



HAPPY AROUND KIDS

Actor Kiara Advani believes she has good maternal instincts, and says she feels happy around children

LEISURE

P2



US TARGETS CCP MEMBERS

US President Donald Trump is considering a sweeping visa ban on Chinese Communist Party members

INTERNATIONAL

P10



REAL MADRID TRIUMPH

Real Madrid clinch their 34th Spanish League title Thursday after a 2-1 win against Villarreal

SPORTS

P12

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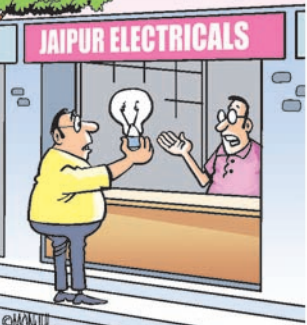
SHORT TAKES

City's caseload crosses 1k-mark

Bhubaneswar: Bhubaneswar's virus load Friday breached the 1,000-mark with the COVID-19 tally rising to 1,043, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) said. Of the 124 new cases, 72 quarantined persons tested positive for the deadly virus and the remaining 52 were detected through contact tracing, the BMC said. The BMC said, as many as 54 patients have been cured of the infection on Friday, the BMC said. The number of recoveries in the state capital increased to 457 while the city now has 574 active cases. Eleven fatalities have been reported from the city so far, the BMC said.

P4

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



You want guarantee for this? There's no guarantee even on those whom we voted for!!

Aishwarya, daughter admitted to Nanavati

Mumbai: Actor Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and her daughter, Aaradhya, have been admitted to Nanavati hospital. Both were in self-quarantine after having tested positive for the coronavirus. As per sources, both of them have developed breathlessness. Aishwarya's husband, actor Abhishek Bachchan, and her father-in-law, Amitabh Bachchan, had been admitted to Nanavati previously, having contracted the virus over the weekend. On July 12, Abhishek had tweeted, "Aishwarya and Aaradhya have also tested COVID-19 positive."

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIAION
SENSEX	37020.14 ↑ 548.46
NIFTY	10901.70 ↑ 161.70
DOLLAR	75.07 ↓ ₹0.24
EURO	85.78 ↓ ₹0.06
GOLD	₹48,948 ↑ ₹175
SILVER	₹52,839 ↑ ₹ 229

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	35.0°C	34.6°C
MIN	26.0°C	24.5°C
Humidity	95%	84%
Rainfall	0.6mm	1mm

Forecast: Generally cloudy sky

Weekend prolonged to month-end

As 4 districts and Rourkela city enter a 14-day lockdown, weekend shutdown is lifted from Cuttack, Bhubaneswar; entry, exit routes of twin cities sealed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: With Ganjam, Khurda, Jajpur and Cuttack districts and Rourkela city entering a 14-day lockdown, Police Commissioner Sudhansu Sarangi has sent a stern message to the people on the lockdown being stricter than previous ones.

The police official further informed that no one will be allowed to enter or go out of the two cities except for emergency cases, for which pass can be obtained through SMS by dialing 100.

Moreover, in a bid to ensure that people do not face issues in purchasing essential commodities during the lockdown period in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar, Sarangi Friday said that there will be no weekend shutdown in the two cities. Addressing a presser here, he said, "Shops selling essential commodities will remain open from 6am to 1pm in the two cities."

Expressing concern over rising numbers of COVID-19 cases, Sarangi said,

HOME DELIVERY OF LIQUOR TO CONTINUE

Modifying its order for lockdown in four districts and Rourkela city till July 31, state government Friday allowed home delivery of liquor. As per the order, home delivery of IMFL/CL/OS liquor by the existing ON/OFF/OS licensees as per the prevailing guidelines of the Excise Department will be allowed during the lockdown in the areas.

This lockdown will be stricter than the previous ones as we will have to reduce the surge in COVID cases

SUDHANSU SARANGI | POLICE COMMISSIONER

"I request people to refrain from non-essential movement during the 14-day lockdown. It may pose more threat to vulnerable population. Also do not use bikes to move around because it may attract penalty."

Sarangi also requested media houses to limit the number of staff in their of-

MODIFIED ORDER

- Shops dealing with fruits, fish, meat, chicken and eggs to open between 6 am and 1 pm everyday
- Mining operations, telecom & Internet service and data & call centres have been exempted from restrictions

Banks, insurance and financial institutions also allowed to operate with staff strength of 25 per cent

PTI PHOTO

fices during the 14-day lockdown. He also said that media personnel will not require any special pass to move around. He also requested the media houses to supply a list of staff who will be mobilized during the lockdown period. He has asked the firms engaged in IT and ITes service to limit

their staff to 10 percent only. Similarly, the banks have been asked to run through 25 percent staff.

As the commissioner has clearly mentioned about the stricter compliance of lockdown regulations this time, cops were found readying the iron wire barricades at important junctions of the city for the lockdown.

Sources in the police department claimed that around 30 platoons of police force will be deployed in the capital city for strict compliance of the lockdown rules.

The denizens have also been advised to avoid using vehicles for marketing and instead go to the nearby shops on foot to fetch essential items. The Odisha government Thursday evening had announced that lockdown will be implemented in Ganjam, Khurda, and Cuttack and Jajpur districts and in Rourkela Municipal Corporation area considering that 66 per cent of the total COVID-19 cases in the state have originated from these places.

Govt employees to work from home

Secretary of any department can ask select staff members to attend office in case of any exigencies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: In view of the lockdown announced in four districts and Rourkela till July 31, the state government has decided to execute 'work from home' protocol for its employees serving in these areas.

The employees working in Ganjam, Khurda, Cuttack and Jajpur districts and Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) have been asked to work from home.

"During the period of lockdown, state government departments will ordinarily adopt 'work from home' protocol for their employees using the VPN facility to dispose official matters in OSWAS. The Issue and Receipt section of each department will function on a roster basis to ensure that dak received is scanned and uploaded on OSWAS and letters issued," General Administration department notification said.

However, the Health and Family Welfare department will continue to function with the full capacity. Departmental control rooms will also function as usual. State IT centre will render 24x7 support to ensure uninterrupted functioning of OSWAS and other IT and Telecom services, the order said.

All employees in the four districts and RMC have been instructed to remain present at headquarters to attend the office at short notice and were asked to be available over telephone all the time.

To dispose any urgent or essential matters, secretary of the concerned administrative department



DISTANCING IS NEW NORMAL

- The employees working in Ganjam, Khurda, Cuttack and Jajpur districts and Rourkela Municipal Corporation have been asked to work from home
- However, the Health and Family Welfare department will continue to function with full capacity
- During the period of lockdown, there will be no physical meeting. Officials can meet virtually

can ask selected staff members to attend office personally.

During the period of lockdown, there will no physical meeting. Officials can meet virtually. All administrative departments were asked to decide the scale of operations in sub-ordinate and field offices at the locations under lockdown.

The offices of disaster management department, district Collectors and municipal administrations, police, fire services, medical establishments, public utilities and essential services have been exempted from the purview of the above order.

Slim down or ship out

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Keeping in mind the vulnerability of people with underlying diseases during the pandemic, the Commissionerate Police has directed all staff to maintain a good physique failing which, they may face disciplinary action.

In an order, police commissioner Sudhansu Sarangi said that the BMIs of all the employees will be measured. A written note will then be given to them as to what their approximate BMI should be. In general, BMI ranging between 19 and 25 is adjudged perfect while a BMI of 30 is considered as obese.

"The officers and other personnel will know how they stand regarding the BMI

factor and then take steps appropriately. The measurement process will continue till July 31. Thereafter, individual BMI records of all personnel will be kept at the police hospital. After a gap of three months, BMIs will be measured once again in November. The figures will then indicate who has put a real effort to decrease their BMIs," said Sarangi.

"If anyone's BMI is above 30 in November, the person will have to attend mandatory exercise classes," Sarangi added. Sarangi also warned of disciplinary measures for cops ignoring their fitness regime. He said those failing to maintain the requisite fitness levels will see restrictions in increment. In some cases, they will be asked to take voluntary retirement and leave the organisation, warned Sarangi.

CITY COPS TOLD



Forest department officials capture a wild elephant after tranquilizing it, at Hudumpur village in Palasbari, Assam, Friday

PTI PHOTO

DEATHS DURING COVID DUTY

Deceased ANMs, ASHA workers' kin to receive pension

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: The State government Friday announced plans to disburse monthly pensions to the families of anganwadi and ASHA workers who succumb to COVID-19 infection while working with the government in managing the pandemic.

In a notification issued by the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC), the state government said that the spouse of the deceased or the next of the kin of the person will be entitled for the government pensions until the date, the deceased would have attained the age of 60 years if alive.

"The spouse/next of kin of deceased anganwadi worker who succumbs to COVID 19 in line of duty under active deployment by the State authorities shall continue to receive ₹7500 per month till the date he/she would have attained the age of 60 years had he/she survived," said the notification issued by the SRC office Friday.

It also added that the family of deceased ASHA workers will also be entitled for ₹5,000 per month pension as per the pension plan of the government.

"The spouse/next of kin of deceased ASHA working under health department who succumbs to COVID-19 in line of duty under active deployment by the State authorities shall continue to receive ₹5000 per month till the date he/she would have attained the age of 60 years head he/she survived," the notification said.

After 17 yrs, déjà vu moment over audio clips in politics

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 17: Seventeen long years after a leaked audio clip made headlines that put the unfavourable spotlight on then Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Ajit Jogi (since deceased), release of another set of audio tapes by the Congress has provided a déjà vu moment for those keeping a close eye on Indian politics.

Old-timers would recall that a similar audio tape was leaked way back in 2003. The only difference is that at that time, a Congress leader was the main

player - CM Ajit Jogi - unlike now when the Congress is playing victim of a 'conspiracy hatched by the BJP to topple the Ashok Gehlot government in Rajasthan'.

The Congress Thursday released three audio clips purported to contain discussions on "horse-trading" between Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and MLA Bhanwarlal Sharma of Sachin Pilot's camp and Jaipur resident and BJP leader Sanjay Jain.

In Chhattisgarh, Jogi was short of a majority in the Assembly, but tried to cobble up



a majority. He was caught on tape in a conversation with Virender Pandey, the then leader of the BJP, while allegedly at-

IDENTICAL EPISODE

The Congress released audio clips containing discussions on 'horse-trading' between Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and MLA Bhanwarlal Sharma

A similar audio tape was leaked way back in 2003. The only difference is that at that time a Congress leader Ajit Jogi was the main player

tempting to poach MLAs from the rival party.

After the audio was leaked, it took the intervention of Sonia

Gandhi to ensure that BJP MLAs were not poached. Later, Jogi was suspended by the party.

Arun Jaitley clarified that Pandey had taken part in the conversation only to trap Jogi. After Jogi's attempt came a cropper, Raman Singh of the BJP was sworn in as the Chief Minister of the state.

Addressing a press conference in Jaipur, Congress spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala had demanded an FIR against Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and others and a fair investigation.

NOT MY VOICE: SHEKHAWAT

Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat Friday rejected the Congress's allegation based on some audio clips that he was part of a conspiracy to topple the Ashok Gehlot government in Rajasthan, saying his voice is not in those recordings and that he was ready to face any probe. The Congress's attack on Shekhawat and some rebel Congress leaders, including MLA Bhanwarlal Sharma, came after two audio clips surfaced pertaining to an alleged conspiracy to topple the Gehlot government. "This is not my voice.... Let there be an investigation. I am ready to face any probe," the senior BJP leader from the state told reporters here after the Congress demanded his arrest.

FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com™ accuracy • reliability • trust FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES

Love and business will thrive today. Expect profits and loans to come through. If you're in love, look forward to a mushy evening, where you will pour your heart out to your beloved. What more do you want from a day?

TAURUS

It is very likely that you will stay physically alert and spiritually awake today, forecasts Ganesha. You will discover an artistic temperament as you engage in performing arts, designing, graphics and special effects.

GEMINI

Your physical appearance is a matter of concern for you, and today, you will decide to pamper yourself with a massage or even a change of style. Your social standing will also get a boost. You will be in the limelight because of your ability to come up with fantastic ideas.

CANCER

Today is the day to quit a few bad habits that you had till yesterday. A change in appearance somehow tops your list of things you want to change in yourself. It may be because you are hopelessly in love, or impress a few people at a party.

LEO

Mental well-being radiates from physical health, says Ganesha, and today, you seem to be inching closer to a synthesis of the two. It is very likely that you shall remain physically alert and spiritually awake today.

VIRGO

All you barons of business should expect a profitable and progressive day today. Financial institutes will sanction your loans. But also make sure to pay due interest to the love interest in your life, for without their love and support, there is nothing much of interest in life, is there?

LIBRA

To be or not to be? Well, that may not be your precise state of mind, but Ganesha does see possibilities of you being puzzled and perplexed today when it comes to professional issues. Chances are that in the afternoon, you may happen to run into an unpleasant situation, so just keep your cool.

SCORPIO

You shall be a live wire today – full of energy and zest. Freelancers will take imagination to new levels when working. At work, your inspiration will kick-start an epidemic of vigour and high-performance. Surprises in the evening will end the day on a high note, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Stormy weather predicted by Ganesha for you today. The day will be riddled with impracticalities. In the afternoon, you may change that hard to something new. Pay special attention to that long overdue work too. Don't drag your feet any more, advises Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

You will try finding the logic and reason behind everything you do and observe today, says Ganesha. Work may leave you a little stressed and worried, but the hope of having something better in the future will keep you going in your endeavours, come hell or high water.

AQUARIUS

Metaphysics and philosophy have aroused your interest. Instead of spending a huge amount on books on these subjects, Ganesha suggests that you keep a balanced approach and practice spiritual discipline.

PISCES

You are likely to be filled with overwhelming ambition today. You will be driven and prepare meticulously to tackle your projects. Evening should see you in the company of like-minded individuals, busy with intellectual activities, says Ganesha.

DIEGO TO FEATURE IN BRUJO

Mexican actor-singer Diego Boneta has been signed on to star in the limited series, *Brujo*. The series is inspired by the true story of the infamous cult leader and serial killer, Adolfo Constanzo, and his acts of dark magic.

NOAH TO STAR IN BLACK ADAM

Actor Noah Centineo is all set to enter the superhero universe as he will be joining Hollywood star Dwayne Johnson in the upcoming superhero movie *Black Adam*. Centineo will play Atom Smasher, a character who can control his molecular structure with the ability to manipulate his size, strength and durability.

Movie on Mamta Kulkarni's controversial life on anvil

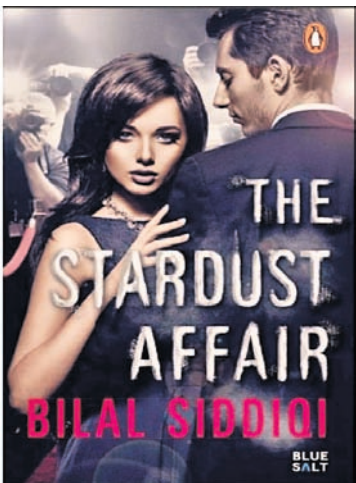
Mumbai: A film inspired by the controversial life of former Bollywood actress Mamta Kulkarni is reportedly in the works.

The rights to Bilal Siddiqi's book, *The Stardust Affair*, which is loosely based on the life of the former actress, have been acquired by producer Nikhil Dwivedi.

"Nikhil has acquired the rights to Bilal Siddiqi's book, *The Stardust Affair*, which is loosely based on the tumultuous and eventful life of Mamta Kulkarni. Her life and journey is something that almost everyone is aware of, right from being a Bollywood star to becoming a 'godmother' to alleged underworld links," Mamta Kulkarni has always been in the headlines. The book will serve as the base for Nikhil's next production and the producer will release an official announcement once all the formalities are complete," said a source.

Known for her oomph and style in the nineties, Mamta had starred in hits like *Karan Arjun*, *Baazi* and *China Gate*. The actress, after vanishing from Bollywood, went on to reveal that she has settled down in Nairobi, Kenya and is leading a spiritual life. However, her name did pop up again, a few years ago, in connection to an alleged drug racket.

"Work on the film's script will begin soon after all modalities are locked and once the shoots begin, the team will finalise a leading lady to shoulder the project," said the source.



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'Raat Akeli Hai' has been an inspiring challenge'

Mumbai: Actress Radhika Apte says peeling the layers of her character in upcoming film *Raat Akeli Hai* was an inspiring challenge. The trailer of the film was released Friday. The movie promises to take the audience on a mysterious journey, as police officer Jatil Yadav investigates a murder of powerful local politician.

