for corona patients

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, July 16: Modulus Housing, a startup incubated at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) has developed a portable hospital unit that can be installed anywhere within two hours by four people, said the IIT-M.

In a statement issued here Thursday, IIT-M said the portable hospital called MediCAB is a decentralised approach to detect, screen, identify, isolate and treat Covid-19 patients in their local communities through these portable microstructures.

According to IIT-M, MediCAB has been recently deployed in the Wayanad district in Kerala to treat corona patients. The startup is developing micro hospitals that can



be deployed rapidly across the nation.

The MediCAB is foldable and is

composed of four zones - a doctor's room, an isolation room, a medical room/ward and a twin-bed ICU,

According to IIT-M, MediCAB has been deployed in Wayanad to treat corona patients. The startup is developing micro hospitals that can be deployed rapidly

maintained at negative pressure. The startup collaborated with Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) who provided inputs on the certifications and customisations necessary for the project.

The company Modulus Housing founded by two IIT alumni in 2018, was supported by the IIT-M

Incubation Cell and has a vision to revolutionise housing through modular prefab structures. They have re-purposed their designs to support the fight against Covid-19.

"The outcome of this pilot project in Kerala will help in proving the applicability of the technology and advantages of micro hospitals, with MediCAB as an instant infrastructure solution. It can be easily assembled in eight hours by four people. When folded, our collapsible cabins are reduced five-fold, making it very cost-effective for transportation," Shreeram Ravichandran, Chief Executive Officer said.

"Health infrastructure is crucial in fighting any pandemic. With a contagious disease such as Covid-19, it is essential to have smart health infrastructure to screen, contain

and treat people. Unlike urban areas where there is plenty of existing infrastructures that can be converted to hospitals, rural areas do not have a lot of infrastructure. It is difficult to construct buildings from scratch as the requirement is immediate. As the rural population density is relatively low, more micro hospitals help greatly in tackling COVID-19 cases."

Modulus is working on a dual design where these can be rapidly launched as Covid-19 isolation wards. Post Covid-19, these can be transformed into micro-hospitals/clinics in rural India where the medical infrastructure needs to be augmented. Modulus Housing has set up its manufacturing unit at Chengalpet (located about 35 kms from Chennai).

of the day quote

The BJP government in Karnataka has made amendments to the land reforms Act and brought out an ordinance on July 13 despite stiff opposition. I had initially thought that the government will not come out with the ordinance at a time when COVID-19 is spreading, but the government did

SIDDARAMAIAH | LEADER OF OPPOSITION IN KARNATAKA

Air India's compulsory leave without pay scheme is unprecedented in the history of public sector undertakings. Obvious ploy to protect top management and sacrifice employees

DEREK O'BRIEN | TRINAMOL CONGRESS LEADER

We have full faith in the Indian culture. Whenever any such crisis like corona takes place, we hold religious programmes to pray to god

JAI RAM THAKUR | HIMACHAL CM

SHORT TAKES

Gold recovered

Palghar: Gold, jewellery and cash worth Rs 1.77 crore looted by a gang of robbers from the office of a gold loan company in Maharashtra's Palghar district last year has been recovered fully, the police said. District Superintendent of Police Datta Shinde said Wednesday those ten persons have been arrested in the case so far and hunt is on for a few others.

Two arrested

Mumbai: The Maharashtra police's Anti-Terrorism Squad has arrested two persons for the alleged possession of mephedrone worth Rs 1.10 crore in the western suburb of Saki Naka here, an official said Thursday. Acting on a tip-off, the Juhu unit of the ATS laid a trap at Wahid Ali Compound at 90-ft Road Wednesday evening and nabbed two men, while another accused fled the scene, the official said.

Farmer found dead

Bulandshahr: A farmer was found murdered in a field in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr, police said on Thursday. According to them, the incident took place at Vidhipur village when Veer Singh (45) went to his fields on Wednesday night. He was found dead by villagers on Thursday morning after which they informed the deceased's relatives and police.

NTPC manager held

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested a manager of NTPC Limited in Jodhpur for allegedly receiving Rs one lakh as bribe for clearing bills and allowing smooth functioning of a firm engaged for the maintenance of a solar plant of the PSU, officials said Thursday.

Two quakes hit Assam

Guwahati: Two earthquakes of 4.1 and 2.6 magnitudes on the Richter scale hit some parts of Assam and adjoining northeast areas on Thursday. No damage or casualty has been reported. According to a IMD official, the first quake of the magnitude of 4.1 on the Richter scale hit southern Assam's Karimganj, Silchar and adjoining areas at 7.57 a.m. Another tremor of 2.6 magnitude on the Richter scale hit the Kokrajhar district in western Assam at 1.9 p.m.

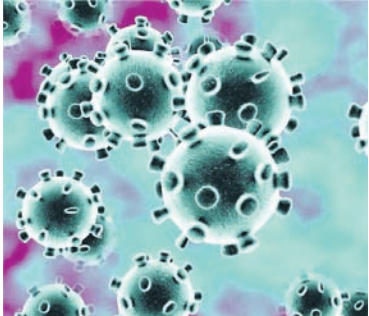


To force a couple to attempt suicide by damaging their crop sown by taking debt with the help of JCB machine, in the name of encroachment, is most cruel and shameful

MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

DEFEATING CORONA

More than 2,000 people have registered to volunteer as civil police wardens with Bangalore police department's south division to assist in regulation and anti-Covid measures, an official said Thursday



ANOTHER STORM?

J'khand Cong fears losing MLAs to BJP

Jharkhand BJP spokesperson Pratul Shahdev said, "There is no value of Congress ministers' words for the government. In this situation they want to create pressure on Chief Minister Hemant Soren"

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ranchi, July 16: After facing political storms in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the fear of losing MLAs is now haunting Congress leaders in Jharkhand. Senior Congress leader and Jharkhand minister Rameshwar Oraon said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is trying to break the Congress MLAs. The BJP, however, denies such allegations, calling it a strategy of the Congress to pressurize the Chief Minister.

Oraon said that many of his MLAs were lured by the BJP and an attempt was made to buy them during the Rajya Sabha elections. He alleged that the BJP is constantly trying to lure the Congress legislators.

However, expressing confidence in his MLAs, he said that they are loyal Congressmen and will not go to any other party Oraon alleged that during the Rajya Sabha elections, a conspiracy was hatched to form the government by offering money and posts to MLAs.

Congress MLA Irfan Ansari also clarified the situation by tweeting and retweeting from his official Twitter account. Ansari tweeted, "I



would have crossed the river with lies and flattery. But the habit of telling the truth drowned me."

