

PROMOTING VEGANISM

Richa Chadha feels large-scale production and consumption of animal products is harming the planet

LEISURE

P2



TIRUPATI TEMPLE OPEN

Though senior pontiff of Tirupati temple has tested positive for Covid, the temple will remain open

TWO STATES

P7



FLOOD FURY

At least 14 people have died in the latest round of seasonal rains and flooding in southern China

INTERNATIONAL

P10

TAX DEPT WILL NOW KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU

Financial transactions will be shown in 26AS only if taxpayers cross the specified limit in an FY

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 18: The income tax (IT) department has come up with a new Form 26AS. The objective is to prevent suppression of information by taxpayers. The IT department will seek full details of the taxpayers' financial transactions such as sale and purchase of stocks, real estate trans-

actions and payment details of credit card bills.

The taxpayers' tax passbook or the form 26AS contains details of taxpayer and compliance details along with other financial transactions. From this year, its format has been changed to include specified financial transactions of taxpayers that will be presented on the form of Statement of Financial Transactions (SFTs).

Taxpayers' other details such as Aadhaar number, date of birth, mobile number, email ID and address will also be present in the new form.

"...the information being received by the Income Tax Department from the filers of these specified SFTs is

NO LAXITY ON TAXES

The **earlier** Form 26AS used to give information regarding TDS and tax collected at source **relating to a PAN**

Certain **additional info** including details of other taxes paid, refunds and **TDS defaults** were also there

But now, it will have Statement of Financial Transactions 'to facilitate voluntary compliance, tax accountability and ease of **e-filing of returns**'



now being shown in Part E of Form 26AS to facilitate voluntary compliance, tax accountability and ease of e-filing of returns so that the same can be used by the taxpayer to file her or his income tax return (ITR) by calcu-

lating the correct tax liability in a feel-good environment. This would also bring in further transparency and accountability in the tax administration," the statement read.

The IT department used to receive

information like cash deposit/withdrawal from saving bank accounts, sale/purchase of immovable property, time deposits, credit card payments, purchase of shares, debentures, foreign currency, mutual funds, buy back of shares, cash payment for goods and services, among others under Section 285BA of Income-tax Act, 1961 from 'specified persons' like banks, mutual funds, institutions issuing bonds and registrars or sub-registrars, with regard to individuals having high-value financial transactions since the Financial Year 2016 onwards. Now, all such information under different SFTs will be shown in the new Form 26AS.



AYUSH doc beats father to death in Capital, held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 18: The Commissionerate Police arrested an AYUSH doctor on charges of killing his father, here Saturday. He was produced in a court.

The incident took place at Jagamohan Nagar in Jagamara area under Khandagiri police limits, July 16. The deceased has been identified as Rajkishore Mishra (73) and the accused as Ranjan Mishra.

According to Khandagiri police station IIC Rashmi Ranjan Mohapatra, the family comprised of Rajkishore, his son, daughter-in-law, two grandsons and one spinster daughter. They lived at Jagamohan Nagar. Ranjan worked as an AYUSH doctor at Banapur CHC.

For the last couple of

months, Ranjan had been accusing his father of having illicit relationship with his wife. Due to the frequent quarrels between father and son, Ranjan's wife along with their two sons had left the house a month ago and been staying at her parents' house.

According to a source, like any other day, Ranjan picked up a quarrel with his father on the issue July 16. Sources added that Ranjan sought to know if he was indeed the biological father of the two sons he has with his wife.

Soon Ranjan lost his cool and became violent even though his sister, who intervened, could not calm him. Rajkishore was rushed to Capital Hospital here where he was declared brought-dead. Ranjan's sister has registered a case against him, accusing him of killing their father.

Those who protect us are doing so sans protective kits

Slew of stories has flooded the internet on the hardships and danger that the doctors or healthcare workers are going under or are exposed to, but what about the Khaki-wearing frontline workers— the cops!

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 18: They are ensuring that the citizens adhere to the Covid guidelines; they are making sure that the hoodlums cannot bank on this occasion and our streets remain safe, but are they safe?

According to the Indian Police Foundation (IPF), an independent think tank, "So far, 22,925 personnel of state police and Central police forces in the country have tested positive and 149 lost their lives in the pandemic so far."

Around 30 policemen have died while 2,200 others have tested positive for the novel coronavirus infection in Maharashtra alone, the worst-hit state.

Meanwhile, several officials of the Odisha Police were also tested positive for the virus and many more have been sent for quarantine. Around 40 policemen have been found infected with the coronavirus in Odisha, till date and five have succumbed.

With the re-imposition of lockdown in four districts including the Commissionerate Police, the police force has also been burdened with two tasks: ensure the citizens adhere to the guidelines and keep themselves safe while maintaining law and order even though it is impossible for them to follow social distancing norms while dealing with knuckleheads.

Many policemen were found not following safety measures while checking commuters at the important junctions in the city. The cops, who have been accompanying



the accused persons to the hospital for medical examination or to the courts for deposition before magistrates, were seen holding the accused persons' hand without wearing gloves; forget social distancing.

HAVE PPE BUT UNFEASIBLE

Additionally, checkpoints in the capital city do not have adequate sanitisers for the police personnel there. A sub-inspector on the condition of anonymity told Orissa POST, "The personnel have been supplied with PPE kits to wear during duty but it is quite difficult to stand under the scorching sun covered with the PPE kits. Similarly, many personnel approaching retirement have been deployed on law and order duty endangering their lives."

Some personnel also expressed their fear of getting infected while on-duty. One Havildar, Shrichandan Das, stationed at Acharya Vihar square here, said, "We aren't feeling comfortable while checking the commuters but it is our duty. People should help us by staying indoors and not roam in the streets."

Meanwhile, many home guards and constables in the Commissionerate Police are residing in slums where new Covid cases have sprung up.

No biometric scrutiny for PDS

FINGERPRINT SCANNER AND IRIS AUTHENTICATION EXEMPTED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 18: The state government Saturday exempted the mandatory biometric authentication for Aadhaar to avail food under the Public Distribution System (PDS).

The decision was "taken in the light of spread of Covid-19 across the state and the rise in their numbers"—the announcement was done by the State Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain.

He said, "In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, biometric mode of Aadhaar authentication using fingerprint scan-

ner and IRIS device has been exempted during distribution of PDS ration through e-PoS device at Fair Price Shops until further orders."

A notification into this regard was also issued by the department Saturday to roll out the new norms of PDS without such scrutiny. All Collectors have been informed about the decision of the government.

The notification was issued by Vir Vikram Yadav, Secretary of the department. The department has asked the Collectors to ensure that the message and instructions reach to the Fair Price Shops. The Collectors have also

Diesel is getting dearer and dearer than petrol

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 18: State-run oil marketing companies hiked diesel prices Saturday while keeping petrol rates on hold at existing levels. In metros, Indian Oil Corporation raised the prices of diesel by 13-18 paise per litre. With effect from 6 am



Global oil rates are up from March lows as easing of restrictions on transport and industrial activity boost fuel demand

Currently, diesel costs more in the national capital compared to petrol. Domestic petrol and diesel prices vary from state to state due to VAT. Crude oil prices edged lower Friday as concerns about the surge in coronavirus cases sapping fuel demand while major crude-producing nations ready increases in output. Brent crude futures – the global benchmark for crude oil – declined 0.53 per cent to close at \$43.14 per barrel.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Believe me, sir, when it comes to mishandling a crisis, we are totally self-sufficient!

| WEATHER | | BHUB | CTK |
|----------|-----|--------|-------------------|
| TEMP | MAX | 35.4°C | 35.0°C |
| | MIN | 27.1°C | 24.5°C |
| Humidity | 92% | 76% | Forecast |
| Rainfall | Nil | Nil | Partly cloudy sky |

54L in deluge but no hue & cry

Amid the political pantomime in Rajasthan and Covid pandemic, Assam floods have no takers

AGENCIES

Guwahati, July 18: Nearly 54 lakh people have been affected across 30 districts of Assam due to massive flooding, state's disaster management authorities informed Saturday. Seventy-six people have lost their lives in the disaster, it added.

"76 deaths and 53,98,017 people affected across 30 districts due to floods till July 17," said Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA).

Due to the state's fluvial landscape, Assam witnesses floods every year in the monsoon season which often results in loss of lives and damage to crops.

According to the report by ASDMA, over 2.4 lakh hectares of agricultural land has been affected so far in Assam, while 3,014

villages are underwater.

The flood-affected districts include Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Biswanath, Sonitpur, Darrang, Baksa, Nalbari, Barpeta, Chirang, Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, South Salmara, Goalpara, Kamrup, Kamrup Metropolitan, Morigaon, Nagaon, Hojai, Golaghat, Jorhat, Majuli, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong and Cachar.

So far, the government has evacuated 76,003 people from the flood-affected areas. A total of 552 camps have been established under the relief work.

Meanwhile, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi expressed solidarity with the northeastern state and said he is confident that the people will overcome the natural disaster.



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FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you may get to share your ideas and opinions with like-minded people. Ganesha says you may finally have a heart-to-heart chat with your beloved, and express your deep commitment.

TAURUS
Logic may be your forte today, but in the game of life, sometimes the heart wins and sometimes the head. Your analytical skills will help you understand things better, in turn, making you wiser. You may feel an urge to spend on music.

GEMINI
You will witness a marked improvement in your emotional quotient, says Ganesha. This change may either come through watching a film, listening to a song or just a simple insight. At the workplace, people will be lavishing praise on you for your excellent performance.

CANCER
You know how to make money, and you are even better in putting it to good use. Today, you will have your one eye on the developments in the stock market, and the other on brochures of tourism companies. You may spend money on entertainment.

LEO
It may be that the best daffodils bloom early in the morning, but good ideas can come any time of the day, says Ganesha. So spruce up your management skills, as you shall need them to help organise and cash in on the multitude of ideas.

VIRGO
A la Sisyphus, you may realise the futility of your efforts and constant failure in achieving success. But do not despair, says Ganesha. Recharge your imagination, inquisitiveness and intelligence and focus on your long-term goals, says Ganesha.

LIBRA
Ganesha says today you will try to be adept in your favorite subject. Today you will be buying antique artistic things too. If there are any legal proceeding going on then the results will be in your favor. You shall be a success in everything that you touch today. Your artistic streak will come to the fore today.

SCORPIO
There is a big black hole in your pocket, and it's high time you looked for remedies there. Loved ones will make use of your money as suntan cream - liberally and carelessly. You are most likely to spend lavishly, especially to impress a member of opposite sex.

SAGITTARIUS
Get ready to rule hearts today. Your thoughtful insights into other people's psyche might just help you write a book on it! In the battleground of love, you will win over your sweetheart all over again, probably with a nice, slow dance coupled with a fantastic candlelit dinner.

CAPRICORN
Like you weren't already overworked, new responsibilities will keep you occupied throughout the day, says Ganesha. The excitement with which you work every day will weaken, and eventually die down by the end of the day because you will burn your energy and resources in helping others.

AQUARIUS
You get a pat on the back due to your brilliant academic standing. People will admire your business acumen and may imitate your choices. But this doesn't mean you become haughty and unapproachable.

PISCES
Anticipation is all the fun. Sadly, this only alludes to your months-in-preparation travel plans that are most likely to be delayed today on one count or the other. Though, if this is any consolation, your trip, when it finally occurs, will bring you the desired pleasure.



DEBATE OVER WEARING MASKS MAKES NO SENSE: RITA WILSON

Actress-musician Rita Wilson says wearing a face mask during a pandemic should be a normal thing, and feels the debate around it makes no sense. "Why wouldn't you wear a mask if it's good for your health? It doesn't make sense," she said.

JOAQUIN'S JOKER UK'S MOST COMPLAINED ABOUT FILM

Joaquin Phoenix's starrer *Joker* is the most complained about film of 2019 in the United Kingdom. A British Board of Film Classification report states that the DC origin movie received 20 complaints relating to the film's age classification, which is 15, reports *digitalspy.com*.



Bhumi's unique b'day wish

Mumbai: On her 31st birthday on Saturday, actress Bhumi Pednekar said that she wished a vaccine or a solution is found for the novel coronavirus.

"My birthday wish for this year is that all the people who are affected by the virus and all the people that are vulnerable because of the situations currently, get some peace, get happiness and we truly find a solution or a vaccine for Covid-19," Bhumi said.

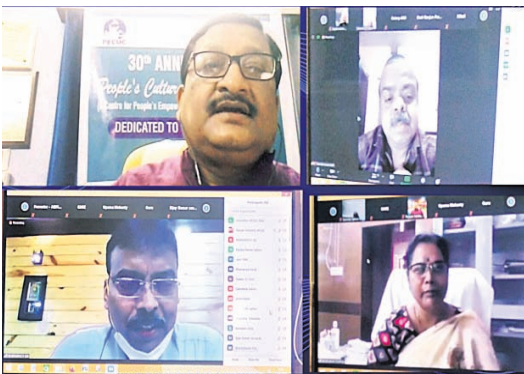
Talking about her birthday plans, Bhumi says: "It will be special because I won't be meeting anyone and will be with my family at home. It will be very simple and basic. No special plans as such," she said.

She said that her celebrations will be 'very different' this year.

"Actually, I am very big on birthdays. I include a lot of people, a lot of my loved ones. I get pampered a lot but I think this year I am just going to be with my mom and my sister. We would probably be on Zoom call with everyone that I love," she added.



PECUC's virtual meet marks anniv celebration



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar: Civil society organisations always play a significant role in the growth of society, said several dignitaries who attended a virtual meeting held Saturday to celebrate the 30th anniversary of People's Cultural Centre (PECUC). For the uninitiated, PECUC is a leading voluntary organisation of the city formed by a team of likeminded people in 1990. It's sole objective was to achieve socio-cultural and economic development of the poor and marginalised community with people's participation.

Attending the digital meet, Khurda Collector Sitanshu Kumar Rout said, "We all need to work together in these difficult hours."

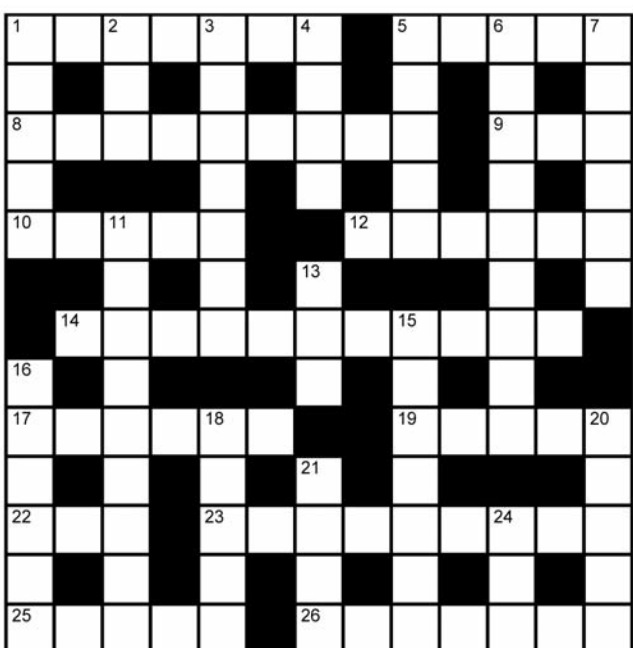
Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights chairperson Sandhyabati Pradhan appreciated PECUC's activities involving the kids and hoped that the organisation will continue its good work in future as well.

Sahadev Sahoo, former Chief Secretary to the government, complemented PECUC for its commendable work in social sector while Francoise Binsfield, Executive Director, AEIN,

Luxemburg also conveyed her good wishes on this occasion.

PECUC's secretary Ranjan Kumar Mohanty shared what the organisation has achieved in last 30 years while executive director Anuradha Mohanty delivered the welcome address and talked about the purpose of this meeting. Among others, Adaramoni Boral, chairman, PECUC, director Minakshi Panda and eminent Odissi dancer Snehaprabha Samantaray attended the virtual meet and complemented the initiative taken by the organisation. Ratna Dash of PECUC gave the vote of thanks at the end.

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Order to a barber (4,3)
 - 5 Tasteless
 - 8 Dead river, Down Under
 - 9 Prospector's need
 - 10 Cheesy snack
 - 12 Formal order
 - 14 Milk cows (5,6)
 - 17 Ready to retire
 - 19 Kick out
 - 22 Sailor's assent
 - 23 Beach formations (4,5)
 - 25 Passenger ship
 - 26 "Far out!"
 - 5 Style
 - 6 Desk item (5,4)
 - 7 Waltzed around
 - 11 Madagascar lizard
 - 13 High card
 - 15 Foot lever
 - 16 Tear into
 - 18 Conundrum
 - 20 Fine thread
 - 21 Old Peruvian
 - 24 Prefix with natal
- Down**
- 1 Rustic digs
 - 2 Jellied delicacy
 - 3 Cacophony
 - 4 Norse thunder god

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

RICHA BATS FOR VEGANISM IN POST-COVID WORLD

Mumbai: Actress Richa Chadha feels large-scale production and consumption of animal products is harming the planet as well as the human race.

"There's a lot of discussion about the last two epidemics originating from meat and poultry farms. The large-scale production, consumption of animal products is harming the planet as well as the human race," Richa said.

The actress had an educational chat with PETA to discuss veganism and why it is a sustainable life choice in post-

COVID world.

"I wanted to be able to talk about it without sounding preachy. The whole concept of veganism stems from 'live and let live', so the idea is not to force people to convert to veganism," she said.

Amid the lockdown and pandemic, Richa has started reading again, and she says the experience feels new.

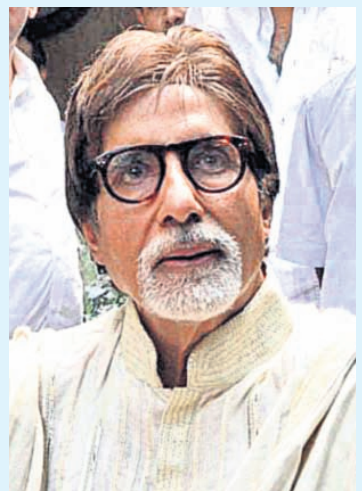
Richa was last seen in the courtroom drama *Section 375*. Her upcoming films are *Abhi Toh Party Shuru Hui Hai* and *Shakeela*.

Big B's soul-searching in hospital

Mumbai: Actor Amitabh Bachchan is reflecting back on his life, decisions and the consequences of his decisions, as he recovers from the novel coronavirus in the Covid ward of a hospital here.

"In the rush of life, when did I ever get the time to, to sit somewhere, for a while and to think .. that what I did, what I said and what I believed in .. what was good in that and what bad ..now I get the time," he began the post.