"The crime thriller explores the lives of various family members while

the murder of its patriarch is being investigated. I play the character of Radha, the new bride of the deceased, who is stubborn, feisty, arrogant and yet mysterious," Radhika said, adding: "She alternates between suspicion and being vulnerable. To peel the layers of her character has been an inspiring challenge for me. Honey Trehan's vision is truly unparalleled and I can't wait for audiences around the world to watch it."

Raat Akeli Hai marks casting director Honey Trehan's directorial debut, and also stars Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Aditya Srivastava, Shweta Tripathi, Ila Arun and Khalid Tyabji. IANS

Have good maternal instincts: Kiara

Mumbai: Actress Kiara Advani believes she has good maternal instincts, and says she feels happy in the company of children.

"I have changed diapers and I have done everything that I could have. I believe I have a good maternal instinct. I feel children are so honest, I just feel so happy in their company because they are so oblivious to everything and they are so pure," Kiara said.

Opening up about her filmy background, Kiara said: "I have never met Saeed Jaffrey and I was not even aware that I was related to

Ashok Kumar. When I joined the film industry was when I heard a lot about him. I do hope they have some kind of genetic influence on me because of the relation I have with them.

Talking about her recent hits *Kabir Singh* and *Good Newwz*, she said: "I really got lucky having got these two different films with extremely different roles. The tough part is to balance and manage to make each film as exciting. I simply have to work hard and leave the rest to the audience and God."

On her performance and role in *Lust Stories*, Kiara said: "When Karan Johar called me for *Lust Stories*, I decided that I have to do this because I thought that I am getting such a huge opportunity to work and be directed by him.

Her full name is Kiara Alia Advani, she changed it before entering Bollywood.

"There was already another superstar Alia before I entered and she was well established but I wanted my own identity and wanted to avoid confusion on the name, so that is how Kiara came up," she said.

Bajrangi Bhaijaan still running in Japan theatres



Mumbai: Bollywood superstar Salman Khan's 2015 film *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* is still running in some theatres in Japan five years after its release!

On Friday, filmmaker Kabir Khan took to Instagram to celebrate five years of the release of his directorial *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* where he informed about the film still running in Japan theatres.

"A film that came from our hearts and will always be special for me because of the unprecedented love that you've showered upon *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. Thank you for the continuing appreciation...5 years later it's still running in some theatres in Japan. #5YearsOfBajrangiBhaijaan," the filmmaker wrote on his verified Instagram account.

Kabir also shared a behind the scenes video from the sets of the film, which highlights various moments from the shoot featuring actors Salman Khan,

Kareena Kapoor Khan and Nawazuddin Siddiqui. The video also shows the filmmaker playing with child actor Harshaali Malhotra, who made her Bollywood debut with the film. In the film, Harshaali's character was called Munni aka Shahida.

"The whole journey of *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* actually began with a phone call that I received from a writer from South India. Casting of Shahida was definitely the biggest challenge of the film. That is the key character in the film. When I was writing *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, I knew the perfect Pawan, the perfect Bajrangi would be Salman Khan," Kabir Khan says in the video.

Bajrangi Bhaijaan received immense love from the audience and appreciation from the critics. The film went on to become one of the biggest blockbusters in the history of Indian cinema.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

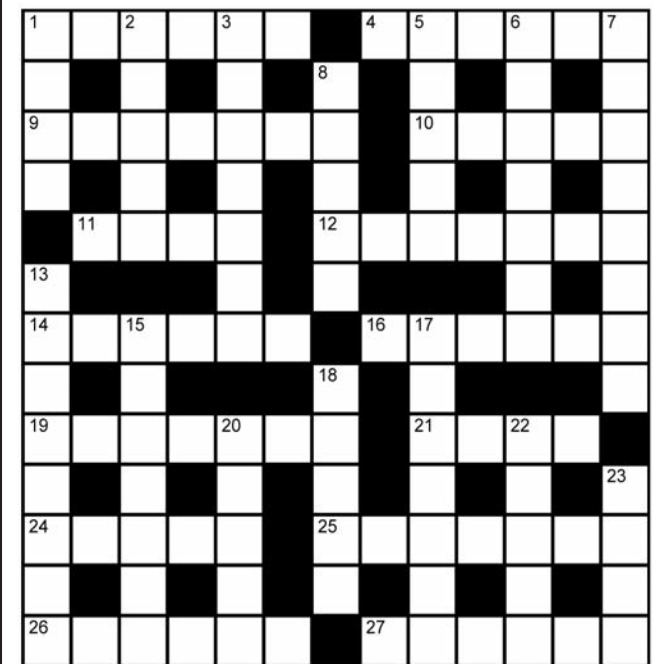


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Means of escape
- 4 Half-pint
- 9 Cote d'Azur is there
- 10 Saltpetre
- 11 Scissors cut
- 12 Pancake flipper
- 14 Jubilant
- 16 Bullfighter
- 19 Trouble
- 21 Milky gem

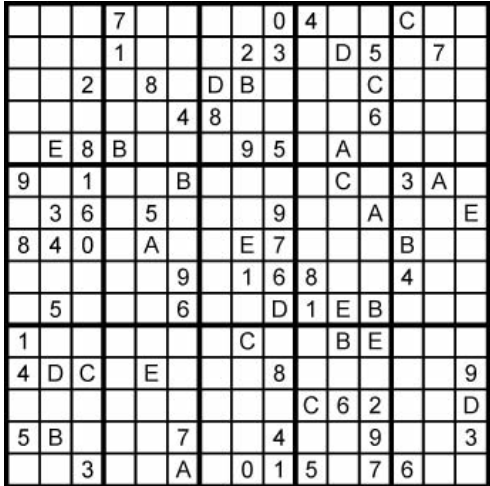
Down

- 1 Light brown
- 2 Poe bird
- 3 Spire

- 5 Redhead's dye item
- 6 Gate-crash
- 7 Child's game
- 8 Quagmire
- 13 Deep-six
- 15 Extreme greed
- 17 Bombastic
- 18 Cover story?
- 20 Vantage point
- 22 Curacao neighbor
- 23 Terminal info

SUDOKU

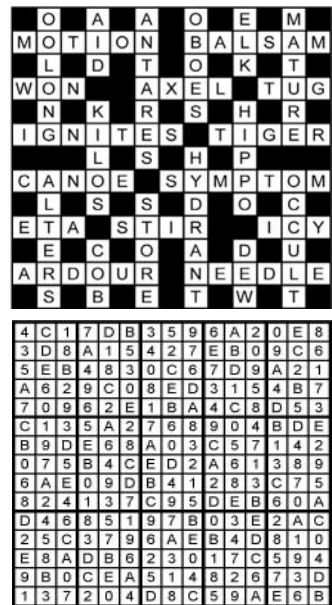
To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



POWER NAP

A man takes a siesta inside a huge pipe in CDA area of Cuttack as the city witnesses high humidity, Friday

PREVENTIVE MEASURE

Srimandir servitors being provided with immunity-boosting homoeopathic medicines at a health camp in Puri amid the Covid-19 pandemic, Friday



RUSH BEFORE LOCKDOWN

‘Make it or break it’ time for state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: A day after another lockdown was declared in four districts and Rourkela, unprecedented rush was witnessed at the market places in Capital city. Although shops selling vegetables, grocery and milk would remain open between 6am and 1pm during the lockdown from July 17 to 31, many stepped out of their homes and resorted to panic buying. Heavy rush and serpentine queues were also seen in front of liquor counters.

The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation has sealed the Unit IV market area Friday after detection of six Covid-19 cases.

Interacting with **Orissa POST**,



Large number of people turn up at Unit-IV haat in Bhubaneswar to buy vegetables ahead of the 14-day lockdown

several people supported the decision while many others expressed

concern over yet another lockdown which, they said, speaks volumes of the government's ability to arrest the spread of the killer virus.

Sambit Maharana, a resident of the city, said, "People get panic largely due to unplanned/unorganised lockdowns. Massive testing is the only option through which we can detect the chain of coronavirus. We are doing less number of testing. More we test more we get the pattern. By imposing lockdowns, we can't stop the virus, we are just delaying it."

It is our collective responsibility to protect ourselves and others. We can keep blaming the government, but unless we don't do our part we can't stop the spread

SATYABRATA PANIGRAHI | SOFTWARE ENGINEER

Meanwhile, Jagannath Mohanty, a city-based lawyer, said, "During the last one week, over 500 Covid positive cases are coming up every day. There is no other way to curb the infection other than lockdown. If people haven't learnt after the last lockdown to plan ahead and follow social distancing then what can the government do?"

Before the lockdown, the government had also declared weekend shutdowns in 10 districts of the state. Also, the night curfew across Odisha has been eased by two hours and was effective from 9 pm to 5 am instead of 7 pm to 5 am earlier. The entire state has been divided into two zones to focus on areas with more positive cases.

Nevertheless, people are seen flocking to the markets in large numbers which becomes a major source of headache for enforcement agencies.

Satyabrata Panigrahi, a software engineer, said, "The shutdowns and lockdowns are not working because people still rush to crowded places to buy groceries, fish and meat etc. It is our collective responsibility to protect ourselves and others. We can keep blaming the government, but unless we don't do our part we can't stop the spread."



Huge traffic rush at Bapuji Nagar in the Capital city

OP PHOTOS

BMC seals Unit-IV market in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: In a bid to contain further spread of novel coronavirus, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Friday, ordered a shutdown of Unit-IV market area after detection of multiple positive cases in the vicinity.

Issuing an order dated July 16, the BMC stated that the market area of Unit-IV and establishments operating adjacent to it will remain closed until further order. Sources at the BMC said that about seven cases have been found positive and most of them were vendors and owners of small establishments.

"We have found that about seven people who were earlier found positive belonging to different slum areas were found to be operating in the market area. Intense contact tracing will be done during the lockdown and those who would be found



Unit-IV market in Bhubaneswar being sealed by the civic authorities

positive will be put in isolation," an official at the BMC informed.

Mo Bus service suspended

Regular service of the Mo Bus run by Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) will remain suspended till July 31 owing to lockdown announced by the state government Friday.

CRUT's Mo Bus which has been operating after resumption of services since lockdown on less than 10 routes is now set to suspend all its

services until lockdown is over. However, the CRUT said that to facilitate the movement of incoming passengers from airport and railway station, shuttle service of M Bus will be available during the period.

Notably, the state government has imposed complete lockdown in four districts of Ganjam, Khurda, Cuttack and Jajpur from July 17-9 pm to July 31 midnight. These four districts constitute two-thirds of the active Covid-19 cases.

3 Odias feted for farm sector contribution

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, July 17: Three Odias have been awarded at the foundation day ceremony of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) by Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar for their outstanding contribution to the field of agriculture and allied activities.

The Union minister felicitated Mohammad Shahid, a senior scientist at ICAR/NRRI Cuttack, with Lal Bahadur Shastri Outstanding Young Scientist Award, 2019 for natural resources management and agricultural engineering.

Similarly, Sudam Sahu, a farmer from Bargarh district, was awarded with Jagjivan Ram Innovative Farmer Award 2019 while Pramod Kumar Sahoo, principal scientist at ICAR/IARI Delhi, was awarded with Rajendra Prasad Puruskar for technical books in Hindi in Agriculture and Allied Sciences 2019.

Goods carriage permit made online

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: The state government has brought grant of goods carriage permit under Odisha Right to Public Services Act, 2012. Chief Minister Naveen

Patnaik has given the necessary approval for this move Friday. Now, applicants can get the permit for goods carriage within seven days of application with submission of valid documents and fees. Commerce & Transport

(Transport) department has so far brought 32 services including grant of goods carriage permit the under ORTPSA. All departments have been asked to make public services delivery online by October 2, 2020.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS
(DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL & TRAINING)
Applications are invited for the post of **Vigilance Commissioner** in the Central Vigilance Commission.
The details of eligibility, etc. and the proforma for sending particulars for consideration for the post may be downloaded from the Department of Personnel and Training website: **www.persmin.nic.in**. The last date of receipt of applications in the Department is **17th August, 2020**.
davp32201/11/0003/2021

Actor Sabyasachi turns real hero for Ganjam family

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: In yet another noble act from Odia cine star Sabyasachi, a family received the body of its member 16 days after his death in Dubai.

Balaram Pradhan, 36, had left Khujapalli of Khallikote panchayat in Ganjam for Dubai in search of work. He had been

working there as a bonded labourer for one and a half years. The outbreak of coronavirus changed everything. The disease snatched the job away from him. He breathed his last due to extreme level of stress. His family members received the shocking news June 29.

After learning about the family's ordeal, Sabyasachi went out of his way and

brought the body back and handed it over to the family members in just three days which otherwise would have taken nearly 30 days.

"Getting a body to an international airport is not an easy task. I contacted the Consulate General of India over there. With the help of the local police, the body was recovered. Before bringing it

to the airport, a coronavirus test and then post-mortem were performed. To bring the body back to Odisha was a challenge for me," said Sabyasachi. After seeking help from DIG, Intelligence, Anup Sahu, he sought help from Customs inspector Malayak Ghosh, Airport PS IIC Umakant Pradhan and Air India senior manager Jitendra Das.

LIMITED ACCESS TO ONLINE EDUCATION

Dropout risk for pupils with spl needs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: A recent survey on differently-abled students of the state has revealed that several of them now face the threat of dropping out as they have limited access to digital/online classes.

The survey was conducted by a community based organisation from the state—Swabhiman – and Disability Legislation Unit of Eastern India.

According to the researchers, the differently-abled students are now vulnerable to denial of access to education due to their limited access to digital interventions and availability of such methods to access online information.

"An underlying reality was that children from government schools belong to poor families, and most of them were not users or owners of smart phones which are being used for online education," said Sruti Mohapatra, CEO,

77% students say they can't cope with the current system of online classes

Parents of as many as 90% of such kids said teachers are not giving them attention while 86% said they don't know how to use the technology

81% teachers say they do not have accessible educational material, suitable for online learning, available with them



Swabhiman. The survey took views from different categories of differently-abled students from the state and took their feedback on their study levels during the global pandemic and closure of educational institutions.

The study said that 56.5 per cent of the differently-abled students are struggling yet attending classes, but irregularly. "Around 77 per cent of students said they would not be able to cope and would fall behind in learning due to their

inability to access distance learning methods while 71 per cent said they are finding it difficult to cope with the Covid-19 social and educational scenario," the study said.

"The parents of as many as 90 per cent of such kids said teachers are not giving them attention while 86 per cent said they don't know how to use the technology. As many as 76 per cent of mothers said they don't know how to help their wards as they themselves do not understand technol-

ogy. A large proportion of teachers (81 per cent) said they do not have accessible educational material, suitable for online learning, with them," the study said.

The study claimed that around 71 per cent said even though smartphones are available at home, father is the only person who has a smartphone and was out of home most of the time for livelihood purposes, while 61 per cent of them said they would not be able to afford buying a new smartphone as it was expensive.

The researchers have advocated for a different approach for the students living with different forms of disabilities as per their needs to help them in their access to studies during the pandemic. Mohapatra said all children with disabilities cannot be clubbed as one group as they are persons with different disabilities and therefore different needs.

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DAVP/37208/11/0006/2021

Centre paddles cycling as city falters on riders

AVIRAL MISHRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Even though the Centre has asked smart cities to push for more cycling-friendly initiatives, the capital city's falling numbers in ridership of Mo Cycles post COVID-19 have raised doubts over enhancement of the existing infrastructure.

On eve of the Smart City Day, June 26, the Centre had directed states to promote more eco-friendly public vehicles and implement cycling-friendly initiatives that would encourage social distancing amid spread of COVID-19.

Sources said the Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL), a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for implementing smart projects, has directed the Central Region for Urban Transport (CRUT) to add 300 more bicycles to its existing fleet of Mo Cycles. Operated by Hexi and Yulu, CRUT's Mo Cycle has a fleet of 2,000 bicycles running in 400 routes in the city.



The state government's austerity measures, which include a ban on purchase of vehicles by various departments, has further put a curb on adding more bicycles to the existing fleet of Mo Cycle

However, ever since CRUT decided to resume the service post COVID-enforced lockdown, Mo Cycles have been only able to operate with just 300 bicycles in mere 50 routes.

Moreover, since onset of coronavirus, an 83 per cent drop in rides has also been observed. While an average 600 daily riders were earlier registered, the ridership has now plummeted to only 100 per day. While the pandemic is said to be the primary

cause behind the fall of demand, off-season cycling and poor riding environment are amongst others.