Ansari has also retweeted a tweet that reads, "Your pain is valid Dr. Irfan Ansari. Rahul Gandhi, what has happened in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the evidence of it will come forward in Jharkhand. Is the MBBS degree not sufficient of a man who carries Congress flag day and night and is educated and straightforward. Matriculation failure is a must. This is the problem of Congress. Change with the times."

The BJP denies any such allegations. Jharkhand BJP spokesperson Pratul Shahdev said, "There

is no value of Congress ministers' words for the government. In this situation they want to create pressure on Chief Minister Hemant."

He said that the Congress is a part of the government. If something like this is happening, they should register an FIR and get the matter investigated. Shahdev added that the situation regarding coronavirus in Jharkhand is getting frightening.

In such a situation, the Congress is trying to divert the people's attention by raising such issues. However, sources say that many Congress leaders are angry with the government and they have raised questions about the government's decisions.

GRIM SCENARIO

Dhankhar slams WB's edu system

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, July 16: West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar Thursday criticised the state's education system saying the quality of education here is rapidly declining due to political control and affiliations.

"It is unfortunate that in our state the education is politically controlled. Politically controlled education system can never serve the wholesome purpose. What I find now is that the political grip on education is tightening in Bengal. It will hurt the students. It will hurt the education scenario. It will hurt the society at large," the Governor told a press conference here.

He said that the importance of education is finished in society. If a country has grown it has grown on the basis of quality education. "Education is important and it is the soul of the society as it passes from one generation to another. Neglect of education will hurt generations after generation," he said.

"I am here for a year now and I am trying to improve the education system. I have interacted with former vice-chancellors. I have interacted with students, guardians and academicians. They all share my anguish that the state of West Bengal which is gifted with finest and oldest institutions is rapidly declining in quality of education on account of political control and



political affiliations," Dhankhar pointed out.

The Governor said that during Covid-19 he had scheduled a virtual conference with the vice-chancellors. "You will be shocked. The government said there is no provision

for virtual conference. Can you ever imagine in changing India the virtual conferences are being held day in and day out by the chief ministers, the government has the audacity to write to the Governor saying that there is no rule," he said.

He said students can do well only if the education system is good. "If I am raising the issue of quality education, if I want students to get the best of education I do not understand why the government is objecting to this," he added.

The Governor's reactions came a day after the state government had refused to give permissions to all vice-chancellors to attend a virtual meeting called by Dhankhar on July 15, citing the on-going Covid-19 pandemic situation.

REACHING OUT



Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal takes stock of flood situation and conditions of animals during his visit to Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation, at Borjuri village near Kaziranga National Park, in Nagaon district

PTI PHOTO

CBSE, IBM introduce AI curriculum in schools

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 16: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Thursday announced a partnership with tech giant IBM to introduce artificial intelligence (AI) curriculum for classes 11 and 12 in about 200 high schools across 13 states in India.

Developed in collaboration with IBM, the curriculum is part of CBSE's Social Empowerment through Work Education and Action (SEWA) programme.

BOOSTING SKILLS

The curriculum is structured around a course framework for students consisting of base strands of knowledge (basics, history, applications), skills (design thinking, computational thinking, data fluency, critical thinking) and values (ethical decision making, bias in AI).

"The objective of our exciting collaboration with CBSE is to help address some of those chal-

lenges by designing one of the most accessible and comprehensive gateways for students to begin their AI journey," Sandip Patel, General Manager, IBM India/South Asia said in a statement.

According to the company, it is further made robust with problem-based learning outcomes and assessment methods for teachers, to build foundational skills of AI in students making them not just consumers of AI, but creators as well.

'REAL TOURISM' YET TO BEGIN

Fresh lockdown in Goa to affect tourist sentiment

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Panaji, July 16: The Goa government's sudden announcement of a lockdown may have affected the tourist sentiment and confidence building efforts made by the state's tourism industry to lure tourist footfalls to the coastal state, Travel and Tourism Association of Goa president Nilesh Shah said Thursday.

Shah, who heads one of the old bodies of travel and tourism stakeholders in Goa, also said that despite the state government opening its doors to the tourists from July 1, trade had not picked up and that only "5 to 7 per cent" hotels were wit-

nessing some bookings.

"What is badly affected is the sentiment and the confidence that we were gradually building. The continuity has also been interrupted. The sentiment was already decreasing because of the rising number of cases and there is no clear way forward. Now it has gone down even more," Shah told reporters here. The comment from the president of the industry stakeholders' body comes a day after Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Wednesday announced a two-tiered curfew in the state.

While a complete lockdown (barring essential and medical services)



has been ordered in Goa from Thursday night to Monday morning, a night curfew has been imposed

until August 10, in view of the prolonged spike in the number of active Covid-19 cases in the state which

have crossed 1,000, in India's smallest state with a population of just 1.5 million. Most of the cases have been reported over the last one month. Sawant had said the state could be heading towards peak numbers, especially in view of the monsoons, when he said there was a tendency for viral infections to increase.

Shah said that despite the state government opening up the state for tourism on July 1, "real tourism" had not started. "Generally speaking, tourism hadn't really picked up in the state with only 5-7 per cent hotels having some occupancy and that too was only people of the younger, more care-free generation," Shah said.

Haryana gears up for intense locust attack

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, July 16: The Haryana government has stepped up efforts to control locust swarms and crop damages in view of warning about potential intense attacks in several districts after July 22.

Additional Chief Secretary Sanjeev Kaushal said, here Thursday, arrangements had been made to stock additional quantities of pesticides. The locust swarms in the region had become resistant to the commonly used pesticide Chorypriphos, he added.

To prevent homogeneity in use of pesticides during repeated spraying, arrangements are being made to stock 20,000 litres of Lambda Cyhalothrin in addition to existing stocks of pesticide.

Three drones were being purchased for aerial spray of pesticide, he said.

According to Kaushal, 66 fire-tenders are available along with 3,540 tractor-mounted spray pumps. The state would also acquire fogging machines being bought by the Centre from the UK for use on trees.

The Locust Warning Organisation has warned of high intensity attacks in Nuh, Rewari, Mahendragarh, Bhiwani and Charkhi Dadri districts after July 22 as large-scale locust breeding was observed in the Jhunjhunu district in Rajasthan.

These attacks are likely to be far more severe than the previous ones over 13,038 acres in Jhajjar, Charkhi Dadri, Palwal, Sirsa, Nuh, Rewari, Bhiwani and Narnaul districts between June 26 and July 16.

Kaushal said farmers in Jhajjar, Palwal and Nuh didn't report any losses due to locust swarms.

AIIMS PATIENT HANGS SELF

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 16: A 35-year-old man was found hanging in the bathroom of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), police said Thursday.