".. and in these moments doth the mind trace back events words, incidents as vividly as one can ever imagine .. distinct, precise, specific and with the clarity of its occurrence .. and you wonder .. wonder what transpired as a result of it .. and you wonder whether it should or could have been done differently .. but wonder as much you may ..fated decisions remain fated," he added.



The cine icon is admitted in Nanavati hospital's isolation ward after he, along with three of his family members, tested positive for Covid-19.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



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





NORMS FLOUTED

Passengers ignore social distancing norms while waiting for trains at Bhubaneswar railway station, Saturday

KITCHEN ESSENTIALS

People buying vegetables at Unit-1 haat in Bhubaneswar as the 14-day lockdown over coronavirus begins, Saturday



Covid throws spanner on Shree Setu project

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, July 18: The Covid-19 pandemic has put brakes on many infrastructure projects with the ambitious Shree Setu project in the Pilgrim city by the state government being one among these developmental initiatives.

The Puri district administration could not carry out the land acquisition and other preliminary work for Shree Setu, the first ever trumpet bridge project in the state, for a couple of months due to the outbreak of novel coronavirus.

Though the administration had resumed land acquisition for the bridge, uncertainty still looms over the commencement of construction work owing to the restrictions, sources said.

The state government had announced several mega projects including the Shree Setu to transform Puri into a heritage city. It had planned to spend around ₹190 crore on the trumpet bridge project.

The trumpet bridge will connect Mangalaghat bypass of Bhubaneswar-Puri National Highway with a proposed pilgrim centre at Jagannath Ballav mutt in the Holy City.



ON THE BACK-BURNER

The state govt had announced several mega projects including Shree Setu to transform Puri into a heritage city

It had planned to spend around ₹190 crore on the trumpet bridge project

The trumpet bridge will connect Mangalaghat bypass of Bhubaneswar-Puri National Highway with a proposed pilgrim centre at Jagannath Ballav mutt in the Holy City

in the Holy City. The proposed project was supposed boost physical connectivity to the Holy City.

The district administration had decided to acquire 37.984 acre land from four revenue villages in the city here for the 2.3 km-long bridge project. According to sources, the administration had planned to acquire 34.246 acre private land from Samang, Matitota, Markandeswar Sahi (No.1) and Dandimala Sahi for the project.

Similarly, the administration would acquire another 3.738 acre government and Srimandir land for the mega project.

The administration had started acquiring land for the project after completion of a social impact assessment (SIA) survey in the four revenue villages. However, the land acquisition was suspended due to Covid-19 outbreak.

“The land acquisition process for Shree Setu project had resumed.

But, there is no further information regarding the commencement of construction work for the project,” said a source in the district administration.

Puri district land acquisition officer Prashant Jena said the next process for Shree Setu project would begin soon after the completion of the land acquisition work. “All the developmental projects in Puri have been delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic,” he added.

Police patrolling on five highways on the cards

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 18: In a bid to check road mishaps on major highways, the state government has given power to police to conduct patrolling on five national and state highways of the state.

Commerce and Transport department has allowed the police to start highway patrolling on five stretches Jaleswar-Ichhapuram, Bhubaneswar-Puri, Sambalpur-Sohela, Manguli-Sambalpur and Sambalpur-Rourkela.

“The state government does hereby specify the police officers of and above the rank of assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of police deployed to be deployed for highway patrolling duty on the stretches of highways,” the department said in a notification. Police officials have been given power to impose fines as per provisions of amended Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

The objective of the patrolling on highways is to reduce accidents and the fatalities arising out of them. In case of an accident, the

TACKLING MISHAPS



Fatality rate (death per 100 accidents) in Odisha stands at 47 as compared to the national average of 32

Commerce and Transport dept has allowed the police to start highway patrolling on five stretches, Jaleswar-Ichhapuram, Bhubaneswar-Puri, Sambalpur-Sohela, Manguli-Sambalpur and Sambalpur-Rourkela

The police officials have been given power to impose fines as per provisions of amended Motor Vehicles Act, 1988

teams will also provide trauma care immediately, sources said.

The teams deployed for highway patrolling will work in at least two shifts. Additional vehicles and police personnel will be deployed for the purpose.

As per reports, the fatality rate (death per 100 accidents) in Odisha stands at 47 as compared to na-

tional average of 32.

Sambalpur-Sohela stretch of NH-53 has been identified as the biggest killer stretch in the state as at least 13 persons die on every 10 km of the road while Bhubaneswar-Puri NH-316 records 12 deaths on every 10 km. Similarly, NH-16 between Jaleswar and Ichhapuram recorded 11 deaths per 10 km.

IOCL PARADIP REFINERY TO BE SHUT FOR 22 DAYS

PNN/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 18: The oil refinery of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) at Paradip in Jagatsinghpur district will remain shut for 22 days from July 25 for maintenance work, a senior official said Saturday.

Nearly 800 workers from nearby areas will be engaged for carrying out the maintenance activity at the refinery plant, while adhering to Covid-19 safety protocols, Jagatsinghpur District Collector Sangram Keshari Mohapatra said.

MAINTENANCE WORK



Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPc will be imposed around the IOCL refinery premises to prevent any congregation in the area,

he said. The decision to undertake the annual maintenance work in the plant has been taken by IOCL authorities and the district administration, Mohapatra said.

“Periodic maintenance work of the refinery is essential for ensuring operational safety and efficiency,” Paradip IOCL refinery PRO, S S Patra, said. The last such maintenance activity was undertaken in March 2018, he added. Commissioned in 2016 and considered as the energy gateway to eastern India, the refinery has a capacity of 15 million tonnes per annum.

PNN/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 18: The state government Saturday warned the private hospitals of strong action for denying treatment to patients coming from Covid-19 hotspots.

Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy said there are instances of some private hospitals being reluctant in admitting patients coming from hotspot districts.

He termed such act as unethical and illegal.



THE CHIEF SECRETARY ADVISED PEOPLE TO DIAL 100 TO LODGE COMPLAINTS AGAINST SUCH HOSPITALS

HE TERMED SUCH ACT AS UNETHICAL AND ILLEGAL

“Instances have come of some pvt hospitals reluctant in admitting patients from hotspots dis-

tricts. It's ethically wrong and illegal. Be informed Govt action against wrong doers will be serious,” tweeted

the Chief Secretary.

He also advised people to dial 100 to inform authorities concerned about such practices.

The Covid-19 cases continue to increase in the state.

Odisha has reported 591 new coronavirus positive cases and three deaths in the last 24 hours, as per the Health department, Saturday.

The deaths were reported from Ganjam and Gajapati districts.

With this, the positive cases of the state increased to 16,701 while the death toll rose to 86.

LOCKDOWN IN CAPITAL



Policemen check vehicles at Rasulgarh Square in Bhubaneswar to enforce the lockdown over Covid-19, Saturday



Jaydev Vihar Square in the Capital city wears a deserted look



Shops at Unit-II market remain closed in accordance with the lockdown norms

OP PHOTOS

10% beds reserved for critical nCoV patients at Ganjam CCCs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 18: With the continuous rise in Covid cases in Ganjam, the state government has chalked out a strategy for the hotspot district.

The paediatric ward of MKCG Medical College and Hospital will be turned into a special Covid Care Centre (CCC) and it will remain under supervision of the district Collector. Emergency and OPD units of the medical college will be reopened for the patients soon.

The government has also decided to reserve 10 per cent beds in all CCCs and Covid Health Centres (CHCs) of the district for the patients, who are coming to the centres with critical conditions. This decision was taken at a high-level meeting held under the chairmanship of Additional Chief Secretary PK Mohapatra here, Saturday.

Similarly, the government has decided to open 150-bed CCC at Bidyutpur in the district while another CCC of same capacity will be

Courts to remain shut during lockdown

BHUBANESWAR: The Orissa High Court Saturday ordered closedown of all district and subordinate courts and also tribunals in Khurda, Ganjam, Cuttack and Jajpur districts and Rourkela city till July end. “It is hereby notified that the normal functioning of the High Court as well as the district and subordinate courts and tribunals falling in the jurisdiction of Khurda, Ganjam, Cuttack and Jajpur districts and Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC), shall continue to remain suspended till 31.7.2020,” HC said in an order issued Saturday. However, the High Court will have restricted functioning with limited number of judges by virtual mode as per the roster assigned by the Chief Justice during the lockdown. The HC has decided to take up only extremely urgent matters on advance memo of urgency submitted by learned advocates/litigants to the deputy registrar (judicial) by e-filing mode/e-mail with advance intimation to the opposite parties, it said.

set up at Saraswati Sishumandir at Berhampur town, which will be monitored by the Berhampur Municipal Corporation, while City Hospital will provide the health-care services at the centre.

A panel headed by a psychiatrist will be formed to boost the morale of Covid patients. The panel will do tele-counselling of the patients under treatment at various health-care facilities in the district. Recovered patients will be engaged

as advisor and Covid monitor, who will counsel at least 10 patients and ₹1,000 will be provided to them.

Free medicine kit will be provided to the patients who are under home isolation. Hotels in Berhampur and Gopalpur will be reserved by the Collector for accommodation of doctors and other frontline workers. Besides, the government has decided to start tele medicine service for other patients who are advised not to visit hospitals.

19 FSOs take oath

Bhubaneswar: Nineteen newly-recruited Fire Station Officers (FSOs) took oath at the Odisha Fire and Disaster Response Academy here Saturday. The officers were administered oath after completion of nine-month training programme on fire fighting and disaster management. The ceremony was held in the conference hall of Fire Academy in view of imposition of social distancing norms. Satyajit Mohanty, the DG, Fire Services, attended the programme as the chief guest.

MeT predicts rain

Bhubaneswar: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday said some pockets of 12 districts will receive heavy rain in next three days. Heavy rainfall is likely to occur at one or two places over Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Dhenkanal and Angul, Sunday while Sambalpur, Deogarh, Bargarh, Kandhamal and Kalahandi will witness heavy rain Monday. Similarly, heavy rainfall will occur at a few places of Sundargarh, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Deogarh & Rayagada districts, July 21.



Graffiti in Silver City to display rich culture

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 18: The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) has initiated steps to beautify the Silver City – the epicentre of Odisha's art and culture.

The artists engaged by the civic authorities are now drawing graffiti on various overbridges of the city as part of the beautification drive.

The state government had sanctioned ₹5 crore to the city for various developmental works. The CMC had decided to spend the money to clear choked drains for quick release of rainwater and undertake a beautification drive in the city, sources said.

In the initial phase, the municipal corporation has taken steps to beautify the walls of overbridges at Press Chhak, OMP Square and Sikharpur. It has engaged three artists' groups to beautify the walls of overbridges with colourful graffiti.

The artists are now drawing graffiti depicting the rich tradition and



culture of Odisha.

“Three artists' groups led by Satyabrata Sahu and Satyabhama Majhi have been engaged in drawing graffiti on the walls of overbridges. The artists are painting the bridge walls depicting various mudras of

Odissi and other traditional dances like Ghodanacha and Paika Nritya,” said an official of the CMC.

According to him, the artists will beautify the walls of all roadside government buildings in the city in the second phase. “The graf-

CMC INITIATIVE

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The CMC had decided to spend the money to clear choked drains for quick release of rainwater and undertake a beautification drive in the city

fitti will be based on the themes of Cuttack's own tradition, culture and heritage structures including the Baliyatra and Barabati fort. The initiative will help people know the glorious history of the Silver City,” said the official.

ECI move to seek views on polls hailed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 18: Most of the political parties in the state, Saturday, welcomed the move of the Election Commission of India (ECI) seeking of the parties on the issue of conducting elections amid the pandemic.

The BJP, BJD and the Congress Saturday appreciated the move of the election watchdog seeking views from the political parties irrespective of the status of the parties.

BJD leader Shashi Bushan Behera

said, “In a democratic country, we follow a Parliament and federal structure. The ECI under a special condition has now sought views from the national as well as regional parties. This is a welcome step.”

BJP leader and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Pradipta Kumar Naik, said, “The ECI could have declared the election dates even without consultation with the regional parties. The ECI, however, has sought views from all parties keeping in mind the current situation. The election watchdog thus

needs applause from our side for this action. This will ensure that there will be less issues relating to conduct of elections at this juncture.”

The Congress party also welcomed the move but asked the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to convene an all-party meeting and build a consensus. “Let the Chief Minister convene an all-party meeting and later the ECI should call a similar meeting. The decision by the parties with consensus should be welcomed by all,” Congress leader Tara Prasad Bahinipati said.

Public road transport vehicles under watch

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, PASSENGERS WILL HAVE TO PUSH A RED BUTTON IN THE VEHICLE FOLLOWING WHICH POLICE OR LOCAL ADMINISTRATION WILL REACH OUT TO THE VEHICLE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 18: With an aim to enhance security of women and children while traveling in buses and other public transport vehicles, the state government has decided to put online vehicle movement tracking system in place so that it can reach the vehicle in case of emergency.

State Commerce and Transport Department has recently approved a project and very soon additional transport commissioner (technical) will sign an MoU with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to implement it.

If the online tracking system is there to track movement of buses plying across the state, safety of passengers can be ensured.

Earlier, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways had mandated vehicle location tracking (VLT) device and emergency buttons to be fitted in all public service vehicles with

CLOSE WATCH



The Centre would provide 60 per cent of assistance to Odisha. The project cost is estimated to be ₹15.40 crore of which the central share is ₹9.24 crore while the state government will bear ₹6.16 crore

The objective of the project is to improve safety of women and children in public service vehicles through the implementation of CMVR (Central Motor Vehicles Rules)

The Nirbhaya Framework was issued to devise to ensure safety of women in the wake of December 2012 Nirbhaya case, in which six people had gang-raped a 23-year-old physiotherapy intern in a moving bus, which had sparked countrywide protests

effect from April 1, 2018. Later, the deadline was extended January 1, 2019. However, many states including Odisha have not implemented it till now due to fund constraints. The Centre, later, decided to fund the project under Nirbhaya Framework with an assistance of Rs332 crore.

The Centre would provide 60 per cent of assistance to Odisha. The project cost is estimated to be ₹15.40 crore of which the central share is ₹9.24 crore while the state government will bear ₹6.16 crore.

The objective of the project is to improve safety of women and children in public service vehicles through the implementation of CMVR (Central Motor Vehicles Rules), sources said.

Accordingly, all specified public service vehicles will be equipped with VLT devices with multiple emergency buttons for requesting emergency response, the source has said.

Odisha will set up a monitoring centre for alerts and emergency

buttons. The centre will function as a unified mechanism where all information will be electronically transmitted to police stations and PCRs, so that time is not lost in rescuing the victim, said an official.

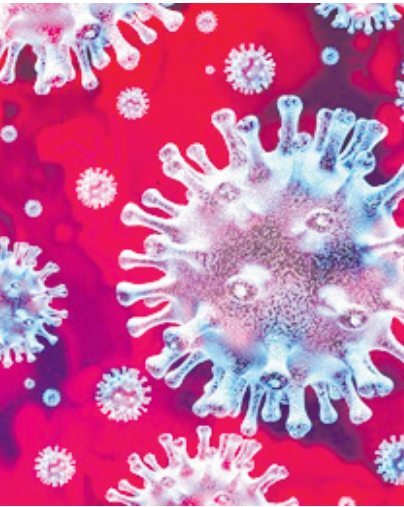
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PEDALLING THEIR WAY



People riding bicycles to buy essentials on the first day of lockdown at Tinkonia Bagicha in Cuttack, Saturday OP PHOTO

STATE TALLY RISES TO 16,701, DEATH TOLL 86



PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 18: The state's Covid-19 tally rose to 16,701 with 591 fresh cases while the death toll reached 86 with three more patients succumbing to the disease, a health department official said Saturday. Two men from Ganjam, aged 63 and 60, and a 48-year-old woman from Gajapati died of coronavirus infection.

"Regret to inform the demise of three Covid positive patients while under treatment in hospitals," the official said. The woman was also suffering from obesity and sleep apnea, he said.

Of the total virus fatalities, 52

Among the total virus fatalities, 52 were reported from Ganjam, followed by Khurda (13), Cuttack (8) and Gajapati (3), with two each from Angul and Puri, and one each from Bargarh, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Rayagada and Sundergarh districts

Of the fresh cases, 394 were detected in different quarantine centres and 197 during contact-tracing exercises whose contact tracing and follow-up actions are underway

were reported from Ganjam, followed by Khurda (13), Cuttack (8) and Gajapati (3), while two each were from Angul and Puri, and one each from Baragah, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Rayagada and Sundergarh districts.

Besides, twenty-six patients have died in Odisha, but their deaths were due to "non-COVID reasons", the official said. The new 591 cases were reported from 25 districts.

Of the fresh cases, 394 were detected in different quarantine centres and 197 during contact-tracing exercises, the official said. Contact tracing and follow-up actions are underway, he said.

The maximum of 182 fresh cases

87 test positive in Capital city

BHUBANESWAR: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Saturday said that 87 more people have tested positive for COVID-19 in the city in past 24 hours.

While 41 of them are quarantine cases, remaining 46 are local contact ones. Meanwhile, 37 persons who earlier tested positive for the deadly disease recovered, BMC said.

"Further contact tracing is still continuing. Primary contacts & nearby houses are being quarantined, sanitised and will be under active surveillance," BMC said. It further added that all positive cases have been shifted to dedicated COVID hospitals.

According to a notification issued by the civic body, as of Saturday morning, 1,130 persons have tested positive for COVID-19 in Bhubaneswar out of which 494 have recovered. While there are 624 active cases, 11 persons succumbed to the disease.

were reported from Ganjam, the worst-hit district by the coronavirus pandemic, 121 from Khurda, 38 from Cuttack, 35 from Bargarh, 22 each from Jagatsinghpur, Nabarangpur and Mayurbhanj, 20 from Sambalpur, 19 from Jajpur, 18 from Sundergarh, 13 from Balasore and 11 from Nayagarh.

Other districts also reported new cases but numbers are in single digit, the official said. Odisha now has 5,259 active cases, while 11,330 patients have so far recovered from the disease.

The health department had conducted 8,155 tests Friday, he added.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 18: The state government Saturday stressed strict observance of the standard operating procedure (SOP) in the SCB Medical College and Hospital and Acharya Harihar Post Graduate Institute of Cancer (AHPGIC) to contain the spread of coronavirus in Cuttack.

The matter came to the fore during a review meeting at the district collectorate, Saturday. Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayini presided over the meeting attended by observers Saurav Garg, principal secretary, agriculture and Susant Mohapatra, additional secretary, general administration.