"Usually months between July and September are off season as this is monsoon. However, the drop in ridership is due to fear in spread of COVID19. While we promote cycling with all sections of society, youths in the city have a particular liking for it. Thus, most ridership was observed in KIIT to XIMB and AIMS to OUAT routes. However, with schools and col-

leges closed, the Mo Cycles are yet to see the usual demand," said a senior official at the CRUT.

Moreover, the state government's austerity measures which include a ban on purchase of vehicles by various departments has further put a curb on adding more bicycles to the existing fleet.

"Although a cap on buying of vehicles is only limited to official purposes only, any expansion to the fleet will be planned after thoroughly involving concerned stakeholders. As of now, we haven't received any directive from BSCL," the official added.

holders. As of now, we haven't received any directive from BSCL," the official added.

Furthermore, avid bicyclers and road safety organizations have claimed Bhubaneswar as 'not conducive for promoting cycling.' Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri, who had initiated the 'Cycles4change Challenge' on Smart City Day asked the SPVs to explore low-cost interventions such as pop-up cycle lanes, non-motorised zones and community-led cycle rental schemes.

"What good will be these initiatives if there are no designated roads for riders?" questioned Sameet Panda, an avid bicyclist here. "The state government during Hockey World Cup invested heavily to represent Bhubaneswar as best cycling city. However, little has been done in this regard as riders still find our cycle tracks clouded by street vendors and vehicles. There is no space for us to ride," he commented.

Govt issues safety norms for pvt docs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: The state Health and Family Welfare department Friday issued an advisory to medical officers and private doctors to reduce chances of getting infected or prevent spread of infection in their clinics.

The state has asked the doctors to encourage use of PPE kits while at clinics and also they were asked to abide by the government norms of disinfection and sanitization of their working area.

The government said the guidelines should be strictly adhered to by medical practitioners who are pursue professional practice in their own chambers or in private setups like nursing homes, polyclinics and private clinics.

The government has asked private practitioners to have separate fever clinic and isolation facilities. It had

also asked them to ensure hand washing facilities, availability of hand sanitizer and masks are used by patients and hospital staff.

The doctors have also been asked to sterilize blood pressure instruments, stethoscope, thermometers and any other touch points after every single use.

Private clinic operators and nursing homes have been asked to direct patients of fever, respiratory disorders and persons coming from hotspot areas to nearest government hospital or private COVID Hospitals. The government has entrusted upon doctors to ensure use of masks and sanitization of patients up to the medical practitioners.

Doctors have been asked to encourage use of posters and other visual mediums to create awareness COVID 19. All doctors have been asked to maintain a register of entries of all patients in the clinic.

PANIC BUYING



Malgown area in Cuttack witnesses heavy rush in the afternoon as people resorted to panic buying ahead of the total lockdown over COVID-19 that came into force from 9pm Friday

Teachers, parents differ on MHRD's online class norms

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Parents and teachers in the state have a different take on the guidelines for online classes issued by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).

According to the guidelines, online classes for pre-primary students should not be for more than 30 minutes. For Classes I to VIII, two online sessions of up to 45 minutes each while for Classes IX to XII, four sessions of 30-45 minutes duration have been recommended.

Priyanka Singh Deo, a parent, said, "I am with the ministry of HRD. I agree that there should not be such lengthy classes for kids because the overall health comes before anything else. It is already a challenging situation for all of us and having such non-stop classes puts pressure on kids where children are not acquainted to sitting in front of screens for long hours."

Basudev Bhatt, a parent and a chairman of Odisha parents' association, said, "Regarding the guidelines, we disagree with the inclusion of

pre-nursery students and also kids from Class I to Class VIII. They can learn at present under the parents' guidance during this pandemic. We demand only Class IX to Class XII students to receive online classes opportunity adhering to COVID-19 guidelines."

Speed up NH projects: NHAI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has urged the state government to expedite land acquisition and forest clearance hurdles to expedite the national highway (NH) projects in the state.

Seven NH projects are delayed due to issues related to land acquisition while four other projects are stuck due to forest clearance.

"The ministry headquarters is pressing hard for action to be taken on the pending issues of land acquisition and forest clearance and finalization of DPRs. Accordingly, it is requested to kindly take appropriate action in this regard,"

NHAI regional officer wrote to Kumar. Director General (Road Development) IK Pandey has also requested the state works secretary Krishan Kumar to convey a meeting with all stakeholders to sort out the issue. NH stretches connecting Rairangpur-Jashipur, Sonepur-Madhapur, Nayagarh-Khurda, Naktideula-Boudh, Chandili-Borigumma, NH-59 and NH-49 are being delayed due to land acquisition problem, the sources said.

Similarly, Chharichak-Bhanjanagar, Rairangpur-Jashipur, Naktideula-Boudh and NH-59 projects are pending due to non-accordance of forest clearances.

Doctor crunch ailing Hepatology, Endocrinology depts of SCBMCH



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 17: Shortage of doctors at the Hepatology and Endocrinology departments of the Sree Ram Chandra Bhanja Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) is likely to affect teaching as well as healthcare facility at the premium state-run institute.

Just a few days ago, the state government has allowed the SCBMCH to open four intensive care units (ICUs) at the Hepatology department. Moreover, the equipment required for the ICUs have already been procured by the hospital authorities, sources said.

Last year, the Medical Council of India (MCI) had permitted the Hepatology department of SCBMCH to start postgraduate teaching, sources added.

At present, the Hepatology department has 38 beds and at least 300 patients are admitted to the department in a month. This apart, around 1,500 patients usually visit the department in a month to get the outdoor treatment.

However, the authorities concerned are yet to appoint doctors to the vacant posts at the Hepatology department. An AIIMS-pass out doctor had been appointed as an assistant professor on a contractual basis at the department in 2013.

The hospital authorities recently initiated process to appoint another doctor on contractual basis to the department. However, they are yet to get a suitable candidate for the post, said a source.

"The Hepatology department has now only a professor and an associate professor as permanent

staff. The hospital authorities are yet to regularise the job of the AIIMS-pass out doctor. If the doctor concerned resigns from the post, then the department will face a lot of problem to manage the ICUs, postgraduate course and healthcare facility," added the source.

The Endocrinology department of SCB is now running with a lone assistant professor. A doctor who was heading the department had retired from his service in June this year.

Moreover, an associate professor of the department had opted for voluntary retirement last year. Now, a senior doctor from the nephrology department has been asked to look after the administrative affair of the Endocrinology department.

"The Endocrinology department has 20 beds and around 2,000 patients usually visit the department in a month. The indoor healthcare at the department has been stopped due to shortage of doctors," said a health staff on conditions of anonymity.

SCBMCH principal Dattaswar Hota said they have raised the issue with the state government. "We are waiting for the state government's decision in this regard," he added.

POST NEWS NETWORK

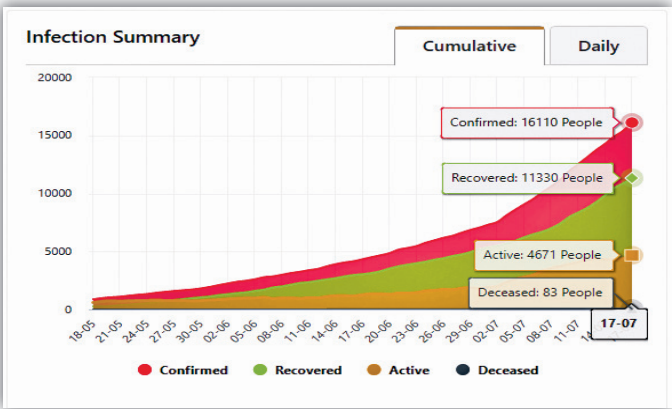
Bhubaneswar, July 17: The COVID-19 tally in the state crossed the 16,000-mark as 718 more persons tested positive for the viral infection while the death toll reached 83 with four patients succumbing to the disease Friday, an official of the health and family welfare department said.

With 718 new cases, the state's infection tally rose to 16,110, said the official. The H&FW department took to Twitter to say, "Regret to inform the demise of four COVID positive patients while they were under treatment in hospitals."

Two fatalities were reported from Ganjam district while one each was reported from Gajapati and Angul districts, taking the toll to 83, it added. Two deceased from Ganjam district—aged 56 and 60—had diabetes and kidney disease, while a 66-year-old man who died in Angul district was suffering from neuroendocrine tumour, the official said, adding that a 56-year-old COVID-19 patient who died in Gajapati district had diabetes and heart disease.

Of the 83 fatalities, Ganjam district alone accounts for 50 deaths followed by Khurda (13), Cuttack (eight), two each from Angul, Gajapati and Puri, and one each from Bargarh, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Rayagada and Sundargarh districts.

According to the official, two



other COVID-19 patients also died in the state, but their death was due to other reasons.

Of the 718 new cases, 479 have been reported from different quarantine centres while the remaining 239 are local contacts. Contact tracing and follow-up action is underway, the H&FW department said.

Ganjam district reported a maximum of 231 cases followed by Khurda (150), Malkangiri (54), Cuttack (32), Keonjhar (28), Koraput (27), Jharsuguda (24), Mayurbhanj (22), Gajapati (21), Rayagada (19), Nayagarh (134), Bhadrak and Sundargarh (10 each). Ten other districts reported new cases in single digits.

Meanwhile, 453 persons who had earlier tested positive for the infection recovered Friday, the H&FW department tweeted. "Another 453 #COVID19 patients have recovered and are being discharged on 17.7.2020

(sic)..." the department said.

The recoveries include 220 from Ganjam, 41 from Sundargarh, 33 from Nabarangpur, 28 from Khurda and 26 from Bolangir.

At present, there are 4,671 active cases, while 11,330 patients have recovered from the disease so far.

In the last 24 hours, 7,818 swab samples were tested for COVID-19.

City's tally crosses 1,000-mark
The state Capital's virus load Friday breached the 1,000-mark with Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) reporting 124 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the total tally to 1,043.

Of the 124 cases, 72 were detected from quarantine centres while 52 were local contacts, BMC tweeted.

Meanwhile, 54 persons, who were earlier tested positive for the viral infection, recovered from the disease Friday, the civic body said.

Shop owner attacked by miscreants

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Bike-borne miscreants attacked a man asking him to pay Rs 5 lakh ransom here at Aryan Nagar under Airfield police limits.

Airfield Police have started a probe into the matter after registering a case based on the victim, Banchanidhi Sahoo. According to the complaint, Sahoo was returning home on his motor cycle after closing his shop at Unit 1 market Tuesday night.

Meanwhile, the miscreants intercepted his vehicle 200 meter before his home. They started beating

him with an iron rod and snatched Rs 1000 from his pocket by holding a knife to his throat. They asked him to pay Rs 5, 00,000 else they would kill Sahoo and his family members.

They also tried to snatch away his bike but failed as some commuters appeared near the scene.

AIRING GRIEVANCES



Activists under the banner of CITU demonstrate in front of Rail Sadan in Bhubaneswar condemning privatisation of entities, among other issues

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Automation defeats MGNREGS' purpose

In Sukinda block of Jaipur, ₹12lakh-MGNREGS project is being executed through machines while job card holders are neglected

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kaliapani, July 17: Amid lockdowns and shutdowns, most daily wagers, migrant returnees and local labourers are living in a dire condition sans employment opportunities in this area of Jaipur.

Keeping their economic hardships in mind, the Central and the state governments have directed the district administration to create job scope of manual labour through MGNREGS so as to tide over the work scarcity during the ongoing lockdown period. Preference was to be given to job card holders on the priority basis.

Sadly, this concern of the government has allegedly been ignored during execution of projects under this rural job scheme in Kaliapani area, because machines are being used in projects instead. Job card holders, who are entitled to work opportunity, at this time, are sitting pretty, a report said.

This irregularity has come to the fore at Pimpudia panchayat under Sukinda block.

According to reports, ₹12 lakh has been sanctioned for excavation of six ponds at Pimpudia, Ambapala and Nuadiha.

Locals alleged that an influential person of the locality has taken up the work. He has been carrying out pond renovation and excavation with machines instead of engaging



While no daily wager or labourer or manpower of any kind is seen near the pond site, an excavator stands parked, on a weekday

THE IRREGULARITY HAS COME TO THE FORE AT PIMPUDIA PANCHAYAT UNDER SUKINDA BLOCK

RS12 LAKH HAS BEEN SANCTIONED FOR EXCAVATION OF SIX PONDS AT PIMPUDIA, AMBAPALA AND NUADIHA

WHEN OUR REPORTER TRIED TO CONTACT SUKINDA BDO BISWAJIT DAS OVER PHONE ON THE ISSUE, THE LATTER COULDN'T BE REACHED

daily wagers. It was further alleged that the person has collected some job cards from beneficiaries. These people were not engaged in work, but their names were entered in muster rolls, which is against the official guidelines. Locals alleged that the

No trace of ₹2cr pension funds, BDO files plaint

Nine executive officers in Athamallik, responsible for distribution of different types of pensions, haven't submitted details for the disbursal of ₹2cr fund

POST NEWS NETWORK

Athamallik, July 17: Nine executive officers who were in charge of distribution of old age, differently-abled, widow pensions of over ₹2,00,00,000 between 2011 and 2019 under Athamallik block in Angul district have not yet submitted the detailed accounts.

However, deserving beneficiaries have smelled a rat in the incident.

Notably, the scam surfaced after Athamallik block development officer (BDO) Sanjay Kumar Kanhar lodged a complaint with the local police in this regard. The total amount was received by nine executive officers concerned to distribute to beneficiaries under this block.

Even as eight of the officers have already been transferred to other stations, one officer still continues here. Total pension mounts lifted individually by Bhama Kanhar ₹1,49,400 between 2011 and 2012, Kishore Chandra Pradhan ₹84,00,000 between 2015 and 2019, Manoranjan ₹1,26,000 between 2011 and 2012, Nameswar Kanhar ₹10,96,400 between 2011 and 2013, Prabhat Kumar Pradhan ₹14,70,000 between 2013 and 2015, Ramesh Chandra Mallick ₹4,00,200 between



2011 and 2013, Sanischar Pradhan ₹50,55,000 between 2011 and 2016, Laba Kishore Jhankar ₹29,98,900 between 2017 and 2018 and Dharmananda Singh ₹7,98,200 between 2011 and 2013.

It is known that, the total amount lifted at different times comes to ₹2,05,45,800. Reacting to this, BDO Acharya said, "Neither the accused officials have given detailed accounts of the pension amounts distributed nor they have refunded balance amounts, so far."

On the other hand, Laba Kishore Jhankar has given detailed accounts of ₹29,98,900 and refunded ₹4,22,000 to the block office, four days back.

Giving his views, local police station IIC Priyabrata Dash said, "We are in receipt of a complaint which was made by Athamallik BDO. However, as the block office has not yet submitted required audit report; no case has been filed in this connection."

Paradip resumes fishing with 'guard down'

MOST OF THE FISHERMEN IN THE PORT TOWN ARE FROM OUTSIDE THE STATE AND THEY AREN'T BEING THOROUGHLY CHECKED FOR THE VIRUS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, July 17: Fishing activities have resumed at Paradip harbour here. However, non-compliance of Covid-19 guidelines has become a worry for the authorities. The trouble has been compounded as majority of the fishermen are from other states. None of them have been kept in quarantine centres on their arrival here, it is alleged. Also most of them have not undergone Covid-19 tests.

To top it all, there is no government officer to oversee the trawler owners who are employing these out-of-state fishermen. Most of the times, these fishermen are not wearing masks. Social distancing norms are also not being implemented.

The trawler owners are taking these fishermen to check whether they have fever to the Paradip community health centre (CHC). If they do not have



fever, they are asked to board the trawler. This situation has created apprehension and fear in the minds of the local fishermen and residents. They fear that the outsiders may spread coronavirus among the fishermen community.

"We are already living in fear as Covid-19 positive cases are exponen-

The fishermen from other states can't be put under quarantine here because we have no facility. While the owners are getting clearances from the CHC, we only have thermal screening facility at the entrance

MADHUMAY SAMAL | FISHERIES OFFICER (MARINE)

tially increasing in the district as well as Odisha. The engagement of outsiders is increasing the risk of contracting the disease," said Pradip Sahu who is associated with the fish trade.

Jagatsinghpur district Collector Sangram Keshari Mohapatra has set some restrictions regarding the entry of outsiders inside government of-

fice. However, Paradip Fisheries Department office seems to be an exception to the rule. Outsiders are enjoying easy access to the office with no restrictions on their movements.

Fisheries officer (Marine) Madhumay Samal was contacted on these issues. He said, "The fishermen from other states cannot be put under quarantine here because there is no facility here. While the owners are getting clearances from the CHC, we have only thermal screening facility at the entrance. We don't have any other method to find out whether someone is infected or not."

