



INSANELY IN LOVE

Actor Priyanka Chopra thanks Nick Jonas for thinking of her all the time and calls herself world's 'luckiest girl'

LEISURE

P2



GUNS TRAINED ON STALIN

DMK president Stalin has said the coronavirus spread in Chennai is higher than that of China

TWO STATES

P7



NEW 'HOPE'

The United Arab Emirates launched its first mission to Mars Monday

INTERNATIONAL

P10

Bharat Biotech's city project in deep freeze

BISWA BHUSAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 20: The state government had decided to set up a biotechnology park on the outskirts of the city to make Bhubaneswar a hub for investors in biotechnology. The government identified 65 acres at Andharua on the city's outskirts for the park.

Hyderabad-based vaccine major Bharat Biotech International Ltd (BBIL), a front runner in Covid vaccine programme, was chosen as an anchor tenant for the project. Bharat Biotech had taken 30 acres of valuable land at the site promising to set up a vaccine manufacturing unit here. However, the project remains a non-starter till now for reasons best known to the firm.

From government side, IDCO has developed all infrastructure such as roads, boundary wall, lights, water supply and solar fencing as it is close to elephant sanctuary at Chandaka. The construction work was supposed to start by March 2011.

However, BBIL has not even commenced the construction work. The en-



tire site, supposed to resemble a plush business district, now resembles a forsaken desert with little or no activity.

Barring the formation of a company titled Odisha Biotech Park Private Limited and a small two-floored building, BBIL has carried out no physical progress at the site.

Even though no progress was made, the foundation stone for the project was laid twice. The stone for the Biotechnology Park was laid October 25, 2009 while the ground breaking ceremony for setting up of a multiple human vaccine production plant was laid November 16, 2017.



As per the proposal, the park was supposed to have a Biotech Incubator (10 acres), a biotechnology corridor – modular labs (three acres), IT corridor (22 acres), administrative corridor (three acres) and an infrastructure and commercial complex (25 acres).

At the Make-in-Odisha Conclave 2018, the chairman of Odisha Biotech Park Pvt Ltd Krishna Ella had committed to invest ₹500 crore in the state

OPPORTUNITY LOST

Foundation stone for the project was laid Oct 25, 2009 and again Nov 16, 2017

State govt handed over 65 acres at Andharua 10 years ago

Biotech plans to make a vaccine against malaria, injectable polio vaccine, Covid-19 human papilloma vaccine in first phase

to set up a vaccine manufacturing unit.

An increasingly impatient IDCO had issued a notice to BBIL in 2015, asking it why the lease agreement should not be terminated. The notice had spurred the BBIL to seek more time from the state government to get its project on track to which the latter had grudgingly agreed.

"The project was first monitored by the science and technology department. Now, we are looking after it. All the required infrastructure including road, water supply, electricity has been provided to the site. We are also providing handholding support to

Bharat Biotech to implement the project," said a senior official of IDCO.

A Arunachalam, who is in charge of BBIL's Odisha project, has not given any satisfactory answer for the delay. "There are many reasons for the delay. The state government has provided all kinds of support. We are fully committed to implement the project and very soon, may be in next two months, work will start," Arunachalam said.

Asked about the present status of the project, he said, "We have got required approval from the State Pollution Control Board. Now we are waiting for the environment clearance from the Centre. Until we get the environment clearance, we cannot start construction at the site."

The company Biotech is planning to make a vaccine against malaria, injectable polio vaccine, Covid-19 human papilloma vaccine (HPV) in the first phase.

Had the project been implemented, Odisha would have got a chance to compete with the world in Covid-19 vaccine manufacturing. Specially, biotechnology students of Odisha would have benefited from this, said former biotechnology director Uma Ballav Mishra.



Incentives for Covid workers

Daily allowances : ₹1,000 for doctors; ₹500 for staff nurses, pharmacists, radiographers and lab hands; ₹200 for Class IV employees; ₹7,500 for disposal of Covid positive bodies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20:

With an aim to encourage frontline Covid workers, the state government Monday announced daily incentives for doctors, paramedical staff and other employees working in Covid hospitals.

As per a notification issued by the health and family welfare department, healthcare personnel including doctors, paramedics and Class IV employees serving in various Covid health centres, Covid care centres and special Covid hospitals will get the daily incentives.

The doctors will receive a daily incentive of ₹1,000 while it will be ₹500 for staff nurse, pharmacists, radiographers and laboratory technicians. Class IV employees will receive ₹200 per day. The additional expenditures in this regard will be met from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF).

The employees will avail the incentives for those days when they are in active con-

STATE TOLL 97

The Covid-19 tally in Odisha crossed the 18,000-mark as 673 more people tested positive for coronavirus, while the death toll reached 97 with six patients succumbing to the disease, a Health Department official said Monday. With 673 new cases, the total number of coronavirus patients rose to 18,110, he said. Of the six new fatalities, five were reported from Ganjam, the worst-hit district by the pandemic, and one from Gajapati, the official said.

tact with Covid positive patients at Covid healthcare facilities, the government said. Similarly, the government has also announced assistance of ₹7,500 for disposal of Covid positive bodies. In fear of infections, at many instances, the government has noticed that no one is coming forward to make last rites of Covid-infected bodies. Therefore, the government has announced this aid, sources said.

No of PSBs may drop to just five

AGENCIES

New Delhi/Mumbai, July 20:

India is looking to privatise more than half of its state-owned banks to reduce the number of government-owned lenders to just five as part of an recast of the banking industry, government and banking sources said.

The first part of the plan would be to sell majority stakes in Bank of India, Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, UCO Bank, Bank of Maharashtra and Punjab & Sind Bank,

leading to an effective privatisation of these state-owned lenders, a government official said.

"The idea is to have 4-5 government owned banks," said one senior government official. At present, India has 12 state-owned banks.

The official said such a plan would be laid out in a new privatisation proposal the government is currently formulating, and this would be put before the cabinet for approval. Finance ministry declined to comment on the matter.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Uniform, books, bags were fine. But now, for online classes, they want us to buy laptops & net connection from school itself!

SHORT TAKES

Babri case: LK, Joshi to depose

Lucknow: A special CBI court Monday set July 24 for recording the statement of former deputy prime minister LK Advani in the 1992 Babri mosque demolition case. The 92-year-old BJP leader's statement under section 313 of CrPC will be recorded through video conferencing.

₹50K for HC judges to buy specs

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government has approved payment of ₹50,000 per year to every judge of the Bombay High Court for buying spectacles, as per a government resolution (GR). According to the GR, the decision covers judges, their spouses and family members dependent on them.

AIIMS begins human trial of Covid vaccine

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 20: The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi began phase I/II of human clinical trials of the indigenously developed Covid-19 vaccine 'Covaxin' Monday. AIIMS-Delhi Director Dr Randeep Guleria said, adding that it would take at least three months for researchers to arrive at the first set of data.



Phase 1 of the three-phase human trials started as coronavirus cases in India crossed the 11 lakh-mark with 40,000 fresh cases of COVID-19. AIIMS Delhi is among the 12 sites where human trials for Covaxin are being conducted.

"It (starting trials) is heartening because it's an indigenous vaccine; making a new vaccine is an achievement. Even if a vaccine is first developed somewhere else in the world, India will be mass producing it. We are good at it," he said. Some 1,125 healthy volunteers will be injected with inacti-

ASTRAZENECA SHOWS PROMISE

LONDON: AstraZeneca's experimental COVID-19 vaccine was safe and produced an immune response in early-stage clinical trials in healthy volunteers, data showed Monday. The vaccine, called AZD1222 and being developed by AstraZeneca and scientists at Britain's University of Oxford, did not prompt any serious side-effects and elicited antibody and T-cell immune responses, according to trial results published in The Lancet medical journal. "We hope this means the immune system will remember the virus, so that our vaccine will protect people for an extended period," study lead author Andrew Pollard of the University of Oxford said.

ated Sars-CoV-2 so their bodies can produce Covid-fighting antibodies.

Phase-1 includes 375 volunteers in the 18-55 age group with no comorbidity; phase 2 will have 750 individuals in the 12-65 age group and Phase 3 will be done with a larger population. "Men and women will be recruited, but women volunteers can't be pregnant," said Dr Sanjay Rai, head of community medicine, who will be overlooking the trials operations.

UK co declares +ve results from protein treatment

AGENCIES

London, July 20: A UK-based biotech company Monday declared positive "breakthrough" results from a clinical trial of a protein-based treatment for COVID-19, which "greatly" reduced patients requiring intensive care.

Synaigen said its SNG001 formulation uses a protein called interferon beta, which the body produces when it gets a viral infection, and is inhaled directly into the lungs of patients with coronavirus, using a nebuliser, in the hope that it will stimulate an immune response.

"This assessment of SNG001 in COVID-19 patients could signal a major breakthrough in the treatment of hospitalised COVID-19 patients," said Richard Marsden, CEO of Synaigen, a respiratory drug dis-

COVID BREAKTHROUGH

SNG001 uses a protein called interferon beta, which, if inhaled directly into the lungs of patients, can stimulate an immune response

The trials showed that the average time coronavirus patients spent in hospital was reduced by a third, for those receiving the new drug



In addition, SNG001 significantly reduces breathlessness, one of the main symptoms of severe COVID-19

covery and development company which originated from research at the University of Southampton.

"We are all delighted with the trial results announced today, which showed that SNG001 greatly reduced the number of hospitalised COVID-19 patients who progressed from 'requiring oxygen' to 'requir-

ing ventilation'. It also showed that patients who received SNG001 were at least twice as likely to recover to the point where their everyday activities were not compromised through having been infected by SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)," he said. In addition, SNG001 significantly reduced breathlessness, one of the

main symptoms of severe COVID-19, the company said, which is now focused on working with the regulators and other key groups to progress the potential COVID-19 treatment as rapidly as possible. The trials showed that the average time coronavirus patients spent in hospital was reduced by a third, for those receiving the new drug – down from an average of nine days to six days. The double-blind trial involved 101 volunteers who had been admitted for treatment at nine UK hospitals for COVID-19 infections. Half of the participants were given the drug, the other half got placebo – an inactive substance.

"The results confirm our belief that interferon beta, a widely known drug that, by injection, has been approved for use in a number of other indications, has huge poten-

tial as an inhaled drug to be able to restore the lungs' immune response, enhancing protection, accelerating recovery and countering the impact of SARS-CoV-2 virus," said Professor Tom Wilkinson, Professor of Respiratory Medicine and Trial Chief Investigator.

Professor Stephen Holgate, co-founder of Synaigen, added, "recognising that SARS-CoV-2 is known to have evolved to evade the initial antiviral response of the lung, our inhaled treatment of giving high local concentrations of interferon beta, a naturally occurring antiviral protein, restores the lung's ability to neutralise the virus, or any mutation of the virus or co-infection with another respiratory virus such as influenza or V, as could be encountered in the winter if there is a resurgence of COVID-19."

Diesel pump price burns all record

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 20: An unexpected rise in diesel prices despite a slower demand has extended the gain for the transport fuel over petrol in Delhi.

With a 12 paise hike in diesel price in New Delhi and a similar rise in Bhubaneswar Monday while petrol prices remaining steady, the gap between the two auto fuels has further widened. Last month, diesel prices overtook that of petrol in an unprecedented development. Diesel was priced at ₹81.64 per litre Monday in the national capital, higher than the previous level of ₹81.52 a litre. Petrol prices, however, remain unchanged at ₹80.43 a litre, the same level as June 29 when its pump price rose marginally by 5 paise over previous day's price.