The man was found hanging with a plastic pipe, which is used with glucose bottles, in the bathroom of the Yellow Zone in the AIIMS Trauma Centre. No suicide note was recovered from him, said police.

"On July 16 at 12.55 a.m., an information regarding the suicide in the bathroom at the AIIMS Trauma Centre" was received in the Police Station Hauz Khas from AIIMS Hospital, New Delhi. On inspection, a ligature mark over the anterior aspect of Neck was found on the deceased," said Atul Thakur, DCP South Delhi.

The deceased was identified as RajMani Patel, a resident of district Satna in Madhya Pradesh. The deceased underwent intestinal surgery at the AIIMS Hospital in July 2019. In continuation of his treatment on July 15, he came for further treatment in the AIIMS Trauma. His admission was made at about 11.30 p.m. on Wednesday. In the meantime, the deceased went missing from the admission area. Thereafter, he was found hanging in the bathroom at Yellow Zone, AIIMS Trauma Centre.

The deceased was rushed to the emergency area where doctor declared him brought dead.

of the day quote

Masks will be mandatory in closed public places as of next week

JEAN CASTEX | NEW FRENCH PRIME MINISTER



The Victoria government responded to the latest spike by reducing non-urgent surgeries allowed in hospitals to increase beds available for COVID-19 patients

JENNY MIKAKOS | AUSTRALIAN POLITICIAN



The United States thinks that everything China does is a threat, such attitude would become self-fulfilling

HUA CHUNYING | CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESWOMAN



SHORT TAKES

30 killed in flash floods

Indonesia: Flash floods and landslides killed at least 30 people on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi and left hundreds displaced, authorities said Thursday. Fifteen people remain missing, Indonesia search rescue agency spokesman Yusuf Latif said in a statement. The flash floods struck the North Luwu district of South Sulawesi province after heavy rain on Monday caused three nearby rivers to burst. More than 4,000 residents were affected.

Netanyahu's popularity drops

Jerusalem: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's popularity has dropped as he is facing a criminal trial, the coronavirus crisis and an economic setback, according to a new poll. The poll, issued Wednesday by Israel's Radio 103fm, the popularity of the embattled leader has been decreasing even among voters of his right-wing Likud party, reports Xinhua news agency. Some 41 per cent of the Likud voters said that they believe the government has failed in handling the crisis.

Iran faces shortage of medics

Teheran: Hospitals in Iran face acute shortages of medical personnel and beds as the country tackles a powerful second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, a senior official of Tehran's anti-coronavirus task force said Thursday. Iran, the Middle East country hardest hit by the pandemic, began relaxing its lockdown in mid-April.

'Climate change as urgent as nCoV'

London: Swedish activist Greta Thunberg urged European leaders on Thursday to take emergency action on climate change, saying people in power had practically "given up" on the possibility of handing over a decent future to coming generations. In an interview with Reuters television, the 17-year-old said governments would only be able to mount a meaningful response once they accepted they needed to transform the whole economic system.

Smoking raises risks

Washington: Close to one third of young US adults appear to have an elevated risk for severe Covid-19, with smoking their strongest risk factor, according to survey data.



The world is waking up to the threats from China and it will be confronted as never before by democracies

MIKE POMPEO | US SECRETARY OF STATE

BOLSONARO AGAIN TESTS COVID+VE

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro confirmed that he has once again tested positive for the novel coronavirus, roughly a week after he contracted the virus



KULBHUSHAN JADHAV CASE

India gets second 'consular access'

AGENCIES

Islamabad, July 16: Pakistan Thursday provided consular access to Indian prisoner on death row Kulbhushan Jadhav, days ahead of a deadline to file a review petition in a court here against his conviction by a military court. This was the second consular access to Jadhav. The first consular access was provided by Pakistan on September 2, 2019, the Foreign Office said in a statement.

Jadhav, the 50-year-old retired Indian Navy officer, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of "espionage and terrorism" in April 2017. Weeks later, India approached the ICJ against Pakistan for denial of consular access to Jadhav and challenging the death sentence. The Hague-based ICJ ruled in July last year that Pakistan must undertake an "effective review and reconsideration" of the conviction and sentence of Jadhav and also to grant consular access to India without further delay.

"Two consular officers of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad were provided unimpeded and uninterrupted consular access to Commander Jadhav at 1500 hours," the FO said in the statement on Thursday.

It also recalled that the mother and wife of Jadhav were allowed to meet him on December 25, 2017.

"Pakistan remains committed to fully implementing the International Court of Justice (ICJ)'s judgment of 17 July 2019. It is hoped that India will cooperate with the Pakistan court in giving full effect to the said judgement," the statement said.

Pakistan enacted an ordinance called the "International Court of Justice Review and Reconsideration Ordinance 2020" on May 20 under



India said Pakistan did not give "unimpeded, unhindered and unconditional" consular access to Indian death row convict Kulbhushan Jadhav

India had earlier sought unrestricted consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav

This request was made ahead of the July 20 deadline to file a review petition

which a petition for the review of a military court's decision can be made to Islamabad High Court through an application within 60 days of its promulgation.

The ordinance would expire on July 19.

Last week, Pakistan's Additional Attorney General Ahmed Irfan said that on June 17, 2020, Jadhav was offered to file an appeal in the Islamabad High Court for review and reconsideration of his sentence and conviction.

Meanwhile, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said Jadhav was "visibly under stress" and indicated that clearly to the Indian consular officers, adding the arrangements did not permit a free conversation between them.

Oxford University Covid-19 vaccine raises hopes

AGENCIES

London, July 16: Researchers at the University of Oxford believe they may have a breakthrough in their search for a Covid-19 vaccine after the team discovered that the jab could provide "double protection" against the deadly coronavirus following early stage human trials, according to media reports in the UK.

Blood samples taken from a group of UK volunteers given a dose of the vaccine showed that it stimulated the body to produce both antibodies and killer T-cells, a senior source from the trial was quoted by 'The Daily Telegraph' as saying. The discovery is promising because separate studies have suggested that antibodies may fade away within months while T-cells can stay in circulation for years. However, the source cautioned that the results, while extremely promising, did not yet prove that the Oxford vaccine provides long-lasting immunity against the deadly virus.

The vaccine development, by the university's Jenner Institute, is being supported by the UK government and AstraZeneca, which will support the production phase.

Chinese executives get 'pre-test' injections in nCoV vaccine race

AGENCIES

Beijing, Jul 16: In the global race to make a coronavirus vaccine, a state-owned Chinese company is boasting that its employees, including top executives, received experimental shots even before the government approved testing in people. "Giving a helping hand in forging the sword of victory," reads an online post from SinoPharm with pictures of company leaders it says helped "pre-test" its vaccine. Whether it's viewed as heroic sacrifice or a violation of international ethical norms, the claim underscores the enormous stakes as China competes with US and British companies to be the first with a vaccine to help end the pandemic — a feat that would be both a scientific and political triumph.

"Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is the new Holy Grail," said Lawrence Gostin, a global public health law expert at Georgetown University. "The political competition to be the first is no less consequential than the race for the moon between the United States and Russia." China has positioned itself to be a strong contender: Eight of the nearly two dozen potential vaccines in



various stages of human testing worldwide are from China, the most of any country. And SinoPharm and another Chinese company already have announced they're entering final testing.

Both China and SinoPharm have invested heavily in a tried-and-true technology — an "inactivated" vaccine made by growing the whole virus in a lab and then killing it, which is how polio shots are made. Leading Western competitors use newer, less proven technology to target the "spike" protein that coats the virus.

That protein is "a good place to make our bet," Dr Gary Nabel, chief scientific officer of the French

pharmaceutical company Sanofi, said at a US biotechnology industry meeting. But "it's good to have some diversity. I like the fact that there is an inactivated, whole vaccine. That provides an alternative in case one of these should fail." SinoPharm's claim that 30 "special volunteers" rolled up their sleeves even before the company got permission for its initial human study raises ethical concerns among Western observers. The company's post cites a "spirit of sacrifice" and shows seven men in suits and ties — a mix of scientists, businessmen and one Communist Party official with a background in military propaganda.

Oli-Prachanda meeting ends without progress

AGENCIES

Kathmandu, July 16: With embattled Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli refusing to resign or give up his position as chairman of the ruling Nepal Communist Party talks aimed to strike a new power-sharing deal between him and former premier Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' failed to make any headway Thursday on the eve of a crucial meeting of the party.

Prime Minister and party chairman Oli, executive chairman 'Prachanda' and former premier Madhav Kumar Nepal held an informal meeting at the PM's official

residence at Baluwatar on Thursday, ahead of the meeting of the party's 45-member powerful Standing Committee. However, the three leaders failed to reach a deal after Oli and Prachanda, who is leading the dissident group, stuck to their demands, said Standing Committee member Ganesh Shah.

The trio tried to sort out differences between Oli and the dissident group. But, as the Prime Minister didn't accept their condition of a one-man-one-post, the talks failed, he said. Oli and Prachanda have failed to reach a power-sharing deal even after at



least eight rounds of talks in recent weeks. Thursday's talks took place just ahead of the Standing Committee meeting on Friday which is expected to determine the political future of the 68-year-

old prime minister who has previously alleged that his detractors were trying to remove him with India's help. Top party leaders, including 'Prachanda', have been demanding Prime Minister Oli's resignation, saying his recent anti-India remarks were "neither politically correct nor diplomatically appropriate." They are also against Oli's autocratic style of functioning.

There could be a middle point for compromise even if the Prime Minister agreed to quit either of the two key positions, which he did not accept, resulting in a deadlock in the talk, Shah said.

CHILLING OUT



A girl plays with water on a warm summer day at a shopping complex in Beijing, China

REUTERS

UK IS bride can return to fight citizenship

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

London, July 16: Shamima Begum, a British resident who ran away in 2015 to become an Islamic State (IS) jihadi bride, has won a legal battle to be allowed to return home to fight the government's decision to remove her UK citizenship, a media report said Thursday.

In its ruling, the Court of Appeal said she had been denied a fair hearing because she could not make her case from the camp, the BBC reported.

The judgement means the government must now find a way to allow the 20-year-old to appear in court in London despite repeatedly saying it would not assist removing her from Syria.

Responding to the develop-

ment, Daniel Furner, Begum's solicitor, said: "She has never had a fair opportunity to give her side of the story. She is not afraid of facing British justice, she welcomes it."

"But the stripping of her citizenship without a chance to clear her name is not justice, it is the opposite." Begum had argued that the government's decision to revoke her citizenship was unlawful because it left her stateless. In 2015, Begum, then aged 15, was one of three schoolgirls from Bethnal Green Academy who left their homes and families to join the IS.

Kadiza Sultana, then 16, and Amira Abase, then 15, and Begum boarded a flight from Gatwick Airport to Istanbul, Turkey, on February 17, 2015, before making their way to Raqqa in Syria.



Russia trying to steal vaccine data, say UK, US and Canada

REUTERS

London/Ottawa, July 16: Hackers backed by the Russian state are trying to steal COVID-19 vaccine and treatment research from academic and pharmaceutical institutions around the world, Britain's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) said Thursday.

A co-ordinated statement from Britain, the United States and Canada attributed the attacks to group APT29, also known as 'Cozy Bear', which they said was almost certainly operating as part of Russian intelligence services.

"We condemn these despicable attacks against those doing vital work to combat the coronavirus pandemic," said NCSC Director of Operations, Paul Chichester.



Russian news agency RIA cited spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying the Kremlin rejected London's allegations, which he said were not backed by proper evidence.

In a separate announcement Britain also accused "Russian actors" of trying to interfere in its 2019 election by trying to spread leaked documents online. Russia's foreign ministry said those accusations were "foggy and contradictory". Britain is expected to publish a long-delayed report into Russian influence in British politics next week.

"SELFISH INTERESTS" British foreign minister Dominic Raab said it was "completely unacceptable" for Russian intelligence services to target work on the pandemic.

What's behind rising tensions in the SCS?

REUTERS

Hanoi, July 16: The United States this week hardened its position on the South China Sea, where it has accused China of attempting to build a "maritime empire" in the potentially energy-rich waters, despite regional concerns.

The rivals have accused each other of stoking tension in the strategic waterway at a time of strained relations over everything from the new coronavirus to trade to Hong Kong.

A statement from U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on July 13 was the first time the United States had called China's claims in the sea unlawful and accused Beijing of a "campaign of bullying".

But heated rhetoric has also been on the rise in the region, where

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam challenge China's claim to about 90% of the sea.

REGIONAL TENSIONS

Vietnam, frequently at loggerheads with China over the issue, is this year chairing the 10-member Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

At a June 26 summit in Hanoi, Vietnam and the Philippines - China's most vocal challengers over the sea - warned of growing regional insecurity amid concern that Beijing was advancing territorial claims under the cover of the COVID-19 pandemic. As China held military drills in the South China Sea this month, Vietnam said Beijing's actions were "detrimental" to its relationship with the Southeast Asian bloc. The United



States simultaneously deployed two aircraft carriers to the area for what it said were pre-planned exercises.

In a blustery response to the Chinese drills, Philippine Foreign Minister Teodoro Locsin said China "will be met with the severest response, diplomatic and whatever

else is appropriate", if the exercises encroached on Philippine territory.