Regarding outsiders enjoying easy access into the Fishery department office, he also expressed his helplessness. "We don't have any e-grievance cell to look into all issues. Moreover, the fishermen are not tech-savvy they visit the office to get their work done," he added.

THE ROADS IN BERHAMPUR POLICE DIST ARE NO MORE WITNESSING TRAFFIC JAMS WHILE CASES OF THEFT, DACOITY AND BURGLARIES HAVE COME DOWN IN THE REGION

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, July 17: The coronavirus induced lockdown and subsequent shutdown in the country, have helped reduce crime and road accidents in Berhampur police district, a report said. The area is a prominent region in corona hotspot Ganjam district.

The region termed as a criminal's paradise is now breathing easy due to reduced crime rates and road accidents.

Sources said that the Union government announced 'Janata Curfew' as a people's movement against coronavirus pandemic. Later, the whole country went under lockdown and various state governments also subsequently imposed shutdowns in their respective states as the number of Covid positive continued to rise.

The lockdown followed by shutdown and night curfew disrupted normal life and brought it to a standstill. The roads in Berhampur police district are no more witnessing traffic jams while cases of theft, dacoity and burglaries have come down in the region.

It is claimed that crime has been locked up in Berhampur police dis-



Cops keep an eye on lockdown violators in Berhampur

FILE PHOTO

trict which is termed as a criminal's paradise. This can be ascertained if we take a look at the crime records in the district which has gone downward after lockdown was imposed in the region.

Reports said that a total of 699 cases have been registered in various police stations of Berhampur police district between April and June. At least 267 cases were registered in various police stations in the month of April, 211 in May and 221 in June.

Four murder cases were registered in May and only two in June. Three theft cases were registered in April; one dacoity case in June while there was none in May. Four cases of burglary were registered in April, seven in May and nine in June.

Similarly, three cases of snatching of cash and gold ornaments from people were registered in April, five in May and 14 in June. There were two rape cases registered in April, three each in May and June.

Road accidents have drastically come down as majority of the res-

idents stayed indoors due to the lockdown, shutdown and night cur-

few imposed by the state government and the district administration. No major road mishaps were witnessed during the period as roads remained deserted during the lockdown.

No major crime was witnessed in the region except the seizure of gutkha worth ₹1 crore from a house near Techno Park in Gurunthi Road and another seizure of gutkha worth lakhs from three places.

A country liquor den was busted while police seized huge cache of foreign liquors from a place near the engineering school. The excise sleuths also busted some illegal country liquor den and seized foreign liquors from Golanthara, Haradakhandi and Pokdibandh areas.

MAHAMAYA U.P. SCHOOL CUTTACK

A minority managed U.P. School at Cuttack needs Bangala knowing B.Sc., D.El.Ed. & OTET cleared, Teacher below 32 years having passed Odia as an subject upto Class VIII standard.

Apply to
Secretary, Mahamaya U.P. School, Kesharpur, Cuttack with all testimonials by 5th August, 2020.
Sd./- President

Email ID – exengeroликтp@gmail.com

ODISHA LIFT IRRIGATION CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, L.I. DIVISION, KORAPUT
e- Tender Notice

Bid Identification No E.E. KORAPUT (OLIC) 03/20-21
DT. 01-07-2020

No.CAD-274:- Installation & Energisation of 13 Nos. of Lift Irrigation Project Works under different Blocks of Koraput & Malkangiri District. Execution of L.I. Project works - Under Koraput & Malkangiri District.

1. Cost of Projects - 11.58 to 21.55 Lakhs each
2. Class of Contractors - Valid Civil 'D', or above class with Electrical H.T. License (As per specified in DTGN.)
3. Availability of Bid in Portal - 14.07.2020 at 10.00 AM to 21.07.2020 up to 05.00 PM
4. Bid Clarification - On or before 17.07.2020 during office hours in the office of the Executive Engineer, L.I. Division, Koraput.
5. Bid opening - 22.07.2020 at 11.00 AM onwards

The bidders who have awarded similar nature of work previously but not satisfactory progress till date or the defaulter contractors need not apply. All other information will be available in Govt. Portal www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Executive Engineer, L.I. Division, Koraput
OIPR-32173/11/0001/2021

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, SAMBALPUR (R&B)
DIVISION NO. II, SAMBALPUR
E-mail – eesbprnbdivision2@gmail.com
Phone -0663-2410104

BID IDENTIFICATION No. EE / R and B / SBP II / 02 (Online) / 2020-21
No.2092 /Dated,15.07.2020
E-procurement notice

No.B-160:-

1. The Executive Engineer, Sambalpur (R&B) Division No.II, Sambalpur on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites Percentage Rate bids in Single cover System in ONLINE MODE
2. No. of works :- 03 (three) Nos. (Electrical works)
3. Tender Cost :- Rs.6,000/- & Rs.4,000/-(online)
4. Class of Contractor :- "HT" & "MV" Electrical Contractor
5. Availability of bid document :- 10:00 hours of 27.07.2020 in the website. to 17:00 hours of 05.08.2020.
6. Date of Opening of Tenders :- 11:30 hours on dt 06.08.2020
7. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website www.tendersodisha.gov.in in only. Any Corrigendum / Addendum/cancellation of tender will be displayed in the website said only.

Sd./- Executive Engineer
Sambalpur (R&B) Division No.II
OIPR-34136/11/0002/2021

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
KALAHANDI RWS&S DIVISION, BHAWANIPATNA
e-mail:eerwsskld@gmail.com, eerwss.kld@nic.in, Phone No.: 06670-230784
INVITATION OF BID THROUGH e-TENDERING
Bid Identification No.11/EE/RWSS/2020-21/Bpt Dated 15.07.2020

01. Name of the work: As per No.O-171:-

Procurement Officer	Bid identification No.	Availability of tender online for bidding on office hour only		Date of opening (Technical bid)
		From	To	
1 Executive Engineer, Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna	2 11/EE/RWSS/2020-21 /Bpt Dated-15.07.2020	3 22.07.2020 from 10.00 A.M.	4 06.08.2020 upto 05.30 P.M.	5 07.08.2020 from 10.00 A.M. onwards

Cost of tender paper & payment of EMD to be made online payment system.
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tenderodisha.gov.in>
Sd./-Executive Engineer, Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna
OIPR-25005/11/0002/2021

GOVT. OF INDIA
Kalawati Saran Children's Hospital
No.KSCH/RR Cell/257/20-21/2473
VACANCY NOTICE ADDENDUM
Dated: 8.7.20

IMPORTANT NOTE: THE SAME VACANCY NOTICE WAS EARLIER UPLOADED ON THE HOSPITAL WEBSITE lhmc-hosp.gov.in ON 18TH MAY 2020. ALL THOSE CANDIDATES WHO HAVE EARLIER APPLIED IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING POST NEED NOT APPLY AGAIN OTHERWISE INSITUATION HAVE A RIGHT TO CANCEL THEIR APPLICATION IN CASE OF RESUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FORM. HOWEVER, THE LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FORMS FOR ALL THE POSTS WILL BE WITHIN 21 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THIS ADVERTISEMENT IN EMPLOYMENT NEWSPAPER.


Applications are invited from eligible Indian Citizens for filling up the following posts in Kalawati Saran Children's Hospital, New Delhi.

SN	Name of the Post / Pay Scale Level	No. of Posts / Category
01	Medical Social Welfare Officer / Social Worker (MSWO), Pay Scale: Level-6 as per 7th CPC	01(One)-UR
02	X-Ray Technician (XRT), Pay Scale: Level-5 as per 7th CPC	02(Two) UR=01, EWS=01
03	Post: Haemodialysis Technician (HTs), Pay Scale: Level-4 as per 7th CPC	04 (Four)-UR=3, OBC=1
04	Post: Data Entry (Technician) (DET), Pay Scale: Level-4 as per 7th CPC	01 (One)-UR
05	Post: Dark Room Assistant (DRA), Pay Scale: Level-3 as per 7th CPC	01 (One)-UR
06	Post: Nursing Attendant (NAs), Pay Scale: Level-1 as per 7th CPC (Note: Backlog vacancies of ST/OBC/EWS)	16 (Sixteen) ST=02, OBC=09, EWS=05
07	Post: Dhoobi (Dho), Pay Scale: Level-1 as per 7th CPC	02 (Two)-UR

For further details regarding eligibility criteria and other information etc. Please visit the hospital website lhmc-hosp.gov.in

Sd./- (Addl. Medical Supdt.), KSC Hospital, New Delhi
davn 17468/11/0001/2021

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



THE MOTHER

Babu gets domicile certificate in J&K


The Jammu & Kashmir administration has started issuing domicile certificates, 10 months after the Indian government abrogated Article 370. The new rules allow non-locals to get domicile certificates. Navin Kumar Choudhary, a senior IAS officer from Bihar, has become the first bureaucrat to get domicile rights in the union territory. A 1994-batch J&K cadre officer, Choudhary is currently principal secretary in the J&K Agriculture Production Department.

Recently, J&K Lt Governor Girish Chandra Murmu launched an e-application to fast-track issuing of domicile certificates to both locals and non-locals. Earlier this year, the Ministry of Home Affairs had ordered that domicile would be granted to anyone who has resided in Jammu & Kashmir for 15 years or has studied for seven years and appeared in Class X or Class XII examinations in an educational institution in J&K.

The move has raised concerns in the union territory about the Centre's intentions, with some viewing it as an attempt to change the demography and cultural identity of Kashmiris. According to sources, more than 30,000 people have received domicile certificates online in J&K since the Centre changed the laws.

Governor's outburst

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and the Trinamool Congress (TMC) party government have been at loggerheads since July last year when Dhankhar assumed office. The ongoing Covid crisis has only sharpened the mutual recrimination between the state government and the Governor.



BABUDOM BYTES
Dilip Cherian

However, we're focusing on this nth round of an interminable battle because it is focused on the babus this time. Recently, Dhankhar took to Twitter and addressed IAS and IPS officers of Bengal. He referred to All India Service (Conduct) Rules and expressed concern at what he termed as "rampant disregard and violations" of the rules in the state. He urged the officials to refrain from doing anything "which is or may be contrary to any law, rules, regulations and established practices; maintain discipline in the discharge of their duties; be ready to implement the lawful orders duly communicated to them; and perform and discharge their duties with the highest degree of professionalism and dedication to the best of their abilities."

The Governor's outburst is been seen in the context of reports of alleged mishandling of the Covid crisis as well as irregularities in distribution of relief to those affected by the Amphan super cyclone by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and the state government. Some see in the Governor's mention of "neutrality" as a nod to the 2021 assembly elections in the state

A veiled threat

That babus in the Modi sarkar are reluctant to serve at the Centre has been evident for some time now. The Centre periodically asks the states to spare more IAS officers of up to joint secretary level for Central deputation. The last such request was made in November last year, when the Centre sought officials under the central staffing scheme and for posts of chief vigilance officers. The response however was disappointing.

According to sources, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has expressed concern over the minimal number of nominations it has received from various cadres and services, especially at the director level. In an order sent to chief secretaries of state governments and secretaries of central government departments, the DoPT said the under-utilization of these posts can cause "serious gaps in cadre management."

Further, the order warns that this aspect will be kept in view while considering cadre review proposals received in the future. The cadres that have not forwarded sufficient number of nominations for Central deputation may have to settle for smaller number of additional senior posts.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian@twitter.com](#).
Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

- “In childhood be modest, in youth temperate, in adulthood just, and in old age prudent.”
SOCRATES
- “The feminine is more powerful than the masculine, the soft is more powerful than the hard, the water is more powerful than the rock.”
OSHO
- “A wise man makes his own decisions; an ignorant man follows public opinion.”
CHINESE PROVERB

WORDSWORTH

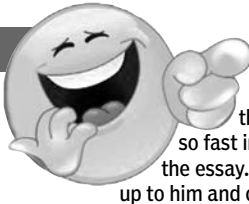
■ Sugar daddy

The first known use of sugar daddy is in an episode of a surreal tale with the title Fat Anna's Future that appeared in the Syracuse Herald March 27, 1923. Coincidentally, its notorious introduction to the wider American public would come in the following day's newspapers. The story had actually begun two weeks before, when the body of Dorothy Keenan King was found in her New York apartment. "Dot" King was a former model and unsuccessful actress who had become what people then called a vamp, a woman who used her undoubted attractiveness to target men. She had been set up in the apartment and given lavish presents by a 50-year-old tycoon named John Kearsley Mitchell III. He used the pseudonym of Mr Marshall but was publicly unmasked in press reports on 28 March below a formal posed photograph: "John Kearsley Mitchell, son-in-law of K. T. Stotesbury, multi-millionaire, of Philadelphia, has been revealed as the mysterious "Mr Marshall," who was the "heavy sugar daddy" of Dorothy Keenan King, New York model, who was chloroformed to death in her New York City apartment." Her murderer has never been found. Claims were made at the time that she had been killed because she refused to go along with a criminal group who wanted her to help blackmail Mitchell. Dot King's story became a cause celebre and was widely publicised, often mentioning her pet name for Mitchell, heavy sugar daddy. It gained instant public recognition and it has been in the language since, though heavy was soon lost. The term seems to have been a New York creation of the louche and criminal worlds linked to Broadway in Prohibition days. Sugar was a long-established slang term for money and heavy sugar was a lot of it. Sugar was also an endearment, which originated around this time in African-American slang and which reached a wider white audience via blues lyrics. Daddy was an obvious reference to an older man, but it may similarly have had a link to African-American slang of the time, in which a daddy was a lover with no implications of age.

LOL

A PIECE ON CRICKET

A teacher once asked her students in a class to write a piece on cricket. All students got on to write about the game. One boy scribbled something on his paper, and then stood up. The teacher was impressed



that he was so fast in writing the essay. She went up to him and collected the paper. Seeing it, she laughed out loud... What the boy wrote was this: "DUE TO RAIN, NO MATCH TODAY."



Bharat Jhunjhunwala

THE TRADE-OFF IS THAT BEFRIENDING THE US WILL GET US TECHNOLOGIES WHILE BEFRIENDING CHINA MAY GET US THE WORLD MARKETS

Some two hundred years ago, the share of India in the world income was 25 per cent and China's was 33 per cent. That declined to 1 per cent and 2 per cent respectively in 1950. These have since increased to 4 per cent and 15 per cent today. Even this improved share is anomalous because India's population is 126 crore and China's is 136 crore. In comparison, the United States accounts for 25 per cent of the world income today while its population is merely 36 crore. Thus, one per cent share of the global income that accrues in India is shared by 31 crore persons; if it accrues in China, then it is shared by 9 crore persons; and if it accrues in the US, then it is shared by only 1.3 crore persons. The challenge before India is to secure a share of global income in proportion to our population.

We have to examine whether this will be facilitated if we befriend China against the US, or befriend the US against China.

Befriending the US will help us get advanced technologies. The US remains the leading technology innovator although China has surpassed it in the filing of patents before the World Intellectual Property Organization. The US filed 58,000 patent applications in 2019 while China filed 59,000 applications with India filing 30,000 applications. The US nevertheless remains in the forefront of technological innovations because of its large hoard of patented technologies innovated by that country in the past.

On the other hand, befriending China may not get us as much access to the advanced technologies because China is rather protective about them. The basic symbiosis between China and India is in China's strength in manufacturing and India's strength in services like software development, medical transcription, translations and typesetting. A combination of China's manufacturing with India's services can give us an edge over the US. The trade-off is that befriending the US will get us technologies while befriend-

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

Protecting refugee children in Covid era

BECAUSE OVER HALF OF THE WORLD'S 26 MILLION REFUGEES ARE CHILDREN - SOME 300,000 OF WHOM ARE UNACCOMPANIED - DEFENDING THEIR RIGHTS IS A VAST CHALLENGE

Kailash Satyarthi & Prince Ali bin Hussein

Taima'a al-Hariri, a 17-year-old Syrian refugee living in the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan, had been regularly attending school before the Jordanian authorities introduced a necessary lockdown to combat the spread of Covid-19. "When the coronavirus appeared, they shut down all the classrooms and we didn't have teachers we could interact with anymore," Taima'a says. "I was starting to do charity work with (refugee) children with cancer, but that was put on hold."

Refugees like Taima'a have been hard hit by the pandemic. These children have long suffered multiple deprivations: they were forced to flee wars and emergencies, sometimes without family, and are struggling to survive with no familiar comforts. And now Covid-19 is exacerbating their hardships.

Even previously, only half of the world's refugee children of primary-school age were receiving formal education, and only 22 per cent of children of lower-secondary-school age were. Moreover, children living in extreme poverty are vulnerable to forced labour and trafficking, putting them at further risk of being out of school.