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VARIATION	
SENSEX	37418.99	↑	398.85
NIFTY	11022.20	↑	120.50
DOLLAR	74.85	↓	₹0.21
EURO	85.74	↓	₹0.04
GOLD	₹49,145	↑	₹178
SILVER	₹54,010	↑	₹ 1111

WEATHER			
BHUB		CTK	
TEMP	33.8°C	34.5°C	
MAX	27.6°C	23.5°C	
MIN	92%	82%	Forecast
Humidity	6mm	Nil	Generally cloudy sky
Rainfall			

FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES

Today you will feel mushy and forlorn. Ganesha says you will make special efforts to strengthen your relationships. You look upon commitment as a security for the future. As a result, you will develop strong, long-term bondings.

TAURUS

Things will tend to get very difficult and complicated, says Ganesha. Be prepared for setbacks and challenges today. No matter how big the issue, your competence, your resourcefulness will see you through. Try to remain focused and alert. Be cautious and circumspect. Act coolly and sensibly. That is all that you need. No predicament or dilemma or predicament will hold you back. You will come out with flying colours.

GEMINI

You will spend your day fulfilling the demands made upon you by your family members and colleagues. You will need to devote time to matters at home. Pay attention to the needs of your relatives for they will be helpful to you in the near future, says Ganesha.

CANCER

A wondrous beginning of the day! A unique vibrations in romantic life. Ties with life partner will be cordial. Blissful moments of married life are indicated. Peace and happiness prevail in the family. The whole day will be blooming and jovial, says Ganesha.

LEO

Financial gains in shares and stocks are indicated. If you are an investor, your investments will yield substantial profits. Long-standing debts are also likely to be cleared, and pending dues will be settled. Expenses for the purposes of entertainment are a possibility, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

Family affairs will predominate today. They will even control your thoughts to the exclusion of everything else. Things will look up on the business front. You may spend time relaxing in the evening. Ganesha says a trip to a place of worship is on the cards.

LIBRA

Ganesha says today is a good day to renovate your home. You will be able to decorate your home artistically because of your designing skills. The atmosphere at your home will be a happy one with the arrival of guests. You will make plans to go for a picnic with close friends or relatives. Ganesha wishes you all the very best for your future.

SCORPIO

Just another mundane day in store for you. At work, pressure may mount and lead to a hectic and tedious day. You may even feel irritated at times. Thus, feeling the need to unwind, you may invite your sweetheart for the cup of coffee and spend quality time together.

SAGITTARIUS

Tough times do not last, but tough people do, remember this fact and move ahead in life. Try to make the complicated life simpler by your optimistic approach. Speak up when it is required and don't get bogged down by unnecessary pressure.

CAPRICORN

Often, sentiments take over your mind. Making you impractical, at times, this tendency proves to be harmful for you. Don't show it on your face as others may take advantage of your weakness, advises Ganesha. If you don't control your emotions, it may become an obstacle in your path to success. Be strong and give a tough fight to those who want to go ahead of you.

AQUARIUS

Flash warning signals to your arch rivals as you will be in a mood to prove you metal and give them a run for their money. Doubts and inhibitions - all will vanish in the air and you will be determined to make your mark, feels Ganesha. While on your path to success you will win the hearts of one and many.

PISCES

Today your intellectual streak comes to the fore. You will indulge your curiosity and take interest in natural phenomenon. Your faith will help you complete all your pending tasks with ease. You will leave things to destiny. You will be more inclined to intellectual pursuits rather than professional, however, do not neglect your responsibilities, says Ganesha.

KANYE HOLDS FIRST CAMPAIGN EVENT

American rapper Kanye West held his first campaign event since declaring himself a candidate for the US presidential election scheduled for November. West delivered a lengthy monologue, focusing on a wide-range of topics before a crowd in North Charleston, South Carolina, reports *Politico news*.

ORLANDO FEELS POWERLESS

Actor Orlando Bloom is heartbroken because his dog Mighty is still missing, and says he feels powerless about the situation. The actor took to Instagram to share an emotional post about his dog, who went missing last week in Montecito, California, reports *people.com*.

Priyanka pens mushy note for Nick

MUMBAI: Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas has penned an emotional note on Instagram for the "greatest joy" of her life, pop star husband Nick Jonas. She thanked Nick for thinking of her all the time and called herself the "luckiest girl" in the world.

Priyanka shared a picture of her birthday celebration with Nick along with the note. In the image, Priyanka and Nick kiss in front of a mirror.

"To the greatest joy of my life. 2 years ago on this day you asked me to marry you! I may have been speechless then but I say yes every moment of everyday since. In the most unprecedented time you made this weekend so incredibly memorable," she wrote with the image, which currently has 1.6 million likes.

"Thank you for thinking of me all the time. I am the luckiest girl in the world! I love you @nickjonas," she added.

Nick and Priyanka got married over a series of ceremonies over three days in India in December of 2018. They later hosted multiple receptions for friends and family.

LOSS OF A COLOSSUS

A glorious chapter in the history of Odia film industry came to an end Monday with the demise of eminent actor Bijoy Mohanty in Bhubaneswar. He was perhaps the only top actor in the state who made a smooth transition from a hero to playing negative roles and then to doing character roles with ease. This is certainly a huge loss and the industry will take a long time to recover. With the fans in a state of shock, **Orissa POST** spoke to some of his co-artists and people from politics and others to learn his contributions to the film industry.

ACTORS GRIEVE

UTTAM MOHANTY: I know Bijay bhaina from very early days. We had spent some quality time at Baripada and had done a lot of plays together. It was my pleasure to work with him and my whole family including my wife and son. We lost a great treasure. I lost my big brother today.

MAHASWETA RAY: I am in a state of deep shock and not in a position to mourn the loss.

SABYASACHI MISHRA: Bijay Sir, I will miss him forever. The Beautiful memories with you will always keep u alive in my heart.

PARTHA SARTHI RAY: One of the finest actors of Odia Cinema is no more. For a small fraternity like ours it's extremely disappointing to lose the Guru of acting. He'll remain immortal through his performances. May his Soul RIP.

JHILIK BHATTACHARJEE: He had played not only my father's role in many movies, he is a father figure for me. Losing an actor like him is a great great loss to the industry.

BHOOMIKA DASH: He was a big name in Odia film industry and his loss came as a rude shock. My first and only movie with him is Nayak Ra Na Devdas and I am very fortunate to share screen space with him.

He will be remembered forever for his peerless contribution to the cinema, drama and theatre world

GANESHI LAL | GOVERNOR

POLITICOS MOURN

Deeply pained to know about the demise of veteran actor #BijayMohanty. It's a huge loss for Odia Cinema as well as millions of his fans. My deep condolences to the bereaved family. May his soul rest in peace.

BHRUGU BAXIPATRA | BJP LEADER

I have saddened to listen the death of senior Odia film actor Bijay Mohanty. His demise is an irreparable loss for Odia film industry. My deep condolences to the bereaved family and prayer for the depart soul.

RANENDRA PRATAP SWAIN | MINISTER

Saddened to know about the demise of legendary Odia actor, Shri #BijayMohanty. His prolific film career, which began in 1977, saw him do many memorable roles. Deepest condolences to his family, friends and fans.

NIRANJAN PATNAIK | PCC PRESIDENT



Deeply sorry at the untimely passing away of Bijay Mohanty. A true colossus of Odia film & theatre. He was the tallest! As director Culture more than 2 decades ago I had pleasant association with him as a member of faculty of Sangeet Natak Academi. He will be remembered!

ASIT TRIPATHY | CHIEF SECRETARY

One more actor turns roadside vendor to make ends meet

He had no choice but to sell veggies to take care of his ailing parents following the cancellation of shoots in Mumbai, says Kartik from Kedrapara who has worked with Akshay Kumar in an unreleased film Sooryavanshi

POST NEWS NETWORK

BHUBANESWAR: Corona positive cases have passed one million marks in India and caused more than 25,000 deaths. Therefore, it is needless to say, the outbreak has affected people across all sections of society including the entertainment industry.

While the pandemic has not affected the top stars much, economically it is the lowest-paid workers of the industry or the small time actors who find it difficult to sustain their families. With the regular shoots getting cancelled due to corona scare, many such artists and technicians are switching to other professions, selling vegetables in particular, to eke out a living.

Kartik Sahoo of Kendrapada district who has worked in Mumbai film industry is one such actor who was seen vending vegetables Monday

LOCKDOWN TALES



Kartik selling vegetables near Rasulgarh, Monday.

at Rasulgarh area for his sustenance.

"Cancellation of shoots in

Mumbai first forced me to return and now I have no choice but to sell veg-

etables to take care of my family including the ailing parents," said the actor who has worked with Akshay Kumar in an unreleased film *Sooryavanshi*. He was also shooting with Akshay for another movie *Prithviraj* under Yash Raj Films banner when the outbreak put brakes on shooting and production. Besides, he shot with Sanjay Dutt in *Shamsher*.

Kartik, earlier, was working as a bouncer and in charge of the security of many celebrities. He has also appeared in several TV serials including *Shree Ganesha*.

After his return from Mumbai, he was expecting that the shoot would begin soon. But that didn't happen which forced him to take to vegetable selling.

He has not got the full payment from the producers for whom he worked. "Now, I desperately want the situation to improve so that I can resume work," he said.

Earlier, Ravi Kumar, a comedian and mimicry artiste from Odisha also started selling vegetables during the lockdown to earn his livelihood. He took to his new profession to feed a family of 11. Ravi used his artistic skills to sell vegetables by doing mimicry of Hindi film actors.

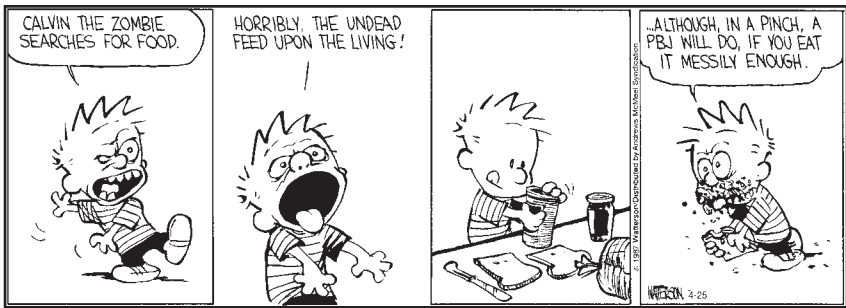
A few Jatra artistes also started selling fish for their survival. For instance, artist Sukant Pani along with his wife now sells fish and vegetables to sustain their family of five in Raghunathpur block of Jagatsinghpur district.