That followed a surprise move by President Rodrigo Duterte - who had courted Beijing since taking office in 2016 - to suspend his decision to scrap a two-decade-old troop deployment agreement with the United States.

TROUBLED WATERS

China illustrates its claims with a vague, U-shaped "nine-dash line" that includes swathes of Vietnam's exclusive economic zone, or EEZ, as well as the Parcel Islands and Spratly Islands. It also overlaps the EEZs of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

A tribunal at The Hague, based on a suit brought by the Philippines, ruled in 2016 that China has no "historic title" over the waters, and that its line was superseded by the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Last year, Chinese and Vietnamese vessels became embroiled in a months-long standoff in Vietnam's EEZ where a Chinese research vessel conducted a sweeping seismic survey of waters overlapping Vietnamese oil blocks.



All industry players should join hands with the government to rescue the COVID-19-hit economy by taking up projects through PPP mode

NITIN GADHAKARI | UNION MINISTER, MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

ICRA REVISES INDIA'S GDP FORECAST SHARPLY

Domestic rating agency IcrA has revised its forecast for contraction in the country's GDP in the current fiscal to 9.5 per cent from 5 per cent earlier



of the day quote

The past few months have been very challenging, but they have also been a great demonstration of the value of collaboration



N CHANDRASEKARAN | CHIEF, TATA GROUP

India's pharmaceutical industry will be able to produce COVID-19 vaccines not just for the country but also for the entire world



BILL GATES | PHILANTHROPIST

The government is considering a proposal by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy to impose 20 per cent basic customs duty on solar modules



ANURAG THAKUR | MINISTER OF STATE, FINANCE

SHORT TAKES

Govt puts curbs on some imports

New Delhi: The government has imposed curbs on import of power tillers and its components, a move which could discourage inbound shipments of these products. "Import policy of power tillers and its components is amended from free to restricted," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has said in a notification. Putting a product under a "restricted" category means the importer would have to seek a license from the DGFT for the imports.

Tata Power arm bags huge order

New Delhi: Tata Power Thursday said its wholly-owned subsidiary TPGL has bagged an order to develop a 225 mega watt hybrid renewable power project. "Tata Power Green Energy Ltd (TPGEL), the company's wholly owned subsidiary, received a letter of award from Tata Power Mumbai Distribution on July 13, 2020 to develop a 225 MW hybrid renewable project," Tata Power said in a BSE filing. TPGEL won this capacity in a bid finalised recently by Tata Power Mumbai Distribution, the filing said.

Prabhjeet new Uber India chief

New Delhi: Ride hailing platform Uber Thursday said it has elevated Prabhjeet Singh as President of India and South Asia operations. In his new role, Singh will oversee the next phase of growth in the company's mobility business and ensure safety of riders and drivers across India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, a statement said. His appointment is effective immediately, it added. Singh was previously serving as Director Operations (India and South Asia) and Head of Cities.

India's edible oils export rises

New Delhi: India's edible oil exports rose 54 per cent to 80,765 tonne in the financial year 2019-20, on a sharp increase in shipment of groundnut oil especially to China, trade body SEA said Thursday. In value terms, the edible oil shipments increased 52.36 per cent to ₹955.51 crore, against 52,490 tonnes valued at ₹627.11 crore in 2018-19, it said in a statement. The country exports edible oils in small quantities to meet expatriate demand. Of the total exports, groundnut oil shipments more than doubled to 38,225 tonnes in 2019-20, from 15,532 tonnes last year. It was mainly exported to China.

Cap on airfares to be extended beyond Aug 24

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 16: The cap on airfares will be extended after August 24, the civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri said Thursday. Expect a short extension of airfare cap beyond August 24 as demand still muted, the civil aviation minister said in a press conference.

In the wake of coronavirus outbreak, the aviation ministry implemented a cap on domestic airfare in May. India started operating domestic flights after a gap of two months in the last week of May. The domestic flights in India have a cap on fares with both an upper and lower limit.

While the upper price limit is aimed at preventing any sharp rise in fares due to pent-up demand, the lower limit will help ensure that financial viability of airlines does not suffer amid high costs, Puri said.

Flights between cities that are under 40 minutes have been classified under section one, while those under 40-60 minutes are under section two.

Section three consists of destinations 60-90 minutes apart by flight, section four comprises cities 90-120 minutes apart, section five consists of cities 120-150 minutes

apart. Destinations between 150-180 minutes and 180-210 minutes have been classified under sections 6 and 7, respectively.

The base minimum airfare of domestic flights ranges from ₹2,000 to ₹6,500 and the maximum range from ₹6,000 to ₹18,600. Airlines have to make available 40% of total seats in an aircraft at less than the mid-point price between the highest and lowest fares, aviation secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola earlier said.

Explaining the mechanism, Puri earlier said the move will mean that the lowest fare between Delhi and Mumbai, the busiest route in the country, will be capped at ₹3,500 and ₹10,000 at the higher end.

On the resumption of international flights, he said, "We are at a very advanced stage between of negotiation with at least three countries for bilateral air bubble."

"Till international civil aviation can reclaim its pre-COVID numbers, I think answer will lie through bilateral bubbles, which will carry a possible number of people but under defined conditions as countries are still imposing entry restrictions," Puri said.



IN THE WAKE OF CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK, THE AVIATION MINISTRY IMPLEMENTED A CAP ON AIRFARE IN MAY

THE DOMESTIC FLIGHTS IN INDIA HAVE A CAP ON FARES WITH BOTH AN UPPER AND LOWER LIMIT

BIZZ BUZZ

Jewellery industry in dire need of digital strategies

New Delhi: The jewellery industry which is going through a slowdown in consumption demand amid the pandemic would require digital strategies for its growth post the Covid-19 crisis, according to a report by the World Gold Council. The report noted that although the online gold market is still in its nascent stage in India, digital and social activity plays a key role in the purchase journey. "In urban India, consumers browse online/mobile apps pre-purchase and use online blogs and social media for ideas and inspiration. Mobile apps/wallets are playing a key role in the growth of Internet Investment Gold," it said. The WGC report noted that the outbreak of COVID-19 and consequent closure of stores from mid-March caused jewellery sales to collapse.



Vivo to set up industrial design centre in India

New Delhi: Smartphone maker Vivo will set-up an industrial design centre in India to develop devices locally, and increase its headcount to 50,000, a top company official said Thursday. Vivo India director for brand strategy Nipun Marya said the company has announced ₹7,500 crore investment in India to increase smartphone manufacturing capacity from 3.3 crore units to 12 crore. "Very soon we will be setting up our industrial design centre in India too. We will not only make in india but also design in India. This design centre will focus on understanding the needs of Indian consumers. The first product from Vivo that will be designed and made in India will be rolled out in 2020-21," Marya said.