Lack of access to formal education is just one of the many

challenges that refugees face. Healthcare and sanitation were already inadequate. And now, starvation is a far greater threat than the pandemic itself, as recent warnings and budget cuts by the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation have stated. Today, 80 per cent of refugees live in countries that are not equipped to support them. Turkey is home to 3.7 million refugees, while Uganda, Pakistan, and Sudan together host almost four million. Jordan and Lebanon have long been home to refugees, who account for almost one-third of each country's population. Because over half of the world's 26 million refugees are children - some 300,000 of whom are unaccompanied - defending their rights is a vast challenge.

We are working on the ground with youth activists from the 100 Million Campaign for children's rights, who are continuing their efforts despite Covid-19. They include Seme Ludanga Faustino, a South Sudanese refugee who in 2017 co-founded the youth-led organisation I CAN South Sudan in the Bidibidi refugee camp in Uganda, home to the world's biggest concentration of unaccompanied minors. Faustino's organisation,

which was set up to use the arts to provide trauma relief to unaccompanied children, now distributes soap and is conducting home visits to teach them how to remain safe from Covid-19.

Against this background, rich nations are behaving shamefully. While spending trillions of dollars to mitigate the effects of Covid-19 on their economies, they are not helping countries with large refugee and displaced populations. In April, a funding shortfall led WFP to announce a 30 per cent cut in food rations it distributes to 1.4 million refugees in Uganda. Even a small fraction of the pandemic bailout funds so far made available in Europe and the US, if diverted, could save the lives of tens of thousands of refugees. We urge governments to fill the gaps in financing for refugees and displaced persons, and ensure that the most marginalised populations receive their fair share of the Covid-19 response. For this, a global social protection fund be set up, to be made available to every child who qualifies for support, including refugees. Canceling the debt owed in 2020 and 2021 by low-income countries that house refugee populations could also have a huge impact. Creditor countries are

suspending repayments, this merely kicks the can down the road.

Yet, what next? We call on European leaders to ensure every refugee child on EU territory is guaranteed the rights enshrined in European legal frameworks. Since 2010, thousands of unaccompanied refugee children have gone missing from Europe, with many having likely fallen victim to trafficking. Every refugee child also must have access to quality education. Jordan, for example, has successfully provided refugee families with cash transfers to ensure that their children go to school. But more than 75 million children urgently need educational support. Governments must fill the current \$8.5 billion financing gap in this area so that children can enjoy their fundamental right to learn. It has never been more important for the world to stand behind refugees, especially refugee children.

Kailash Satyarthi is a Nobel Peace Prize winner and HRH Prince Ali bin Hussein of Jordan is a member of the Laureates and Leaders for Children Steering Committee.
@PROJECT SYNDICATE

Letters TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarih Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Plasma therapy, Odisha

Sir, Good to learn that the plasma therapy to treat critically ill patients has been launched in three dedicated Covid-19 hospitals in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. Odisha is the third state, after Delhi and Maharashtra, to have introduced convalescent plasma therapy for the treatment of serious Covid-19 patients. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has earnestly urged eligible Covid-19 survivors to donate their plasma, which would go a long way in helping with the treatment of serious Covid-19 patients. Thanks are due to the first four plasma donors of Odisha, and the 12 more who came forward to donate their plasma. Medical experts say bodies of people who recover from Covid-19 produce an anti-body/plasma in the blood, and this would be of help to other affected people get into recovery process.

Hitesh Kumar Parida, Panikoiili, JAJPUR

Land of superstitions

Sir, India is a land of blind beliefs, witches and black magic. Some people are exploiting these situations. Educated and eminent people are also conducting special puja and 'jadu tona' to achieve their aims. Prime Minister Narendra Modi motivated people to light candles, hold torchlights, Diya etc as part of efforts to fight Covid-19. These did not help and this is evident from the steady and sharp rise in Covid-19 cases in the country. Sadly, most TV films and serials are promoting such superstitious beliefs. Women are getting enthused by such serials. On the one side, the nation is keen on spreading awareness and rational thinking among the masses. On the other, we are telecasting films on ghosts and rebirth to mislead people. This is a pitiable scenario.

Santosh Kumar Mohanty, Safa, CUTTACK

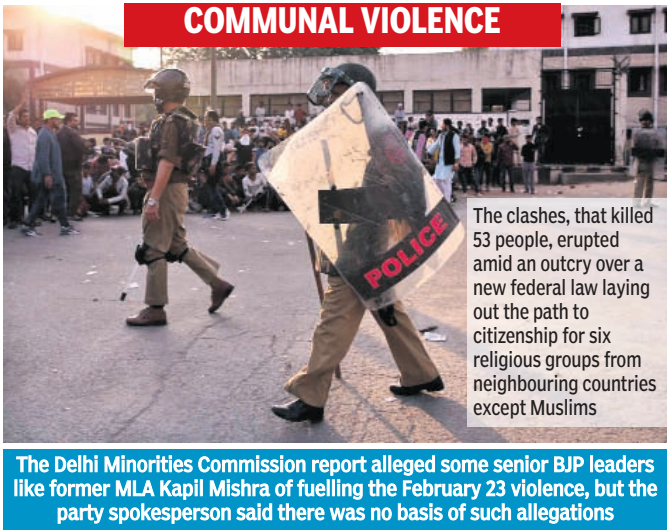
Archer's folly

Sir, English speed merchant Jofra Archer's folly in breaching bio-secure protocols has cost him his place in the second Test at Old Trafford against the West Indies. The speedster will now undergo two Covid-19 tests during a five-day isolation period, which have to test negative before he comes out of self-isolation. By Archer's admission, his act has put the entire team and management in danger. Players at the highest level are under constant public gaze and must set example by being more disciplined.

NJ Ravi Chander, EMAIL

Minorities panel faults police role in Delhi riots

New Delhi, July 17: A government-appointed commission promoting the rights of India's religious minorities said police failed to protect Muslims campaigning against a new citizenship law during violent riots in Delhi this year. At least 53 people, mostly Muslims, were killed and more than 200 were injured in the worst communal violence in the Indian capital for decades. The clashes erupted amid an outcry over a new federal law laying out the path to citizenship for six religious groups from neighbouring countries except Muslims. Critics said the law was discriminatory and flouted India's secular constitution. The Delhi Minorities Commission (DMC) said Muslim homes, shops and vehicles were selectively targeted during the rioting that erupted in northeast Delhi in February when protests against the new Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) broke out across the country. In all, 11 mosques, five madrasas or religious schools, a Muslim shrine and a graveyard were attacked and damaged, a team from the commission said the report released Thursday. Recommendations made in the commission's report to safeguard minority rights are not binding. "Seemingly, to crush the protests, with support of the administration and police, a retaliatory plan of pro-CAA protesters was worked out to trigger violence at a large scale," it said.



The Delhi Minorities Commission report alleged some senior BJP leaders like former MLA Kapil Mishra of fuelling the February 23 violence, but the party spokesperson said there was no basis of such allegations

The commission said police had charged Muslims for the violence even though they were the worst victims. Delhi police spokesman Anil Mittal rejected the allegation of bias and said the police had acted fairly. "We have filed 752 first information reports, over 200 chargesheets, arrested over 1400 people in connection with the riots. We have also formed three special investigation teams and are still open to receiving complaints," Mittal said. Critics of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government say it has been promoting a Hindu-first India and that the citizenship law aimed to further marginalise the country's 170 million Muslims. The BJP denies any bias but says it is opposed to the appeasement of any community. The report also alleged some senior BJP leaders like former member of Delhi legislative assembly Kapil Mishra of fuelling the February 23 violence, but the party spokesperson said there was no basis of such allegations. "When Delhi Police has already stated in court that there is no role proved of Kapil Mishra, then on what grounds DMC is saying this," BJP spokesperson Harish Khurana said. The minorities commission said witness spoke of police failure to intervene in the rioting. "Multiple testimonies collected by this Fact-Finding Committee recount reports of police inaction even as violence unfolded before them, or of police not arriving despite being called repeatedly," it said.

'Lockdown no solution to control virus'

Bangalore, July 17: Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa Friday said lockdown is not the solution for controlling COVID-19 and made it clear that there was no proposal before the government to extend it in Bangalore. Bangalore urban and rural areas are currently under "complete lockdown" since 8 pm of July 14 and it will be effective till 5 am July 22. With the spike in cases, speculations were rife that the current lockdown is likely to be extended for 15 days, as that much time is required to break the chain. "Lockdown is not the solution to control COVID. There is no proposal before the government to extend the lockdown," Yediyurappa was quoted as saying by his office in a release. The Chief Minister Friday chaired a meeting with Ministers who have been made in-charge of eight zones in the city and officials regarding the COVID-19 situation in Bangalore. Earlier too, July 13, the eve of the lockdown, Yediyurappa had said the government did not plan to extend it in Bangalore urban and rural districts, and had appealed to the people to cooperate by not paying heed to rumours. They had said that in their personal opinion, a 15 day lockdown would be good, as that much time is required to break the chain. The Opposition Congress too had asked for a minimum of 15 days lockdown after taking expert opinion.



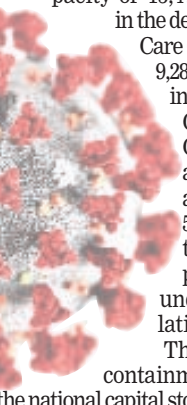
EARLIER TOO, JULY 13, ON THE EVE OF THE LOCKDOWN, YEDIYURAPPA HAD SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT PLAN TO EXTEND IT IN BANGALORE URBAN AND RURAL DISTRICTS, AND HAD APPEALED TO THE PEOPLE TO COOPERATE BY NOT PAYING HEED TO RUMOURS

MAYOR M GOUTHAM KUMAR AND COMMISSIONER OF THE CIVIC BODY BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE B H ANIL KUMAR HAD FAVOURED ITS EXTENSION. THEY HAD SAID THAT IN THEIR PERSONAL OPINION, A 15 DAY LOCKDOWN WOULD BE GOOD, AS THAT MUCH TIME IS REQUIRED TO BREAK THE CHAIN

THE OPPOSITION CONGRESS TOO HAD ASKED FOR A MINIMUM OF 15 DAYS LOCKDOWN AFTER TAKING EXPERT OPINION

Recoveries 6 times higher than active cases in Delhi

New Delhi, July 17: With 1,462 new coronavirus cases and 26 deaths in the last 24 hours, the national capital recorded a total tally of 1,20,107 cases and 3,571 deaths as Friday. According to the Delhi government's daily health bulletin, as many as 99,301 people have recovered, almost six times the number of active cases which stand at 17,235. A total of 1,608 patients recovered in the last 24 hours. June 23, the city had witnessed the highest single-day peak of 3,947 cases, but the number has come down steadily since then despite the number of tests increasing. Testing numbers in the city have also gone up since the commencement of rapid antigen tests last month. Over 6,270 RT-PCR, CB-NAAT and TrueNat tests and 14,194 rapid antigen Covid-19 tests were conducted Friday. Currently, 3,696 beds are occupied in the hospitals out of a total capacity of 15,474 beds, 2,304 in the dedicated Covid Care Centres out of 9,284 beds and 178 in the dedicated Covid Health Centres as against the availability of 554 beds. A total of 9,595 people are under home isolation. The number of containment zones in the national capital stood at 638. Last week, the number of containment zones increased by more than 150 after the city government decided to break existing hotspots into smaller clusters for better surveillance.



Bangalore hospitals short of staff

Bangalore, July 17: Several private hospitals in the city are facing acute shortage of doctors, nurses, ward boys and helpers amid the raging Covid-19 pandemic. "There is actually acute shortage of manpower in Bangalore hospitals, especially nurses, ward boys and aayahs (helpers). Even before Covid, we had a little shortage but after Covid they all left in droves," Karnataka chapter Indian Medical Association (IMA) official Ravindra told IANS. He roughly estimated the shortage to be 6,000 doctors and about 12,000-18,000 nurses and ward boys. A major reason Ravindra cited for the shortage is the fear of contracting the virus amid the pandemic as they discharge duties in hospitals. "Some of them cannot work because they are pregnant or above 55, diabetic or other health problems. Some of them are not coming to work although they did not leave the job," he said. Besides the scare of getting infected, the IMA official said some of the health workers themselves are already Covid positive, quarantined or admitted in hospitals. In case of support staff, he said most of them are migrant workers from Gulbarga and other districts who panicked after seeing some videos of Covid victims being dumped and buried. "They said if I have to die, I don't want to die in Bengaluru. I will die and get buried in my native place. After those videos went viral, quite a few have left," explained Ravindra, deciphering the social media impact as well. Similarly, the virus has also sent the doctors and health workers' duty schedules haywire, prohibiting them from working continuously. "Duty schedules are also changing. As per government guidelines, they cannot work continuously. So if they work for two weeks and even if they are alright, one week they have to be compulsorily on leave. Because of this, we are facing a huge shortage of manpower, especially nurses and ward boys," said Ravindra, who is also a doctor. Likewise, to ensure their safety and others, all of them will also be made to undergo a rapid antigen test after their 10-day-long duty.



Some of them cannot work because they are pregnant or above 55, diabetic or other health problems. Some of them are not coming to work although they have not left the job

RAVINDRA | IMA OFFICIAL

HEALTH INFRA UNDER PRESSURE

A major reason cited for the shortage is the fear of contracting the virus amid the pandemic as they discharge duties in hospitals

Besides the scare of getting infected, some of the health workers themselves are already Covid positive, quarantined or admitted in hospitals

In case of support staff, most of them are migrant workers from Gulbarga and other districts who panicked after seeing some videos of Covid victims being dumped and buried

as deputing post graduate medical students, nursing students and others as the hospitals have beds and infrastructure but not sufficient manpower. Recently, the city civic body has initiated the process to recruiting 1,700 medical professionals, doctors, staff nurses and support staff to scale up its workforce to establish 30,000 Covid care beds. The health department has calculated that one doctor per shift is needed for every 100 patients and one staff nurse for every 50 patients. Similarly, two supporting staff and three Group D employees are needed per shift for every 100 patients. Generally, a day is divided into three shifts of eight hours each. According to the director of medical education, there are 25,000 nursing students who have completed GNM and BSc Nursing courses and pursuing higher education. Likewise, there are 3,231 medical, dental and Ayurvedic interns while MD and MS postgraduate students have been identified to be 1,613, in Bengaluru colleges.

Cybercriminals ramp up attacks on home routers

Bangalore, July 17: Increase in attacks targeting and leveraging routers will continue as cybercriminals are able to easily monetise these infections in secondary attacks, warns a new report by global cybersecurity company Trend Micro. The research revealed an increase from October 2019 onwards in brute force log-in attempts against routers, in which attackers use automated software to try common password combinations. The number of attempts increased nearly tenfold, from around 23 million in September to nearly 249 million attempts in December 2019. As recently as March 2020, Trend Micro recorded almost 194 million brute force logins. "With a large majority of the population currently reliant on home networks for their work and studies, what's happening to your router has never been more important," Jon Clay, Director of Global Threat Communications for Trend Micro, said in a statement. "Cybercriminals know that a vast majority of home routers are insecure with default credentials and have ramped up attacks on a massive scale. For the home user, that's hijacking their bandwidth and slowing down their network. For the businesses being targeted by secondary attacks, these botnets can totally take down a website, as we've seen in past high-profile attacks." Another indicator that the scale of this threat has increased is devices attempting to open telnet sessions with other Internet of Things (IoT) devices. Because telnet is unencrypted, it's favoured by attackers - or their botnets - as a way to probe for user credentials. At its peak, in mid-March 2020, nearly 16,000 devices attempted to open telnet sessions with other IoT devices in a single week, said the report titled "Caught in the Crossfire: Defending Devices From Battling Botnets". This trend is concerning for several reasons. Cybercriminals are competing with each other to compromise as many routers as possible so they can be conscripted into botnets. These are then sold on underground sites either to launch Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks, or as a way to anonymise other attacks such as click fraud, data theft and account takeover, said the report. To avoid such attacks, Trend Micro suggested several measures. It said that users should make sure the router is running the latest firmware. Moreover, it is important to use a strong password and change it from time to time. The company urged users to check logs to find behaviour that does not make sense for the network. Users should only allow logins to the router from the local network, it said.