The development came after a number of patients and staffers of the SCB Medical College and Hospital and Acharya Harihar Post Graduate Institute of Cancer (AHPGIC) tested positive for Covid-19.

Garg said the SOP has been issued to strictly adhere to Covid-19 guidelines so that patient care and treat-



ment does not get hit on the pretext of coronavirus.

He asked all including the hospital authorities to abide by the SOP in indoor and outdoor wards and shift patients to the Covid hospitals if they test positive for the virus during the antigen test.

He further said steps have been taken for door-to-door surveillance by special health teams in the city during the lockdown period to contain the spread of virus.

The observers asked the Collector and municipal commissioner to strictly adhere to SOP in all government and private hospitals.

Cuttack records 11 fresh cases

Cuttack: The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Saturday said that four more people have tested positive for COVID-19 in the city in past 24 hours. While six of them were reported from institutional quarantine centres, three were home quarantine cases and the remaining two are local contact ones. Meanwhile, seven persons recovered from the disease in last 24 hours. "Active surveillance, contact tracing, and sanitization of the concerned areas are underway," CMC said. According to a notification issued by the civic body, as of Saturday morning, 334 persons have tested positive for COVID-19 in Cuttack out of which 188 have recovered. There are 139 active cases and seven persons have succumbed to the disease.

5 medicine shops sealed in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 18: At least five medicine shops in the City were sealed by Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) which were found violating social distancing and other Covid-19 guidelines.

"The shops have been closed for violation of lockdown norms and directives issued for Covid-19 management as per the provisions of Section 51 to 60 of the Disaster Management Act 2005, the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, Section 188 of IPC and other legal provisions," said a BMC official.

It is pertinent to mention here that local administrations across Odisha are stressing on strict adherence to Covid-19 guidelines including wearing of masks and maintaining social distance to stay protected from

coronavirus infection.

However, such guidelines are being flouted by people as well as several business establishments in Bhubaneswar and other parts of the state. This has resulted in sharp rise in virus cases with certain patients emerging as local cases.

Gradually, this has lead to closure and sealing of large market places in the city. BMC had temporarily closed Unit-2 market in a major crackdown against COVID-19 norm violation June 12 while it had sealed Unit IV market area Friday after a few of vendors were tested positive for the virus. Moreover, the enforcement squad of BMC-BDA, health officials and Commissionerate Police continues to conduct surprise checks at hospitals/clinics and other places to ensure strict compliance of the norms.

Fire personnel to donate plasma

Cuttack: At least 10 fire personnel who recovered from coronavirus will donate their plasma for the treatment of affected Covid patients, a report said Saturday. This was stated here by Satyajit Mohanty, director general of fire services and homeguards, here Saturday. The recovered fire personnel will donate their plasma at SCB Medical College and Hospital, he said. As many as 192 out of 372 fire personnel were affected by the disease while undertaking relief and rescue operations in West Bengal due to devastations caused by cyclonic storm Amphan. The fire personnel after their return from West Bengal remained in quarantine. All of them were tested for the virus out of which 192 tested positive.

NOWHERE TO GO



Buses are parked on a stretch of the Link Road in Cuttack city, Saturday

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 18: The department of social security and empowerment of persons with disabilities (SSEPD) has decided to keep open government authorized therapy centres meant for the differently-abled during lockdown.

The department said the therapy centres assist the differently-abled and hence should not be closed down during lockdown. The department Saturday wrote to concerned officials of the districts that got into lockdown from July 17.

"We are directed to inform you that the therapy centres functioning under this department to provide therapeutic services to persons/children with intellectual disabilities in zones declared to be placed under lockdown from 9 pm of 17.07.2020 until midnight of

SPECIAL KIDS

The therapy centres to abide by the guidelines issued by the health department and others relating to COVID 19 to ensure that such centres do not get affected by COVID 19 infection after the people with therapeutic needs visit such centres

The letter was sent to all chief functionaries of NGOs who work with such centres and all therapeutic centers in the four affected districts to ensure hassle free operations of such centres

The department of social security and empowerment ordered closure of special schools both funded by the state government and the Centre throughout the state in the light of the spread of COVID 19 in the state and rising numbers of the case



31.07.2020 in Ganjam, Khurda, Cuttack and Jajpur districts and Rourkela municipal area are allowed to continue treatment during lockdown."

The department, however, warned such centres to abide by the guidelines issued by the health department and others relating to COVID 19 to ensure that such centres do not get affected by COVID 19 infection after the people with therapeutic needs visit such centres.

It added, "As this is an ongoing service, this should not be discon-

tinued. However, the institutions must adhere to COVID-19 preventive measures strictly," the letter from the department said.

The letter was sent to all chief functionaries of NGOs who work with such centres and all therapeutic centers in the four affected districts to ensure hassle free operations of such centres.

The department, meanwhile, ordered closure of special schools both funded by the state government and the Centre throughout the state in the light of the spread of COVID 19 in the state and rising numbers of the case.

The department ordered closure of special schools till July 31 but it has not extended the closure of such schools till August 31. Information relating to the closure of such schools has now been sent to all Collectors.

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Green fodder sprouts hope for Covid-hit Sambalpur farmers

Under MGNREGS, the admin has decided to massively promote dairy farming by providing them with financial assistance for green fodder cultivation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, July 18: Even as the district has seen a huge influx of migrants and there is loss of livelihood for a large number of people, the district administration is looking at various options to provide them with livelihood.

The administration has realized that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) will be the fulcrum of providing jobs to them at a time when revenues are drying up due to a halt in economic activities. Providing livelihood to migrants and the poor will not be economically sustainable for long.

In view of this, the forest department and other departments have already been making use of many projects under MGNREGS, creating work for daily wagers, labourers and the poor class.

Now, the administration wants to make use of the rural job scheme for dairy farmers, who have been severely affected by a series of lockdowns and shutdowns.

Under the MGNREGS, the administration has decided to massively promote dairy farming by providing them with financial assistance for green fodder cultivation/grass cultivation.

This was stated here by the office of the PD, DRDA. The animal husbandry department conducted a survey in 9 blocks and identified 690 dairy farmers.

The farmers are supposed to earmark an acre or more land for green



BOOST TO DAIRY FARMING

According to the DRDA office, the animal husbandry department had conducted a survey in 9 blocks in the district and identified 690 dairy farmers

Farmers are to earmark an acre or more land for green fodder cultivation. The work will be included in the MGNREGS and seeds will be provided them free of cost

Due to lockdown, cattle feed supply was badly disrupted while the price of the feed in the market has spiraled. They can't afford the high price of

fodder cultivation. The work will be included in the MGNREGS while seeds for grass will be provided them free of cost.

As per decision, each beneficiary farmer will be provided Rs 25,000.

Farmers can start cutting grass with 70/80 days from the day of sowing seeds. The administration has set a target to harvest grass five to six times a year. The farmers will have plenty of grass for their bovines. According to farmers, due to lockdown, cattle feed supply has been badly disrupted while the price of the feed in the market has spiraled. The price of the cattle feed is not affordable on part of the farmers.

At this crisis, dairy farmers will not have to depend on the market while green fodder production will make them self-dependent and ensure more milk production.

An official said this scheme will immensely benefit the dairy farmers and provide them with a stable income option at this crisis times.

Souvid Bisi, the district coordinator for MGNREGS, said, "This scheme will be beneficial for dairy farmers. On a half acre of land, a farmer can produce 600 to 900 quintals of grass. Grass will reduce their dependency on market cattle feeds. If a farmer doesn't have cattle, he can sell grass to other dairy farmers."

Odia youth Sridhar in Mr India semifinals



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jeypore, July 18: After a Jeypore girl, another youth from Borigumma block in Koraput district, Sridhar Mohapatra, has excelled in the male segment of an all-India contest Mr and Miss India 2020-Season 2 organised by Zerone Production House.

Sridhar's success has brought in cheers to the entire district. He is the son of Loknath Mohapatra of Podapadar village under this block. He had earlier registered online for participation. Leaving hundreds of contestants behind, Sridhar climbed the ladder of success and gave his best in all three rounds of the contest before reaching the semifinal stage. He had ambitions to excel in national level pageants. "I am very hopeful that I will earn name and fame for my beloved Koraput district and the state as well," he gleamed.

Online education out of reach for Angul students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, July 18: Educational institutions across India and also in Odisha have been closed since March due to the coronavirus outbreak. Schools and colleges have resorted to online teaching platforms. Odisha is also not an exception to the rule.

Many schools, both government-run and private in Angul district, have implemented online teaching. However, even though education is seamless when it comes to schools in Angul town, it is the students of remote villages who suffer the most.

Nilakantheshwar High School at Jagannathpur under Angul block is a case in point. The school has 123 students studying from Class 1 to Class 10. Among them, 42 read in Class 10. They reside in neighbouring villages.

These students will be appearing for the final exams next year. However, most of their parents are too poor to buy them a smart



phone. And even when one does have a phone, connectivity is a huge problem. Most of these villages lack mobile towers, so online classes continue to remain out of reach for these students.

Even though teachers have realised the plight of these students, they cannot do much. "The problem is such that we cannot do anything. Only god can help out the students," observed Nilakantheshwar HS School headmaster, Santosh Kumar Panda.

Angul district education officer (DEO) Kalpana Behera is also

aware of the situation. "This problem is being felt across the nation. We are aware of students missing out on online education due to lack of connectivity and their financial conditions. But we cannot do anything else now, Behera said.

"As of now, only 20 per cent of Angul district's students are availing online classes. Our efforts are on to get more and more students into it. Those who have no alternate facilities have to wait till opening of schools. We are helpless," added Behera.

HONOUR TO WARRIORS



As part of an awareness campaign, an artist paints Covid warriors of different fields on a wall in Angul town, Saturday

Cancer patient, wife beat Covid

AGENCIES

Kendrapara, July 18: An 85-year-old cancer patient and his septuagenarian wife have recovered from COVID-19 in Kendrapara district, officials said Saturday.

Surendra Pati, who is suffering from throat cancer, and his 78-year-old wife Sabitri have been cured of COVID-19 and both have been discharged from a medical facility, Kendrapara District Collector Samarth Verma said.

"...they inspire many to beat the disease. Our best wishes to them," the Collector tweeted. The man was admitted to the Acharya Harihar Regional Cancer Centre

Collector Samarth Verma tweeted: "...they inspire many to beat the disease. Our best wishes to them."

in Cuttack June 8 for chemotherapy, while his spouse was attending to him at the hospital. On June 29, both of them had tested positive for COVID-19, Kendrapara Additional District Medical Officer (ADMO) M H Beig said.

The couple was admitted to a designated COVID-19 hospital in Cuttack. After undergoing treatment for 10 days, they were dis-

charged when they tested negative for the infection, he said.

Thereafter, the couple was housed in a COVID-19 care centre in Bagada gram panchayat area in Kendrapara block as a precautionary measure, Beig said, adding they were discharged from the facility on Friday.

"The couple, particularly Surendra Pati, fought the battle against coronavirus with grit and determination despite

his advancing age. Cancer patients have low immunity levels," he said. The couple has sent a message loud and clear that COVID-19 can be vanquished, the ADMO added.

Ganjam teacher succumbs to virus

DIGAPAHANDI: A 57-year-old male teacher engaged at K Samatrapur quarantine centre in Ganjam district succumbed to COVID-19 Friday.

The deceased COVID warrior has been identified as Bansidhar Behera from Kusupada panchayat under Digapahandi block.

Behera was working at the quarantine centre for the last two months. However, he was under home quarantine after coming in contact with some Covid patients.

Subsequently, he developed symptoms. His swab sample tested positive.

The health department admitted him to the dedicated Covid hospital at Sitalapalli. Unfortunately, he lost his battle against the virus. Digapahandi MLA Surjya Narayan Patro and many others condoled his death.

2 Covid warriors, 1 CRPF infected in Kandhamal

KANDHAMAL: Two COVID Warriors and one Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel are among the seven new novel Coronavirus positive cases detected in Kandhamal district today, informed Collector & District Magistrate, Kandhamal on Twitter.

While one COVID Warrior who has tested positive for the novel Coronavirus is an ANM of the Mobile Health Unit of Tumudibandh, the other is an ASI of Raikia.

Out of the remaining five who have tested positive one is CRPF



personnel of the CRPF Camp at Baliguda, three are positive cases of previously detected positive cases at Raikia and one is a local case at G Udayagiri of a Ganjam returnee, the tweet added.

SA returnee tests +ve; 58 people under lens

JANHAPANKA: A youth, who recently returned from South Africa, tested positive for Covid-19 at Madhupur in Boudh district. What is worrying of the administration is that 58

people have come in contact with the infected youth. The administration has started contact tracing in the area and swab collection is under way. Suspected people were told to

POST NEWS NETWORK

Patna, July 18: Years after electric poles were erected in their village and wires connected to their homes, residents of Saradhapur village under Chakundapal panchayat in Patna block of Keonjhar district continue to live under darkness amid administrative apathy.

The ambitious Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana



(Saubhagya), which was rolled out in the district with an eye to provide electricity to backward people like these, has failed to achieve what it set out for in Keonjhar district.

There are about 24 families in this village who have been deprived of Saubhagya benefits despite having been included in it two years back.

According to villagers, a transformer has already been installed,

electric poles have been planted and electric wires have been drawn in the village. That said, despite running from pillar to post, the energy department authorities are yet to electrify the village.

"We have been managing with earthen lamps and kerosene lamps for past two years. Our concerns should be addressed immediately," said a villager Kirtan Bihari Nayak.

As the village is located close to a forested area, residents panic to come out of their respective houses at night for the fear of wild animals. Their children study amid utter difficulties, another villager Sukanta Behera added.

On being contacted, Patana sub-divisional officer (Electrical) Kartik Chandra Sahu said, "Electrification work of Saradhapur village was taken up under 'Saubhagya'. Almost 90 per cent of the work has already been completed. As soon as the contractor firm hands over possession after completing the remaining work, power supply will be commissioned".

Outside traders cash in on Kalahandi pineapple

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, July 18: In absence of adequate marketing facilities, pineapple farmers from Kalahandi district are being compelled to sell their produce under distress to traders outside the district and state.

Pineapple is cultivated mostly by the tribal farmers here. That said, Kalahandi horticulture department officials are least concerned to the issues being faced by local pineapple farmers, several farmers here alleged.

Hundreds of tribal farmers, on Niyamgiri hills bordering Kalahandi and Rayagada districts, had cultivated pineapple despite COVID-19



restrictions in the district. The harvest had also been good this year.

While the local farmers were hopeful of a good earning from sales,

that dream remains a farfetched reality.

Local farmers failed to sell their produce owing to improper road connectivity and lack of marketing facilities, they alleged.

"Taking advantage of the simplicity of tribal farmers, the traders buy a pineapple for just Rs 5 to Rs 7 each; as against this, the traders of Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh sell it for Rs 50 to Rs 70. Even to sell pineapples in local markets, we have to walk a distance of about 15 to 20 kilometres from Niyamgiri hill," a farmer lamented.

Besides, the farmers here face distress sale as there is no food processing and food preservation unit in this region. There are over 20

tribal villages around Niyamgiri hill. Usually, local farmers cultivate crops like mango, banana, orange, lemon, turmeric, ginger, jackfruit, tamarind, black pepper and ragi.

During the months of May and June, farmers here cultivate pineapple. The climatic condition of Kalahandi district is conducive for pineapple cultivation. Local tribal farmers sale their pineapple in Chatikana, Bissamkatak, Muniguda, Ambadola markets in Rayagada district and Lanjigarh, Biswanathpur, Bhawanipatna markets in Kalahandi district respectively.

Meanwhile, the distress sale to Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh traders discourages the poor farmers here.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
HIRING OF VEHICLE
Tender Notice No. MSM-CW-SBP-RV-3-20
Name of Work: HIRING OF A NON-AC ROAD VEHICLE FOR INSPECTION OF EIMWB, WAGON TIPLER AND MOVEMENT OF CARRIAGE & WAGON SUPERVISOR & OFFICERS IN CASE OF BREAKDOWN AND SURPRISE CHECKS ABOUT WAGON DAMAGES FOR A PERIOD OF 03 YEARS.
Approx cost of the work: ₹15,14,691.60, EMD: ₹30,300/-, Cost of Tender Document: ₹2,360/-, Completion Period of the work: 03 (Three) Years.
Date & time of Tender Closing: 31.07.2020, 1100 hrs.
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-Tenders, even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website <http://www.reps.gov.in>
Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer/ PR-160/L/20-21 Sambalpur

OFFICE OF THE REGULATED MARKET COMMITTEE
SARGIPALI, SUNDARGARH
INVITATION OF BIDS THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT
TENDER CALL NOTICE No. 416 of 2020-21 Dated 16.07.2020
BID IDENTIFICATION No. 05
The office of the R.M.C., Sargipali, Sundargarh invites percentage rate bids in double cover system on online mode from eligible contractors for execution of the different works under RMC, Sargipali. The details of which are available at e-Procurement portal www.tenderorissa.gov.in from 24.07.2020. The interested tenderers are advised to visit the above website for submission of e-tender.
Tender will be closed at 17.00 hours on 05.08.2020.
Sd./- Collector
Sundargarh-cum-Chairman
R.M.C., Sargipali, Sundargarh

“Our actual enemy is not any force exterior to ourselves, but our own crying weaknesses, our cowardice, our selfishness, our hypocrisy, our purblind sentimentalism.”

SRI AUROBINDO

Decision-making, Modi style

The news agency ANI reported a story this week with the headline: “PM Modi taking input from top 50 officials to revive economy.” The meeting was 90 minutes long and would have finance and commerce ministry officials making presentations on the situation.

What would such a meeting have looked like? If all 50 got a chance to give an input and nobody else spoke or asked questions, they would get less than two minutes each. But it is likely that there would have been someone doing some sort of introduction to the meeting and setting up the agenda so it's unlikely that the per person time was two minutes. Perhaps many of them did not get the opportunity to speak at all. The headline says that the PM was looking to receive input from them so many would have said their piece. What can be communicated in a couple of minutes?

Modi likes this sort of meeting. The first time I met him, with Dileep Padgaonkar (who was editor of Times of India) and BG Varghese (who was editor of Hindustan Times), both now dead, for an Editors Guild report on the violence in 2002. At that meeting, Modi called in all his secretaries, there were two dozen and perhaps more men sitting in rows to respond to us. There were no ministers. That was and apparently still is Modi's style.