P-notes investment climbs to ₹62,138 cr

New Delhi: Investments through participatory notes (P-notes) in the domestic capital market surged to ₹62,138 crore till June-end, making it the third consecutive monthly rise. P-notes are issued by registered foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to



overseas investors, who wish to be part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly. They, however, need to go through a due diligence process. According to Sebi data, the value of P-note investments in Indian markets -- equity, debt, hybrid securities and derivatives -- stood at ₹62,138 crore until June, while the same was at ₹60,027 crore at the end of May. Prior to that, investment level was at ₹57,100 crore at the end of April.

Beginning of the end for savings

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 16: The RBI has reduced its benchmark repo rate by 115 basis points between March and May to support the economy in light of the Covid-19 induced slowdown. As a result, banks have had to reduce their lending and deposit rates to adjust to the new interest rate scenario.

Economists say real returns should be judged over a period of time and cannot be gauged from a month's data. A sharp fall in deposit rates due to aggressive rate cuts by banks in response to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) reduction in the benchmark rates coupled with a rise in consumer prices have pulled real interest rates into negative territory, disincentivising savings.

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A sharp fall in deposit rates due to aggressive rate cuts by banks have pulled real interest rates into negative territory



port the economy in light of the Covid-19 induced slowdown. As a result, banks have had to reduce their lending and deposit rates to adjust to the new interest rate scenario.

One basis point is 0.01 percentage point. Meanwhile, consumer prices have risen to 6.09% in June due to the supply side constraints induced by the lockdown enforced to check

the spread of the pandemic. As a result, savers who would want to keep their money in the one-year term deposit of State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest bank, currently risk earning almost a percentage point lower than the current inflation rate.

SBI's one-year term deposit rate is at 5.10%. "Savers will now start asking how much to save and also where to put their money. The economic uncertainties at present would mean that returns would not be at top of savers mind but it could have an impact on domestic savings," said Saugata Bhattacharya, chief economist, Axis Bank.

The benchmark consumer price index (CPI) had eased to 5.91% in March from a peak of 7.52% in January. But the supply side constraints due to the lockdown have again led to a spike in June even as deposit rates have fallen sharply.

Global oil giants eye BPCL

SAUDI ARAMCO, ABU DHABI NATIONAL OIL CO, ROSNEFT AND EXXON MOBIL INTEND TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BIDDING PROCESS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 16: As the deadline for submitting the Expressions of Interest (EOI) for 52.98 per cent stake in the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) nears, big names in the global oil market are showing interest in picking up the majority stake in the state-run oil company.

According to official sources, Saudi Aramco, Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (Adnoc), Rosneft of Russia and Exxon Mobil intend to participate in the bidding process for the PSU. The deadline for submitting EOIs has been postponed twice and the current deadline ends on July 31.

Indian oil majors are not behind their global counterparts and are also actively pursuing the prospects of bidding for BPCL. Oil-to-telecom major Reliance Industries is understood to have shown interest for the bid.

The disinvestment in BPCL involves the government selling its entire 52.98 per cent stake in the company to a strategic investor with transfer of management control.

The Centre has allowed prospective bidders with a minimum net worth of \$10 billion to present their bids. Another condition pertains to a maximum of four members are permitted in a consortium, and the lead member must hold 40 per cent

in proportion. Other members of the consortium must have a minimum \$1 billion net worth.

The EOI allows changes in the consortium within 45 days, though the lead member cannot be changed.

The Indian government proposes to disinvest its entire shareholding in BPCL comprising 1,14,91,83,592 equity shares held through the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, which constitutes 52.98 per cent of BPCL's equity share capital, along with the transfer of management control to the strategic buyer (except BPCL's equity shareholding of 61.65 per cent in Numaligarh Refinery Ltd (NRL) and management control.

State envisions huge growth in agriculture

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Agriculture minister Arun Kumar Sahoo said that the government of Odisha has declared a huge package of ₹200 crore for the sector which will benefit 25 lakhs of farmers.

Sahoo made the announcement during an e-conference on Paradigm of Covid-19: Challenges & Opportunities for Agri, Food Production & Horticulture Sector in Odisha. The event was organised by Indian Chamber of Commerce here Thursday.

"The government had also announced a special livelihood intervention package worth ₹17,000 crore. The move aims to generate employment opportunities through various sectors like agriculture, fisheries, MGNREGS, Skill Development, handloom, Forestry & handicrafts," he said.

He also informed about Ama Krushi helpline which has been created for the farmers to receive help on farming and marketing related information. Recently, the Government of Odisha has launched a scheme called "Balaram" to provide agricultural credit of ₹1040 cr to landless farm-



ers facing hardship due to the pandemic. Around 7 lakh landless cultivators will be benefited from this programme in the next 2 years.

Principal Secretary of Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment Saurabh Garg launched the Mukhyamantri Krushi Udyog Yojna. Garg said, "Under Atma Nirbhar Schemes, Odisha is inviting interested parties to setup cold storage & primary storage facilities. Govt. has also issued an ordinance about contract farming to be started in Odisha by which quality & quantity of the produce will improve & will be helpful to create more job opportunities. Govt. is working on land leasing ordinance too."

Four loan processing centres inaugurated

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Union Bank of India inaugurated four new loan processing centres in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack Thursday.

Ramakanta Pradhan, FGM, Bhubaneswar, Sudarshan Sethi, DGM, Bhubaneswar and Bhubaneswar Nayak, RM, Cuttack



Region inaugurated the centres. These centres are Saral Bhubaneswar and Saral Lite Cuttack for MSME and Commercial Finances and Union Loan Point Bhubaneswar and Union Loan Point Cuttack for Retail Advances. Vice Chancellor, Ravenshaw University Ishan Kumar Patro appreciated the efforts taken to provide one point solutions for loan disbursal.

Reliance emerges as bigger threat for Amazon, Walmart

REUTERS

New Delhi, July 16: A \$20 billion fund raising spree may take India's Reliance closer to its dream of becoming a digital giant, further threatening the ambitious plans U.S. companies like Amazon, Walmart and Zoom have for India.

Stake sales in Reliance's digital unit Jio Platforms attracted not just private equity and sovereign wealth funds but also Google and Facebook, a strong endorsement for an enterprise that until a few years ago focussed largely on oil refining.

Some industry watchers equate Reliance's digital plans - which extend from online shopping and cloud computing to telecom and digital payments - to China's Alibaba and Tencent, companies Reliance it-



JIOMART CURRENTLY DELIVERS GROCERIES IN ONLY 200 CITIES, WHILE AMAZON AND FLIPKART DELIVER A WIDE RANGE OF GOODS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

self calls "global peers".