In Mumbai, actor Javed Hyder who has worked in more than 300 movies was also seen selling veggies to earn a living.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

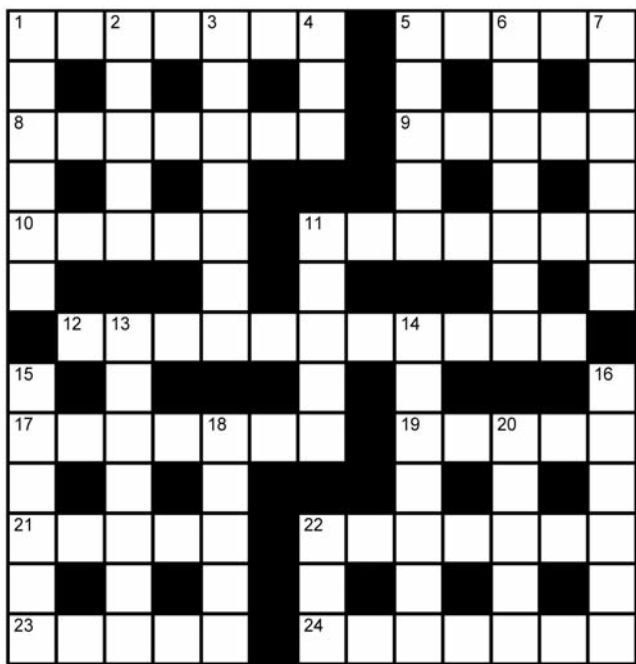


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Golf clubs
- 5 Photographer's aim
- 8 African pests
- 9 Buffalo
- 10 Uncredited actor
- 11 Fissure
- 12 Child's game (4-3-4)
- 17 Domes
- 19 Wash cycle

- 21 Knock down
- 22 Hide
- 23 Low cards
- 24 Mousse, maybe

Down

- 1 Oceanic bird
- 2 Larceny
- 3 Subjugate
- 4 Letters of distress
- 5 Short moral story

- 6 Region of central Spain
- 7 Vocaliser
- 11 Walking sticks
- 13 Stalemate
- 14 Short runs
- 15 Mystical
- 16 Fanatic
- 18 Egyptian water lily
- 20 Family girl
- 22 Real heel

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



TROPICAL FRUIT

Men put up black plum for sale near College Square in Cuttack, Monday

AMID UNCERTAINTY

An artisan works on earthen idols of Lord Ganesh at Kumbhar Sahi in Cuttack, Monday. This year, Ganesh Puja will be a muted affair owing to the pandemic



Floating solar projects in state on the anvil

THE PROJECT WILL INVOLVE AN ESTIMATED INVESTMENT TO THE TUNE OF ₹2,500CR AND IS BELIEVED TO BE A GAME-CHANGER

POST NEWS NETWORK


Bhubaneswar, July 20: In a bid to develop floating solar power projects with a total capacity of 500 mega watt (MW), the Green Energy Development Corporation of Odisha Limited (GEDCOL) and the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC), Monday, signed an agreement to form a joint venture company (JVC), an official said.

The JVC will implement the project in a phased manner in various reservoirs of the state in joint venture mode under Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks scheme of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

In Odisha, where availability of large and contiguous patches of non-forest, non-agricultural, barren lands suitable for land-based solar projects are limited, floating solar projects can be a game-changer, said GEDCOL Chairman-cum-Managing Director, B P Sethi.

RENEWABLE ENERGY BOOST

The JVC will implement the project in a phased manner in various reservoirs of the state in joint venture mode under Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks scheme of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy



The floating solar projects have an inherent advantage of conservation of land and the related cost to acquire and maintain the site

The MoU will help the state achieve the targets set under Odisha Renewable Energy Policy, 2016 for setting up 2,200 MW solar and 550 MW non-solar renewable projects by 2022

The floating solar projects have an inherent advantage of conservation of land and the related cost to acquire and maintain the site, Sethi said.

Other advantages include decrease of temperature-related losses due to cooling effect and reduction of water evaporation.

The MoU will help the state achieve the targets set under Odisha Renewable Energy Policy, 2016 for setting up 2,200 MW solar and 550 MW non-solar renewable projects by 2022.

The present renewable energy installed capacity of the state is divided between solar power at 362 MW and 77 MW energy from non-solar sources, he said.

The GRIDCO is further procuring 75 MW solar and 150 MW wind power from outside, the official said. The state requires another 2,000 MW solar capacity (1,000 MW towards Solar RPO (Renewable Purchase Obligation) and 1,000 MW for Non-Solar RPO converted to Solar RPO) by 2020 to meet the RPO trajectory set by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

“The total estimated investment will be to the tune of Rs 2,500 crore. The incubation period for conceiving each special purpose vehicle (SPV) project would be around

7-8 months and the approximate completion time for each conceived project will be about 18 months,” Sethi said. The first phase work of the project is likely to be commissioned by March 2022, he said.

Development of floating solar projects in the state will be a win-win proposition for the people as it would generate employment, lessen the requirement of land and evaporation of water.

Installation of floating solar power plants over natural water resources will reduce evaporation thereby avoiding the loss of water. So, floating solar development initiative will be helpful in providing food and energy security to the state, he said.

Energy Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra, during signing of the MoU through videoconferencing, congratulated both the organisations and expressed hope that the agreement would boost the renewable energy aspirations of the state.

OCS qualifiers to be trained online

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: The state government, Monday, decided to train the candidates selected through Odisha Civil Services (OCS) Examination, 2018 in online mode in view of the lockdown imposed due to Covid-19 pandemic.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Ait Tripathy here, Monday.

The Chief Secretary reviewed the preparedness and logistics for online training at several state-level training institutes like Gopabandhu Academy of Administration, Madhusudan Das Regional Academy of Financial Management, Biju Patnaik State Police Academy, Madhusudan Institute of Cooperative Management and Revenue Officers Training Institute (ROTI).

Tripathy asked the directors of all these institutes to jointly work out online teaching-learning-training

Online training course will begin August 4 after completion of the ongoing training for the previous batch

contents along with evaluation modules. He further asked them to prepare the best content for effective motivation building and capacity enhancement of the new entrants to public service.

The meeting decided to start online training course August 4 this year after completion of the ongoing training for the previous batch.

Revenue and Disaster Management secretary Bishnupada Sethi said 60 candidates were selected for OAS, 61 for ORS, 15 for OPS, 31 for OT & AS, 6 for ARCS and 16 OES for the year 2018. They would be provided training in the academy and training institutes pertaining to the service against which they were selected, he said.

Das Burma's chopper ride draws BJP ire

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: At a time when the state government is taking austerity measures, questions are being raised on a chopper ride by State Planning Board deputy chairman Sanjay Das Burma to south Odisha.

The state unit of BJP Monday alleged that Das Burma had visited Gajapati, Rayagada and Nabarangpur in an official programme. However, he had also attended some political events there.

“Das Burma had to visit the three districts and discuss different schemes with the Collectors, but instead he chose to extend his tour as well as his stay. Despite being in the planning board, he is the general secretary of BJD and is using the government money to execute his party's work,” alleged BJP's state vice president, Balabhadra Majhi.

“The government is restricting travels of officials by first class in trains, but are allowing helicopter tours for some others,” he said.

In his reaction to the allegation, Das Burma said, “The programme was held in presence of BJP legislator and all others. However, it is unfortunate that the BJP is adding political flavour to the event, which was held three days ago. I expect that all political leaders and public representatives will work together in this pandemic situation.”

ENFORCING LOCKDOWN



Police personnel inspect vehicles near AG Square in Bhubaneswar, Monday. As many as 49 Covid-19 positive cases were detected from Bhubaneswar Monday, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) tweeted. While 34 were quarantine cases, 15 were local contact cases. The spike in virus cases has emerged as a big concern for the citizens as well as the authorities.

OP PHOTO

Mahanadi water dispute tribunal frames 36 issues

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, July 20: The Mahanadi water dispute tribunal has framed 36 issues for argument in a petition filed by Odisha challenging the construction and operation of barrages on Mahanadi river by Chhattisgarh.

Out of 36 issues, 23 were submitted by Odisha while 13 were submitted by Chhattisgarh. All the parties will have to complete admission and denial in respect of the issues framed by the tribunal before August 8- the next hearing of the tribunal.


The tribunal will hear submissions on whether the ongoing projects in Chattisgarh for use of 2.95 MAF of water would cause prejudicial affection to the interests of state of Odisha during non-monsoon months. The tribunal will see whether the six industrial barrages constructed by Chhattisgarh are illegal and whether the alleged construction of 516 anicuts, barrages and others in Mahanadi basin by state of Chhattisgarh to utilise 1.25 MAF of water have prejudicially affected the downstream flows in Odisha during non-monsoon months, from November to May.

The tribunal will hear arguments on whether the project report of the Mahanadi Valley

BONE OF CONTENTION

Out of 36 issues, 23 were submitted by Odisha while 13 were submitted by Chhattisgarh

All the parties will have to complete admission and denial in respect of the issues framed by the tribunal before August 8- the next hearing of the tribunal



Development Hirakud Dam Project 1947 as prepared by the Central Waterways, Irrigation and Navigation Commission (CWI&NC) constitutes and agreement, arrangement or understanding as contended by Odisha and whether such agreements are enforceable against other riparian states including Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Jharkhand.

It is to be mentioned here that Odisha and Chhattisgarh have

filed petitions in the Mahanadi water dispute tribunal in respect to sharing of Mahanadi river water. Odisha, in its petition, claimed that Chhattisgarh has constructed several barrages on the river obstructing the water flow to Odisha.

Odisha has sought stay on the construction and operation of six barrages being built on Mahanadi river and also for maintaining specific flow of water during the non-monsoon months, November to May.

Vig ex-DSP fined for fake trap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: The Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has raised serious questions over fairness and credibility of Vigilance department, the premier anti-corruption watchdog of the state government.


After finding incriminating evidences against some Vigilance officials including a former DSP in a fake trap case, the commission has awarded Rs 5 lakh compensation to the victim government engineer.

Meanwhile, the authorities have been asked to recover the compensation amount from the erring ex-DSP, Himanshu Sekhar Mishra, who had carried out the fake trap on the engineer at the behest of a local contractor, Suresh Nayak.

As per the order, the complainant, Rajendra Parsad Mishra, was a junior engineer at NAC office of Kamakhyanagar in Dhenkanal district. He reportedly did not allow Nayak, to execute a work order he fetched reportedly for substandard work. Subsequently, Nayak connived with the Vigilance sleuths to implicate Rajendra in a false bribe case.

Accordingly, DSP Mishra along with constables Udhav Charan Lenka and Srinibas Biswal, and home guard Surendra Dhal laid the fake trap at the office of Rajendra March 24, 2017. The video footage of the CCTV installed at the complainant's office and presented before the OHRC clearly showed the Vigilance sleuths putting the bribe money in the drawer of the office

CREDIBILITY AT STAKE



The video footage of the CCTV installed at the complainant's office showed the Vigilance sleuths putting the bribe money in the drawer of the office table of the complainant

DSP Mishra along with constables Udhav Charan Lenka and Srinibas Biswal, and home guard Surendra Dhal laid the fake trap at the office of Rajendra March 24, 2017

table of Rajendra.

The victim was also attacked by the contractor with an iron rod in the presence of the Vigilance DSP.

The rights body after examining the CCTV footage, reports by DIG, Vigilance, and the statement by the officials said, “We are inclined to hold that the trap was a concocted and a staged-managed one at the instance of the contractor and the concerned Vigilance personnel including the DSP, Sri Mishra have acted in a manner which is not expected from and officer of anti-corruption watch dog like the Vigilance Department.”

Apart from the compensation, the

commission also asked the Vigilance department to not associate the two constables and home guard accompanying DSP Himanshu in any serious matter of the department in future.

The OHRC further directed the government to initiate steps for the blacklisting the contractor.

The district social welfare officer of Dhenkanal has been asked by the rights panel to take stringent action against the DSWO officials who gave false testimonies against Rajendra as independent witnesses.

The commission has asked the authorities to comply with its order within two months.

PLASMA THERAPY TO START IN GANJAM TODAY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: Reviewing the Covid-19 situation in Ganjam, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Monday, directed the officials concerned to start plasma therapy in the district from Tuesday.

Plasma therapy to cure critical Covid patients will start at Tata Covid Hospital, Sitalapalli.

A dedicated 100-bed (including 16 ICU beds) Covid hospital will be set up at Amit Hospital, Berhampur. It will be operated by Ashwini Hospital, Cuttack.

To strengthen the manpower in the hotspot district, two IAS officers, 25 OAS officers, 105 ORS officers, 30 MBBS doctors, 100 Ayush doctors, 27 lab technicians have been deployed. In addition, Rs 25 crore has been provided to Ganjam district from Chief Ministers Relief Fund (CMRF) for Covid management.

It was decided at the meeting to strengthen the ambulance service in Ganjam to ensure timely response to the patients. The district Collector has been empowered to deploy as many as 100 ambulances as per the requirement.