The question is what happens at such large meetings for input and what is taken away from them. You would have a series of men saying extremely concise things. And they would have to be prescriptive. The problem is already known: the ANI story says that the meeting would find means of a “speedy recovery of the economy which has witnessed a slowdown in recent quarters due to falling consumer demand.”

What would a two-minute prescription be? It would be something like: “The black money problem can be permanently solved by eliminating high value currency notes. We can force everyone to exchange their notes for smaller denominations and identify the black money sources. This will also end counterfeiting and reduce terrorism.”

Such a presentation would lack nuance and it would not contain detail. It may or may not get into the problems that could come about because of such an action and it may or may not list the things that could go wrong in execution. There would not be enough time for this. It would merely present some sort of solution, and if the solution looked like a permanent fix and particularly if it sounded original and innovative, it would meet approval.

This is the problem of decision making that is done on the basis of short and rapid input. But when one asks 50 people to gather and give a series of short and sharp inputs it is clear that this is the preferred style of functioning.

I have written before about this manner of Modi's governance. He has said in a very fine interview with Madhu Kishwar that he doesn't read files because he cannot govern through academic studies. He wants his people to reduce the substance of issues to a two minute synopsis which he will digest and then decide.

The problem here is that some things cannot be reduced to a short presentation because they are very complex. Many things are not clear. They are grey. Many details are not precise because there is not enough information or data. Many times what the possible consequences of decisions will be cannot be understood without very thorough analysis.

The issue of black money was such a matter. China relations is another as is Covid. The effect of a two-month lockdown is also complex. What it could do to the economy needs to be examined with great care and caution must be exercised before using such a blunt weapon as demonetisation or a total lockdown.

My intent here is not to be needlessly critical or to be contemptuous. What Modi decides affects all of us and we must see what can be done in the best interest of our nation and its people at this time.

However, the decision making style needs to be examined and there is no running away from that. Let me quote another report, this time from Saturday July 18 in the Indian Express. The headline “Manufacturers fret as sudden lockdown hits logistics of production.”

The story tells of the problems. One is that at 8 pm on July 13, Karnataka ordered a lockdown from the following day and told industries to shut. Companies including automobile manufacturers like Toyota told their workers to go home, informed vendors and issued a statement. But the next evening, the government sent another circular saying manufacturers were exempt from the lockdown. But the workers had already gone by then. One week's production has been lost.

Another problem was supply chains. Auto manufacturing does not all happen in one place. It is only assembled at the main factory but the components come from around the country. There was a lockdown in some of the states meaning that even if the main assembly plant was exempt from lockdown or in a state with no lockdown, production would slow or stop.

There are lockdowns in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Bihar, Bengal, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Assam and elsewhere. There was no coordination to ensure that supply chains be kept going.

Similarly, companies could not access warehouses some of which were in lockdown. Another problem was workers who were reluctant to return given the problems that they had faced during the first lockdown.

These are issues of detail and complexity. They do not require decision making. They require governance, meaning the hard work of making the state function efficiently. It is true that India has always been a hard place to govern because it is chaotic and anarchic. The government doesn't follow its own rules often. It will not be easy for us to undo the damage that has been done to the economy by the lockdown and the solution will not come from two-minute presentations.

WISDOM CORNER

“The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination.”
ALBERT EINSTEIN

“The world is the great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong.”
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

“Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow.”
HELEN KELLER

LOL Soldier stands guard

A new soldier was on sentry duty at the main gate. His orders were clear. No car was to enter unless it had a special sticker on the windshield. A big Army car came up with a general seated in the back. The sentry said, "Halt, who goes there?" The chauffeur, a corporal, says, "General Wheeler."

"I'm sorry, I can't let you through. You've got to have a sticker on the windshield." The general said, "Drive on!" The sentry said, "Hold it! You really can't come through. I have orders to shoot if you try driving in without a sticker." The general repeated, "I'm telling you, son, drive on!" The sentry walked up to the rear window and said, "General, I'm new at this. Do I shoot you or the driver?"

FOCUS SOCIAL SECURITY

NO CARE FOR CARE WORKERS

Those who thought that a pandemic would make everyone realise the crucial role of care workers should think again. With the coronavirus still spreading rapidly, frontline workers are more essential – and at greater risk – than ever; yet public attention has shifted elsewhere.

Worse, as economies collapse and labour-market conditions deteriorate, employers in the private and public sector alike have grown more cynical in their treatment of essential workers. Far from instilling a deeper appreciation for their employees, the pandemic-induced surge in unemployment has enabled employers to exploit workers even more.

Capitalism has always had an uneasy relationship with care work. Although capitalist production relies heavily on unpaid and underpaid labour performed by women, migrants, and other disadvantaged social groups, it has historically pushed that work off the books and underground, into informality. As a result, all the varied tasks associated with social reproduction are barely recognised, much less rewarded or remunerated. Because so much care work is performed for free by women and girls within families and communities, it is simply taken for granted and, because it is outside the market, not counted as economic activity.

Unpaid work performed by women who have no other choice thus creates a vicious cycle of devaluation. When women do enter labour markets, their wages tend to be lower than those of men, not only because they are willing to work for less, but also because so much of their work is available for free. Hence, occupations dominated by women – such as in the care sector – tend to be lower paid; even men doing similar work suffer a wage penalty.

In the case of healthcare, there are additional occupational hierarchies to navigate, from highly paid 'professionals' like specialist physicians down to nurses, ward attendants, and cleaners.



Decades of public neglect and underspending have brought us to the point that even an unprecedented global health emergency and economic collapse are not enough to make mistreatment of low-paid essential workers socially and politically unacceptable

Unsurprisingly, the gender balance within each occupation changes as one goes down the pecking order; with women concentrated in the lower-status, worst-paid positions.

Globally, women hold 70 per cent of all health-care jobs. But they are more likely to be nurses, midwives, and community health workers, while men comprise a disproportionate share of better-paid occupations like surgeons, physicians, dentists, and pharmacists. Community health workers are perhaps the most exploited of all health workers, especially in developing countries. Often, they are not recognised as workers at all, but rather as 'volunteers' (as is true in India). As such, they rarely benefit from formal contracts that provide job security and a fair wage, let alone protections like healthcare.

Women healthcare workers are also more at risk in the current pandemic, because they are more likely to be involved in activities

that require close physical contact with patients. For a brief period after the pandemic first erupted, these workers were widely recognised for their critical contributions to society. Around the world, political leaders and members of the public applauded essential workers, singing their praises from balconies and leaving flower bouquets outside hospitals.

But while healthcare workers at all levels were rightly described as "heroes," that seems to have represented the extent of their reward. The public acclaim has not translated into better working conditions or higher wages, and certainly not systematic efforts to ensure their physical safety during the pandemic.

For example, in the United States, a brief period during which some companies offered their frontline workers slightly higher wages was soon followed by reversion to the norm: wages returned to their previous lows –

and sometimes went lower. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Boris Johnson thanked the immigrant nurses – "Jenny from New Zealand," "Luis from Portugal" – who saved his life when he was hospitalized with COVID-19. But then he had no problem trying to slap a surcharge on immigration fees (ironically for the purpose of funding the National Health Service).

The situation in developing countries is even worse. Governments faced with falling tax revenues are practicing austerity in the midst of a health emergency and recession, slashing non-COVID-19 health spending, forcing pay cuts and longer hours on health workers, and avoiding the expense of procuring personal protective equipment.

So blatant is the official disregard for essential workers that doctors and nurses in India have threatened to resign, while health workers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have gone on strike after months of working without pay. Likewise, the needs of underpaid and vulnerable sanitation workers have been systematically ignored.

Decades of public neglect and underspending have brought us to the point that even an unprecedented global health emergency and economic collapse are not enough to make mistreatment of low-paid essential workers socially and politically unacceptable. If our societies are to survive at all, something will have to shake us from our complacency. Essential care workers deserve real pay and protections, not mere lip service. Our applause is no longer enough to keep them safe.

Jayati Ghosh is Professor of Economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, Executive Secretary of International Development Economics Associates, and a member of the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation.

@PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM GENDER

Pandemic & plight of women migrants

The coronavirus-induced lockdown severely affected many lives. The plight of migrants and their families, captured through horrifying images, brought out their rights to the centre stage. Partly as a response to this, state agencies and NGOs tried to provide some help to stranded workers. However, the problems faced by women workers, particularly from less developed states like Odisha, remained largely invisible.

Mobility of workers is not a new phenomenon though its frequencies have increased in recent decades. The latest data, which is almost 10 years old, provides a glimpse of changing patterns of inter-state migration. As per Census 2011, there were 54.3 million inter-state migrants in India, of which 30.4 million were females. Nearly 1.3 million migrants from Odisha reside outside the state, out of which 53 per cent are females. The top five destinations for women migrants from Odisha are Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Gujarat.

The main causes of migration of women are marriage and movement of families. Hence, there is a tendency to neglect women migrants in policy-making. However, women are increasingly migrating out for employment. Census

data reveals that out of the total out-migrants from Odisha for a duration of less than one year, 21 per cent of women have migrated for employment. Besides, many women start working to supplement their family income after reaching their destinations, even if the initial cause is marriage. Even those women migrants, who are not part of the labour-force, contribute to the household economy through their unpaid and care work. Without their labour, a substantial section of the migrant labour would not be able to survive with meagre wages. Similarly, the left-behind women of migrant households, in the absence of men, shoulder major household responsibilities. However, women migrants remained largely invisible in the policy response towards the Covid-19 crisis.

Women workers are mostly found in low-paid, vulnerable employment. They suffered immensely during the lockdown. Lack of income, inability to pay house rents and lack of savings added to their miseries.

In recent years, migration scenario from Odisha has undergone substantial changes, and it is valid for women as well. However, official statistical systems are blind to such changes. We simply do not have enough reliable

information about migrant workers from Odisha. Field surveys and newspaper reports suggest many women migrants were recruited through labour contractors. Those who worked in sectors such as garments, brick kilns, construction and live-in domestic work faced restrictions on mobility. Women workers were subjected to coercion, confinement, and, in some cases, mental and physical violence by employers and associates.

Digital divide across genders leads to systematic exclusions. The government's efforts to provide relief through cash transfers to Jan-Dhan accounts, Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board and Aadhaar are likely to have excluded many women workers. Further, health rights of women seem to have taken a back seat during the crisis. When stranded workers and their families tried to return, the special needs of pregnant and sick women were ignored.

After reaching their homes, migrants, especially women faced additional problems, such as hostility of local population, lack of adequate facilities for quarantine. Incidents of caste and gender discriminations were reported in some places. Besides, the access of women to livelihood generation pro-

grammes like NREGA and Garib Kalyan Yojana was limited.

As migrants and their families attempt to survive the crisis, the role and condition of women within the households deserve particular emphasis. During a crisis, it is typically the health and nutrition of women of the household that suffer disproportionately. Also, a typical household survival strategy is to substitute purchased products by home-made and unpaid goods and services, the burden of which falls largely on women. The National Commission of Women has recorded a sharp rise in domestic violence against women amid the lockdown.

The invisibility of women from official statistics and policy discourse has marginalised them from the limited state support. The post-pandemic economic situation is likely to marginalise women further. There is an urgent need to examine the gender sensitivity of short and medium-term programmes that have been announced. The specific vulnerabilities of women migrants have to be taken into account in designing and implementing livelihood support programmes.

The author is an independent researcher based in New Delhi.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Healthy habits

Sir, The COVID-19 pandemic has taught human beings the biggest lesson of their lives – how to stay clean and keep their surroundings clean. Until the pandemic arrived, personal hygiene was limited to a countable few, especially those in the healthcare profession. For instance, washing and sanitising hands was diligently practiced by doctors and attendants after each and every check-up. However, everyone around now-a-days is seen routinely doing this. This could be tagged by critics as an act of compulsion done under unavoidable circumstances. Nevertheless, it's a healthy practice. There are examples of countries where it has always been a healthier practice to wear face-masks by an individual, even when he/she is mildly unwell. So using masks during the pandemic is pretty agreeable to them. However, in places where wearing masks and sanitising hands often looked to be an alien task, practicing these healthier habits seems more of a challenge. People are averse to practicing them regularly. But who is the beneficiary at end of the day? It's we, the people. It's we who want to survive. So let's resolve to maintain healthy habits, to put-on face-masks whenever needed, to maintain social distance during the pandemic and spread positivity everywhere.

Parthabandhu Nayak, SBI Colony, BHUBANESWAR

Essential commodities

Sir, Like other essential commodities hand wash and sanitisers have become essential in our daily lives which might be a gift of the coronavirus. We are going to be habituated to keep these products at our homes and workplaces. But strangely the government has imposed 18 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) on these products. This I think is not justified in the current scenario. This will lead the products to become costlier and will gradually discourage the common people from using them. The state government must discuss this issue with the central government and try to make the product affordable to the public in this critical time. At the same time, the government must check the quality of sanitisers as manufacturers of the product have mushroomed in the city and customers are purchasing the products hurriedly without judging their quality. The state quality control and drug control department should be more vigilant about the marketing of hand wash and sanitiser and it should assure that the products are safe.

Ramdas Ray, BHUBANESWAR

Who's next in Kerala gold smuggling case?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, July 18: As the four-year-old Pinarayi Vijayan government in Kerala was winning applause in the management of COVID-19, out of the blue came a gold smuggling case and a week later, two top officials in the Chief Minister's Office were booted out. The million dollar question now is who will be the next to fall?

The gold smuggling case which has large scale ramifications first surfaced when PS Sarith, a former employee of the UAE Consulate, here was arrested by the Customs July 5. He was facilitating the smuggling of 30 kg gold in diplomatic baggage to Thiruvananthapuram from Dubai. It turned murkier when the name of Swapna Suresh, a former employee of the UAE Consulate here and now employed with the state IT Department, surfaced. The case turned full circle when their links with the second most powerful person in Vijayan's office -- his principal secretary M. Sivasankar, got revealed. After dilly dallying, despite the Congress and the BJP up in arms demanding Vijayan to suspend Sivasankar, Thursday the Chief Minister finally did it.



'NO CONFIDENCE' DAGGER HANGS ON GOVT

Two top officials in the Chief Minister's Office -- his principal secretary M. Sivasankar and his IT man Arun Balachandran -- were booted out

With both Congress and BJP demanding Vijayan to quit over the way he has been managing affairs in his office and by now two of his close aides have been removed, it remains to be seen as to how Vijayan will manage in the coming days

LEADER OF OPPOSITION RAMESH CHENNITHALA HAS ANNOUNCED THEY WILL MOVE A NO CONFIDENCE MOTION AGAINST THE VIJAYAN GOVERNMENT

Also to fall was his IT man -- Arun Balachandran - a popular face in all the IT related events in the state.

Both of them were booted out by Vijayan, after several visuals and telephone call records surfaced which showed that Swapna was in frequent touch with the two.

Now on the radar of suspicion is State Minister of Higher Education KT Jaleel. He has on record said that he interacted with Swapna with regards to accepting sponsorship from the UAE Consulate worth Rs 5 lakh for distribution of Ramzan kits in the Malappuram district,

from where he hails.

According to the code of conduct for State Ministers, they cannot accept gifts which are valued more than Rs 5,000. Besides, rules are very clear that all such things should be routed only through the Ministry of External Affairs and not directly to either the state or Union Ministers.

Kerala Assembly speaker P. Sreeramakrishnan is also facing the heat as he himself has gone on record stating that he knew Swapna for a while now.

What has landed him in trouble is that last year he had inaugu-

rated a business venture of Sandip, here, who has been arrested by the NIA. At the inauguration function, visuals have come out where he is seen patting the shoulder of Swapna.

"I knew her as a functionary of the UAE Consulate, as she was a key personnel in dealing with officials and others in the state government for them," said Sreeramakrishnan.

With both Congress and BJP demanding Vijayan to quit over the way he has been managing affairs in his office and by now two of his close aides have been removed, it remains to be seen as to how Vijayan

will manage in the coming days.

Already the Congress led opposition Thursday served a notice to remove Sreeramakrishnan from the Speaker's post. The State Assembly is to meet on July 27 to pass the Finance Bill.

But, as per the rules, this notice requires a period of 14 days. Hence, it remains to be seen if it will be taken up during the session.

Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition Ramesh Chennithala has announced they will move a no confidence motion against the Vijayan government.

CPI-M state secretary Kodyeri Balakrishnan wrote in the party organ, which came out Friday, that Kerala has a history when a Chief Minister (K. Karunakaran) had to resign over the ISRO Spy case in 1995.

"The opposition and a section of the media is busy weaving out baseless stories in the gold smuggling case, but they will not be able to dislodge the present government. The colour of 'gold' here is not 'red' but it is 'green' and 'saffron'. The opposition is trying to rake up this issue as the main election campaign, but it won't be of any help. The CPI-M and the Left front is strongly behind the Vijayan government," said Balakrishnan.

Tirupati temple to remain open even as priests test +ve



AGENCIES

Tirupati, July 18: Senior pontiff of the Shree Pedda Jeeyar Swamy Mutt of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) that governs the shrine of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala, near here, has tested positive for coronavirus.

Speaking to PTI Friday, chairman of the TTD Board Y V Subba Reddy said the 63-year-old seer was to be shifted to a corporate hospital in Chennai but he declined and expressed his wish to take treatment at the mutt itself.

As per a centuries-old custom, the seer has been observing a four-month-long 'Chaturmasya Deeksha' since Sunday last, so he preferred to remain here and get treatment, Reddy said.

The pontiff's health condition is, however, stable, the chairman said. Since the temple was re-opened for devotees June 11, about 160 TTD staff members, including 16 'archakas' (priests) were infected by the virus so far, he said.

Nevertheless, the devotees can still visit the shrine, he added.

A row erupted over the temple's honorary chief priest AV Ramana Dikshitulu raising concern over the temple remaining open despite the growing number of Covid-19 cases among priests. He even warned of "a disaster".

He had tweeted Thursday that 15 out of 50 archakas (priests) tested positive while results of 25 others are awaited. Tagging Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, he wrote that the TTD Executive Officer and Additional Executive Officer refused to stop 'darshan' and alleged

that they are following "anti hereditary archaka and anti-Brahmin policy" of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and its chief Chandrababu Naidu. "Disaster if this continues. Please take action," he wrote.

TTD chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy, however, differed with the honorary chief priest and claimed that the situation does not warrant closure of the temple for darshan.