Reliance has a track record of disrupting rival businesses. With cheap smartphones and data plans, its telecom venture Jio has in four years dethroned market leaders Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel to

become the largest telecom operator in India.

On Wednesday, billionaire chairman Mukesh Ambani said Reliance will expand e-commerce platform JioMart - which connects small retailers with consumers - to offer

not just groceries but also electronics and fashion goods.

"Jio Platforms not only has the backend infrastructure and development capabilities but also an ever expanding captive consumer base," said Mayank Vishnoi of Singapore-

Reliance-Aramco partnership stalls

Reliance Industries' planned sale of a fifth of its oil-to-chemical business to Aramco has stalled after the Saudi company sought at least 20 per cent cut in \$75 billion valuation billionaire Mukesh Ambani's firm was seeking. Sources privy to negotiations said Saudi Aramco had right from the beginning resisted the \$15 billion price tag Reliance had put for the 20 per cent stake in O2C business, which comprises of the company's twin refineries at Jamnagar in Gujarat, petrochemical plants and 51 per cent in fuel retailing venture.

based financial advisory firm Resfeber International.

GUNNERS CRUSH LIVERPOOL HOPES

Arsenal break Reds' hearts ending newly-crowned champions' bid for 100 points in Premier League

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, July 16: Liverpool will have to settle for just lifting the Premier League trophy next week. It won't be accompanied by a record-breaking points total after losing 2-1 at Arsenal.

Having ended the club's 30-year title drought, Liverpool has eased up and the bid to match or overhaul Manchester City's 100-point record is over.

Arsenal scored from their first two shots on target — to cancel out Sadio Mane's opener — and Liverpool provided the assists through carelessness Wednesday.

"We are all human," Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said. "I cannot make a negative out of something so positive — becoming champions so early in the season. These boys have played an exceptional season and no one can take that away from them."

Under pressure from Arsenal forward Reiss Nelson on the edge of the penalty area, Virgil van Dijk opted for an ill-judged back-pass. Alexandre Lacazette intercepted the ball and rounded goalkeeper Alisson before tapping in Arsenal's equaliser in the 32nd minute.

Alisson was at fault for Arsenal's winner by clearing the ball straight to Lacazette, and Nelson applied the finish in the 44th.

"The goals we gave them were a present," Van Dijk said. "Until the first goal it was totally us and we were dominant. But if you give goals like that away, including myself, you get what you deserve."

"Goals like that shouldn't happen and it happened twice tonight. Until I make the mistake, we did nothing wrong. I take the blame for it, of course, I take it as a man and we move on."

It had initially been Arsenal's defending that was providing gifts. Mane was left unmarked to meet Andrew Robertson's cross and put Liverpool in front in the 20th minute.

But Liverpool now has just one point from its last two games after being held 1-1 by Burnley at Anfield, ending a bid to become the first team to finish a Premier League season with a perfect record at home. This was only Liverpool's third loss of the season but it means it can only finish with 99 points by winning its remaining two matches.



ECSTASY & AGONY: Arsenal players celebrate one of their two goals in London, Wednesday

KLOPP'S MEN TO GET TROPHY ON THE KOP

LONDON: Liverpool's players will be presented with the Premier League trophy on a special podium built on the iconic Kop stand at Anfield after the team's match against Chelsea next week. The league is describing it as a 'unique' ceremony that has been designed because fans won't be able to celebrate the moment with the team, as matches are being held in empty stadiums during the pandemic. Jordan Henderson will be the first Liverpool player to lift a league championship trophy in 30 years, and for the first time since the Premier League era began in 1992. The specially erected podium will be surrounded by fan banners in the Kop at the July 22 match. Players have been involved in the planning of the ceremony, with club great Kenny Dalglish — the last manager to lead Liverpool to a league title — among the trophy presentation party. The match against Chelsea will be shown on free-to-air TV in Britain, and Liverpool and the Premier League are urging fans to stay at home to watch it rather than congregate at Anfield.

The title was sealed in record time three weeks ago, with seven games to spare after a three-month pandemic-enforced break in the season.

The trophy will be presented to Liverpool players after final home game of the season next Wednesday against Chelsea.

With no fans allowed into Anfield

due to the coronavirus, a podium will be built in the iconic Kop stand for Jordan Henderson to become the first Liverpool player since 1990 to lift a league championship trophy.

Arsenal has won the Premier League four times since then, but not since 2004. The north London club is way off the pace this season, 40 points adrift. This win only lifted Mikel Arteta's side to ninth place, but it remains in the hunt for Europa League qualification.

A route into Europe also remains through the FA Cup with Arsenal playing defending champion Manchester City in the semifinals Saturday.

"We've been working hard and getting the win here against the leaders is good for us," Nelson said, "and we will take it into the next game."

Silva brilliance lifts Man City

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, July 16: The highlight reel of David Silva's decade at Manchester City is getting some top-quality bonus material from his last games with the club.

Silva scored from a direct free-kick for the second straight home match to lead City to a 2-1 win over relegation-threatened Bournemouth in the Premier League on Wednesday.

The former Spain playmaker also set up Gabriel Jesus for the second goal in City's first match since winning its appeal against a two-year ban from European competition.

Silva will leave City at the end of the season after a 10 year spell that will see him go down as one of the club's greatest players, if not the best.

His display against Bournemouth had other Premier League players taking to social media to praise Silva, whose curling free-kick from the right edge of the penalty area in the sixth minute touched the crossbar as it went in.

"Sorry," Leicester midfielder James Maddison wrote on Twitter after Silva scored his free-kick, "but David Silva is a true Premier League great. Have so much respect for him. Admire his character and ability. Genius at work and will miss watching him, won't miss playing against him whatsoever."

City fielded a heavily rotated side in view of the FA Cup semifinal match against Arsenal on Saturday but still just about had too much for Bournemouth, which grabbed its goal through David Brooks in the 88th minute and more



TRUE MASTERCLASS: David Silva (R) rejoices with teammates following his goal from a free-kick, Wednesday

than matched City in spells.

In fact, the visitors had two great chances to equalize in stoppage time through Callum Wilson and Sam Surridge. Bournemouth stayed in third-to-last place and three points adrift of safety with two matches remaining. West Ham and Watford, the teams directly above Bournemouth, have a game in hand.

Bournemouth had a second-half goal by Josh King ruled out for a narrow offside — a VAR review backed up the on-field decision — while City goalkeeper Ederson Moraes tipped a free-kick from Junior

Stanislas onto the post in the first half.

Jesus has now scored in three straight games for City and is thriving as the replacement for injured first-choice striker Sergio Aguero.