With a large majority of the population currently reliant on home networks for their work and studies, what's happening to your router has never been more important

JON CLAY | DIRECTOR, TREND MICRO

Counselling service fails to aid frontline workers

New Delhi, July 17: The Delhi government's psychiatric tele-counselling service, 'Samarthan', for doctors, healthcare and frontline workers battling against the COVID-19 pandemic, is struggling hard to find takers just within a month of its launch. On an average, the number of people calling the helpline service for the counselling is less than one in a day. In the last 30 days, only 20 people have availed the service. As per records, 12 doctors are volunteering to provide the tele-counselling. This means no counsellor has attended even two calls in the whole month. The officials stated that a number of factors were behind the inadequate response the helpline has received. The stigma attached to seeking mental help and insufficient publicity of the service are significant reasons restricting people from availing the service. The service was launched June 17 in collaboration with the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS). Besides, the Delhi Medical Association (DMA), Delhi Medical Council (DMC), and the Delhi Psychiatric Society also have collaborated for this cause. The service was started to help the frontline workers cope with the stress and anxiety as coronavirus pandemic is taking a toll on their mental health. Professor Nimesh Desai, Director, IHBAS, which is coordinating the tele-counselling service, said the frontline workers are not aware of the helpline which is limiting them to access the service. "They (frontline workers) don't know if any such thing exists. In a distressing time like this, they need counselling and support which they cannot avail only because they are unaware of it," he said. Desai added that had the government tried to publicise the service, more people would have sought psychiatric help. "Frontline workers are reeling under immense pressure. There is risk in performing the duty and concern of the safety of their family and loved ones. Severe stress and anxiety are becoming common among the fraternity. If this situation is not dealt with on time, they may also start to develop suicidal tendencies. This is the time they need expert help to get out of self-harm thoughts and stay motivated. Our service can save lives," he added. Doctor Girish Tyagi, president of the DMA, said that his association would approach the government and request to start a campaign for the promotion of the tele-counselling service. The government needs to register the presence of the service in the minds of the frontline workers so that whenever they feel distressed, they know where to seek the psychiatric help," he said.

Frontline workers are reeling under immense pressure. There is risk in performing the duty and concern of the safety of their family and loved ones. Severe stress and anxiety are becoming common among the fraternity. If this situation is not dealt with on time, they may also start to develop suicidal tendencies

NIMESH DESAI | DIRECTOR, IHBAS



FEW TAKERS

In the last 30 days, only 20 people have availed the service. While the tele-counselling service is open to all the frontline workers, including police and the journalists, only healthcare workers have turned up to avail it so far

Doctors said the callers had shared fear of exposure to self and transmitting to family after prolonged working hours and issues with the quality of masks and PPE kits being provided

of the day quote

The economic condition of lakhs of migrant labourers, who had returned to their homes in UP because of the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown, continues to be very bad and now they are forced to wander for their livelihood



MAYAWATI | BSP SUPREMO

Drone cameras should be used for monitoring containment zones



YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

Human trial of a vaccine against novel coronavirus has begun at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences in Rohtak



ANIL VUJ | HARYANA HEALTH MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Another Congress MLA resigns in MP

Bhopal: Days after the resignation of Pradyuman Singh Lodhi, another Congress MLA in Madhya Pradesh resigned from the Assembly Friday. Sumitra Devi Kasdekar, who represents Nepanagar in Burhanpur district, submitted her resignation in person to pro-tem Speaker Rameshwar Sharma in the afternoon. "I have accepted the resignation of the Nepanagar MLA as she insisted on resigning even after being given time to think over it," Speaker Sharma said.

Assam flood kills 5 more

Guwahati: Five more people died in flood-related incidents in Assam and around 36 lakh people across 28 districts are now affected, an official bulletin said Friday. One person each died in Dhubri, Darrang, Bongaigaon, Goalpara and Kamrup districts, the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said in its bulletin. More than 39.8 lakh people in 27 of the 33 districts in the state were affected by the deluge Thursday, it said.

5 of family killed in wall collapse

Shahjahanpur: Five persons of a family were killed and a child was injured when a wall collapsed in Wajid Khel locality of Chowk Kotwali area in Shahjahanpur district of Uttar Pradesh Friday. Shahjahanpur District Collector Indra Vikram Singh said the family of five was asleep when bricks from the wall of a neighbouring house fell on them, killing them. One child was critically injured and is undergoing treatment. Offering condolences, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced ₹4 lakh compensation to the kin of the family. He ordered officials to ensure proper treatment to the injured child.

NIA arrests bank manager

Srinagar: In a breakthrough in a recent narco-terror case, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested the key accused -- a branch manager of a cooperative bank -- from Srinagar, a spokesperson of the probe agency said. Afaq Ahmad Wani, a resident of Maratgam village of Handwara, is the fourth person to have been arrested after the drug syndicate operating in Jammu and Kashmir was busted last month. It led to the seizure of 21 kg of heroin and over ₹1.35 crore in cash from the syndicate members.

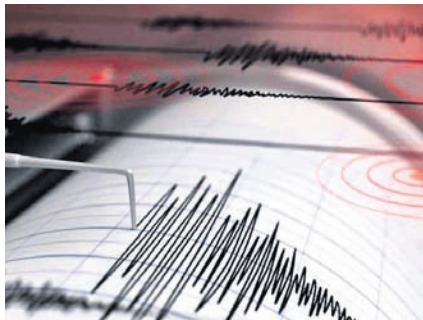


The monsoon rains in Assam and other parts of India bring destruction and great suffering to people year after year

THE DALAI LAMA | TIBETAN SPIRITUAL LEADER

QUAKE HITS ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

An earthquake of 4.8 magnitude hit the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Friday morning, officials said. There were no immediate reports of any loss of life or damage to property, they said. The depth of the earthquake was 10-km, it said



Rajnath sends stern message

Addressing the Army and ITBP jawans at a forward post in Lukung, Singh said if there is an attempt to hurt the self-respect of India, then it will not be tolerated and will be given a "befitting reply"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lukung (Ladakh), July 17: On a visit to Ladakh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Friday hoped the ongoing talks would resolve the border standoff with China but said he cannot guarantee the extent of success, and asserted that no power in the world can touch even an inch of India's land.

Addressing the Army and ITBP jawans at a forward post in Lukung, Singh said if there is an attempt to hurt the self-respect of India, then it will not be tolerated and will be given a "befitting reply".

"Whatever progress has been made in the talks, there should be a resolution of the matter. But to what extent it will be resolved, I cannot guarantee. However, I would like to assure that no power in the world can touch even one inch of India's land, nobody can occupy it," the defence minister said at the post located on the banks of the Pangong Tso lake in eastern Ladakh.



Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a bitter standoff in multiple locations in eastern Ladakh for over eight weeks since May 5. The tension escalated manifold after the violent clashes in Galwan Valley.

Singh said the best thing would be for the matter to be resolved through talks and the process was underway at both the military and diplomatic level.

"We are proud of the Indian Army. I am feeling proud to be

among the soldiers. Our soldiers have given their lives. 130 crore Indians are saddened by it," he said.

India is the only country in the world that has given the message of peace to the whole world, he added.

"We have never attacked any country, nor have we occupied the land of any country. India has given the message of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family)," the defence minister said.

"Now our India is not a weak

India. India has strong leadership. We have got a prime minister like Narendra Modi. We have got a prime minister who can take decisions," Singh asserted.

He also paid tributes to the brave soldiers who guarded the borders of India by risking their lives in the Kargil war: Singh arrived in Leh on a daylong visit, accompanied by Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat and Army Chief General MM Naravane.

Following a series of diplomatic and military talks, India and China have begun a mutual disengagement process at most of the friction points on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh on July 6. China and India are committed to "complete disengagement" of troops, and the process is "intricate" that requires "constant verification", the Indian Army had said Thursday after the fourth round of marathon military talks for further de-escalation of tension in eastern Ladakh.

SC DECLINES '1 NATION-1' BOARD PLEA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: The Supreme Court Friday refused to entertain a PIL seeking to explore feasibility of establishing 'One Nation One Board' by merging ICSE and CBSE to ensure uniform education to all children aged between 6-14 years, saying such "policy issues" do not fall under its "domain".

A headed by Justices D Y Chandrachud, in a hearing via video-link, told PIL petitioner and BJP leader Ashwini Upadhyay that the issue of merger of education boards cannot be decided by courts.

"The Writ Petition raises issues of policy. We are affirmatively of the view that it is not within the domain of this court under Article 32 of the Constitution to direct the constitution of a National Education Council or National Education Commission.

"These are matters which fall within the domain of experts. Similarly, the relief which has been of introducing a 'standard textbook with a chapter on the Constitution' is a matter of policy. The school syllabus contains subjects bearing on the knowledge of rights, duties and governance under the Constitution," said the bench which also comprised Justices Indu Malhotra and K M Joseph.

"Our students are already burdened with heavy school bags on their shoulders. Why do you want to add to their burden by adding more books," the bench asked during the hearing.

Police fired at Dubey in self-defence: UP tells SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: The police party escorting gangster Vikas Dubey from Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh to Kanpur had to "fire back in self-defence" as he tried to escape and was killed, the Uttar Pradesh government has said in an affidavit filed in the Supreme Court.

The UP government has constituted a 3-member SIT, headed by UP additional chief secretary Sanjay Bhoosreddy July 11, to look into the crimes committed by the dreaded gangster and the alleged collusion between Dubey, police and politicians, the affidavit said.

"The only option available to the escort party, under the circumstances was to fire back in self-defence," Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police Hitesh Chandra Awasthy, in the affidavit filed on behalf of the state, on a plea seeking a court-monitored probe by the CBI or the NIA into the encounter



killing. The top police officer denied that Dubey had surrendered at Ujjain and said that the accused who was on the run was identified at the Mahakaal Temple by the Samiti authorities as well as the policemen at the temple premises.

The DGP also dealt with the question as to why Dubey was not handcuffed and said, "There were 15 police personnel and 3 vehicles to escort the accused directly to the court at Kanpur. He had to be produced at Kanpur within 24 hours before court which deadline was expiring at 10 am July 10".

LOVE LANDS MAN IN TROUBLE

Maharashtra man nabbed in Rann of Kutch while trying to sneak into Pakistan to meet girlfriend

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhuj/Mumbai, July 17: A 20-year-old engineering student from Maharashtra was apprehended by the Border Security Force (BSF) in Gujarat's Rann of Kutch while he was trying to sneak into Pakistan on foot to meet a girl he had befriended on social media, officials said Friday.

The man, identified as Zishan Mohammad Siddiqui, is a resident of Khwajangar in Maharashtra's Osmanabad town, they said.

"Siddiqui was held by the BSF Thursday night and later handed over to the local police," Kutch-East Superintendent of Police, Parikshita Rathod, said.

"Police had issued an alert after a motorcycle with the Maharashtra registration number was found abandoned near Dholavira village in the Rann of Kutch Thursday evening. The BSF later nabbed the man when he was found walking towards the border in a bid to enter Pakistan," Rathod added.

According to a police official



from Maharashtra, Siddiqui had left his home in Osmanabad on a motorcycle July 11 to meet the girl in Pakistan as no means of public transport was available due to the lockdown. "He went to Kutch on his motorcycle to cross the border and enter Pakistan," he said.

'No need for CBI probe in Sushant death case'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagpur, July 17: There was no need for a CBI probe into the death case of Hindi film industry actor Sushant Singh Rajput as the Mumbai police were capable of handling the matter, said Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh Friday.

The police were also examining the angle of "business rivalry" in the case, he said. Rajput, 34, was found dead in his Bandra apartment in Mumbai June 14 and what the police claimed was a case of suicide. In the initial investigation, the Mumbai police had found that the actor was under medication for depression.

Rajput's friend, actor Rhea Chakraborty Thursday in a tweet, demanded a CBI inquiry to understand what "pressures" prompted Rajput to take the extreme step of

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

Talking to PTI, Deshmukh said the Mumbai police were conducting a detailed inquiry into the actor's death and also recording statements of people concerned.

"There was no need to give the case to the CBI. Our police officials are capable and doing the inquiry in right way. We are also examining the angle of business rivalry," said Deshmukh. So far, the police have recorded the statements of more than two dozen people, including Chakraborty, filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Hindi film industry casting director Mukesh Chhabra and Rajput's family members, as part of probe into the suicide, which jolted the Hindi film industry.

GET WELL SOON



A leaf artist shows a portrait of actor Amitabh Bachchan, with the wish of his recovery as he tested positive for COVID-19, in Agartala Friday

UNI PHOTO

Terrorists planning to target Amarnath Yatra, says Army



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, July 17: The Indian Army said Friday that there are inputs that terrorists are planning to target the Amarnath Yatra, but the Army has its systems in place to ensure that the annual pilgrimage goes on peacefully.

Speaking to reporters, 9 Rashtriya Rifles sector Commander, Brigadier VS Thakur, said that inputs suggest that terrorists are planning to target the yatra somewhere on National Highway 44.

"We have inputs that terrorists would try their best to target the yatra, but we have got our systems and resources in place to ensure that it goes on unhindered and peacefully," he said in a statement. He also said that Friday's encounter in South Kashmir's Kulgam district, in which three terrorists, including a Pakistani named Waleed, were killed ahead of the commencement of the yatra, was a big success for the security forces.

"It is only befitting that this operation has been conducted successfully, which has led to the elimination of one Pakistani terrorist also, just four days before the Amarnath Yatra commences August 21," he said. He said the message to local people is that the Army will remain committed to the peaceful conduct of the Amarnath Yatra without any hindrance of any sort.

NATURE BREATHE

Lockdown in India may have saved 630 lives

According to the scientists, during this period, the levels of harmful air pollutants reduced by 10% Mumbai, and by up to 54 per cent in Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: The COVID-19 lockdown-led reduction in air pollution levels across five Indian cities in India, including Delhi and Mumbai, may have prevented about 630 premature deaths, and saved \$690 million in health costs in the country, according to a new study.

Scientists, including those from the University of Surrey in the UK, assessed the levels of harmful fine particulate matter (PM2.5) from vehicles and other sources in five Indian cities -- Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Hyderabad - since the beginning of the lockdown period. The study, published in the journal Sustainable Cities and Society, compared these lockdown PM2.5 figures from 25 March up

until 11 May, with those from similar periods of the preceding five years, and found that the measure reduced pollution levels in all these places.

According to the scientists, during this period, the levels of these harmful air pollutants reduced by 10 per cent in Mumbai, and by up to 54 per cent in Delhi. "The percentage reduction for the other cities ranged from 24 to 32 per cent, which were slightly smaller than the measured values for Delhi and Mumbai," the scientists noted in the study.

"While the reduction in PM2.5 pollution may not be surprising, the size of the reduction should make us all take notice of the impact we have been having on the planet," said Prashant Kumar, a co-



author of the study from the University of Surrey. The scientists said these reductions in PM2.5 were comparable to those reported in other cities across the world,

such as in Austria's capital Vienna (60 per cent), and Shanghai (42 per cent) in China.

They also calculated the monetary value of the reduced mortality due

to air pollution, and found that the lowered levels of PM2.5 may have saved 630 people from premature death, and \$690 million in health costs in India. According to the researchers, the present lockdown situation offers observational opportunities regarding potential control systems and regulations for improved urban air quality.

They said an integrated approach might help in understanding overall impacts of COVID-19 lockdown-style interventions and support the implementation of relevant policy frameworks.

"This is an opportunity for us all to discuss and debate what the 'new normal' should look like - particularly when it comes to the quality of the air we breathe," Kumar said.

of the day quote

These people (Americans), for self-interest and political gain, do not hesitate to hijack domestic public opinion... to the point where they have lost their minds and gone mad

HUA CHUNYING | CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESWOMAN



I love the people of India and I love the people of China and I want to do everything possible to keep the peace for the people

DONALD TRUMP | US PRESIDENT



Pakistan is willing to provide third consular access to (Kulbhushan) Jadhav. If they (India) want to meet him tonight or tomorrow, we are ready

SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI | PAKISTAN FOREIGN MINISTER



SHORT TAKES

Tsunami warning in Papua New Guinea

Canberra: A strong earthquake has struck near coastal Papua New Guinea. The US Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said a hazardous tsunami was possible within 300 kilometers of the epicenter, which would include eastern coastal areas of the country. The US Geological Survey says the 7.0 magnitude quake struck Friday north-northwest of Popondetta, Papua New Guinea, and was 80 kilometers deep.

US drug kingpin to be executed

Iowa City: A ruthless Iowa meth kingpin who killed five people, including two young girls, in 1993 to thwart his prosecution for drug trafficking is set to become the third federal inmate to be executed this week. Dustin Honken, 52, would become the first defendant in an Iowa case to be put to death since 1963 if he is executed as scheduled Friday. Iowa abolished the death penalty in 1965, but federal prosecutors sought to execute Honken for killing government informants and children.