ASHA workers engaged in door-to-door survey and special surveys to get Rs 1,000 per month as incentive from July to October 2020 for the surveys while the anganwadi workers to receive Rs 1000 per month during the period engaged for surveys.

New DCPs of twin city take charge



Cuttack DCP Prateek Singh (L) and Bhubaneswar DCP Umashankar Dash take charge at the Police Seva Bhawan in City, Monday



OP PHOTOS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: The newly-appointed Deputy Commissioners of Police (DCPs) of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, Umashankar Dash and Prateek Singh, took charge at a special function held at the Police Seva Bhawan here, Monday.

While Das took charge from outgoing Bhubaneswar DCP Anup Kumar Sahu, Singh received the charge from former Cuttack DCP Akhileshvar Singh.

Both Dash and Singh were appointed as the DCPs during a recent reshuffle.

Dash, was previously serving as Superintendent of Police (SP) in Puri district, and his appointment as DCP, Bhubaneswar is largely considered as a reward for conducting this year's Rath Yatra amid the trying times of Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, Prateek Singh was the SP of Kandhamal.

Speaking on the occasion, both the DCPs said that successful enforcement of the lockdown and ensuring strict compliance of Covid-19 guidelines, while keeping the policemen safe, would be the biggest challenge for them.

Besides Commissioner of Police Sudhansu Sarangi, Additional Commissioner of Police Sajay Singh welcomed both the new DCPs.

However, media persons were barred from visiting the Police Seva Bhawan and the function was broadcast live in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.

Later, both the officers left for their respective DCP offices in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar.

10 Odia freedom fighters to receive President's award

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: Ten freedom fighters of the state will be felicitated on the occasion of 'August Kranti Divas' August 9.

Due to Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown, the freedom fighters may not be able to visit Rashtrapati Bhawan to receive their awards. Respective district Collectors will visit the houses of freedom fighters and felicitate them on behalf of the President. Each freedom fighter will be given a shawl including a memento.

The freedom fighters to be honoured are: Nilamani Samal of Balipadia village under Barchana block of Jajpur district; Ramahari Goswami and Gourahari Goswami of Suryapur village under Dhusuri block in Bhadrak district; Brajakishore Rout of Kamarabandha village under Dhamnagar block of Bhadrak district; Ishwar Bishoyi of Majhikhanda under Ranpur block in Nayagarh district; Sahadev Behera of Kantilo area in Nayagarh district; Biswanath Dash of Bhagaban Sindhol village under Balikuda block in Jagatsinghpur district; Debanand Gupta of Kalami village under Maneswar block in Sambalpur district; Dadhichi Sahoo of Kaipadar village in Jajpur district and Makardhwaj Das of Hatabanapur village in Kendrapara district.

State's caseload breaches 18k-mark

POST NEWS NETWORK

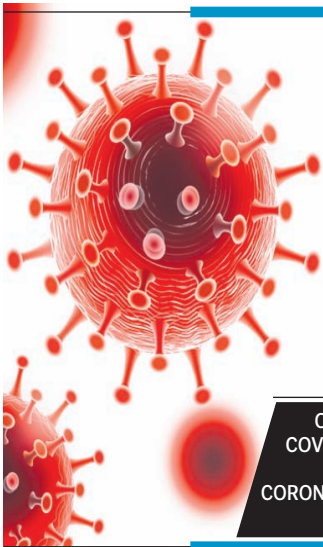
Bhubaneswar, July 20: The COVID-19 tally of Odisha crossed the 18,000-mark as 673 more people tested positive for the viral infection, while the death toll reached 97 with six patients succumbing to the disease Monday, an official of the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

With 673 new cases, the total number of coronavirus patients rose to 18,110. Ganjam district reported the highest number of 239 cases followed by 58 each in Khurda and Bhadrak districts, Koraput (41), Jagatsinghpur (36) Cuttack (32), Jajpur (28) and Keonjhar (24).

Of the six new fatalities, five were reported from Ganjam, the worst-hit district by the COVID-19 pandemic, and one from Gajapati, the official said.

The fresh cases were reported from 23 districts. Of the new cases, 446 have been detected in different quarantine centres, while 227 were found through contact-tracing exercises, the official pointed out, adding that contact tracing and follow-up actions were underway.

Meanwhile, experts predicted that the COVID positive cases will cross 25,000 to 30,000 by the end of July in view of the current trend of positive cases being reported daily from the state. Although the active local contact cases have gone up over 3,000 in July alone, the state government claimed that there has been no evidence of community



Of the six new fatalities, five were reported from Ganjam, the worst-hit district by the COVID-19 pandemic, and one from Gajapati

Ganjam district reported the highest number of 239 cases followed by 58 each in Khurda and Bhadrak districts, Koraput (41), Jagatsinghpur (36) Cuttack (32), Jajpur (28) and Keonjhar (24)

ODISHA HAS SO FAR RECORDED 18,110 COVID-19 CASES AND 12,909 RECOVERIES. WHILE THE STATE HAS 5,075 ACTIVE CORONAVIRUS CASES, 97 HAVE SUCCEMDED TO THE DISEASE SO FAR

transmission in any part of the state.

On the other hand, some experts argued that local transmission has already started as evident from the increasing number of local contact cases being reported from several districts.

Meanwhile, 457 persons recovered from the infection Monday.

With this, the recoveries stand at 12,909. Odisha has so far recorded 18,110 COVID-19 cases. While the state has 5075 active cases of COVID-19, 97 have succumbed to the disease.

49 fresh cases, 53 recoveries in City

As many as 49 COVID-19 positive cases were detected from the

City Monday, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) tweeted.

While 34 were quarantine cases, 15 were local contact cases, BMC said, adding that 53 persons who had earlier tested COVID-19 positive recovered Monday.

With this, the Capital City has 642 active cases COVID-19, while 576 persons have so far recovered from the viral infection. The State Capital has so far witnessed 1,231 cases and 11 persons have succumbed to the infection.

The Cuttack Municipal Corporation, on the other hand, reported 16 fresh cases of COVID-19 and 17 recoveries.

HAILING CORONA WARRIORS

Odisha Police will issue 'Special Appreciation' to police personnel—Corona warriors— who promptly resumed enforcement duty on recovery.

Many police personnel have been infected with COVID-19 during discharge of their duty. However, the infection has not affected their spirit or determination to save the people of Odisha. They have defeated COVID-19 and re-joined frontline enforcement duty, a release from the police headquarters said, adding that as many as 95 police personnel have so far re-joined frontline enforcement duty on recovery from the viral infection.

Director general of police (DGP) Abhay said, "Odisha Police takes pride in their dedication to public service. We dedicate ourselves to fight COVID-19 with other frontline warriors and Odisha residents."

In recognition of their dedication and commitment to public service, Odisha Police has decided to issue 'Special Appreciation' from DGP and for

all such police personnel who promptly resumed enforcement duty on recovery from the infection.

The DGP took to the Twitter to say, "In recognition of their dedication and commitment to public service, and as a mark of respect, we are conferring 'Special Appreciation'."

In another tweet, the Ganjam superintendent of police (SP) said, "12 police personnel exhibit dedication and sincerity worth emulating. We are proud of each of you."

Ganjam police, the SP said, welcomed back its 12 heroes of Aska & Bhanjanagar police stations who defeated COVID-19 and immediately resumed frontline duty after recovering from coronavirus. "We are proud of their dedication," said the SP.

Berhampur SP, on the other hand, tweeted, "10 of our brave police personnel rededicated themselves for public service after defeating Covid. We welcome them back and we are proud of their commitment and dedication."

Many police personnel were infected with COVID-19 on the line of duty. However, the virus could not affect their determination to save lives

RTOs to operate from 10am to 2pm

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 20: The Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) in the localities of Khurda, Cuttack, Ganjam and Rourkela, where the state government has imposed a 14-day lockdown to break the Covid-19 chain, will operate from 10am to 2pm, an official of the State Transport Authority (STA) said Monday.

According to the official, the RTOs will function with 33 per cent of the employee strength. "Select shops are allowed to op-



erate in the areas from 6am to 1pm. As banks in the localities have been functioning from 8am to 2pm, RTOs have been directed to operate from 10am to 2pm," said the official.

As a result, Cuttack, Ganjam, Bhanjanagar, Rourkela, Chandikhol, Jajpur, and Bhubaneswar-1 and II RTOs will follow the new office hours, added the official.

SAFETY FIRST



SBI customers maintain social distance inside the bank's branch at Rasulgarh in Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

Online classes commence at IIM Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, July 20: After successfully completing the end term examinations of the first-year students using online proctoring systems, IIM Sambalpur, has taken yet another giant step. The classes of the MBA 2nd Year: Batch 2019-21 commenced from Monday and is being conducted completely online.

Moreover, the classes of MBA 1st Year: Batch 2020-22 will also

begin in the online mode from 10th Aug 2020. The commencement of the new batch will be on the 3rd of August and induction will continue till 7th August 2020.

The online classes will be conducted with the help of several digital tools and processes to facilitate effective learning.

Mahadeo Jaiswal, Director, IIM Sambalpur, said, "The global pandemic has taught us that being innovative is the only way

to lead and innovation is one of the three core values of IIM Sambalpur. Owing to the present circumstances, the first term of MBA first year and fourth term of MBA second year will be conducted completely through the online mode as students are not in the campus and will take sessions from their home. Our preparedness has helped us take on these extraordinary circumstances head on."

RU conducts int'l webinar series

Cuttack: An international webinar series on life and cultural values in a post-pandemic world, which was hosted by the History department of Ravenshaw University here, saw an active participation of hundreds of intellectuals from across the globe. The webinar series that kick-started July 8 witnessed 200 participants on a daily basis. More than 1,500 persons from various walks of life had registered for the virtual event. RU History department head professor Subrat Kumar Acharya welcomed the participants. While expressing his views on the shift in moral values in the changing scenario, Ravenshaw Vice Chancellor professor Ishan Kumar Patro said, "In this situation [during COVID-19], we should forget our ego, enmity and self-centred attitude and extend hands for cooperation among ourselves."

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: Civil society organisations here urged the state government to start remedial classes for students of govt schools after similar moves by Odisha Secondary School Teachers Association (OSSTA) and Odisha Parents' Federation to bridge the learning gap.

In a virtual discussion Monday, experts urged the state government to focus on school infrastructure and use the lockdown as an opportunity to start remedial classes to help weaker students learn faster.

More than 100 CSO representatives across the state joined the discussions titled "Policy, planning and Approaches of School Education during COVID19" where they decried the quality of school infra-



MITIGATING DIGITAL DIVIDE

- Children, mostly from the poor-families, who study in government-run schools, are the worst sufferers as their learning has taken a halt due to the pandemic
- Though state governments have offered online classes, both teachers and students are facing challenges due to absence of proper digital infrastructure
- The disparity in access to smartphones, computer, electricity and internet connections also pose a challenge to mitigate the learning gap

structure and the woes of online education that has left lakhs of rural children's education in the lurch.

Gasiram Panda, an Advisor on Right to Education (RTE) to Odisha State Commission for Protection

of Child Rights, said, "COVID has made us realise that we are far behind in fulfilling the norms and standards for our schools as envisaged in the act. It has been the major bottleneck in achieving the

minimum level of learning."

"School infrastructure should also be seen in stand-alone, where it can be seen as community resources centre as in most of the villages these are the only infra-

Fire dept launches disinfection drive



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: In view of Covid-19 pandemic, Odisha Fire Services has been conducting area disinfection of public places, public institutions, hospitals, Temporary Medical Centers (TMC) and quarantine centers among others.

Till July 20, around 338 Fire Stations have disinfected 47,103 places on multiple occasions with more than one lakh Litrs. of Sodium Hypochlorite which after dilution with a certain proportion are sprayed at designated places.