Subba Reddy told reporters after a meeting with priests that Ramana

Discontinue 'darshan', police suggest to TTD

Tirupati: Finding fault with the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) for keeping the Tirumala temple open to devotees despite its employees testing positive for coronavirus, police Saturday suggested discontinuation of 'darshan' in the interest of public health. "In the interest of public health safety, the 'darshan' needs to be closed as it doesn't come under the emergency department (activities)," a senior police official wrote to TTD, which manages the affairs of the world's richest temple atop Tirumala hill. In his note sent to the TTD, the Tirumala ASP (Law and Order) suggested that if discontinuation of 'darshan' was not possible, the pilgrims from containment zones should not be allowed in, or at least the pilgrims from the worst-affected states be avoided.

Dikshitulu should have conveyed his opinion to the TTD board instead of making a comment in social media. He said it was not proper to give political colour to priests testing positive. "Making such comments before the media is not good. After our government came to power, the honorary chief priest was appointed and he is being paid the honorarium," said Subba Reddy, who is the maternal uncle of the Chief Minister. The TTD Chairman said 60 of those tested positive are the security personnel who were drawn from the Andhra Pradesh Special Police (APSP) battalion. Those who contracted the virus also include 16 employees who prepare 'prasadam'. Subba Reddy said 70 of the affected employees have recovered, living a normal life and have even resumed duties. He claimed that none of the pilgrims visiting the temple was infected by the virus.

AP records all time daily high of 3,963 new cases



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati, July 18: Andhra Pradesh Saturday reported the highest single day spike in COVID-19 infections with 3,963 new cases, taking the overall tally to 44,609 in the state, health officials said.

Also, the state reported 52 fatalities, the highest single day toll so far, pushing the death toll to 586. This is the fourth successive day that Andhra Pradesh has reported record Covid numbers.

The officials said that all the thirteen districts returned Covid cases in triple figures. Almost a quarter of the new cases reported Saturday morning are from East Godavari district which reported the highest tally of 994 positive cases. Kurnool followed with 550 cases, while West Godavari with 407 cases, Chittoor with 343 cases were the other districts that reported high numbers. Some of the other districts that reported high Covid numbers in the last 24 hours include Nellore with 278 cases, Prakasam with 266 cases, Anantapur with 220 cases, and Guntur with 214 cases.

Srikakulam on the other hand reported 182 cases, Kadapa 145 cases, Krishna 130 cases, Vizianagaram 118 cases, and Visakhapatnam 116 cases, the districts with low incidence in the last 24 hours.

As per the latest update, Covid deaths were reported in 11 of the 13 districts in the state. The day's high of 12 deaths were reported from East Godavari district, while eight deaths each were reported from Guntur and Krishna districts.

On the other hand, Anantapur reported seven, West Godavari reported five, Prakasam reported four, Nellore reported three deaths and Visakhapatnam reported two deaths.

At the bottom of the list, Chittoor, Kadapa and Vizianagaram districts reported one death. With 1,411 persons discharged from hospitals and covid treatment centres over 24 hours, there are 22,260 active cases while 21,763 persons have been declared as cured and discharged in Andhra Pradesh. On the brighter side, not a single positive case was detected among returnees from other states to Andhra Pradesh.

Till date, 2,461 cases have been identified as covid positive among persons who returned from other states. The active cases tally in this

State doubles mobile testing infrastructure

Amaravati: With the stakes continuously rising in the war against Covid-19, the Andhra Pradesh government has deployed 52 new buses to supplement the present vehicles for testing samples positioned across all high risk areas in the state. A total of 102 buses are now stationed in various districts, collecting samples from across 95 locations. The intelligent monitoring analysis services quarantine (IMASQ) system provides a contactless digitised swab sample collection system, and tracking and tracing in all containment zones. Health Commissioner Katamaneni Bhaskar said: "102 special buses have been deployed only for mass testing purposes which them survey 10-12 people at the same time, to avoid a crowd gathering." Bhaskar added that multiple testing counters in the buses will facilitate a zero contact procedure. Each bus has 10 counters, with three officials deployed at each counter. "The swab samples will be collected and sent to the ICMR laboratories for further testing. Officials at the border check posts verify the details of people entering the state by road with the help of Aadhaar numbers. Each person's swab sample is collected and he/she is either directed to undergo institutional or home quarantine. Those at quarantine camps are tracked to ensure that no procedure is skipped." Apart from deploying the modified buses, the state government has also issued notifications for recruiting more medical professionals to be assigned to different districts in the state. Bhaskar stated that to improve the health system from the primary to the tertiary level, a total number of 9,700 medical staff will be hired for further requirement.

category currently stands 311, while 2,150 persons have been declared as recovered till Saturday (Friday).

Similarly, there were no new cases detected among overseas returnees. The cumulative tally of covid patients in this category stands at 434, while 390 persons have been discharged after getting cured. As of Friday, 44 cases are receiving treatment for Covid infection in the state.

BILLS FOR AP's 3 CAPITALS SENT TO GUV FOR ASSENT

Official sources said the Governor might refer the two Bills, which were intended to facilitate setting up of three different capitals for the state, to the President of India after the legal examination

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, July 18: The Andhra Pradesh government Saturday sent the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill, 2020, and the AP Capital Region Development Authority (Repeal) Bill, 2020, to Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan for his assent but he is sending the two contentious Bills to the Law Department for advice.

Highly-placed official sources said the Governor might refer the two Bills, which were intended to facilitate setting up of three different capitals for the state, to the President of India after the legal examination. The opposition Telugu Desam Party has requested the Governor not to give assent to the two Bills as the Legislative Council had disapproved the state government policy in this regard.

The ruling YSR Congress cried foul saying the TDP was only seeking to block the development of the backward Rayalaseema and north



coastal Andhre regions by opposing the two Bills. When the two Bills were first introduced in the Legislature in January this year, the Assembly passed them without any hitch owing to the brute majority of the ruling party but they faced a blockade in the Council as the opposition TDP was in majority.

The Council referred the two Bills to Select Committees for deeper examination, effectively scuttling Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's plans to have three capitals for the state in Amaravati (Legislative), Visakhapatnam (Executive) and Kurnool (Judicial).

'Cluster care' method to contain virus spread

Those in the clusters must strictly follow the health protocol including wearing of masks, social distancing, handwash and use of sanitisers. We must keep in mind that the clusters are formed just before the community transmission

KK SHAILAJA | HEALTH MINISTER

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, July 18: As the number of COVID-19 cases in Kerala is on the rise, the state government has decided to implement a "cluster care" method to mitigate the spread of coronavirus, state health minister KK Shailaja said Saturday.

The minister said testing, treatment and quarantining will be strengthened inside the "clusters" in order to stop the spread of the virus beyond a particular area.

"Those in the clusters must strictly follow the health protocol including wearing of masks, social distancing, handwash, use of sanitisers. We must keep in mind that the clusters are formed just before the community transmission," Shailaja said in a release. A cluster is formed when there is an "unexpected surge in COVID-19 cases" at a particular area or a region.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had Friday said that community spread had occurred in Poonthura and Pulluvilla in Thiruvananthapuram and its nearby places have seen a rapid increase in the number of contact cases.



The health minister said that there are 87 clusters in the state of which 70 are active clusters and 17 contained clusters.

"Two of such clusters have reported community transmission and the people there need to cooperate with the health department to bring those regions from the cluster classification," she said.

Contact tracing of the cluster is started based on the fact that there is at least one case where the source is unknown and more than two unrelated cases in an area.

"It can be a market, hospital, coastal area, an institution, a ward, panchayat or a tribal area.

The disease may be reported en masse in people who work or live in that partic-

Andhra police's Covid drive reunites mom with son

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati, July 18: A state-wide drive launched to screen orphans and street kids for Covid-19 has united a grieving mother with her son who was missing for four years. The authorities also rescued 10 children hailing from Bihar who were forced to live as bonded labourers.

The good turn of events took place barely a couple of days after 'Operation Muskaan Covid-19' was launched by the Andhra Pradesh Police.

Bobba Sri Lalitha, a resident of Palakollu in the West Godavari district, lost her husband soon after the birth of her second son, Srinivas. Struggling to make ends meet, Lalitha was forced to take up menial jobs, including working as a rag picker to feed her sons.

In 2016, Srinivas fled home and reached the Vijayawada railway station. From there, the railway police rescued Srinivas and shifted him to a child care centre in Vijayawada and he has been there ever since. During the course of



Operation Muskaan, Srinivas finally revealed that he is a native of Palakollu in the West Godavari district. The authorities then sprung into action and facilitated the reunion of Srinivas with his mother.

DGP Gautam Sawang said, "It is very heartwarming to be able to facilitate the reunion of a mother-son duo after almost four years. Things like these give us immense satisfaction and keep us going. Each kid who has been rescued has a heart wrenching story. It is to make this kind of difference in the lives

of the vulnerable that this initiative was launched."

Police officials said that the 'Muskaan Covid-19' initiative has led to the rescue of 2,739 kids within 72 hours of its launch. During the drive, the police have also rescued 10 children employed as 'bonded labourers' in Perecherla. All the kids hailing from Bihar have now been rescued and shifted to child care homes while a case has been registered against the management under relevant sections of the law. The drive will continue till July 20.

of the day quote

Today, it is clear that the Congress party is on a ventilator. No plasma therapy, hydroxychloroquine, or Remdesivir can save this political party from the impending death

Party workers' demand that Priyanka Gandhi Vadra be the party's face in the 2022 UP Assembly elections, it is a "strategic decision" to be taken by the CWC and Priyanka ji herself

The deep and culturally rich heritage of our country is known all over the world. We don't have to prove anything to Nepal Prime Minister KP Oli

SHORT TAKES

Top Manipur cop shoots self

Imphal: A top officer of Manipur police department allegedly shot himself in his office Saturday afternoon, officials said. The officer, Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Arvind Kumar, was taken to a hospital following the incident. Top brass of the state police and officials, including Chief Secretary J Suresh Babu, were at Raj Medicity where Kumar was being treated.

3 terrorists killed in Kashmir

Srinagar: Three terrorists have been killed in an ongoing encounter with the security forces in South Kashmir's Shopian district Saturday. The gunfight was going on in the Amshipora village in Shopian. The Army said the operation was in progress and three terrorists have been killed. "A joint operation was launched early Saturday morning. The Security Forces were fired upon while laying the cordon, from the cow shed of the lone house in the orchard. A firefight ensued. Joint Operation in progress," the Army said.

Youth fatally stabs lover

Coimbatore: A 20-year-old man is on the run after fatally stabbing his teenage lover near her house on the outskirts of the city, police said Saturday. C Ratheesh and Aishwarya (18) were in love but her parents objected to it. So, she began avoiding him since the last four months, the police said. Upset over this, Ratheesh went to her house Friday night and called her out. When she came out, the two got into an argument and the man knifed her. On hearing her scream, Aishwarya's father came out and he was also stabbed. Neighbours took the daughter and the father to hospital where she died without responding to treatment while he is in stable condition, the police said.

Pak intruder arrested

Jammu: A Pakistani intruder was arrested by the Army along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, an official said Saturday. The intruder was found moving into this side in Nowshera sector late Friday night and was immediately arrested, he said. The official said the man was being questioned. This is the second such arrest along the LoC in the past four days.



It is unfortunate that the people of Rajasthan are paying for the discord within the Congress

VASUNDHARA RAJE | FORMER RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

IIT-KGP DEVELOPS WEATHER FORECAST SYSTEM TO HELP FARMERS

Researchers at IIT Kharagpur have developed an advanced weather forecast system to help farmers in agricultural activities and reduce climatic risks, an official said Saturday



Centre identifies Chinese firms with PLA links operating in India

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 18: The Union government has identified a number of China-based companies having links to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and operating in India soon after it banned 59 Chinese mobile applications, including TikTok. The government believes that the Chinese firms operating in India have been involved in intelligence activities overseas.

As per the China's 2017 Intelligence law, the Communist government in the country has power to monitor suspects, raid premises and seize vehicles as well as devices. The US Secretary of Defence, Mark Esper's annual report

to the American Congress titled 'Military and Security Developments involving the People's Republic of China 2019' has put this on record. Chinese firms like Huawei, ZTE, TikTok and others have been entrusted with the job to support, provide assistance, and cooperate with China's national intelligence undertakings, wherever they operate according to this law. Article 7 of the law states "Any organisation or citizen shall support, assist and cooperate with the state intelligence work in accordance with the law. The state protects individuals and organisations that support, assist and cooperate with national intelligence work."

It is worth mentioning here that this law has direct security impli-



cations for all overseas FDI that originate from China. Some of the Chinese companies identified by the Indian government having direct/indirect links with the PLA and operating in India include Xindia Steels Ltd, Xinxing Cathay International Group, China

Electronics Technology Group Corporation (CETC) and Huawei. Xindia Steels Ltd: This company is among the largest joint ventures between India and China and has recently commissioned a 0.8 MTPA iron ore pelletisation facility in Karnataka's Koppal district at a

total cost of over Rs 250 crore. The primary investor in Xindia Steels Ltd is Xinxing Cathay International Group Co Ltd (China). According to the latter's website, it is reorganized, reconstructed and unhooked from previous Production Department and subordinate enterprises and institutions of the General Logistics Department of the PLA. Xinxing Cathay International Group: This group set up a manufacturing facility in Chhattisgarh with an investment of Rs 1,000 crore on the invitation of the Chhattisgarh government to physically examine the state and position of iron ore in the state. With a turnover of almost Rs 3,000 crore, so far Xinxing has supplied close to 30,000 tonnes

of ductile iron pipes to India. China Electronics Technology Group Corporation (CETC): In 2018, the CETC announced a \$46 million investment in a 200 MW PV manufacturing facility in Andhra Pradesh's Sri City. A leading military electronics manufacturer, CETC also produces Hikvision CCTV cameras. The US government has added several CETC research institutes and subsidiaries to its entity list and restricted exports on national security grounds. Huawei: Founded by Ren Zhengfei, a former deputy director of the PLA engineering corps, in 1987 in Shenzhen, Huawei is a popular brand in India.

PLA troops non-committal about retreat

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 18: Chinese troops have not moved back from the Line of Control (LaC) in eastern Ladakh in line with the consensus arrived at during the disengagement talks between India and China, sources said Saturday. Seeing the "non-committal approach" of the People's Liberation Army troops, India maintains that the process of disengagement is "intricate and requires constant verification".

The sources in the Indian security establishments said that the Chinese retreat a bit and then return; so there is a need for "constant verification" of the consensus achieved during the meetings between Indian and Chinese military delegates.

It has been found that Indian and Chinese troops have pulled back at Pangong Lake by 2 km and Finger 4 is empty. However, the Chinese are still camping on the ridge line. This clearly indicates that the Chinese had camped at Finger 4 that had traditionally been under Indian control.

The Chinese had come in 8 km into the Indian territory, all the



The sources in the Indian security establishments said that the Chinese retreat a bit and then return; so there is a need for "constant verification" of the consensus achieved

The Chinese are still camping on the ridge line indicating that the Chinese had camped at Finger 4 that had traditionally been under Indian control

way till Finger 4 from Finger 8. India maintains that the LaC runs through Finger 8. Mountain spurs jutting into the lake are referred to as fingers.

In Galwan Valley, which is called Patrolling Point 14, distance between Indian and Chinese troops is three km. At Patrolling Point 15, the distance between troops is around eight km.

But in Hot Springs, that is Patrolling Point 17, 40-50 troops on

both sides are just 600-800 meters apart. The Chinese Army had retreated as per the consensus but again returned.

Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Friday, during his visit to Ladakh, said that India wants peace but there is no guarantee of the final outcome of talks with China. Singh also reviewed the ground situation in the hostile border areas.

India and China are engaged in military and diplomatic deliberations to de-escalate the tense situation in the border areas in Ladakh. The countries are locked in a 10-week-long stand-off at multiple points, hitherto unprecedented along the border. The Indian Army said on July 16 that the disengagement process on the LaC with China is "intricate and requires constant verification". The armed force said that India is taking the de-escalation process forward through "regular meetings at the diplomatic and military level".

During 15-hour-long deliberations spread over July 14 and July 15, India and China military delegates reviewed the progress on "implementation of the first phase of disengagement and also discussed further steps to ensure complete disengagement" in eastern Ladakh. The Indian delegation's main agenda at the meet was the complete PLA pullback from the Pangong Lake, Depsang and other areas in eastern Ladakh.

China had started to change the status quo on the LaC at various places, moving inside the Indian territories. India has objected to it and is taking up the matter with China at all levels.

BIRDS OF SAME FEATHER



Asian openbill storks perch on a tree branch in Birbhum district, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

IS member Sadiya was planning lone wolf attack

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 18: Sadiya Anwar Sheikh, a second year mass communication student from Maharashtra's Pune who was arrested by the NIA for her alleged links with the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKAP) module, a banned terror organisation that is part of the IS, was in touch with several key leaders on secure messaging platforms. She was also part of their chan-

nels to build up a cadre to carry out terrorist activities in the country, sources said Saturday.

According to top NIA sources, Sheikh was arrested on July 12 along with a gym operator Nabeel Khatri from Pune for trying to build up a cadre of ISKP in India, which is also a part of the IS-JK module.

The source said that the IS has made several such groups in different parts of the world. The NIA source said that Sheikh, 22, was a highly radicalised extremist, who

had undergone de-radicalisation twice before and was allegedly in constant touch with the Kashmiri couple - Jahanazaib Sami Wani and his wife Hina Bashir Beigh.

The Kashmiri couple was arrested in the ISKP module case initially registered with the Delhi Police's Special Cell on March 8 this year from Delhi.

The source claimed that Sheikh was in touch with Abdullah Basith, who is already in Delhi's Tihar jail.

KANPUR AMBUSH

Dubey aide's wife may turn approver

AGENCIES

Lucknow, July 18: The special investigation team (SIT) probing the Kanpur ambush and encounter of gangster Vikas Dubey, let off the mafia's wife Richa after a five-hour interrogation, Manu - wife of an arrested henchman Sashikant Pandey, seems to be in the spotlight in police investigations.

Manu has gained importance after back-to-back audio clips wherein she was supposedly heard mobilizing men folk to take sniper position on rooftops and conspiring with the don and misleading cops came to the surface.

Manu was released after two days of rigorous interrogation in detention and sent home in Bikru under heavy police protection. The police have revealed that she may turn an approver in the case.

She is supposed to have confided to investigators that she and her husband were ready to provide details on the ambush. According to the police, their statements would be

taken under Section 164 CrPC for recording confessions and statements by a magistrate during investigation. "Though, she did not make a formal request for protection, two constables have been deployed round-the-clock outside her house after analyzing threat perception," said a police official.

"During preliminary interrogation, Manu revealed details on aides who reached the Dubey's residence on the fateful night and the sequence of events leading to the carnage and what happened next. Besides

Manu, her mother-in-law was another witness. Manu's statements will give police crucial leads to investigate and verify multiple murders on the night of July 3," said a police official.