His improved confidence was highlighted in the way he took his goal, receiving a short pass from Silva just inside the area before cutting inside past Jack Stacey and Steve Cook and driving a low shot into the corner in the 39th minute.

It was Silva's 10th assist of the Premier League season, the fourth time he has reached double figures for assists in a single campaign.

Hurri-Kane blows Newcastle away

REUTERS

Newcastle, July 16: Harry Kane went past 200 club career goals with a second-half double as Tottenham Hotspur won 3-1 at Newcastle United in the Premier League Wednesday to boost their European qualification hopes.

Minutes after Matt Ritchie's piledriver had drawn the hosts level, Kane's clinical header on the hour put the visitors back in front,

taking him to another landmark. Kane sealed the points in the last minute with another header to take his career tally to 201.

Son Heung-min had given Tottenham the lead in the 27th minute with his 11th league goal of the campaign. Tottenham rose to seventh on 55 points with two games remaining, one point behind sixth-placed Wolverhampton Wanderers in the race for a Europa League spot.

Kane's 201 club goals have come

in 350 appearances in all competitions with 185 of them for Tottenham. It was also a milestone of sorts for Spurs manager Jose Mourinho who claimed a first league win at Newcastle.

Newcastle were unfortunate to be down at halftime, although they were culpable for Son's strike. The hosts lost the ball trying to play out from the back and Spurs pounced with Giovani Lo Celso moving the ball across to Son whose shot beat Martin Dubravka at his near post.

Newcastle had the better chances, though, with Miguel Almiron's effort cleared off the line by Davinson Sanchez, captain Jonjo Shelvey heading over and Dwight Gayle heading against the post.

Ritchie scored a deserved equaliser in the 56th minute when he gathered a poor clearance from Serge Aurier before lashing a fizzing shot past Hugo Lloris. Aurier was playing despite his brother being murdered in France this week.

Newcastle were only level for three minutes, however, with Spurs substitute Steven Bergwijn's first contribution being a superb cross that was met by Kane with an angled header. Kane dived in to head his second after substitute Erik Lamela's shot was parried.



ON A ROLL: Harry Kane strikes past a hapless-looking Newcastle custodian for one of his two goals, Wednesday

Juventus held 3-3 at Sassuolo Sibley props England to 112/3 at tea



SAVING THE VISITORS' DAY: Alex Sandro heads in the equaliser against Sassuolo, Wednesday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Milan, July 16: Juventus were held to a 3-3 draw at Sassuolo in Serie A, although that will do little to slow its seemingly unstoppable march to a record-extending ninth straight league title.

Juventus are seven points ahead of Atalanta, which beat Brescia 6-2 Tuesday, and eight points ahead

of Lazio five games remaining after the capital side also drew — 0-0 at relegation-threatened Udinese. Fourth-place Inter is nine points behind Juventus and visits Spal Thursday.

It was Juve's third straight match without a win after a 2-4 loss against AC Milan — after going 2-0 up — and a 2-2 draw against Atalanta.

Juve seemed to be cruising early

as it went 2-0 up within 12 minutes following goals from Danilo and Gonzalo Higuain. However, Filip Duricic pulled one back in the 29th minute and Sassuolo had the better of the chances at the end of the first half.

Sassuolo turned things around shortly after the break as Domenico Berardi equalised with a free-kick and set up Francesco Caputo three minutes later.

Alex Sandro headed in a corner for Juventus to level in the 64th and Bianconeri goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny pulled off a number of important saves throughout the match to leave the Bianconeri ultimately grateful for a point.

Lazio has struggled since the restart and was somewhat fortunate not to lose against Udinese. Rodrigo De Paul hit the post in stoppage time for Udinese, which inched seven points clear of the relegation zone.

Lazio came into the match on the back of three successive defeats and had only won two of its previous six matches since Serie A resumed following the break because of the coronavirus pandemic.

AC Milan boosted their chances of qualifying for Europe as it came from behind to beat Parma 3-1. Milan moved level on points with sixth-place Napoli, which drew 1-1 at Bologna. Roma is four points ahead after beating Hellas Verona 2-1.

Elsewhere, Sampdoria beat Cagliari 3-0 to move eight points above the drop zone and 18th-place Lecce, which lost 3-1 at home to Fiorentina.



Dom Sibley looks on after defending one into the leg side during the opening day's play in Manchester, Thursday

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Manchester, July 16: Dominic Sibley (46 batting) dug deep to hold one end up but Alzarri Joseph (0) built on from Roston Chase's (2/24) early inroads by sending skipper Joe Root (23) back in the hut as England were 112/3 at tea on the opening day of the second Test at Old Trafford here, Thursday.

After off-spinner Chase reduced the hosts to 29/2 either side of the lunch break, opener Sibley and

Root — back leading the side after missing the first Test — shared a 53-run stand for the third wicket.

But fast bowler Joseph ended Root's vigil with a classic outswinger that grazed the right-hander's bat and flew to his counterpart Jason Holder at slip. At the break, talismanic all-rounder Ben Stokes (18 batting) and Sibley were at the crease.

Shortly after the second session began, Zak Crawley (0) was sent back for a golden duck by Chase who had the young No.3 batsman

caught at leg slip by Holder. Having removed Burns in the last ball before lunch, Chase was on a hat-trick but missed the landmark.

Root and Sibley then steadied the ship before the former departed with Stokes joining Sibley and both trying to negotiate Joseph and Holder's fiery little spell where the ball moved sideways under overcast conditions.

Earlier, England openers Burns and Sibley got off to a cautious start but Chase provided West Indies with the crucial breakthrough at the

Archer misses Test for protocol breach

Manchester: England dropped pacer Jofra Archer from the second Test against West Indies following a breach of the team's bio-secure protocols, announcing the decision hours before the start of the match at Old Trafford Thursday. "Archer will now commence five days of isolation and will undergo two COVID-19 tests in this period, which have to test negative before his self-isolation period is lifted," the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a statement. The ECB did not specify the nature of the breach in the statement but media reports said Archer exited the bio-secure bubble to visit his flat in Brighton between the series opener in Southampton and the second match here. The ECB said the West Indies team were satisfied with the measures taken. "I have put, not only myself, but the whole team and management in danger. I fully accept the consequences of my actions, and I want to sincerely apologise to everyone in the bio-secure bubble," said Archer.

stroke of lunch.

With rain playing spoilsport, the first session saw only one hour of play on the opening day of the Test of #raisethebat series. England, who are gunning to level the series, were put to bat by Holder after he won the toss, which was delayed by more than an hour because of rain.

BRIEF SCORES: England 112/3 (Dom Sibley 46 batting, Joe Root 23; Roston Chase 2/24, Alzarri Joseph 1/19). Match to continue.