Further, a special disinfection drive has been launched to disinfect and sanitise all Covid facilities, such as, Covid Care Hospitals, Covid Testing Centers and Covid Care Centers of the state from Monday. This will be a daily task undertaken by the Fire Stations in their respective jurisdiction as per the list provided by Health and

Family Welfare Department.

Odisha Fire Services DGP, Satyajit Mohanty (IPS) said, "During the drive, as many as 35 Covid Hospitals, 22 Covid Testing Centers and 16 Covid Care Centers of the state were sanitized in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19."

Earlier, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik commended the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and Odisha Fire Services (OFS) personnel for coming forward after recuperating to donate Plasma for the treatment of serious patients. He said this gesture will inspire other Covid patients to donate blood after recovery and help save precious lives.

The 37 National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel and 10 Odisha Fire Services personnel, who have recovered from COVID-19, have volunteered to donate Plasma for the treatment of serious patients fighting with the virus in the state.

COVID-19 VACCINE

First human trial unit in City

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA


Bhubaneswar, July 20: A Preventive and Therapeutic Clinical Trial Unit (PTCTU), the first dedicated human trial unit in Odisha, was inaugurated at the Institute of Medical Sciences and SUM Hospital here, Monday.

It would facilitate human trials in clinical research, Dr E Venkat Rao, Principal Investigator in Covid-19 vaccine trial and Professor in the department of Community Medicine of the hospital, said.

The IMS and SUM Hospital, faculty of medical sciences of the SOA Deemed to be University, is among 12 medical institutes in the country chosen by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) where the much-awaited clinical human trial, India's first, would be conducted.

The PTCTU was inaugurated by the institute's Dean Prof Gangadhar Sahoo in the presence of SOA's Vice-Chancellor, Prof (Dr) Ashok Kumar Mahapatra, Director of the Regional Medical Research Centre (ICMR) Dr Sanghamitra Pati, who attended through video conference, and Head of the department of Community Medicine Prof Trilochan Sahu.

Addressing the media, Rao said several research organisations from across the country and outside had been eagerly looking for such a unit in this part of the country to



The IMS and SUM Hospital is among 12 medical institutes in the country chosen by ICMR for clinical human trial of Covaxin

Equipped with all modern amenities, the PTCTU would focus on clinical trials involving preventive and therapeutic aspects

Volunteers, who wish to participate in these clinical trials for the betterment of humankind, are encouraged to register online through the website: <http://ptctu.soa.ac.in/> or contact +91 89172 11214 through WhatsApp

generate evidence in clinical research based on local population.

Equipped with all modern amenities, the PTCTU would focus on clinical trials involving preventive and therapeutic aspects like vaccines, immunoglobulins, preventive practices, chemoprophylactic drugs, educational/behavioural interventions and interventional agents/drugs.

All phases of clinical trial involving human subjects (Phase I to IV) would be conducted here, he said.

"We are committed to maintenance of quality, ethics, patient safety and confidentiality of the highest level. We conduct clinical trials involving investigational drugs/ molecules approved by the

Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) and the Central Drug Standardisation Control Organisation (CDSCO)," he said.

Human volunteers, who wish to participate in these clinical trials for the betterment of humankind, are encouraged to register online through the website: <http://ptctu.soa.ac.in/> or contact +91 89172 11214 through WhatsApp, he added.

This is the first indigenous vaccine being developed by India against Covid-19 and is derived from a strain of SARS-CoV-2 isolated by ICMR-National Institute of Virology, Pune. ICMR and Bharat Biotech are jointly working for the preclinical as well as clinical development of this vaccine.

structure to be used in any disaster," he added.

"Children, mostly from the poor-families, who study in government-run schools, are the worst sufferers as their learning has taken a halt. Though state governments have offered several online classes, both teachers and students are facing challenges as there is an absence of physical classrooms and proper digital infrastructure. The disparity in access to smartphones, computer, electricity and internet connections also pose a challenge to mitigate the learning gap", the participants in the discussion stated.

According to the information shared by School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash, more than 20 lakh children are attending the online classes so far, offered by the government,

which stands at only 33.33 %. However, data from the secondary sources claim that only 6 lakh children have so far benefited from the programme. Online classes cannot ensure the education of all children, especially the marginalised ones who do not have a smartphone or a laptop.

"Schools are more than learning centres for poor children where children reflect their feeling and the institution promotes democratic value. Schools also provide social protection, nutrition, health and emotional support to the most disadvantaged. Therefore, the state government should immediately start remedial classes for the students so that the learning gap of these children can be bridged," said Anjan Pradhan of Odisha Shramjeebee Manch.

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Cops conduct last rites in absence of fear-struck kin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, July 20: People are taking help of police and the government officials for performing the last rites of their even non-Covid deceased family members as relatives and neighbours are staying away fearing infection in coronavirus affected Ganjam district, officials said on Monday.

The state government has allowed gathering of a maximum of 20 people at the crematorium, but even relatives and neighbours are reluctant to attend funerals due to coronavirus anxiety.

"COVID-scare has gripped people in Ganjam due to large number of cases," district officials said.

Ganjam has reported maximum 5,527 confirmed cases in Odisha, where the tally of positive patients stands at 18,110 as per the latest count. Of the total 97 COVID-19 fatalities in the state, a whopping 59 are from Ganjam. A 45-year-old man, Narendra Raul, died due to diarrhoea at his residence in Godarapalli village last Saturday, while her 75-year-old mother, Jambhu, died of shock after coming to know about the incident.

Their family members had no option but to seek assistance from local administration as villagers, even close relatives or friends, did not come forward to help them perform the last rites, Hinjili block development officer (BDO) P K Patra said. "We rushed to the village along with the hearse vehicles of the Hinjili Municipality for the cremation of the bodies, after they sought help from us," he said.



GOOD SAMARITANS

Ganjam has reported maximum 5,527 confirmed cases in Odisha, where the tally of positive patients stands at 18,110 as per the latest count

A KIN OF A DECEASED SAID VILLAGERS WERE AFRAID OF GETTING INFECTED WITH COVID-19 AND HENCE WERE NOT EAGER TO ATTEND FUNERALS EVEN IF IT IS NOT LINKED TO THE VIRUS

A family member of the deceased said villagers were afraid of getting infected with COVID-19 and hence not eager to attend funerals even if it is not linked to the virus.

The BDO said the family members claimed that the two had no symptom of the coronavirus.

In another incident, an elderly mother in Golapada village waited for 15 hours with the dead body of her 50-year-old daughter, Sanjukta Pradhan, who died due to heart attack, before the Bhanjanagar police station officials arranged for her cremation. According to the villagers,

the deceased, a widow, was staying with her parents in the locality. Recently, her father, a COVID-19 patient, was admitted to a local hospital, though the woman and her mother tested negative for the disease, they said. "People simply stayed away from her funeral out of fear of virus," a villager said.

"We tried to convince the villagers following which some of them came forward to help cremate the body. They were provided with PPEs to perform the last rites," Bhanjanagar police station inspector-in-charge SK Sahoo said.

COVID STIGMA Body carried on rickshaw as kin stay away from cremation

BUGUDA: In a shocking incident, family members of a man who died of fever carried his body on a trolley-rickshaw to the crematorium after relatives and neighbours did not turn out to participate in his last rites due to stigma associated with Covid-19 here in Ganjam district, Monday

The deceased was a 35-year-old hotel owner of Buguda town. He was suffering from fever for

ried the body to the cremation ground. His family said as his swab samples were not sent for test, relatives suspected that he died due to Covid-19.

A local said eight people have died in the last eight days in Buguda town after suffering from fever. There is panic among the residents following these deaths.

Earlier, a similar case was reported from this district.



the last one week and undergoing treatment at home.

He passed away Monday. His family members informed his friends, relatives and neighbours about his death but none came out to participate in his cremation.

Left with no option, his family hired a trolley-rickshaw and car-

Dr Subhasis Panigrahi of Buguda community health centre (CHC) said none of those declared dead here had undergone treatment in the CHC. He advised people having fever to not conceal their disease and take medical consultation for treatment.

34 COPS FETED FOR CONQUERING COVID

SUNDARGARH: 34 police personnel who recovered from COVID-19 and were discharged from NTPC COVID Hospital in Sundargarh district, were lauded by Collector Nikhil Pavan Kalyan for their bravery and fight against the deadly disease.

Kalyan tweeted, "34 COVID warriors from police fraternity have recovered and discharged from COVID Hospital, NTPC, Sundargarh, and they were encouraged and felicitated by the official staff in presence of sub collector and BDO Sundargarh, DPHO Sundargarh." All the 34 police personnel had contracted the virus while performing COVID-19 duties at several places of the district. While being discharged, hospital staff and Sundargarh BDO felicitated the frontline warriors by presenting them flower bouquets, books on India's freedom fighters and chocolates. Kalyan also prayed for the best health of the 34 police personnel.

48-hour shutdown in Nabarangpur



POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, July 20: Amid a spike in coronavirus cases in Nabarangpur, the district administration has decided to enforce a two-day complete shutdown beginning midnight of Monday, said Collector Ajit Kumar Mishra.

Except for shops selling essential items like vegetable, grocery, milk and medicine all other shops and commercial establishments will remain closed during the shutdown. The shops have been allowed to open from 6.00 am to 1.00 pm.

The administration has also restricted movement of people and ve-

hicles in the district during the shutdown. However, those having

emergency requirement can venture outside after taking permission from the authorities concerned.

During this shutdown period the administration will take measures like contract tracing, symptom checking to ensure isolation of suspected cases. All government (except health department and other sections attached to it) and private institutions will remain closed during the shutdown. The tally of COVID-19 patients in the district stands at 157.

Week-long shutdown in four civic bodies

JEYPORE: In view of the spike in COVID-19 cases, the Koraput district administration Monday declared a one-week shutdown in four civic bodies and four panchayats in the district. The shutdown will be in force from July 21 to July 27. The decision has been taken in view of public interest and to contain further spread of COVID-19 in the district informed, Madhusudan Mishra, Monday. The civic bodies where the shutdown will be imposed are Koraput, Sunabeda and Jeypore municipalities and Kotpad Notified Area Council. Similarly, the district administration will impose shutdown in four panchayats -- Borigumma, Charanga, Pottangi and Laxmipur. Addressing a press conference Mishra said that except the vegetable shops, groceries and milk booths, all other shops will remain closed during the shutdown. With fresh 41 cases reported Monday, the district's tally stands at 311.



A medical team conducts health check-up of a couple Monday, as 87 tested Covid positive in the last three days in Chhatrapur

OP PHOTO

Rare yellow turtle spotted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasore, July 20: A rare sweet-water yellow turtle was spotted in a paddy field in Balasore district, officials said Monday.

The reptile, deep yellow in colour, was rescued by a farmer, Basudev Mahapatra, from his paddy field at Sujampur village under Soro block of the district Sunday.

"Our officials have collected it and we are in touch with experts to have detailed knowledge of the species," Divisional Forest Officer

of Balasore Wildlife Division, Biswaranjan Panda, told PTI.

The entire shell and exterior of the turtle are yellow, another senior forest official, B Acharya, said. "Most probably it is an albino. One

such aberration was recorded in Sindh a few years ago," wildlife expert and Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer, Sushant Nanda, tweeted Monday.

Nanda also posted a video and a photograph of the turtle which, he said, has pink eyes one indicative feature of albinism.



Elephant tramples 2 to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, July 20: An elephant trampled a man and his nephew to death at Galio village under Sadar forest range in Dhenkanal district, Monday.

Sources said a herd of five elephants had sneaked into a forest near the village. They stayed there all through the night and damaged standing crops.