Manu's husband Sashikant, who was arrested late Monday, had accused the gangster of orchestrating the ambush while talking to reporters. To a query by media persons on what happened on the fateful night, Sashikant had stated.



'Parliament's Central Hall poses evacuation challenges'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 18: The Central Public Works Department (CPWD) has informed the Supreme Court that the Central Hall of Parliament poses a challenge for rescue and evacuation operations in certain conditions during an emergency.

The CPWD pointed out that the hall has a seating capacity for only 440 persons and during joint sessions a large numbers of seats have to be arranged in the aisles. "This arrangement undermines the dignity of the institution and poses challenges for evacuation during emergent

conditions, as movements are highly restricted," said the CPWD in a counter-affidavit in the apex court in reply to a petition against the Central Vista Project.

The CPWD said that the new Parliament building will be constructed with enhanced structural life, which will last for centuries, and will become a symbol of national pride as well as inspire citizens to participate in the democratic traditions of India.

Citing the expansion of the Lok Sabha in future, the CPWD said it is likely to increase substantially after 2026, as the freeze on the total



number of seats is only till that year. "The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha are packed to capacity and have no space for addition of seats if Parliament is expanded. The seat-

ing arrangements are cramped and cumbersome, there are no desks beyond the second row, and movement is extremely constrained," the department said.

It also pointed out that there are six plots in the Central Vista, where temporary barracks or stables during the Second World War were built. "These structures occupy an area of over 90 acres near the North Block, South Block, Jammagar House, and Jodhpur House. This precious land on the Vista is highly under-utilised," the CPWD contended.

Detailing the Common Central Secretariat, the CPWD said: "The development of Common Secretariat will lead to major increase in office spaces which will offset the huge gap in present and future demand and existing availability."

BTP SUPPORTS GEHLOT GOVT IN RAJ: MLAs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, July 18: The Bhartiya Tribal Party (BTP) supports the Ashok Gehlot government in Rajasthan, the two MLAs of the regional party said in a joint press conference with state Congress chief Govind Singh Dotasara Saturday.

BTP legislators Rajkumar Roat and Ramprasad asserted that their party's president and other leaders have agreed on extending support to the Gehlot government on the condition that demands related to development of the state are fulfilled.



The party had Monday issued a whip asking Roat and Ramprasad to be neutral and neither support the Congress nor the BJP. It had also told them to neither support Chief Minister Gehlot nor Sachin Pilot in case of a floor test in the Assembly.

"BTP MLAs and their party leaders held discussions with the chief minister. They were already with us and have reassured their support to the Ashok Gehlot government," Dotasara said at the press conference outside a hotel on the Delhi highway where the Congress has kept MLAs amid the political crisis.

The MLAs were shifted to Hotel Fairmont Monday soon after a Congress legislature party meeting, where Congress lawmakers expressed support for Gehlot and only indirectly referred to Pilot, whose rebellion threatens the state government. Pilot was stripped of the posts of Rajasthan's deputy chief minister and the party's state unit president Tuesday.

Chief Minister Gehlot tweeted informing about the support by the BTP.



I have been saying this since a long time; if the situation does not improve in Bihar then it will not only become a national hotspot soon but also become a global hotspot of COVID cases

TEJASHWI YADAV | RJD LEADER

MUMBAI'S COVID-19 RECOVERY RATE IMPROVES FASTER

Even as Mumbai's COVID-19 case count is nearing the one lakh-mark, the recovery rate of the country's financial capital is nearly 70 per cent – seven per cent more than the national average, official data has revealed



of the day quote

The entire nation is with Assam. The people of Assam are facing this problem with all their grit and their self-determination nature and they will recover from this disaster. I appeal entire Congress workers to extend all possible help

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

I welcome Congress MLA Sumitra Kasdekar ji from Nepanagar assembly seat in Madhya Pradesh to join the BJP family after leaving the Congress. Correct decision taken by another MLA in the interest of the state

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | BJP LEADER

In those days, we had to file a suit for compensation (for my father's death in accident). My mother filed the claim and the court passed a decree but we could not get the amount due to complicated procedures

JUSTICE R. BANUMATHI | SUPREME COURT JUDGE

SHORT TAKES

■ Lover kills woman after tiff

Nagpur: A 25-year-old woman was allegedly killed by a man she was in relationship with in Nagpur city, police said Saturday. The body of the victim was recovered on Friday evening from an under-construction house in Abhay Nagar locality of the city, police said. The accused, identified as Prem alias Sonu Pankaj Ganveer, 23, a resident of a slum, has been arrested, an official from Ajni Police Station said. Some residents of Abhay Nagar found the girl lying dead in an under-construction house.

■ Partially-burnt body found

Noida (UP): A body was found inside a house where a fire broke out in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida, police said Saturday. The matter was reported to the police on Friday night from Kudi Khara village in Badalpur area, a senior official said. "The house is located in a farmland and it was on fire. When the police team reached the spot on being alerted about it, they broke open the door and went inside the house to find a partially-burnt body there," Deputy Commissioner of Police, Central Noida, Harish Chander said.

■ Undertrial prisoner found hanging

New Delhi: A 38-year-old undertrial prisoner, who was lodged in Tihar jail in a murder case, was found hanging inside a cell, officials said Saturday. Ravi, a resident of Delhi's Mohan Garden, was lodged in the jail Thursday for allegedly killing his 62-year-old mother-in-law with an ice pick on suspicion that she was behind his wife's decision to abandon him. He had also severely injured some relatives of the woman.

■ 3 of family killed as train hits car

Patna: Three persons of a family were killed Saturday when their car was hit by a train in Bihar's Patna district, police said. The Patna-Ranchi Janshatadbi special train hit the vehicle while it was crossing the railway tracks between Potahi and Nadwan stations at around 6.35 am, East Central Railway (ECR) CPRO Rajesh Kumar said. The train was on its way to Gaya when the accident took place, Kumar said.

Centre asks 4 states to strengthen efforts to combat nCoV

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 18: With a surge in coronavirus cases in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam and Odisha, the Union Health Ministry has asked these states to make renewed efforts to contain transmission of the virus and keep case fatality rate below one per cent.

With these states imposing lockdown anew, the Health Ministry emphasised that the restrictions should be utilised to focus on containment, surveillance and testing in containment and buffer zones as the key strategy for early detection of cases and fatality management.

In a letter to Principal Secretaries (Health) and Secretary (Health) of these states, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Health Lav Agarwal asked them to ensure that at least 80 per cent of the new cases have their close contacts traced and are in quarantine within 72 hours of case confirmation.

The letter underlined that containment and buffer zones should be suitably delineated based on the mapping of cases and contacts, and



According to active case load, Odisha is the tenth most-affected state in the country with Ganjam reporting approximately 37 per cent of the state's active caseload

The Union Health Ministry has asked four states to make renewed efforts to contain transmission of the virus and keep case fatality rate below one per cent

With these states imposing lockdown anew, the ministry emphasised that the restrictions should be utilised to focus on containment, surveillance and testing in containment and buffer zones as the key strategy

a list of NCC volunteers along with other workforce is available on Covid warriors' portal which can be optimally utilised in containment and surveillance effort.

"In terms of testing the state should aim to achieve a minimum of 14 tests per one lakh (140 tests per million) per day, while ensuring a positivity rate of less than 10 per cent," the letter to the states read.

The Centre has also decided to depute a multi-disciplinary team to Bihar to review and coordinate with the state in managing the pandemic there, according to an office

memorandum issued by the health ministry. The team, comprising Agarwal, Dr SK Singh, Director, National Centre for Disease Control, and Dr Neeraj Nischal, Associate Professor, Medicine at AIIMS New Delhi, will undertake the visit immediately and coordinate with state health authorities to review the existing situation and provide necessary support and guidance.

According to the letter to the Principal Secretary (Health & Family Welfare), Bihar, cases in the state are rising with almost 450-500 cases being reported daily and

80 per cent of the total active cases in the state were reported in the last seven days.

Districts like Patna, Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, Begusarai and Munger are reporting higher number of cases while Saharsa, Gaya, Paschim Champaran, Jamui, Arwal, Saran and Khagaria are the emerging hotspots.

The overall testing is very low in the state vis-à-vis national average and an increasing trend in case positivity rate on weekly basis is also a cause of concern, the letter said.

In the letter to the Secretary

BJP demands CBI probe into Raj 'tapes'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 18: The BJP Saturday hit back on the Ashok Gehlot government when it not only denied charges of alleged bid to break the Congress party but also alleged that the desert state is witnessing an "indirect emergency".

The BJP was referring to the purported phone conversations that were leaked by Gehlot camp.

This attack comes in the wake of an FIR filed by the SOG in Rajasthan against Union Minister and BJP leader Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and two others

"Is the phone of every person in Rajasthan, who has any concern with politics, is being tapped? Is Emergency not being imposed indirectly in Rajasthan?" asked BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra in

a press conference here Saturday.

Calling the Rajasthan political crisis a "drama", Patra alleged it is a brazen cocktail of conspiracy, lies, fraud and defiance of law.

"The whole conspiracy is being hatched in their house and through some audio tapes it is being alleged that the BJP is trying to sabotage the Congress party," said Patra. He demanded a CBI probe into this matter, to ascertain whether phone tapping was done or SOPs were followed. He also questioned if the voice in the leaks are authentic, why the FIR states it as "purported".

This attack comes in the wake of an FIR filed by the SOG in Rajasthan against Union Minister and BJP leader Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and two others on the basis of a complaint by Congress whip Mahesh Joshi soon after three audio clips with alleged conversations on toppling the Ashok Gehlot government were released by Rajasthan's ruling party.

However, Shekhawat has denied any of the tapes has his voice while another BJP leader said the tapes were doctored.

Man approaches police against tailor for 'too short' underpants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, July 18: A 46-year-old man has approached the Bhopal police with a complaint that a tailor has stitched his underpants "too short".

The police, however, asked the man Krishna Kumar Dubey, to move the court to get the issue resolved.

Dubey, who was earlier employed as a security guard and used to earn Rs 9,000 per month, lost his job due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown two months ago. "I am from Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh and I came to Bhopal for a job in October.



Recently, I borrowed Rs 1,000 from a friend and bought different things, including a two metre-long cloth to get two underpants stitched," Dubey, who lives in Bhim Nagar here, said.

He paid Rs 190 to the tailor for the job. However, according to him, when he wore the underpants, he found them too short.

"I complained to the tailor, who told me that the cloth was inadequate. I went back to the shop owner, who told me that he had given two metres of cloth," he added. The man then approached the police a couple of days back, who asked him to take up the matter to court.

From machines to N-95 masks, cartels use all to smuggle gold, drugs

A confidential note of the Indian Customs suggested all preventive teams deployed at the airports and sea ports to keep an eye on all types of gadgets and hi-tech tools

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi July 18: From automatic iron presses to hand held drilling machines and from COVID-19 protective suits to N-95 masks, smuggling cartels are using every possible item under the sun to secretly peddle contraband drugs and gold into India.

A confidential note of the Indian Customs suggested all preventive teams deployed at the airports and sea ports to keep an eye on all types of gadgets and hi-tech tools even if they have minimum cavity space.

While the gold smuggling cartel of Kerala, recently busted by the Customs, used diplomatic consignments to smuggle large quantities of gold, other syndicates preferred to use home appliances to push drugs and yellow metal through green channels.

An alert Customs superintendent at the Amritsar airport got suspicious when four passengers, carrying juicers-grinders and automatic iron presses, tried to skip through the green channel on the night of July 16. The official also noted a set of hand held drilling machines brought by the passen-



gers who landed from flight IX 1192 from Dubai. The reports of the Amritsar Customs reviewed by the this news agency said that

once the drilling machines were unscrewed and all its parts were knocked down, the officials discovered gold concealed in small packing.

Two sets of Sanford auto-irons were also dismantled. In the base plates, concealed yellow metal was found. Juicer-grinders, a common home appliance item brought in from flights arriving from Dubai, were also unboxed. The report said that more than 8 kg gold, concealed in these appliances, was recovered from the passengers who were later arrested. The drug cartels are eying COVID care ma-

terials to smuggle cocaine, marijuana and other contraband drugs. Early this week, Delhi Customs had seized a large quantity of marijuana being smuggled from the US. The marijuana was concealed in a packing declared as consignment for N-95 face masks.

On June 17, Delhi Customs had recovered contraband narcotics worth over Rs 30 lakh brought from the US. This time the drugs were concealed inside computer servers.

In Kerala, a gang of gold smugglers peddling gold paste was unearthed at the Kannur Airport,

which used to conceal the precious metal in paste form in clothes, mostly jackets and jeans.

Smuggling gold in "paste form" is a new way adopted by the crime syndicates to clear X-ray machines installed at various international airports and seaports in India, a Customs Commissioner said.

According to him, smugglers first convert gold into powder and then produce its compound in paste form. Around 700 gm gold can be retrieved from 1 kg of paste through a chemical procedure. The smuggled gold in pure form is later sold in the market.

COUPLE, TEEN SON KILLED IN PAK SHELLING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, July 18: Three members of a family were killed when Pakistani troops shelled various forward areas and civilian places along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district Friday, prompting the Indian Army to give a befitting reply, officials said.

"At around 9:20 PM Friday, Pakistan army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and resorting to shelling of mortars along the LoC in Gulpur sector of Poonch district," a defence spokesperson said. Pakistan army also shelled heavily near the hamlets along the LoC in Khari Karmara sector, officials said. A shell landed on a house in Karmara village killing Mohd Rafiq (58), his wife Rafia Bi (50) and son Irfan (15) on the spot, they said, adding that some houses have been damaged and a few people have sustained injuries.

NATURE'S BOUNTY



A view of Lukung in eastern Ladakh, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

Conducting Bihar polls would be costly, thanks to COVID-19

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, July 18: Conducting the upcoming Assembly elections in Bihar is likely to be a 'more than usual' expensive affair due to certain challenges and difficulties that have emerged following the coronavirus-triggered crisis across the globe.

To ensure social distancing and other necessary precautionary measures, over one lakh personnel would be pressed into election duties – mainly to look out for physical distancing among the people that would turn up to exercise franchise.

The term of the Bihar Legislative Assembly expires in November and it is believed that elections will be held on time if everything goes well. Sources said the Election Commission (EC) is considering all the challenges, and poll preparations are being constantly reviewed.

The EC has made it clear that this time, only 1,000 voters will vote at a particular polling station. Therefore, it has been decided to set up additional polling booths.

Sources in the Election Commission said that due to the proposed formula of allowing 1,000 voters at a polling centre, preparations are underway to come up with around 34,000 additional polling centres.

Woman, daughter self-immolate near UP CM's office, 3 cops suspended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amethi/Lucknow, July 18: The Amethi police suspended three policemen after a woman from the district and her daughter set themselves on fire outside the Chief Minister's office in Lucknow alleging inaction in a land dispute case, officials said Saturday.

The Lucknow police, however, said the women were instigated by Congress leader Anoop Patel to set themselves on fire as part of a "criminal conspiracy" and a case has been filed against him and three others.

Meanwhile, the BSP and the SP attacked the UP government over the immolation bid, saying it should take the incident seriously and act against the officers responsible for it.

According to Lucknow civil hospital authorities, the woman suffered 90 per cent burns and is on life support, while her daughter is stable.

"Three policemen including the in-charge SHO of Jamo police station in Amethi have been suspended. The matter is being probed by the additional superintendent of police and action will be taken once the report comes," Amethi Superintendent of Police Khyati Garg said.

No suicide note was recovered from Safia or her daughter Gudia,



she said. Garg and Amethi District Magistrate Arun Kumar said Safia (55) had a dispute with her neighbour over a drain and the two had even exchanged blows in the past.

Safia and her daughter set themselves on fire outside Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's office in the state capital Friday evening, police said.

The police personnel posted there swung into action when they saw the women engulfed in flames and rescued them. The two were taken to the civil hospital for treatment, they said.

A video of the incident has gone viral on social media.

Dr Ashutosh Dubey, medical superintendent of Shyama Prasad Mookerji Civil Hospital, Lucknow, told this news agency, "The mother has suffered 90 per cent burns and is in a serious condition. Her daughter suffered 15 per cent burns and

is stable. The mother has been put on life support."

Lucknow Police Commissioner Sujeet Pandey said prima facie it appears that the incident was part of a conspiracy.

"It is a criminal conspiracy as part of which some people instigated them (Safia and her daughter). A case has been registered against four people – Aasma, Sultan, Kadir Khan (Amethi district president of AIMIM) and Anoop Patel (former Congress spokesperson) – in this regard," he said.

The women were told to come to Lucknow and try to set themselves on fire so that their grievances can be highlighted and the dispute resolved, he said.

Pandey said, "We have evidence to show that these women went to the UP Congress office and met Anoop Patel."

of the day quote

In order to address the growing pollution levels and national environmental degradation it is vital that concerted efforts are made to plant trees extensively across the country

IMRAN KHAN | PAKISTAN PM

The US is deeply disappointed by the European Court of Justice's ruling that invalidated a transatlantic data sharing deal

MIKE POMPEO | US SECRETARY OF STATE

We know from before, and I guarantee you I know now because now I get briefings again. The Russians are still engaged, trying to de-legitimise our electoral process

JOE BIDEN | FORMER VICE PRESIDENT OF US

SHORT TAKES

67 missing in Indonesia floods

Jakarta: Sixty-seven people have been reported missing, while more than 14,000 others were displaced due to flash floods in Indonesia's Sulawesi province, authorities said Saturday, adding that search and rescue operations were underway. So far, rescue teams have retrieved a total of 36 bodies, reports Xinhua news agency. The rescuers focused their efforts in the villages of Sabbang, Baebunta, Pontaden, Meli, and Masamba city, the hardest-hit areas in Luwu Utara district, said a provincial official.

15 Pak pilots suspended

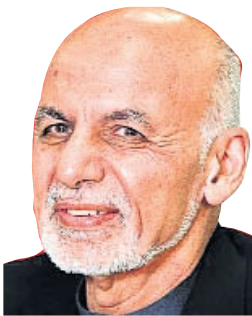
Islamabad: Pakistan's Aviation Division has suspended 15 more pilots for having dubious licences, raising the overall tally to 93, as verification continued, it was reported Saturday. The 15 are among the 262 pilots possessing suspicious licences, reports Dawn news. Friday, Abdul Sattar Khokhar, spokesman for the Aviation Division, said a total of 262 pilots were identified as possessing suspicious licences by the Board of Inquiry and grounded immediately after identification on the instructions of the government.