Pak Taliban leader blacklisted

United Nations: The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terror group's leader Noor Wali Mehsud has been designated as a global terrorist by the UN for participating in the financing, planning and perpetrating acts on behalf of and in support of entities associated with al-Qaida. The UN Security Council's 1267 ISIL and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee added Mehsud, 42, to the ISIL and Al-Qaida Sanctions List Thursday.



The whole world has changed in the past six months, and I don't know if the President (Donald Trump) has caught up

AMY KOCH | DEMOCRAT LEADER

TRUMP BOOK WRITTEN BY HIS NIECE SELLS MILLION COPIES ON 1ST DAY

A new book on Donald Trump written by his niece sold nearly a million copies on the first day it went on sale in the United States, its publisher said Thursday



Russia is hacking virus vaccine trials, Western countries say

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, July 17: Western governments Thursday accused hackers believed to be part of Russian intelligence of trying to steal valuable private information about a coronavirus vaccine, calling out the Kremlin in an unusually detailed public warning to scientists and medical companies.

The alleged culprit is a familiar foe. Intelligence agencies in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada say the hacking group APT29, also known as Cozy Bear, is attacking academic and pharma-

ceutical research institutions involved in COVID-19 vaccine development. The same group was implicated in the hacking of Democratic email accounts during the 2016 US presidential election.

It was unclear whether any useful information was stolen. But British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said, "It is completely unacceptable that the Russian Intelligence Services are targeting those working to combat the coronavirus pandemic." He accused Moscow of pursuing "selfish interests with reckless behavior."

Sticking to more general lan-



guage, White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said, "We

worked very closely with our allies to ensure that we would take

measures to keep that information safe and we continue do so."

The allegation that hackers linked to a foreign government are attempting to siphon secret research during the pandemic is not entirely new. US officials as recently as Thursday have accused China of similar conduct. But the latest warning was startling for the detail it provided, attributing the targeting by name to a particular hacking group and specifying the software vulnerabilities the hackers have been exploiting.

Also, Russian cyberattacks strike a particular nerve in the US given

the Kremlin's sophisticated campaign to influence the 2016 presidential election. And the coordination of the new warning across continents seemed designed to add heft and gravity to the announcement and to prompt the Western targets of the hackers to protect themselves.

"I think (the governments) have very specific intelligence that they can provide," said John Hultquist, senior director of analysis at Mandiant Threat Intelligence. "The report is full of specific operational information that defenders can use" to protect their networks.

US targets CCP members in possible travel ban: Source

The New York Times and later The Wall Street Journal reported that Trump is reviewing a proposal to refuse US entry of all members of the Chinese ruling party



Chinese Communist Party."

"We want to make sure we do it in a way that reflects America's tradition, and there are lots of ideas that are under review by the President and by our team," he said, without commenting directly.

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said of Trump at a briefing: "He has not ruled out any action with regard to China."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying called the reported visa ban idea "very pathetic" for the world's "strongest power."

"We hope the US will refrain from doing more things that disdain the basic norms governing international relations and undermine its reputation, credibility and status as a major country," she told reporters.

Trump has been ramping up pressure on China, repeatedly blaming the Asian power for not preventing the coronavirus pandemic which is taking a heavy toll in the United States months ahead of elections.

Last week the State Department said it would refuse visas for three senior Chinese officials over abuses in the Xinjiang region, where rights groups say more than one million Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims are incarcerated.

But a sweeping ban on members of the Chinese Communist Party would be an extraordinary undertaking, requiring US authorities to step up screening of the three million Chinese who visited each year before the pandemic disrupted travel.

Chinese state media last year said that more than 90 million people belonged to the party, with 35 percent of them "workers and peasants."

For many Chinese, membership in the 99-year-old party is seen as vital for advancement. Many observers were startled in 2018 to learn that Jack Ma, the billionaire businessman behind e-commerce titan Alibaba, belonged to the party.

Nepal's ruling Communist party calls meet today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, July 17: Nepal's ruling Communist party Friday decided to convene a meeting of its top decision-making body Saturday to try and end the tussle for power between beleaguered Prime Minister and former premier Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' that has divided the party.

The decision to hold a meeting of the 9-member Central Secretariat was taken hours after the party postponed for the fifth time the Standing Committee meeting till Sunday to give more time to Oli and the rival faction led by Prachanda, the executive chairman of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) to have more talks.

According to Prime Minister's press secretary Surya Thapa, the NCP has called a secretariat meeting after the two top leaders have agreed to call a conclave of the highest body of the party ahead of the 45-member Standing Committee meeting on Sunday in a bid to strike a power-sharing deal by sorting out their differences.

During previous meetings, Oli has refused to resign or give up his position as chairman of the NCP as demanded by the faction led by Prachanda.

Pakistan paid \$18K to UK parl group for PoK trip

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

London, July 17: It has been revealed that a UK parliamentary group, whose aim is to highlight alleged human rights violations in Kashmir, received 30 lakh PKR (\$17,917) from Islamabad for a visit to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The register of all party parliamentary groups reveal that "All Party Parliamentary Group on Kashmir" (APPGK), which is chaired by Labour MP Debbie Abrahams, received a benefit of between 29.7 lakh PKR and 31.2 lakh PKR February 18 from the Pakistan government for a visit to PoK between February 18 and 22.

Parliamentary groups are bound to declare benefits and money received worth more than 1,500 pounds on the parliamentary register. Abrahams was reported to Dubai February 17 after being informed at Delhi Airport that her e-visa was not valid.

The following day she flew to Pakistan and met Prime Minister Imran Khan, all funded by Islamabad.

The APPGK, which is made up of cross party British parliamentarians some of Pakistani heritage, aims at supporting the right to self determination of Kashmiris; to

The register of all party parliamentary groups reveal that "All Party Parliamentary Group on Kashmir" received a benefit of between 29.7 lakh PKR and 31.2 lakh PKR from the Pakistan

seek support from UK MPs; to highlight the human rights abuses in Kashmir and to seek justice for people there.

This is not the first time APPGK has received funds from Pakistan. On September 17, 2018, the Pakistan High Commission in London gave around 12,000 pounds to the group to fund a visit to Islamabad and Kashmir between September 17 and 20 that year.

Abrahams has been highly critical of the Indian government's move to revoke Jammu and Kashmir's special status, granted under the Article 370 of the Indian Constitution.

On August 5, 2019, she wrote to India's then High Commissioner in London, Ruchi Ganshyam, expressing serious concern about the removal of Kashmir's special status.

Nepal plans excavation in Thori to unearth Oli's 'real Ayodhya'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, July 17: Nepal's archaeological department plans to start studies and excavation in Thori in the country's south after Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's claim that it is the "real birthplace" of Lord Ram, according to a media report.

Several top Nepalese political leaders from different parties have slammed Oli for making "senseless and irrelevant" remarks that Lord Ram was born in Thori near Birgunj and the real Ayodhya lies in Nepal. They have asked him to withdraw his controversial statement.

Following Oli's remarks, the Department of Archaeology (DoA) has been discussing a possible

archeological study in the area with different ministries, My Republica newspaper reported.

"The department has been holding several meetings with different ministries to discuss the possibility of starting archaeological studies in Thori of Birgunj," it quoted Ram Bahadur Kunwar, the spokesperson for the DOA, as saying.

DoA Director General Damodar Gautam said the department is serious about conducting archaeological studies in Thori after Prime Minister Oli's statement.

"The department will discuss with experts and will come to a conclusion soon," said Gautam.

However, the DoA doesn't have any basis to start any excavation at Thori, he added.



COVID-ERA FASHION SHOW



A model presents a creation from Etro Spring/Summer 2021 Men's collection at a livestreamed show amid the coronavirus outbreak during Milan Digital Fashion Week in Milan

REUTERS PHOTO

China moves rocket into place for its 1st Mars mission

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, July 17: China has moved a rocket into position to launch a rover to Mars in one of three upcoming missions to the red planet, one from the US and another by the United Arab Emirates.

The Long March-5 carrier rocket is China's heaviest-lift launch vehicle and has been used experimentally three times, but never with a payload. Dubbed Tianwen-1, China's first mission to Mars aims to land a rover to gather scientific data.

The rocket is due to blast off from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in the southern island province of Hainan in late July or early August, according to state media reports Friday that quoted the China National Space Administration.

The mission is one of the most ambitious yet for China's space program, which has advanced rapidly since launching its first crewed mission in 2003. Since then, it has sent astronauts to an experimental space station, begun work on a larger, more permanent facility and landed a probe on the less-explored far side of the moon.

This summer's trio of missions is the most sweeping effort yet to seek signs of ancient microscopic life while scouting out Mars for future astronauts.

The timelines for such missions are daunting and the countries involved are striving to take best advantage of a one-month window in which Mars and Earth are in ideal alignment on the same side of the sun, minimising travel time and fuel use. Such a window opens only once every 26 months.

Preparations have continued amid the coronavirus outbreak, which in part prompted Europe and Russia to drop their plans to send a life-seeking rover to Mars this summer.

Each spacecraft will travel more than 480 million kilometers before reaching Mars next February.

Anniversary of world's 1st atomic test fuels nuclear debate

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Albuquerque (US), July 17: Transported in the backseat of a blacked-out Plymouth sedan was the culmination of years of feverish work a hefty plutonium core that would soon be used to trigger the world's first atomic explosion.

Within days of being taken in 1945 from a top secret installation in the mountains of northern New Mexico to a desert outpost more than 200 miles away, the core and other components were assembled for what was code-named the Trinity test.

Scientists weren't entirely sure whether the Gadget would work as intended or if the explosion would ignite the Earth's atmosphere or maybe lead to the evaporation of the planet.

They found out in the early morn-

ing hours of July 16, 1945.

The detonation forever changed the course of history, ensuring the end of World War II and marking the dawn of the atomic age. After 75 years, the test is both revered for the scientific advancements it helped to usher in and vilified for the moral and diplomatic implications that still linger in its wake.

Lisa Gordon-Hagerty, head of the National Nuclear Security Administration, traveled to Los Alamos National Laboratory Thursday to commemorate the anniversary.

The lab is known as the birthplace of the atomic bomb where Robert Oppenheimer and a disparate collection of physicists went about untangling the theoretical and practical challenges of what came to be known as the Manhattan Project.

The immediacy of their work



was fueled by word in the late 1930s that German chemists had discovered fission through their work with uranium and that the possibility of the Nazis setting up nuclear chain reactions had become more

real and could lead to the construction of bombs.

A group of scientists that included Albert Einstein pressed then US President Franklin D. Roosevelt about the importance of the United

States getting the jump on Germany.

Gordon-Hagerty, a self-described science and history geek, said she often has thought about what it would have been like to stand in Oppenheimer's shoes the morning of the Trinity test.

From uranium miners, truck drivers and government workers to those living in communities near test sites, thousands were exposed over the years to radiation that resulted in cancer, birth defects and other illnesses.

Members of New Mexico's congressional delegation say radiation exposure has disproportionately affected minority communities, including those in the shadow of that first test. They lawmakers have been pushing to expand the federal government's compensation programme to include downwinders in Tularosa Basin.

Tina Cordova, a cancer survivor and co-founder of the Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium, says many people who lived near the Trinity Site weren't told it involved an atomic weapon until the US dropped bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and World War II ended.

"It's horribly disheartening and unforgivable to be relegated to nothingness, like we don't count for anything, while other people are being taken care of," she said, accusing the federal government of looking the other way for decades.

Cordova and others also have concerns about New Mexico's continued ties to nuclear research, bomb making and the resulting waste, saying the state already has made enough sacrifices for the good of the country.

business

of the day quote

Ease of banking is one of the key agenda of IBA and bankers are thinking through this. They have to think about swifter delivery. Banks are converting this pandemic in opportunity for digitisation of their loan products

SUNIL MEHTA | CEO, INDIAN BANKS' ASSOCIATION

The COVID-19 crisis has led to a significant shift in the consumer quest and preferences in India, leading to a spike in demand for health and hygiene products

RAKESH KHANNA | MD AND CEO, ORIENT ELECTRIC

UCO Bank is in the process of introduction of Loan Originating System (LOS) to upgrade its appraisal techniques through technology driven end to end automation of loan appraisal system.

AK GOEL | MD AND CEO, UCO BANK

SHORT TAKES

JLR crosses 15L production mark

New Delhi: Tata Motors-owned Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) Friday said it has crossed 15-lakh production mark for its Ingenium engine range which powers its current models. The company's engine manufacturing centre in Wolverhampton, UK, produces the Ingenium powertrain family, providing a range of electrified, petrol and diesel powertrains for all JLR models, the automaker said in a statement.

Investors Clinic ties up with NCR firms

New Delhi: Property brokerage firm Investors Clinic Friday said it has tied up with four NCR-based realty firms to offer fresh housing and commercial units to distressed customers who are stuck in stalled real estate projects. The amount invested by customers in the stalled projects will be accounted for and adjusted in the purchase price of new properties, it said. The existing home loans, if any, in the stuck properties will be closed and a fresh loan can be availed while purchasing new units.

NoBroker to hire professionals

Mumbai: Property portal NoBroker Friday said it is planning to hire nearly 300 professionals to further strengthen its business. The company plans to recruit professionals across all its verticals, including business, marketing, and technology, it said in a statement. "With the lockdown lifted, we have seen the demand coming back to pre-COVID levels across cities. Our data also indicated that 65% of consumers believe that it is the best time to buy a property."

Bawa new SAP President, MD

New Delhi: Tech major SAP SE Friday said it has appointed Kulmeet Bawa as President and MD for SAP Indian subcontinent, effective July 20. Bawa will be responsible for driving and delivering an exceptional SAP experience for employees and customers across our ecosystem, as well as guide businesses in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to adopt a digital-first mindset, the company said in a statement.



There is a need to deepen the market to further global energy transition. The motivation behind the transition varies across the developing world. Therefore, capital flow in the developing world is the need of the hour

AMITABH KANT | CEO, NITI AAYOG

PEGATRON JOINS WAVE OF TECH INVESTMENT

Apple iPhone's assembly partner Pegatron is making preparations for its maiden plant in India, adding to a large influx of foreign tech investments in the country this year. In June, the Indian government set out a \$6.6bn plan to woo the world's top smartphone manufacturers, offering financial incentives and ready-to-use manufacturing clusters



JUNE FMCG SALES REACH PRE-COVID LEVELS: NIELSEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: The Indian industry has a delayed recovery in comparison to other countries, but the FMCG sector has touched the pre-COVID-19 level sales in June primarily helped by a rebound in rural consumption and sales from traditional channels, said data analytics firm Nielsen Friday.

According to Nielsen, both urban and rural sales are growing but the recovery/sales from the undeveloped semi-urban/rural quarters are much faster and traditional trade channels as neighbourhood and Kirana stores have scored over modern trade outlets as retail outlets and hypermarkets.

Compared with other global markets such as China, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, the industry in India has witnessed a delayed growth recovery due to extended lockdowns, said Nielsen President - South Asia Prasun Basu. "Though it has taken three months, we are kind of coming back to the levels, which we had left behind at the end of last year and the beginning of this year Q1 period. If that was 100 in the index, then today we are at 98, which is almost recovered. Good news is that it is a clear recovery but a slowish recovery," said Basu.

The FMCG industry had a sharp decline in April. It started recovering in May (25% decline) and in June,

BACK ON TRACK



it returned almost to pre-COVID-19 level, said the Nielsen report.

Nielsen is comparing the average sales data of December, January and February and from June. It has dropped March for the baseline

According to Nielsen, both urban and rural sales are growing but the recovery/sales from the semi-urban/rural quarters are much faster

Nielsen is comparing the average sales data of December, January and February and June

comparison as according to Basu, it was the month when there was panic buying in the segment with lots of pantry uploading.

According to Nielsen Global Connect West Market Leader - South

Asia Sameer Shukla, the growth recovery is led by rural and traditional channels.

"Rural is the major contributor toward that recovery. It's not that urban has not recovered as it had a higher dip in April and May and then gain. In rural, the dip was not that significant," he said.

Over baselines of 100 of December, January and February sales, rural has now recovered to 109, while the

urban trade is 92, while the traditional trade has come to 101 as against 78 of the modern trade, which includes big format retailers.

Rural sales contribute to around 37% of the total FMCG sales, Shukla added.

Interestingly, some segments as beauty have witnessed a sharp recovery in June. "With the majority of people confined to their house, cosmetics and beauty categories were de-prioritised in the lockdown phase - categories like Deodorants, Hair Colour and Skin Care had witnessed a significant slowdown. These categories witnessed a sharp bounce back in June," said Nielsen.