The incident took place when the man along with his nephew was re-



turning to their home after catching fish from Brahmani River.

The pachyderm appeared out of nowhere and before the duo could act, the animal trampled them to death.

A team from Sadar forest range and a team of Dhenkanal police reached the spot. Police recovered the bodies for post-mortem. Forest officials were trying to drive away the herd from the area.

The villagers are in a state of panic and have demanded that the elephants be driven away at the earliest.

Couple murdered on witchcraft suspicion

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, July 20: In a shocking incident, a couple was burnt to death in an organised attack by villagers at Nimapali village of Pingal panchayat under Sukinda block in this district late Sunday night.

The couple was identified as Shaila and Basanti Balumuchi. Police efforts are underway to find out how they were murdered and who the perpetrators were.

According to a source, about six to seven villagers have so far died over some yet to be identified reasons over the last two weeks. The villagers had since been suspecting that all the deceased had fallen victims to black magic practiced by the deceased couple. Some miscreants went to the



couple's house Sunday night, murdered them in their sleep and set their house on fire.

On being informed, Kalinga Nagar police reached the village Monday morning and launched an investigation.

A man beheaded a woman suspecting her to be a witchcraft practitioner at Chhatara village under Jajpur Road police limits. Police arrested him when he was roaming near Duburi while carrying the severed head.

Drinking water project may pose threat to Bhitarkanika

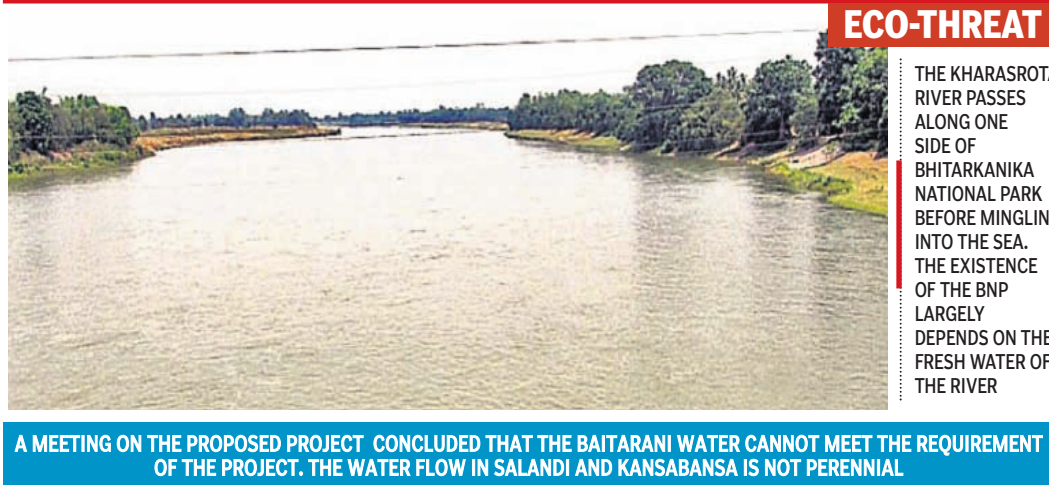
POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, July 20: A proposed Rs 892-crore piped drinking water project will quench the thirst of people in 91 panchayats of Bhadrak district. However, at the same time the project is seen as a threat to the Bhitarkanika National Park (BNP).

The proposed project will draw water from Kharasrota river. This river flows through Jajpur and Kendrapara districts. Residents of Chandbali, Basudevpur, Tihidi and Dhamnagar blocks will benefit from this project. As per plans, the project will draw water from Kharasrota near Barunadiha, which lies between Aul and Rajkanika in Kendrapara.

An activist apprehending threat to the BNP filed a petition with the National Green Tribunal (NGT). A case has been registered (23/2020/EZ) based on the petition.

Petitioner Sanjay Kumar Behura has said that the project will reduce the downstream flow of water in the river. It will have a detrimental impact on the rich flora and fauna found within the BNP.



ECO-THREAT

THE KHARASROTA RIVER PASSES ALONG ONE SIDE OF BHITARKANIKA NATIONAL PARK BEFORE MINGLING INTO THE SEA. THE EXISTENCE OF THE BNP LARGELY DEPENDS ON THE FRESH WATER OF THE RIVER

A MEETING ON THE PROPOSED PROJECT CONCLUDED THAT THE BAITARANI WATER CANNOT MEET THE REQUIREMENT OF THE PROJECT. THE WATER FLOW IN SALANDI AND KANSABANSA IS NOT PERENNIAL

The river passes along one side of the park before mingling into the sea. The existence of the BNP largely depends on the fresh water of the river. If the water flow decreases, the salinity of the water will increase and will cause extensive damage to plantation found in the park. Moreover, people in nearby areas will also face acute scarcity of drinking water and water for agriculture

purposes, the petitioner said.

In the last hearing (May 14), the bench of NGT, comprising its judicial member justice SP Wangdi and expert member Siddhant Das, directed Principal Secretary, Water Resources Department and Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) to deposit a detailed fact-based report. The next hearing has been scheduled for August 5.

A meeting on the proposed project was recently convened at the circle office of Water Resources Department at Chandikhole July 16.

Superintendent, RWSS, superintendent engineer, Cuttack Circle, superintendent engineer, Chandikhole circle and executive engineers of Bhadrak, Kendrapara and Jajpur divisions of RWSS attended it.

They discussed on the alterna-

tive possibilities of rivers like Baitrani, Salandi, Kansabansa and Mantei.

It was discussed in the meeting that the Baitarani water cannot meet the requirement of the project. Similarly, the water flow in Salandi and Kansabansa is not perennial. They also ticked off Mantei as its water is saline and it is about 30 km from the proposed project site. So Kharasrota was left as the last resort.

The members reached to a consensus that the project will not affect the BNP as it is 32 km away from the project site. Meanwhile, an engineer stationed in Cuttack has informed the RWSS engineer-in-chief that the Water Resources Department has given its permission for the project (Letter No-2412/12/09/2019). This information was provided by sources.

When contacted, Chandeswar Behera, superintendent engineer, water resources department of Chandikhole Circle, said the required report will be placed with the NGT at the right time as per the tribunal's direction. No final decision on the mega project has been taken as yet, he informed.

NOTICE OF TIME EXTENSION

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST NOTICE FOR ENLISTMENT OF MAKES & MODELS OF IMPROVED IMPLEMENTS, EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY RELATING TO AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE, FISHERIES & ANIMAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR FOR 2020-21, FOR POPULARISATION UNDER DIFFERENT SCHEMES OF GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

No. L-17: In continuation to the previous notification, the time extension for submission of EOI for ENLISTMENT OF MAKES & MODELS OF IMPROVED IMPLEMENTS, EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY RELATING TO AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE, FISHERIES & ANIMAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR FOR 2020-21, FOR POPULARISATION UNDER DIFFERENT SCHEMES OF GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA has been extended from 24.07.2020 to 20.08.2020 by 5.30 P.M. due to lockdown notification of Special Relief Commissioner, Govt. of Odisha vide Order No. 4263/R&DM(DM)/16.07.20 for Covid 19 pandemic situation. The other terms and condition of EOI remain unchanged.

Sd./ Development Engineer
OFMRDC, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-01051/11/0003/2021

There is no mortality. It is only the immortal who can die; the mortal could neither be born nor perish.

SRI AUROBINDO

CHINA MISSES OPPORTUNITY

Until recently, China was unmistakably trying to be a hegemon in the image of the United States, increasingly complementing its growing hard power with soft power. But China seems to have missed its opportunity to build a serious rival to, or even supplant, the existing world economic order fashioned by the US following World War II.

All the elements of success seemed to be falling into place for China. It launched the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a transnational infrastructure investment program intended to define a vision of a China-led, post-Bretton Woods world, much as the US Marshall Plan did for the post-1945 order. China also aggressively promoted the renminbi as an international currency, and persuaded the IMF to include it in the basket of reserve currencies underpinning Special Drawing Rights (the IMF's unit of account) far sooner than was justified.

China also sought to take over leadership of international institutions; it currently heads five. It pushed to increase its voice in existing bodies such as the World Bank and IMF. And where it felt stymied, it established its own, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the New Development Bank.

The COVID-19 pandemic offered China an opportunity to cement this strategy of remaking the world economic order on its terms. It's worth considering the possibilities.

For starters, as the world's largest long-term creditor to low-income countries, China could have proactively and unilaterally declared a moratorium on all debt service owed to it. And it could have gone further. As Scott Morris and his colleagues at the Center for Global Development have shown, China's lending terms – interest, grace period, and maturity – are much more onerous than those offered by the World Bank and its concessional lending arm, the International Development Association. China could simply have promised to eliminate this wedge.

Furthermore, it could have provided unconditional short-term liquidity – in both renminbi and dollars – to developing and other economies facing major capital outflows. One irony of the post-2000 world is that the country most able to provide dollar liquidity is China, owing to its \$3 trillion-plus in dollar reserves. The People's Bank of China could have extended swap lines to all its developing-world counterparts.

Regarding trade, China could have offered freer market access to poorer countries ravaged by COVID-19. It could also have ramped up production of essential medical supplies to fight the coronavirus assuring their high quality and offering to make them available to any country via the WHO at concessional prices. Such generous intervention would have shown that China was offering an alternative to US-led institutions.

Instead, China's recent actions have undermined its global aims. The geographic range and intensity of the Chinese regime's belligerence are now familiar, with the ever-growing list of targets including Xinjiang, Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong, India, the South China Sea, the Philippines, Australia, Europe, the US, and Canada. And instead of being transparent regarding the origins of COVID-19, China has persuaded the WHO to connive with its own obfuscation. The puzzle is why China is choosing aggression over magnanimity, or even over mere inaction. After all, its current leaders probably view America as a declining power that will soon organically vacate the hegemonic position that China seeks to occupy. If so, just as Deng Xiaoping, the father of China's reforms 40 years ago, advised geopolitical patience until China became stronger, a Dengian strategy today would be to wait for the US to become weaker.

The obvious answer to the puzzle is Xi Jinping and the regime that he both represents and has helped to create. But key elements of China's earlier strategy – including the BRI and reserve-currency status for the renminbi – were Xi's own signature gambits. So, what's driving the reversal?

Perhaps China's leaders once again see the world through a victim's lens. As they perceive it, the powerful West had kept a weak China in check since the early 1800s. Now that the roles are reversed, the regime believes it is time to correct historical injustices. With Xi's aggressive insecurity having replaced Deng's calm confidence, China now places a premium on settling its borders and returning to the glory days of the Middle Kingdom.

A darker possibility for the rest of the world is that China not only seeks historical justice, but is also gazing beyond its borders. It is in the nature of repressive, autocratic regimes to believe only in the currency of fear and hard power. In this view, Xi is merely reverting to type, following his idol Mao Zedong's dictum that political power – both internally and externally – grows from the barrel of a gun. So, perhaps China's recent aggression is not a bug but rather a feature of its strategy for supplanting the US.

In her book The Guns of August, American historian Barbara Tuchman memorably captured the shift in geopolitical power from the UK to the US by saying that a strong America became an enfeebled UK's "larder, arsenal, and bank." In the wake of the pandemic, China could have achieved something similar vis-à-vis the US-led global order by becoming the development bank, central bank, and medical supplier to the world. By choosing unprovoked aggression over enlightened generosity, China has squandered the historic opportunity and possibly also revealed its true character. Soft power, China appears to believe, is for wimpy democracies. Scorpions sting. The world must take steps to respond.

The author is a former Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India.

WISDOM CORNER

- Don't waste your time with explanations: people only hear what they want to hear.

PAULO COELHO
- I'm not in this world to live up to your expectations and you're not in this world to live up to mine.

BRUCE LEE
- A lion chased me up a tree, and I greatly enjoyed the view from the top.