Kuwait's ruler hospitalised

Dubai: Kuwait's 91-year-old ruler has been admitted to the hospital for a medical checkup, the oil-rich nation's state-run news agency reported Saturday. Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah was in "good health," the KUNA news agency said, citing a statement from the country's diwan minister. The brief report did not elaborate. However, the visit comes as the tiny nation fights the coronavirus pandemic, which has seen over 58,000 cases and 400 deaths in the country of 4.1 million.

Bangla hospital owner arrested

Dhaka: A hospital owner in Bangladesh has been arrested on charges of fraud to a tune of about \$350,000 for allegedly issuing thousands of fake Covid-19 test results to deceive people. Mohammad Shahed, the hospital owner, was arrested on July 15, nine days after he managed to evade the authorities, when he was trying to cross a river to escape to India, wearing a burqa -- to hide himself from the public and police, officials said.



The reason why the process of releasing Taliban's prisoners is moving forward is because I want the fate of every prisoner of the Afghan security and defence forces to be clear. The peace process will not go on until the fate of our heroes is clarified

ASHRAF GHANI | PRESIDENT OF AFGHANISTAN

Trump says no US mandate for masks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, July 18: President Donald Trump has said he would not order Americans to wear masks to contain the spread of the coronavirus, saying people should have a "certain freedom."

His comments came after Dr Anthony Fauci, the top US infectious diseases expert, appealed to state and local leaders to be "as forceful as possible" in getting people to wear masks in public places.

In a 'Fox News Sunday' interview, Trump said, "I don't agree with the statement that if everybody wears a mask, everything disappears."

Commenting on the initial comments from top health officials, Trump said: "Hey, Dr Fauci said don't wear a mask. Our Surgeon General - terrific guy - said don't wear a mask. Everybody who is saying don't wear a mask - all of sudden everybody's got to wear a mask, and as you know masks cause problems, too."



In a 'Fox News Sunday' interview, Trump said, "I don't agree with the statement that if everybody wears a mask, everything disappears"

Trump, who has been seen wearing a face mask only once, said, "I'm a believer in masks. I think masks are good." But Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said social distancing, an important factor in blunting the spread of the coronavirus, can be difficult with more people going out.

"When you're living your life and trying to open up the country, you are going to come into contact with people. And for that reason, we know that masks are really important, and we should be using

them everywhere," he said during a US Chamber of Commerce virtual event.

Americans are actually slowing down the re-opening the country by not wearing a mask, CNN quoted Fauci as saying during a US Chamber of Commerce event. "If we could get more people to understand that, hopefully we'll get more people who'd be willing to wear masks," he said.

He said he would "urge the leaders - the local political and other leaders - in states and cities and towns to be as forceful as possible in getting your citizenry to wear masks." The country needs to concentrate on the problems at hand and not worry about a second wave, he said.

"When you're having up to 70,000 new infections ... that's something you need to focus on right now, as opposed to looking at what's going to happen in September or October," he said. There were 77,255 new cases reported on Thursday, crossing a previous record set two days ago, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Nepal meet ends, talks fail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, July 18: Nepal's ruling communist party's top decision-making body Saturday failed to achieve a breakthrough to end the tussle for power between Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and former premier Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' despite four hours of marathon discussions.

No conclusion was reached during the meeting of the Nepal Communist Party's (NCP) nine-member Central Secretariat though the party leaders discussed agenda to be presented during Sunday's Standing Committee meeting, according to senior party leader Ganesh Shah.

During the meeting, senior leaders of the party agreed to resolve the issues through consensus, party spokesperson Narayankaji Shrestha told media persons after the meeting.

Arson suspected in Nantes cathedral fire

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nantes, July 18: French officials launched an arson inquiry Saturday after a fire broke out in the Gothic cathedral of the western French city of Nantes, shattering stained glass windows and sending black smoke spewing from between its towers.

Residents and tourists watched aghast, and emergency workers cordoned off the area around the St Peter and St Paul Cathedral, in the historical center of this city on the Loire River. A City Hall official said the fire broke out Saturday morning inside the cathedral, and the cause is unclear. The official is not authorized to be publicly named. No injuries have been reported. The local firefighter service said the roof is not affected by the fire and was "under control." They brushed aside comparisons with Notre Dame cathedral in Paris whose lead roof and spire burned down in April 2019. The Nantes fire for many will bring back memories of that devastating blaze that threatened to topple the medieval monument.

SAUDI TO IMPOSE CURBS

Starting from Sunday, Saudi authorities will impose a ban on entering holy sites without a permit as the Kingdom is bracing for a limited Haj season in an effort to stem the spread of Covid-19



Floods kill 14 in southern China

RESCUE WORKERS USED INFLATABLE RAFTS TO RESCUE MORE THAN 1,900 PEOPLE TRAPPED IN THEIR HOMES AND OTHER BUILDINGS



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, July 18: At least 14 people have died in the latest round of seasonal rains and flooding in southern China, as soldiers and workers built makeshift barriers with sandbags and rocks Saturday to keep the Yangtze River and its tributaries at bay.

Three floodgates of the Three Gorges Dam that spans the Yangtze were opened as the water level behind the massive dam rose more than 15 meters (50 feet) above flood level, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

The dam was holding back about 45% of the water, Xinhua said, citing China Three Gorges Corp. Upstream, 11 people had been killed in Chongqing as of Saturday morning, China National Emergency Broadcasting said in an online report, citing the municipal emergency agency. More than 20,000 people had been evacuated and 1,031 homes destroyed.

Three landslides in Dunhao town in a mountainous part of Chongqing left six dead, the city's Emergency Management Bureau said.

The bodies had been found by Friday evening after more than 200 people were dispatched for a search and rescue operation. Rainfall in the town of Dunhao totaled 39 centimeters (15 inches), the bureau said. Three more people

died in neighbouring Hubei province, the emergency management department said in a social media post.

State broadcaster CCTV showed people cleaning up still wet, muddy streets and shops in the city of Enshi after severe flooding Friday. Rescue workers used inflatable rafts to rescue more than 1,900 people trapped in their homes and other buildings.

Downriver, firefighters and others finished filling in a 188-meter (620-foot) break in a dike on Poyang Lake, China's largest freshwater lake, Xinhua said. The dike gave way nine days ago, flooding 15 villages and agricultural fields in Jiangxi province, the news agency said. More than 14,000 people were evacuated.

The incoming waters were expected to peak Saturday behind the Three Gorges Dam, but more water is forecast to arrive around Tuesday, Xinhua said.

The hydropower dam is used to mitigate catastrophic flooding. Seasonal flooding strikes large parts of China annually, especially in its central and southern regions, but the rainfall has been unusually high this year.

About 1.8 million people have been evacuated and direct losses attributed to flooding are estimated at more than 49 billion yuan (\$7 billion), according to the Ministry of Emergency Management.

Police officer suspended for kneeling on Black man's neck

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, July 18: A Scotland Yard officer has been suspended after an "extremely disturbing" footage emerged that appears to show him kneeling on the head and neck of a Black man during an arrest here.

The video recorded in Islington area of the UK capital shows two officers holding the handcuffed suspect on the pavement. A second Metropolitan Police officer has been removed from operational duty following the arrest on Thursday evening.

The UK has seen widespread Black Lives Matter protests following the death of 46-year-old African American George Floyd in Minneapolis in the US on May 25 while he was in police custody. Deputy Met Police commissioner Sir Steve House said the footage was "extremely disturbing" and had been referred to the police watchdog - the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

The video recorded in Islington area of the UK capital shows two officers holding the handcuffed suspect on the pavement. A second Metropolitan Police officer has been removed from operational duty following the arrest on Thursday evening

"The video footage that I have seen today and is circulating on social media is extremely disturbing. Some of the techniques used cause me great concern - they are not taught in police training," he said.

"One officer has been suspended and another officer has been removed from operational duty, but not suspended at this time. This

decision will be kept under review," he added. The Met Police confirmed it had charged a 45-year-old man with possession of a knife in a public place. Marcus Contain will appear in custody at Highbury Corner Magistrates' Court on Saturday.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said: "I'm deeply concerned about this distressing incident and we have raised this with senior officers at the Met Police as a matter of urgency. I welcome the fact the incident has been reviewed quickly by the Met and it's right that they have referred it to the IOPC."

In the footage, one of the officers appears to be using his knee to control the suspect and has his hand on the man's head. He is eventually released from the ground and continues to talk to officers after they sit him up. Several police cars arrive at the scene after the arresting officers are confronted by onlookers, who drew parallels with the police custody death of Floyd that triggered Black Lives Matter protests.

Global virus numbers show normal life still far away

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Johannesburg, July 18: South Africa was poised on Saturday to join the top five countries most affected by the coronavirus, while breathing-taking numbers around the world were a reminder a return to normal life is still far from sight.

Confirmed virus cases worldwide have topped 14 million and deaths have surpassed 600,000, according to Johns Hopkins University data, a day after the World Health Organisation reported a single-day record of new infections at over 237,000. Death tolls in the United States are reaching new highs, and India's infections are over 1 million.

Iran's president made the startling

announcement that as many as 25 million Iranians could have been infected, the state-run IRNA news agency reported Saturday. Hassan Rouhani cited a new Health Ministry study that has not been made publicly available. Iran has seen the worst outbreak in the Middle East with more than 270,000 confirmed cases.

Experts believe the true numbers around the world are higher because of testing shortages. And as countries try to ease lockdowns, new ripples of cases follow. South Africa Saturday could join the US, Brazil, India and Russia as the most badly hit countries as its cases near 350,000. Current case trends show it will surpass Peru.

That comes as the world marks



Mandela Day, remembering South Africa's first Black president and his legacy of fighting inequality. The country, however, remains the world's most unequal, and health officials

have warned that the pandemic will lay that bare.

"The simple fact is that many South Africans are sitting ducks because they cannot comply with

World Health Organisation protocols on improved hygiene and social distancing," the foundation of former South African archbishop and fellow Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu and his wife, Leah, said in a statement. South Africa's new epicenter, Gauteng province, is home to one-quarter of the country's population, with many poor people living in crowded conditions.

The country's cases make up roughly half of all on the African continent. Its struggles are a sign of trouble to come for less-resourced nations there. In India, a surge of 34,884 new cases was reported as local governments continue to reimpose focused lockdowns in several parts of the country, only allowing essential food supplies and

health services.

In the US, teams of military medics have been deployed in Texas and California to help hospitals deluged by coronavirus patients. The two most populous states each reported roughly 10,000 new cases and some of their highest death counts since the pandemic began. In China, the number of confirmed cases in a new COVID-19 outbreak in the far western region of Xinjiang has risen to 17. In Bangladesh, confirmed cases surpassed 200,000 but experts say the number is much higher as the country lacks adequate labs for testing. Most people in rural areas have stopped wearing masks and are thronging shopping centers ahead of the Islamic festival Eid al-Adha later this month.

business

of the day quote

The engineered biomolecule mega incubator initiative will get a ₹500 crore direct investment in the first phase, and the entire ecosystem will see a fund flow of around ₹10,000 crores

RAVI SHARMA | PRESIDENT, IIT ALUMNI COUNCIL

As of July 15, PSBs have sanctioned loans worth ₹19,668.87 crore for 71 MSME hubs in 27 States/UTs under the 100% Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme, of which ₹12,871.50 crore has already been disbursed

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

Today, we can deliver any service from anywhere in the world. Largely, that's the model we have adopted and have been able to collaborate extensively with customers across continents, across time zones and they have also become very comfortable about this operating model

C VIJAYAKUMAR | PRESIDENT AND CEO, HCL TECHNOLOGIES

SHORT TAKES

HDFC Q1 net profit up 20%

New Delhi: HDFC Bank Saturday reported nearly 20% rise in standalone net profit at ₹6,658.62 crore for June quarter, 2020-21 on the back of healthy interest income driven by growth in advances. The country's largest private sector lender clocked a net profit of ₹5,568.16 crore in the April-June period of 2019-20. Income of the bank rose to ₹34,453.28 crore in June quarter from ₹32,361.84 crore in the year-ago same period, HDFC Bank said in a regulatory filing.

NPS adds over 1L subscribers

Mumbai: Pension fund regulator PFRDA Friday said National Pension System - a flagship defined contribution retirement savings scheme of the government - has registered about 1.03 lakh members in its subscriber base in April-June quarter. During the period, nearly 1.03 lakh individual subscribers from the private sector and 206 corporates were enrolled, Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) said in a release.

MASSA hails govt's decision

New Delhi: Hailing the Centre's decision to permit sign-off of foreign seafarers in India as a historic move, global maritime body MASSA said they will facilitate the travel of foreign seafarers. MASSA said the move comes as a huge relief for about 1.2 million seafarers globally who are involved in the international trade routes. The MHA July 17 accepted a proposal of the shipping ministry and issued a Standard Operating Protocol for repatriation of foreign seafarers from Indian Ports during COVID -19 pandemic.

Cadila gets USFDA nod

New Delhi: Drug firm Zydus Cadila said that it has received final approval from the US health regulator to market generic Butalbital, Acetaminophen and Caffeine combination tablets to treat symptoms of tension headaches. The company has received final approval from the USFDA to market Butalbital, Acetaminophen and Caffeine tablets in strengths of 50mg/325mg.



The short-term business outlook remains uncertain due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the long-term story of India and that of the two-wheeler industry remains intact, strong and positive

PAWAN MUNJAL | CHAIRMAN, HERO MOTOCORP

US GDP TO CONTRACT IN Q2: IMF

US GDP is expected to contract by an annualised rate of 37% in Q2 and by 6.6% for 2020 as a whole, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff has said. The longest economic expansion in US history has been derailed by the unanticipated advent of the COVID-19 pandemic



Food exports up 27% amid economic turbulence

We exported almost ₹1,66,000 crore merchandise. It shows the Indian market has bounced back and the international market is responding well to Indian exports

MOHIT SINGLA | CHAIRMAN, TPCI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 18: Despite economic turbulence due to COVID-19, India's overall food exports since March have increased 27%. According to the Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI), the average growth of 27% during the lockdown and the unlock period came on the back of high demand for food-based items. "The food sector has shown 27% growth. The major markets that have responded well are the US and Canada," TPCI Chairman Mohit Singla said at the Indo-Canadian virtual "buyer-seller meet (BSM) on food & beverages." He said exports in June against year-ago month had declined by only 4%. "We exported almost ₹1,66,000 crore merchandise. It shows the Indian market has bounced back and the international market is responding well to Indian ex-



ports," he said. Recently, official data showed India emerged as a net exporter in June. The country recorded \$0.79 billion trade surplus in June against \$15.28 billion deficit during the same period of 2019. On the Indo-Canadian food trade, Singla said, "Canada can be an important market for the Indian F&B industry as it has a large population (approx 2.4 million) of Indian diaspora. Outreach to the main-

I-T dept identifies individuals with high value transactions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 18: The Income Tax Department Saturday said it has identified certain individuals with high value transactions in 2018-19 who have either not filed returns or have discrepancies in their ITRs. The last date for filing as well as revising the Income Tax Return for Assessment Year 2019-20 (relevant to FY 2018-19) is July 31, 2020.

The department would be launching an 11 day e-campaign beginning July 20 to facilitate taxpayers/ assesseees who are either non-filers or have discrepancies/deficiency in their returns for the Fiscal year 2018-19 for ensuring voluntary compliance.

"Under this e-campaign the Income Tax Department will send email/SMS to identified taxpayers to verify their financial transactions related information received by the I-T department from various sources such as Statement of Financial Transactions (SFT), Tax Deduction at Source (TDS), Tax Collection at



Source (TCS), Foreign Remittances (Form 15CC) etc," it said.

The department also has collected information related to GST, exports, imports and transactions in securities, derivatives, commodities, mutual funds, etc.

The CBDT said that under the e-campaign the taxpayers will be able to access details of their high value transaction related information on the designated portal.

They will also be able to submit online response by selecting among any of these options: (i) Information is correct, (ii) Information is not fully correct, (iii) Information re-

THE LAST DATE FOR FILING AS WELL AS REVISING THE I-T RETURN FOR ASSESSMENT YEAR 2019-20 IS JULY 31, 2020

THE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE LAUNCHING AN 11 DAY E-CAMPAIGN BEGINNING JULY 20 TO FACILITATE TAXPAYERS WHO ARE EITHER NON-FILERS OR HAVE DISCREPANCIES IN THEIR RETURNS

lated to other person/year, (iv) Information is duplicate/included in other displayed information, and (v) Information is denied.

There would be no need to visit any Income Tax office, as the response has to be submitted online.

"Data analysis has identified certain taxpayers with high value transactions who have not filed returns for AY 2019-20 (relevant to FY 2018-19). In addition to the non-filers, another set of return filers have also been identified wherein the high value transactions do not appear to be in line with their Income Tax Return," the CBDT said.

DFCCIL terminates Chinese firm's contract

The move by DFCCIL promotes 'Make in India', which is PM Modi's ambitious project

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 18: In a follow up to Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India), the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation India Ltd will give the work of the signalling on 417 km route of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor to Indian companies after it terminated the contract with the Chinese firm, officials said Saturday.

The DFCCIL also plans to float the fresh tender for the remaining part of the project by the end of July or in August this year. The move by DFCCIL promotes the ambitious project of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Make in India'.

The remarks came a day after the DFCCIL terminated the tender worth ₹471 crore with the Beijing National Railway Research and Design Institute of Signal and Communication Group Company



Limited (BNRRDISC) due to non performance for signalling on 417 km route of the EDFC.

Anurag Sachan, MD of the DFCCIL told IANS, "This part of our project was funded by the World Bank and this project was given to a Chinese company by following the World Bank's procedure.

"Now, as we have terminated this contract and we have decided to complete it with our own railway party," he said. Sachan further said, "As the tender has been terminated now, we don't need to go to the World Bank and we have put the terms and conditions in such a way that we will be able to give this contract to some Indian players."

CII conducts webinar on 'export strategy'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 18: The COVID-19 pandemic has blocked all business and trade activities in the country. Exports, being one of the vital sectors, contributing to country's economic growth, have been hit hard.

Against this backdrop, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Bhubaneswar Chapter Friday organised a webinar on 'Export Strategy in COVID-19 Crisis: Resurgence & Way'.

The discussion was focussed upon the scenario of the export activities worldwide during this pandemic situation. The session was covered on topics like various schemes provided by the Exim Bank India to support the exporters, diversification of the products to improve product segments and promotion and marketing of the products, tapping of new market zones, changes in the DGFT rules, digitisation in the shipping documentation process, MPEDA Policy for the marine products and farming and sea food processing.