Compared with other global markets such as China, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, the industry in India has witnessed a delayed growth recovery due to extended lockdowns

PRASUN BASU | PRESIDENT (SOUTH ASIA), NIELSEN

TAX FRAUD

Exporters who claimed ₹1,875cr IGST refund 'untraceable'

The list of 'risky exporters' also includes 7 larger entities who are accredited as star exporters

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 17: Government crackdown on tax defaulters has revealed shocking data as a total of 1,377 exporters who have fraudulently claimed IGST refund amounting to ₹1,875 crore have been found untraceable at their principle place of business.

Also, the list of 'risky exporters' includes 7 larger entities who are accredited as star exporters. In addition, adverse reports have also been received on three star exporters. These 10 star exporters have claimed IGST refund amounting to ₹28.9 crore deceitfully.

Sources said on the condition of anonymity that as on date, 7,516 exporters are in risky exporter list. Out of them, IGST refund/drawback worth ₹1,363 crore is suspended in



It may be noted that exporters are identified as "risky" on the basis of specific risk indicators based on Customs, GST, I-T and DGFT data

respect of 2,830 risky exporters. Adverse reports have also been received with respect to 2,197 risky exporters.

According to the sources, the field formations of CBIC have detected offence cases amounting to ₹115 crore against identified risky exporters. Also, out of the 234 suppliers' verification received so far, 82 suppliers have been found non-existing at their principle place of business.

It may be noted that exporters are identified as "risky" on the basis of specific risk indicators based on Customs, GST, Income Tax and DGFT data. The identified risky

exporters are shared with the CGST formations for physical and financial verification in terms of GST policy wing for CGST formation.

Sources said that in 695 cases positive reports have been received from CGST formations that have found their suppliers to have availed ineligible ITC. Out of these, in 461 cases of IGST refund /drawback amounting to ₹273 crore is under suspension.

These risky suppliers have been shared with jurisdictional field formations for their physical/financial verification and to verify the ineligible ITC availed by them.

CM INAUGURATES EIGHT HDFC BRANCHES IN STATE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday inaugurated 8 new branches of HDFC Bank in the state via video conferencing. Opening new branches are part of the bank's expansion strategy in Odisha. The bank aims to provide effortless banking services amid the ongoing pandemic.

Of the eight branches, 5 branches are in Khurda district and one each in Sundargarh, Sambalpur and Kendrapara. These branches are opened in semi-urban and rural areas of the state. According to the report, these newly opened branches will provide employment to over 100 aspiring youths.

Patnaik said, "Launching of eight branches in this pandemic situation will be another step forward in financial inclusion of the unbanked people."

The CM appreciated the efforts of HDFC authorities for their commitment to the growth of banking in the state.

"Odisha today is following a comprehensive and well diversified economic path. Out social outreach initiatives have made us a model state in economic inclusion of almost all sections of the society. The expansion of banking networks in the state will be very helpful to our pro-people initiatives," said Patnaik.

He also hoped that the bank would open more branches and business correspondent points to cater to the unbanked population.

At present, HDFC has 150 branches and 276 ATMs in the state. The bank also plans to set up 7 additional business correspondents.



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurating 8 branches of HDFC bank in four districts via video conferencing July 17

OP PHOTO

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BIZ BUZZ

NTPC Kaniha celebrates 'Van Mahotsav'

Bhubaneswar: NTPC Talcher Kaniha celebrated Van Mahotsav with much enthusiasm. On this occasion, fruit saplings were planted at an identified location in Stage II of the Township. Chief General Manager, Sudip Nag said, "Planting trees is significant in restoring the ecological balance of the environment around us. In NTPC Talcher Kaniha, till date, we have planted 14.6 lakh trees, and this year, we aim to plant over 30,000 more trees." Nag recalled the devastating impact of natural disasters like cyclones that are prone to the coastal state. In his concluding remarks, Nag appealed to all to spread the message of planting as many trees as possible and help in making our environment clean and green.



Hyundai begins 17-day hygiene drive

Bhubaneswar: In the wake of spreading of COVID-19 pandemic, following hygiene and safety measures is the new normal for us. In a bid to provide an appropriate hygienic situation, Hyundai Motor India Limited (HML) Friday announced a 17-day hygiene drive for its cars at its workshops across the country. The hygiene drive will continue till July 31. Under this initiative, arrays of measures with special offers that include smoke sanitisation and interior surface sanitisation will be carried out. Customers can opt for these services at any of the company's authorised workshops. The complete interior smoke sanitisation starts at ₹599, the interior surface sanitisation package begins at ₹600 while customers can avail the exterior dry wash facility at ₹340.



Fuel demand falls due to high prices, lockdown

REUTERS

New Delhi, July 17: Indian state refiners' petrol and diesel sales declined in the first half of July from the same period last month, according to preliminary data, as a renewed lockdown in parts of the country and rising retail prices hit demand.

India Friday became the third country in the world to record more than one million cases of the new coronavirus, behind only the United States and Brazil, as infections spread further into the countryside and smaller towns.

Fuel demand growth in India, the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, plunged to historic lows in April when the federal government imposed a country-wide lockdown.



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State-refiners' diesel sales, which account for two-fifth of overall refined fuel sales in India, fell by 18% to 2.2 million tonnes in the first half of July from the same period

in June, and by about 21% from a year earlier, according to data compiled by Indian Oil Corp.

State companies - Indian Oil Corp, Hindustan Petroleum Corp and Bharat Petroleum - own about 90% of India's retail fuel outlets.

Fuel demand growth in India, the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, plunged to historic lows in April when the federal government imposed a country-wide lockdown

Indian fuel demand had gathered pace from May when the lockdown was partly eased. But a spike in cases of coronavirus infection has led to authorities imposing fresh lockdowns and designating new containment zones in several states

this week, including the largely rural Bihar in the east and the southern tech hub Bangalore.

State companies' sales of petrol fell 6.7% to 880,000 tonnes in the first half of July from the same period in June, and by about 12% from a year earlier, the data showed.

"Retail sales are down because of reimposed lockdown and higher retail prices," said Sri Paravaikkarasu, director for Asia oil at consultancy FGE.

India's diesel price has touched a record high of ₹81.35 (\$1.09) a liter Friday in New Delhi, slightly higher than that of petrol.

State retailers sold 6.5% more LPG in the first half of July from a year ago, at about 1.075 million tonnes.

Benzema brace helps Los Blancos claim their 34th Spanish league title with 2-1 win over Villarreal



REAL SEAL DEAL



Real Madrid players throw their manager Zinedine Zidane into air in celebration, Thursday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, July 17: There was Zinedine Zidane again, being thrown into the air by his Real Madrid players in another title celebration. With the Frenchman back in charge, Madrid is back to collecting major trophies.

Madrid clinched their 34th Spanish league title — and first since 2017 — after extending their perfect run following the pandemic break with a 2-1 win over Villarreal Thursday, opening a seven-point gap to second-place Barcelona with one round to go. Barcelona lost to 10-man Osasuna at the Camp

Benzema scored twice to give Madrid their 10th consecutive league victory. It was the only team with a perfect record after the coronavirus-enforced break, having trailed Barcelona by two points before the league was halted. Zidane quit as Madrid coach in 2018 after leading the team to three straight Champions League titles, then returned less than a year later with the team floundering. In his first full season back in charge, Madrid wrested the league title away from Barcelona for the first time in three years.

It was also Madrid's first league title since Cristiano Ronaldo left to join Juventus two seasons ago. The title celebrations were subdued as the triumph came with Madrid playing at its training center because the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium remains undergoing renovation work. Fans have not been allowed into games since the pandemic, and Madrid had warned supporters

not to gather at the team's traditional celebration spots in the Spanish capital. Most of the early celebrations came from fans honking their car horns across the city's streets. Captain Sergio Ramos lifted the trophy at the empty Alfredo Di Stefano Stadium as confetti went

into the air behind him and his teammates. Players later threw Zidane into the air a few times, then they all posed for photos in front of one of the goals.

Barcelona had won the last two league titles but stuttered after the break, drawing three times and losing once after the league resumed. Benzema — one of Madrid's key players this season — opened the scoring with a shot from inside the area in the 29th minute and added to the lead by converting a penalty in the 77th, reaching 21 league goals and moving within two of scoring leader Lionel Messi, who netted for



Karim Benzema

Barcelona against Osasuna. Benzema's goal from the penalty spot came after Ramos' initial attempt was called back after he just rolled the ball sideways to Benzema to score. The French striker had entered the area too soon and the penalty had to be taken again.

Luka Modric set up Benzema's first goal after a breakaway that started near midfield. Fifth-place Villarreal pulled one back with a header by Vicente Iborra in the 83rd. It was denied an equalizer by a great save by Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois in stoppage time. Madrid's Marco Asensio had a goal disallowed moments later.

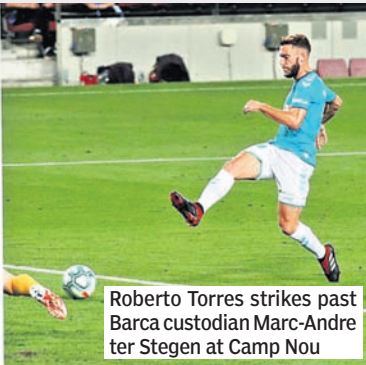


Lionel Messi

Agonising end to Barca's dismal run

BARCELONA: Barcelona needed to win their match and hope Real Madrid slipped up. Instead they lost 1-2 at home against midtable Osasuna, who were down to 10 men before the winner. Messi scored his league-leading 23rd goal from a free-kick in the second half to cancel out Jose Arnaiz's opener. Osasuna lost substitute Enric Gallego to a direct red card for bloodying the mouth of Barca defender Clement Lenglet with an elbow to the face in the 77th. But Osasuna's Roberto Torres scored in stoppage time with Barca pushing forward searching for a late goal. It was Barca's first home loss in the league since a 3-4 loss

to Real Betis in November 2018. **OTHER RESULTS** Third-place Atletico Madrid won 2-0 at seventh-place Getafe, while fourth-place Sevilla drew 0-0 at sixth-place Real Sociedad. Valencia moved into eighth place to keep alive its hopes of grabbing a Europa League spot after a 1-0 win against last-place Espanyol. Mallorca became the second team to be relegated after a 1-2 loss to Granada at home. Espanyol had already been demoted. Leganes keep their chances of survival alive thanks to a 2-0 win at Athletic Bilbao. Celta Vigo stayed just outside the relegation zone after a 2-3 loss against Levante at home.



Roberto Torres strikes past Barca custodian Marc-Andre ter Stegen at Camp Nou

Messi blasts 'weak' team

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, July 17: After seeing Barcelona's Spanish league title defense come to a disappointing and meek end, Lionel Messi didn't hold back. Messi blasted his team for being 'weak' after Real Madrid wrested the league title away from Barcelona for the first time in three years Thursday. "This game represents the entire year. We have been an erratic and weak team," Messi said in a rare TV interview just after the final whistle at an empty Camp Nou. "Madrid did its part by winning all its matches, which

Fans must be very angry at how this whole season has gone, that is normal, we are too, its logical. Roma, Liverpool, people are running out of patience because we are not giving them anything"

is impressive, but we also helped them to win this league. We have to be critical of how we have played, starting with the players, and the rest of the club," he added. Barcelona led the league by two points over Madrid when the league was stopped for three months. "The feeling on this team is that it tries, but that it cannot get the job done," Messi said. "Today in the first half they were better

than we were and it seems we have to fall behind to react like we tried to do in the second half," the Argentine lamented. "I said it some time ago, that playing like this we had no chance of winning the Champions League, and it turns out we didn't even have enough to win la Liga," Messi said. "We need to take a breather, let some air in, and clean out minds of all that has happened since December."

Barcelona must regroup for the second leg of its Champions League round of 16 match against Napoli August 8. The first leg finished 1-1 in Italy. "Playing like this we will lose against Napoli," Messi said. "We have to start from zero in the CL and blame ourselves for what went wrong," he signed off.

We weren't happy with what happened that day (humiliating 3-7 loss to rival Atletico in a preseason friendly in the US). When you concede seven goals, that stays with you, no matter what happens the rest of the season. But you have to pick yourself up, and that's what we did

ZINEDINE ZIDANE



Zidane has been key for us. He has guided this team. He has shown that he trusts all of his players. That doesn't happen with all coaches. And we believe in him

SERGIO RAMOS

Spanish media reacts...

Real Madrid's record-extending 34th LaLiga title was heralded as 'Unforgettable' in the Spanish capital, but in Barcelona the mourning was just beginning Friday. The newsstands in each city presented front pages that could hardly have been more contrasting, with the Madrid-based papers in celebratory mood and those from Barcelona reflecting a solemn tone

MARCA: 'Unforgettable'



Spain's best-known sports newspaper is Madrid-based, and its wraparound cover showed Zidane's squad in party mood

AS: 'And they go to 34!'



As well as quoting Zidane's comment that the title made him 'happier than the Champions League', Madrid-based AS found space on its own wraparound cover for Messi, saying he 'explodes after the latest fiasco' for Barcelona

SPORT: 'This isn't enough'



Barcelona-based daily pictured a despondent Messi, accompanied by his declaration that the Catalan giants have not reached the heights required of champions.

L'ESPRESSO: 'People are running out of patience because we don't give them anything'

The Catalan-language sports newspaper inevitably also focused on the frustrations of Messi, picturing the Argentinian with the Barcelona shirt pulled over his face.

MUNDO DEPORTIVO: 'Messi explodes'



Another Barcelona-based daily reflected the anger of captain Messi, who said after Madrid landed the title that his team must be 'self-critical' before next season begins

L'EQUIPE: 'The jewels of Real'

Madrid's title provided cause for celebration in France, where the high-circulation sports daily L'Equipe splashed with pictures of Zidane and Karim Benzema, the two Frenchmen at the centre of Los Blancos' success story

Notable reactions

While the Real Madrid fans and followers around the world are still celebrating the team's La Liga triumph, several known sportspersons shared their feelings in their social media handles. Indian cricket team opener Rohit Sharma and World Chess Champion Magnus Carlsen are among them.



Humpy beats World No.1, sails into final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 17: India's top player Koneru Humpy pulled off a 6-5 win over World No.1 Hou Yifan of China Friday to reach the final of the fourth and final leg of the Women's Speed Chess Championships. Humpy, the World Rapid Champion, overcame her Chinese opponent in a close match with the Indian winning the decisive bullet game.

Former world champion Alexandra Kosteniuk of Russia meets Sarasadat Khademalsharieh of Iran in the other semifinal.

Foxes, Man Utd win

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, July 17: The race to secure the final two Champions League qualification spots from the Premier League is going to the last day of the season. And two of the three teams still in contention will be going head to head.

Leicester and Manchester United both won Thursday to ensure their meeting in the final round of matches July 26 will have plenty riding on it.

Leicester's 2-0 home victory over Sheffield United was followed hours later by a 2-0 win for United at Crystal Palace. It left the two teams tied on points with two games remaining, with fourth-place Leicester only ahead by virtue of a superior

goal difference.

Before their final-day showdown at King Power Stadium, Leicester plays away to Tottenham Sunday and United hosts West Ham Wednesday. If Leicester and United both win those games, they realistically could find themselves in third and fourth place, respectively.

United rode its luck against Palace, which had a strong penalty appeal turned down moments before going behind to Marcus Rashford's well-taken goal in the first half stoppage time. United sealed victory through Anthony Martial's goal of the season.

Foxes were a more comfortable winner, with goals by Ayoze Perez and Demarai Gray seeing off Sheffield United.

Stokes, Sibley tons take England to 378/5

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, July 17: Ben Stokes (172 batting, 349b, 17x4, 2x6) reached his 10th Test century as England quickened the pace in search of a big first-innings total against the West Indies on Day 2 in the second Test at Old Trafford.

England were 378/5 at tea Friday, with the departure of Dom Sibley (120, 372b, 5x4) allowing the hosts to increase the miserly run rate in Manchester. In the middle with Stokes was Jos Buttler (12 batting).

England lost two wickets in the middle session, with Sibley's snail-like innings eventually ending when he smashed spinner Roston Chase



(4/106) to Kumar Roach as he ran round from midwicket. Ollie Pope (7) was then trapped plumb in front of the stumps by Chase.

An extraordinary straight six off paceman Alzarri Joseph was a signal of intent by the all-rounder after he brought up three figures with a reverse sweep soon after lunch, having resumed on 99.

Stokes, who was dropped on 157 by Shai Hope at gully off Shannon Gabriel, passed Sibley for runs made before their 260-run partnership ended.

BRIEF SCORES: England 378/5 at tea (Ben Stokes 172 batting, Dom Sibley 120; Roston Chase 4/106) vs West Indies. Match to continue.