CONFUCIUS

LOL MAKE THE WORLD HAPPIER

Bill Clinton, Hillary Ramrod Clinton, Al Gore, and Tipper Gore are flying aboard Air Force 1 on their way to visit the Communists to share their success stories about taxing Americans.

Bill: "Why don't I throw this hundred dollar bill out the window and make someone very happy."



Hillary: "Well, why don't you throw ten hundred dollar bills out the window and make ten people happy." Al: "Why don't you two jump out the window and make me and Tipper happy." Tipper: "Why don't we all jump out the window and make everybody throughout the United States and world happy."



Ajit Ranade

WE HAVE TO BRACE FOR AN UNUSUAL COMBINATION OF A RECESSION AND RISING INFLATION. WITH LOSS OF INCOMES, AND RISING UNAFFORDABILITY, MANY HOUSEHOLDS MAY FALL BACK INTO POVERTY AND EVEN FOOD INSECURITY



Arvind Subramanian

A darker possibility for the rest of the world is that China not only seeks historical justice, but is also gazing beyond its borders

FOCUS ECONOMY

RECESSION, INFLATION

COVID-19 has pushed the world into a deep recession. India is no exception. The national economy will shrink by about six per cent this financial year. This means the national income will be lower than last year, and every household on an average will have less money to spend.

In a recession, demand falls, and so the factories remain idle. Production capacity remains under-utilised across sectors, including primary ones like steel and cement, and secondary ones like automobiles and washing machines. Producers are forced to cut prices to boost their sales. It's likely large discounts are offered on consumer durable goods. In a falling demand scenario, prices could fall too. Should inflation remain benign? This does not seem to be bearing out.

It may be true that on certain items like cars and scooters, or televisions and furniture, large discounts are offered. But since these price reductions are on discretionary spending items, the demand will still be lukewarm, despite the discounts. Many retailers of consumer goods, both durable and non-durable, make robust business during the Diwali and the subsequent holiday shopping season. Some retailers probably make 60 to 70 per cent of their annual profit in the months between Dussehra and Christmas. This is unlikely this year, since people are cutting back on discretionary spending.

When there is loss of livelihood means, or anxiety about jobs and income, the first temptation is to cut back on all non-essential spending. Even weddings, which are a perennial boost to the economy, will be subdued, not just because of the economy, but also to adhere to social distancing norms. If you just keep track of discounts and price drops on such items, you may wrongly conclude that inflation has come down.

The inflation experienced by the common man or woman is based on the items purchased. There has been a marked change in expenditure patterns after the lockdown started in March. These changes may not have been adequately reflected in the basket of consumption goods and services tracked by the government. So, the officially reported consumer price index (CPI) based inflation may be underestimated. Even though it is an imperfect underestimate, the official June inflation was already above 6 per cent, beyond the tolerable band of the RBI. Given that in urban areas many retail outlets, especially malls and restaurants are still shut, the buying pattern has changed considerably.

Households may be spending more on food including processed food eaten at home, and less on eating out, clothes, recreation or travel. If their food purchase costs go up, the effect can get hidden or understated if we continue to use the pre-Covid consumption basket to compute the CPI. Hence Professor Alberto Cavallo of Harvard University used actual data from transactions to compute a "Covid inflation" rate. His recent research shows that official CPI understates the Covid-CPI inflation in 10 out of 16 countries he studied. This gap between official CPI and Covid-CPI is widening. His



Fact is, if we focus on items of actual consumption, the inflation trend is worrying. In June, as per official data, food inflation was running at 7.3 per cent. Pulses, which are a key source of proteins, were rising at 16.7 per cent and fish and meat at 16.2 per cent. Milk prices rose at 8.4 per cent in June

data does not include India. Researchers at the State Bank of India extended Professor Cavallo's method to India and have found the same phenomenon. That the official number published by the government is an underestimate. For instance, according to SBI research, the actual June inflation could be 7 per cent. And in the severe lockdown months of April and May, it could have been understated by more than 2 per cent.

Fact is, if we focus on items of actual consumption, the inflation trend is worrying. In June, as per official data, food inflation was running at 7.3 per cent. Pulses, which are a key source of proteins, were rising at 16.7 per cent and fish and meat at 16.2 per cent. Milk prices rose at 8.4 per cent in June. The story of milk is interesting. The demand for milk has actually fallen, as per data from Maharashtra. This is because the demand from the hotel and restaurant industry is sharply down, thanks to the lockdown. As a result, the milk producers in the state claim that they are receiving 10 to 15 rupees less per litre than pre-Covid prices. Their stock re-

mains unsold.

According to leaders of the farmers' organisation Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana, out of 1.3 crore litres of milk produced daily, around 52 lakh litres remain unsold. And yet, city consumers are facing higher prices for milk delivered at their doorstep. Even the national data on CPI shows milk inflation at above 8 per cent.

In June, we also had a sharp increase in diesel prices, which is used to transport food items. This was an administered price increase of Rs 10 a litre, including central excise and road cess. This too will feed into inflation, not just for food products but overall CPI. Despite weak demand, steel companies announced that they were raising prices due to rising input costs. Higher import duties on Chinese goods, probably in retaliation, will feed into overall consumer inflation. Higher levels of non-performing assets, i.e., bad loans would mean that banks cannot offer lower interest rates on loans. So, the cost of working capital will remain high or go higher.

Additionally, the requirements of hygiene, packaging, and safety would also add to the cost of goods. The throughput of sales will also have to be moderated to observe social distancing.

We thus have to brace for an unusual combination of a recession and rising inflation. With loss of incomes, and rising unaffordability, many households may fall back into poverty and even food insecurity. If there is illness in a family, Covid-related or not, that is an additional shock. The government must be prepared to avert a hunger crisis by vastly expanding the foodgrains distribution through the PDS, and expanding it to include items like cooking oil and soap too. Farmers' income may need to be supported, in case their remuneration for a bumper crop is inadequate. And of course, a strong fiscal impetus is required to generate demand and jobs and livelihoods.

The writer is an economist and senior fellow, Takshashila Institution.

THE BILLION PRESS

SPECTRUM HEALTH

Need for fair-play in Covid treatment



Dr. Guru Prasad Mohanta

MEDICINES ARE DIFFERENT COMMODITIES. THE REAL BUYER, THE PATIENT, HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO PAY, WHILE THE ONE WHO MAKES CHOICE IS PAID

Reports speak of shortage in and black-marketing of the most-promising Covid-19 medicine, Remdesivir, in the open market. The black-market prices are substantially higher, making the medicines unaffordable. The police have registered cases against the black-marketers. Realising the potential of this experimental drug, the Trump administration has booked enough of supply to meet its requirements for the next three months, leaving little or nothing available for others. The Indian situation is different.

Remdesivir, developed by American company Gilead for Ebola treatment is now repurposed for Covid-19. Though the company has obtained patent in India, it has signed a licence agreement with some Indian pharmaceutical companies, like Cipla, Hetero, Mylan, Jubilant etc, permitting them to manufacture and sell the drug in 127 low and middle income countries. This is subject to regulatory approval.

India's drug regulator, the Drugs Controller General (India), has permitted the above companies to manufacture and sell the drug. Under the non-exclusive licencing agree-



ment, Gilead provides technology transfer for manufacturing Remdesivir which would enable the Indian companies to scale up. The companies are given the liberty to fix their own prices for the generic products. In a goodwill gesture, Gilead decided not to receive any royalty on sales volume until one of two conditions are met: either World Health Organization declares Covid-19 as a public health epidemic globally, or vaccine or medicine is made available to treat it.

The Union Government has approved use of the drug under emergency authorisation and this is recommended for patients with moderate disease (those on oxygen support), but with a rider: The drug is not to be used for pregnant or lactating mothers or children below age 12. The drug is not recommended for patients with liver and renal impairment.

The drug should be used pru-

dently by adhering to government advisory. Three pharmaceutical companies have announced their prices: Hetero pharma's Covifor costs Rs 5,400; Mylan's Desrem costs Rs 4,800 and Cipla's Cipremi costs at Rs 4,000 per vial. Typically for a five-day course, the drug cost varies from Rs 24,000 to Rs 32,400. Gilead's product in US costs substantially higher, for a course of five days, at the lowest price of \$2,340 – equivalent to Rs 175,500. The price of Remdesivir in India is low compared to the US price, but there is a large inter-brand variation. The price variation between the lowest priced and highest priced product is of 35 per cent.

Remdesivir is an injectable product to be given as infusion. This is to be used only in hospital; means there are added costs. Here is a tricky situation. Which of the three products that are currently available will be used by hospitals? Will there be patients' interest to choose the lowest-cost one or the one which gives maximum profit to the hospitals? Medicines are different commodities. The real buyer, the patient, has no choice but to pay, while the one who makes choice is paid.

Remdesivir not only looks prom-

ising but is cost-effective too. The study has shown that the use of Remdesivir reduces the recovery time by 31 per cent. The patients with Remdesivir will recover in 11 days against the standard care which takes 15 days. In Covid-19 treatment especially in private sector, the bed cost and professional charge dominate. A savings of four days' hospital cost would benefit the patient.

The simple marketing force alone is not the determining factor of the medicine price. Pharmaceutical marketing is a complex process and the government is advised to enforce pharmaceutical marketing code. The stepping up of production and improved logistics may improve availability of drugs but the affordability remains a concern! The Drugs Price Control Order provides immunity from price ceiling for new patented medicines for five years. Remdesivir falls under the category. But in public interest, the government's intervention is needed to rationalise price and keep a tab on maximum retail price.

The writer is a retired pharmacy professor with Annamalai University.

Covid, bodies

Sir, The months-long pandemic has by now claimed more than 27,000 valuable lives in India. The surge in positive cases is simply uncontrollable. In this context, it's distressing to note that the bodies of our brethren are not properly disposed of. People are so scared that they do not come forward to take the bodies, leave alone touch them. The family members who eventually want to take them are apprehensive they might be infected. The hospitals and nodal officers for Covid-19 management are giving them an impression that the dreaded virus might infect the family, relatives and the areas inhabited by them. Yet, a ray of hope has come from an experienced medical practitioner who has stated that the bodies can be handed over to family after properly sanitising them along with the wrappers put on the bodies at the time of discharge from hospitals. This process would not pose any problem in cremating the departed. Let's hope the authorities will take note.

Sanjib Das, CUTTACK

Rajasthan tussle

Sir, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is on a strong wicket to prove his majority in the state assembly. Reports say that the CM enjoys the backing of 102 lawmakers, including allies and Independents in the 200-member House. The odds are stacked heavily against former deputy CM Sachin Pilot, who may now have to eat a humble pie.

NJ Ravi Chander, EMAIL

Reform UN

Sir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reiterated his earlier call for a 'rebirth and reform' of the UN for its continued relevance in today's world. Over these years, the permanent members are seen misusing veto powers and making a mockery of the rules-based global order. In recent years, China has used veto thrice to protect UNSC's move to blacklist the Pakistan based Jaish-e-Mohammad and declare its founder Masood Azhar a global terrorist. Did the veto help in containing terrorism? No, and China's attempts like this posed a threat to global peace and stable world order; and more so, in relation to its expansionist policy, violation of human rights and breaking of international laws. Death of lakhs of people due to the Covid-19 it unleashed on the world, and the devastation of the global economy as a result of the pandemic raise questions on Xi's leadership. Does China deserve veto power?

Maguni Charan Behera, EMAIL

No HC relief to co-op banks against RBI's supervision

MADRAS HIGH COURT DIRECTS CENTRE, RBI TO FILE COUNTER TO PLEAS CHALLENGING ORDINANCE ON COOPERATIVE BANKS

AGENCIES

Chennai, July 20: The Madras High Court has refused immediate interim relief to cooperative banks which have challenged the Centre's ordinance bringing them under the purview of the RBI.