The distinguished panelists from Exim Bank, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FEIO), Neelplast Polymers Pvt Ltd., MPEDA, Indian Institute of Import & Export Management, Essenpee Business Solutions and Export Credit Guarantee Corporation Ltd had shared a detailed overview of the export environment in Odisha and how steps can be taken to improve the export activities in the state apart from, shipping documentation which has been simplified and how to promote local-made products in the world market.

BIZ BUZZ

States' market borrowings skyrocket 76%

Mumbai: The states, reeling from massive revenue losses due to coronavirus lockdowns, have front-loaded their borrowings by a whopping 76% so far this fiscal to ₹1.93 lakh crore, says a report. Front-loading of market loans has been on the back of the Centre relaxing the ways and means advances norms to manage cash-flow mismatches due to the pandemic, says a report by Care Ratings. In addition, the Centre has also relaxed the fiscal deficit target from 3 to 5%. "Between April 1 and July 14, the states' market borrowings have jumped to ₹1.93 lakh crore, which is 76% higher than the corresponding period last fiscal year," says the report. The aggressive borrowings will further shoot up the outstanding debt of all the states which has more than doubled to ₹52.6 lakh crore in FY20.



AGR dues: Voda Idea pays addt'l ₹1K cr to DoT

New Delhi: Vodafone Idea Saturday said it has paid additional ₹1,000 crore to the government towards the statutory dues, taking its total payment to an aggregate ₹7,854 crore. The company had earlier deposited ₹6,854 crore in three tranches, Vodafone Idea said in a regulatory filing. "In line with the above, the company has yesterday (July 17, 2020) paid a further sum of ₹1,000 crore to the DoT (Department of Telecom) towards the AGR dues. The company had earlier deposited ₹6,854 crore in 3 tranches," the filing said. With this, the company has paid an aggregate amount of ₹7,854 crore towards the Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) dues, it added.



Govt appoints new ORERA chief

Bhubaneswar: Odisha government appointed expert member National Green Tribunal (NGT) Siddhanta Das as the new Chairperson of Odisha Real Estate Regulatory Authority (ORERA). Department of Housing and Urban Development issued a notification in this matter. This post was lying vacant since another Veteran IFS Amiya Mohapatra left RERA as Chairperson. Earlier, Das was Director General of Forests and Special Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. For the last several years, he has worked in different positions with the Government of Odisha. In the past, he also served as the Principal of the Forest Rangers' College in Angul; Deputy Conservator of Forest, Sambalpur Division, as Professor, Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, Dehradun, Uttarakhand; as GM, as Executive Director at Odisha Forest Development Corporation.



Things to look for while choosing apt Health Insurance plan

It is rightly said that, 'Let our advance worrying become advance thinking and planning'. With healthcare costs hitting double digit inflation year-on-year, planning for your healthcare needs is essential. It is about bringing the future into the present and taking actions now. Health insurance plays a critical role in having a healthy lifestyle with access to good quality treatment in case of a medical exigency. Below are few things I feel are important to consider while you decide on your health insurance cover.

■ **Need:** It is extremely important to make sure that you select the best health plan as per your needs. One must not end up with a wrong choice as it may not be of much

help at the time of requirement.

■ **Age:** Age plays a vital role in deciding your health insurance cover. Although it's never too late to buy insurance, it is advisable to buy health insurance at a younger age as it will come at a lower premium rate since you're less prone to health risks.

■ **Premium:** While keeping an eye on the premium, one must also read through the features of bonus and discount along with the deductibles and co-payments under the policy. It is important to keep all these points in mind to ensure the right selection of plan and wise use of funds.

■ **Family history:** If you have a family history of lifestyle dis-



eases, the probability of it being passed on to the next generation is higher. Any individual who is in a genetically high-risk category should buy wider health insurance coverage when s/he is

young and healthy.

■ **Understand the coverage:** Understanding your health coverage, getting familiar with the services covered and how much

If you opt for a health insurance cover that is not adequate or is restrictive you may have to shell money from your pocket

you will have to pay in case of an unfortunate eventuality is important. If you opt for a health insurance cover that is not adequate or is restrictive you may have to shell money from your pocket.

■ **Ability to pay:** I feel that one must invest at least 2% of their yearly income to buy a health insurance policy that provides them with adequate coverage.

MCL's sanitation project to transform lives of tribal



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Sambalpur, July 18: Mahanadi Coalfield Limited's CSR project of providing toilet-bathroom with water supply in 375 tribal houses benefitting 1,670 people in five hamlets of Sundargarh (three) and Jharsuguda (two) is in final stage of completion.

'MANTRA (Movement & Action Network for Transformation of Rural Areas), the project possesses innovative features like house-holds contributing in the form of labour and building material & agreeing to create corpus for inclusion of new households in future and village committee to look after maintenance.

The project is being implemented by Gram Vikas, a non-profit organisation which carries more than four decades of experience in rural community development in tribal dominated areas of Odisha.

With completion of toilet-bathrooms, water supply infrastructure is presently being developed, which includes bore well/ dug well, overhead water tank, pump house, pipeline and electrification.

Vedanta's Jharsuguda unit launches innovative MPC



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Jharsuguda, July18: Vedanta's Jharsuguda plant, the largest aluminium producer in the country, has launched an innovative Monsoon Preparedness Center (MPC) equipped with required gear and apparatus to bolster emergency planning and rescue preparedness in its world-class aluminium smelters and power plants.

The brand-new MPC will monitor data from across the length and breadth of the plant for rapid action in emergency scenarios, particularly during unpredictable monsoons. Parallely, Vedanta is also fast-tracking digitalization of Health, Safety, Environment & Sustainability (HSE&S) monitoring and reporting for unlocking greater agility in analytics-based decision making.

CEO - Vedanta Ltd., Jharsuguda CN Singh said, "Our MPC is the latest addition to the emergency planning and rescue preparedness measures deployed at site. We have put in place robust processes and global best practices in Health, Safety, Environment & Sustainability aimed at making our workplaces safe for employees and partners. We are also constantly innovating our processes to realize our vision of becoming a Zero Harm, Zero Waste and Zero Discharge operation."

For instance, if a person earns ₹6 lakh a year, he might be able to pay an amount that is up to 2 % of that the yearly income which comes down to ₹12,000.

Do your homework on the kind of products available and do it right before you buy your health insurance plan. Check if the coverage is enough for you and matches your requirement. After all, you are responsible for yours and your family's well-being. An appropriate health insurance cover will help you stay worry-free in terms of managing medical expenses in case of any exigency.

Sweetie Salve is the Vertical Head - Claims Medical Management, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance

SPECTATORS ALLOWED BACK INTO SPORTS EVENTS IN ENGLAND FROM NEXT WEEK

FAN FEST SET TO RETURN



ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, July 18: Spectators will be allowed back into some sports events in England from next week as coronavirus prevention measures are tested ahead of a planned wider reopening of stadiums in October. Domestic cricket July 26-27 is set to be the first sport that fans are allowed to watch in person since March. Some spectators will also be allowed into the world snooker championship in Sheffield from July 31, and the Glorious Goodwood horse racing festival August 1 is also part of a government scheme piloting the return of fans. “From October we intend to bring back audiences in stadia ... in a COVID-secure way subject to the successful outcome of pilots,” British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in Downing Street Friday. Prof. Susan Michie, who advises the government on the pandemic response, fears reopening sports to fans — particularly indoor venues — could lead to a rise in virus cases and another lockdown. “We’ve gone too far, too fast already,” Michie said in an interview. “I think the data will begin to show that. I don’t think we should have

opened indoor pubs, much as I like pubs. And I think to begin opening up mass sporting events is not a good idea.” Stadium capacities will still be restricted, and staggered entry times, social distancing measures and one-way systems will be required. Barriers or screens will have to be installed where social distancing cannot be maintained when buying food and merchandise or betting. Fans will be told not to attend if they could have been exposed to COVID-19. “With the excitement of sport, where people are standing up,” Michie said, “I don’t think social distancing would happen.” Announcing a further easing of lockdown restrictions, Johnson said the measures could be reversed if coronavirus infection rates begin to climb again with concerns about a new coronavirus spike this winter. The UK’s official pandemic death toll, which stood at more than 45,000 as of Friday, has for several weeks been the highest in Europe and the

third highest in the world behind the United States and Brazil. Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston cautioned that it will “remain some time” before stadiums can be full again. The Premier League will finish the season without fans at games, and there will be no spectators at the 90,000-capacity Wembley Stadium for the FA Cup semifinals this weekend. “For months millions of us have felt the void of being unable to go to the match to support our team or attend a top-class sporting event,” Huddleston said. “So I am pleased that we are now able to move forward with a plan to help venues safely reopen their doors to fans. I recognize that not every sport, team or club has the benefit of huge commercial revenue, and it is often their dedicated fans that are the lifeblood which helps keep them going. By working closely with sports and medical experts, these pilots will help ensure the safe return of fans to stadia.” The English Football Association last month announced it was cut-

ting 82 jobs to cover an anticipated deficit of 300 million pounds (USD 370 million) due to the pandemic restricting crowds at games and more events being canceled, including NFL regular season games. The Community Shield, contested by the Premier League and FA Cup winners, has been floated as a potential test event. “Supporters are the lifeblood of our national game, and that has been underlined by how much their absence has been felt at matches over the last month,” the FA said. “We will continue to work closely with the relevant authorities on how we can bring them back in a safe and secure manner, including any help we can provide to the proposed pilot events.” English Rugby Football Union chief executive Bill Sweeney said in May that 85 per cent of the governing body’s revenue comes from hosting men’s international games at Twickenham. England has been working on the assumption its Six Nations campaign and quartet of autumn test matches can be played across October and November as the RFU seeks to avoid losses of more than USD 100 million caused by the pandemic.

Domestic cricket July 26-27 is set to be the first sport that fans are allowed to watch in person since March

Leeds back in EPL after 16-year exile



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leeds, July 18: Setting off smoke bombs in the team’s yellow and blue, Leeds United fans celebrated outside their Elland Road stadium after the northern English team’s 16-year exile from the Premier League ended. Marcelo Bielsa’s side secured promotion from the second-tier Championship with two games to spare Friday after West Bromwich lost to Huddersfield 2-1. Bielsa was filmed in a tracksuit celebrating with fans near his home. A return to the world’s richest football league comes a year after a late collapse saw the northern English team drop to third place and have to go through the playoffs where it was beaten. “Our club, our fans and our players have sacrificed so much — we’ve been in the doldrums for 16 years,” captain Liam Cooper said. “To be part of this team and to lead this team to promotion back to where we know we’ve always belonged is unbelievable.” Seen as a sleeping giant of English soccer, Leeds won the last of its three English league titles in 1992 — the final season before the inception of the Premier League — and was a Champions League semi-finalist in 2001. A financial implosion led to Leeds being relegated from the Premier League in 2004, with debts rising to more than 100 million pounds (now USD 125 million) and fears the club could go out of business.

Leeds was forced to sell all of its players and other assets, including the stadium academy, and stumbled from crisis to crisis under a succession of owners. Leeds went into administration in 2007 under Ken Bates’ ownership, which led to the team being relegated to the third tier where it spent three seasons. Leeds fared little better under the next set of owners, GFH Capital, before the arrival of controversial Italian Massimo Cellino. During Cellino’s chaotic three-year ownership Leeds had seven different managers, but current owner Andrea Radrizzani bought a 50 per cent stake in Leeds in January 2017 to signal the dawning of a new era. Radrizzani purchased the remaining 50 per cent from Cellino the following May. The 49ers Enterprises investment affiliate of the San Francisco NFL team also took a minority ownership stake in 2018. Leeds made a bold statement of intent by appointing Bielsa in the summer of 2018. Bielsa spent seven years in charge of Argentina, guiding it to Olympic gold in 2004 and the runner-up spot in the Copa America the same year. He also guided Chile to the 2010 World Cup, while Athletic Bilbao reached the Europa League final and Copa del Rey final under him in 2012. After spells at Marseille, Lazio and Lille, Bielsa was competing in the second-tier at Leeds. He proved an instant hit, transforming the same squad he inherited into genuine promotion challengers in his first season.

I’m not eligible for Khel Ratna, says Harbhajan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 18: Veteran off-spinner Harbhajan Singh Saturday clarified the Punjab government’s decision to withdraw his nomination for this year’s Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award as he doesn’t fit in the eligibility criteria for country’s highest sporting honour. “I have been flooded with calls as to why Punjab Govt withdrew my name from Khel Ratna nominations. The truth is I am not eligible for Khel Ratna which primarily considers the international performances in last three years,” the 40-year-old cricketer tweeted. “The Punjab Govt is not at fault here as they have rightly withdrawn my name. Would urge my friends in media not to speculate.” Bhajji, who has 417 Test and 269 ODI wickets is an Arjuna Awardee and was also conferred with Padma Shri. Bhajji last represented India in Test and ODIs in 2015.

Kapil’s advice ‘helped’ Dravid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 18: Batting great Rahul Dravid says legendary all-rounder Kapil Dev’s advice helped him to explore options after his retirement before eventually taking up the coaching job of India A and U-19 sides. Dravid said he was also ‘a little fortunate’ that at the back end of his career, he was already in a captain-cum-coach role of IPL side Rajasthan Royals. “After I finished (playing), there were quite a few options and I was not sure what to do. It was Kapil Dev who gave me this advice actually when I was coming to the end of my career,” Dravid told India women’s team coach WV Raman on his Youtube channel ‘Inside Out’. “I bumped into him somewhere and he said ‘Rahul, don’t commit to doing anything straightaway, go out and spend a few years just exploring and doing different things and see what you really like’. I thought it was good advice.” The former captain said initially he liked doing commentary, but later found ‘a little disconnect’ from the game. “...the thing that gave me the most satisfaction was really being involved in the game and being connected with the boys. I really liked the coaching side of things and I got sort of involved in that when the opportunity came up to do some coaching with India A and U-19,” Dravid said. “I thought it was a good place to start and and took it up and I’ve really enjoyed it since. I just feel a lot more satisfying to be involved in the coaching side of things,” said the legendary batsman, who piled up 13288 runs from 164 Tests



between 1996 and 2012. “Especially the developmental side of coaching, whether India A, U-19 or the NCA. It’s really given me the opportunity to work with a lot of the players without having to worry about the immediate results which I think is a really nice space for me to work in.” He backed the BCCI’s decision to restrict U-19 players to one World Cup only. “Instead of just 15-20 players, we were able to give 45 to 50 players exposure to the facilities at NCA, good coaches, good physios, good trainers, so it broadens the pool,” said Dravid, who is Head of Cricket at the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore. He said that India A players now felt secured as everyone gets a chance to play. Dravid also revealed that he doubted himself as an ODI player when he was dropped from the Indian team in 1998 mainly due to his strike rate. “There have been phases in my international career (when I felt insecure). I was dropped from the ODI team in 1998. I had to fight my

way back in, was away from the Indian team for a year,” he said. “There were certain insecurities than about whether I’m a good enough one-day player or not because I always wanted to be a Test player, was coached to be a Test player, hit the ball on the ground, don’t hit the ball in the air, coaching like that. You sort of worry whether you had the skills to be able to do it (in an ODI).” Dravid made a comeback to the ODI side ahead of the 1999 World Cup in England and ended up as the highest scorer (461) of the tournament though India failed to make it to the semifinals. The right-hander later played in the 2003 World Cup and also captained the side in the 2007 World Cup. He scored 10,889 runs from 344 ODIs. Talking about choosing cricket over academics, he said, “Growing up as a young cricketer in India is not easy. In the time that I grew up there was only Ranji Trophy and revenue was so poor. I had to forgo a CA or MBA to pursue cricket so there was insecurity.”



RAIN PLAYS SPOILSPORT



A view of the ground with the pitch being covered with rain covers; England pacer Sam Curran (inset) enjoys despite play was abandoned on the third day of the second Test between England and West Indies in Manchester Saturday. West Indies had ended the second day on 32/1 in reply to England’s first innings 469/9 declared

PHOTOS: ESPNCRICINFO

Hamilton takes pole, Bottas 2nd

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Budapest, July 18: Lewis Hamilton beat Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas Saturday to take pole position for the Hungarian Grand Prix. It was Hamilton’s second straight pole this season and record-extending 90th of his F1 career. Hamilton has won seven times at the Hungaroring and the veteran British driver needs one more to equal F1 great Michael Schumacher’s single-track record of eight wins, when the French GP was held at Magny-Cours. He was .107 seconds quicker than Bottas and .93 faster than Racing Point driver Lance Stroll. Sergio Perez was fourth. Four-time F1 champion Sebastian Vettel and his teammate Charles Leclerc finished fifth and sixth. Max Verstappen starts seventh on Sunday for Red Bull ahead of McLaren’s Lando Norris. Bottas won the season-opening Austrian GP and Hamilton clinched the Styrian GP the following week in Austria.

Vaughan backs Sibley despite criticism



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Manchester, July 18: Dominic Sibley maybe facing criticism for scoring one of the slowest Test cen-

turies but former skipper Michael Vaughan says he is just the kind of player England needed. The 24-year-old scored a 312-ball century in the second Test against

West Indies. It was the slowest hundred in Test cricket since November 2014, when Bangladesh’s Tamim Iqbal also required 312 balls to reach three-digit mark against Zimbabwe.

Sibley played 372 deliveries in his 120-run knock. “England is a funny team to follow because we criticise them when they play flamboyantly and there were so many on social media criticising the way that Dom Sibley was playing,” Vaughan was quoted as saying by ‘Wisden’. “He is absolutely right for this England team. That is exactly what England have required for a long period of time. Someone that just wants to stay in, value their wicket, bat a period of time,” he added. Vaughan, who featured in 82 Tests and 86 ODIs for England, said Sibley should not change his game and the youngster deserves a lot of credit for setting the foundation for the side’s flamboyant players to play their game. “Give the likes of Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler, Ollie Pope, these flamboyant players the foundation to go and play their way. So Dom Sibley

deserves a lot of credit for just sticking to his game, I don’t think he should change. “I don’t think there is too much wrong with him, maybe he could bring in an off-side game or two just to try and put more pressure on the bowlers when he is set and he gets in,” he added. After losing the series opener by four wickets at Southampton, England took control of the second Test with Sibley (120) and vice-captain Ben Stokes (176) putting forth superb performances with the bat. “England have played the right game here. They’ve played with patience, they have put up a score on the board, and now it is down to the West Indies. I believe there is a bit of rain around Saturday, the third day.” “The West Indies, to me, looks like they are going to have to bat two-and-a-half days to try and draw,” Vaughan said.