The court Monday directed the Centre and RBI to file their counter affidavits to the petitions by two cooperative banks in Tamil Nadu challenging the constitutional validity of some sections of the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance of 2020, within four weeks.

The First Bench of Chief Justice AP Sahi and Justice Senthil Kumar Ramamoorthy refused to grant any interim relief to the Big Kanchipuram Cooperative Town Bank Ltd and the Velur Cooperative Urban Bank Ltd which challenged provisions of the ordinance prom-



The court cites lack of 'imminent tangible evidence indicating actual invasion of rights' for the refusal

A cooperative society might be a state subject when it does other activities. But when it involves in banking activities then it falls under the purview of Parliament

AL SOMAYAJI | SENIOR COUNSEL FOR THE RBI

The subject matter falls exclusively within the competence of the state legislature ... hence, any law, including the impugned Ordinance, trenching upon Entry 32 of List II of the Constitution of India is liable to be struck down, as it is totally beyond the competence of the Parliament

PH ARVIND PANDIYAN | ADDITIONAL ADVOCATE GENERAL (APPEARING FOR THE COOP BANKS)

ulgated June 26.

"...unless there is an imminent tangible cause or evidence indi-

cating actual invasion of the rights of the petitioner banks in running the affairs of the Society, it would

not be appropriate to consider the issue of interim relief at this stage....," the bench said.

The cooperative banks had sought stay on operations of the provisions of the ordinance which empowers the Reserve Bank of India to deal with incorporation, regulation and winding up of cooperative banks too. Citing a Supreme Court judgment by a constitutional bench, additional advocate general PH Arvind Pandiyan, who appeared for the cooperative banks, submitted that the subject matter falls exclusively within the competence of the state legislature.

"... hence, any law, including the impugned Ordinance, trenching upon Entry 32 of List II of the Constitution of India is liable to be struck down, as it is totally beyond the competence of the Parliament and, therefore, also beyond the ordinance making power

of the Centre," he said.

Opposing the arguments, senior counsel for the RBI, AL Somayaji contended that a cooperative society might be a state subject when it does other activities. But when it involves in banking activities then it falls under the purview of Parliament, he said.

"There are over 1,937 such banks which handle over Rs 7.27 lakh crore of loans primarily provided to agriculturists and middle-class people. The ordinance has been passed only to bring the banks under the banking regulations and protect the interest of the public," Somayaji said.

Concurring with his submissions, additional solicitor general of India R Sankaranarayanan also submitted that when such societies exclusively do banking activity then they fall within the purview of Parliament.

WB teenage girl 'wasn't' raped

POSTMORTEM REPORT OF THE GIRL REVEALS THAT SHE LOST HER LIFE DUE TO POISONING AND NO SIGNS OF EXTERNAL INJURY WERE ON HER BODY

AGENCIES

Kolkata, July 20: The death of a teenage girl that triggered violence in parts of north Bengal was caused by poisoning and there were no signs of sexual or physical assault, police said Monday, quoting her postmortem report.

The BJP, however, termed the autopsy report of the 17-year-old girl, who was sister of a BJP activist, a 'cover-up' and reiterated its demand for an impartial probe into the incident. The ruling TMC accused the BJP of trying to "make an issue out of a non-issue."

"No signs of external injury seen. Effects of poison. However, final opinion reserved pending till receipt of chemical examiners report," the postmortem report said.

It also said there were neither injury marks anywhere on the body nor signs of sexual or physical assault. The videography of the post-mortem was done, police said.

Alleging rape and murder of the girl, a mob had gone on a rampage in North Dinajpur district Sunday, setting fire to several police vehicles and government buses on the National Highway 31 in Chopra area near Siliguri.

The girl, who had gone out of her house at Sonapur village Sunday morning to relieve herself, was found dead a few hours later. The villagers alleged that she was raped before being murdered.

Meanwhile, the dead body of a youth was found in a pond in the same Chopra area Monday morning. The police are investigating



The girl was murdered by goons of TMC as she is sister of a BJP activist. The police are trying to pass off the rape and murder as suicide

RAJU BANERJEE | VICE PRESIDENT, WEST BENGAL BJP

The BJP is trying to fish in the troubled waters and attempting to make an issue out of a non-issue

GOUTAM DEB | SENIOR TMC LEADER & MINISTER

whether the two deaths are linked in any way.

Police also said they have so far arrested 16 people for their alleged involvement in the Sunday violence.

The incident has caused the latest face-off between the TMC and the BJP, with the Saffron party alleging that the girl was murdered as she was sister of a BJP activist.

BJP state vice president Raju Banerjee said, "The girl was murdered by goons of TMC as she is sister of a BJP activist. The police are trying to pass off the rape and murder as suicide."

He also said a BJP delegation reached Chopra this morning, but it was denied permission to take out a rally with the body of the girl in the area.

BJP National Secretary Rahul Sinha termed the autopsy report a "cover-up" exercise to "protect" the culprits.

The TMC termed the allegations baseless.

Senior TMC leader and Minister Goutam Deb said, "The BJP is try-

ing to fish in the troubled waters and attempting to make an issue out of a non-issue."

"An incident has happened; the police are investigating the case. But, the BJP doesn't have the patience to wait for its conclusion. The BJP is disturbing the peace of the area," Deb added.

Members of the RSS-affiliated ABVP and Left-backed Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) also protested in Jalpaiguri district's Dhupguri area over the incident, leading to tensions.

Violence erupted in West Bengal's Uttar Dinajpur district Sunday over the death of the teenage girl

Locals, who alleged that the girl was raped and murdered, went on a rampage

They blocked National Highway 31 and set at least three buses and police vehicles on fire

The area remained tense for a second consecutive day Monday, even as a huge police contingent has been deployed to maintain peace.

BJP Mahila Morcha holds protest rally

KOLKATA: The BJP Mahila Morcha held a protest rally here Monday over the death of the teenage girl at Chopra in North Dinajpur district, alleging that she was sexually assaulted and murdered.

The rally, led by BJP Mahila Morcha state unit president Agnimitra Paul, which was to be held from Gariahat to Deshapriya Park in south Kolkata, was stopped by the police at the outset.

The police claimed that since there was no permission for a procession, it would not be allowed.

Women police personnel barricaded the road preventing the protesters from moving forward. "We were told by the police that we will not be allowed to hold the protest procession, so we are holding a demonstration here," Paul said.

AGENCIES

Chennai, July 20: After questioning DMK President M. K. Stalin's silence on the issue of denigrating Hindu God Lord Murugan, senior Tamil Nadu Minister S. P. Velumani Monday fired another salvo at Stalin. Velumani urged Stalin "to take the necessary medicine to cure himself of the fear mongering disease."

In a tweet Velumani urged Stalin not to be a fear monger comparing China with Chennai in respect of the coronavirus spread.

Earlier in the day Stalin had said the coronavirus spread in Chennai is higher than that of China.

Stalin said despite many state ministers testing positive for coronavirus, Chief Minister K. Palaniswami like a gramophone record with a scratch has been repeating that there is no community spread of the virus and it will be controlled. Velumani told Stalin not to keep the people of Chennai in a constant state of fear issuing statements comparing the state capital with China. Though Chennai leads the coronavirus infection table in the state, the numbers have come down from a daily infection rate of about 2,000 cases to less than 1,200.

'Some' are trying to paint DMK as enemy of Hindus

Meanwhile, Stalin Monday said



Velumani (R) had questioned DMK President MK Stalin's silence on the issue of denigrating Hindu God Lord Murugan

Monday, Stalin wrote to party members saying some people are trying to use a very old idea of trying to paint the DMK as the Hindu enemy through new technology to prevent the growth of the party

some people are trying to paint the party as the 'Hindu enemy' to prevent its growth.

In a letter to the party members, Stalin said some people are trying to use a very old idea of trying to paint the DMK as the Hindu enemy through new technology to prevent the growth of the party. Stalin said while such acts divert the people's

attention, and work is on to prevent 27 per cent reservation to Other Backward Communities (OBC). According to Stalin, the party is fighting against such actions in the court of law.

Urging to practice restraint against those who try to paint the DMK as 'Tamil enemy' Stalin asked his partymen to look at the social media posts against the party as jokes.

According to Stalin, the people of Tamil Nadu want a government change while attempts are being made on the social media to prevent DMK's electoral victory.

Meanwhile DMK's Organisation Secretary and Member of Parliament R. S. Bharathi Monday lodged a complaint with the Commissioner of Police, Greater Chennai about a fake twitter account in the name of Stalin.

Kolkata cops ask denizens to 'Mask-up', launch campaign

Veteran singer Usha Utthup lends her voice for the campaign song

AGENCIES

Kolkata, July 20: To sensitise people about the importance of wearing masks in public places, Kolkata Police Monday launched a unique campaign in the city to distribute masks among the people.

The city police released a mask-wearing awareness anthem, sung by veteran singer Usha Utthup, to motivate people in Covid-19 safety activities. The campaign 'Mask-up Kolkata' was launched by city police Commissioner Anuj Sharma.

"Always wear a mask," Sharma tweeted, while launching the awareness drive.

To fight the war against Covid-19, the city police decided to run the campaign using mobile vans and tableaux, which will roam around in different parts of Kolkata spreading awareness. The campaign was carried out at various busy traffic intersections by the police, who distributed masks to those who forgot to wear them, and urged them to use hand wash and alcohol-based sanitisers and maintain 2-metre distance from each other in public places for their own safety.

'Mask-up Kolkata' banners were also put up at various places in the city as part of the sensitisation drive.

Total lockdown for 2 days every week

KOLKATA: The government Monday announced total lockdown across the state for two days every week.

In the wake of the recent spike



There are a few places in the state where community transmission of Covid-19 has been detected. After talking to experts, doctors, enforcement authorities, and the police, we have decided to impose complete lockdown for two days every week in the entire state to break the chain

ALAPAN BANDYOPADHYAY | HOME SECRETARY, WEST BENGAL



in the number of Covid-19 cases, state Home Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay said that complete lockdown will be enforced across

West Bengal Thursday and Saturday this week.

"We have decided that from now onwards, there will be a two-day complete lockdown every week across the state, apart from running a broad-based containment zone approach. In the current week, it will be Thursday and Saturday," Bandyopadhyay told a press conference at the state secretariat Nabanna.

The Home Secretary also admitted that community transmission of Covid-19 has been recorded in a few pockets of the state. Bandyopadhyay said that the containment zone-based Covid-19 lockdown strategy would continue across the state till July 31.

"An advisory has already been issued in that particular direction, alerting all district magistrates, police superintendents and other top brass of the state administration. They may take a view on continuing the lockdown depending on the local situation in their respective areas. They can do it for five to seven days," he said, adding that a total state-wide lockdown would be observed on Wednesday next week.

Bandyopadhyay said that the next plan of action with regard to the weekly lockdown would be taken after a meeting on next Monday.

The state government had also added 63 new areas to the list of 'broad-based' containment zones Sunday, taking the total number of containment zones in the state to 739. The number of broad-based containment zones in Kolkata climbed to 32 from 24, state health department officials said.



Maniktala market wears a deserted look after it was closed following detection of Covid infections in the market, during Unlock 2.0, in Kolkata, Monday

A museum to showcase 600 BC Tamil civilisation

Excavations at Keeladi reveal that it was the cradle of one of the oldest urban civilisations, dating to some 2,600 years ago

AGENCIES

Chennai, July 20: The life and times of the ancient Tamils who lived on the Vaigai plains around 6th century BCE will soon translate in the form of a museum at Konthagai village in Tamil Nadu's Sivaganga district.

Monday, Chief Minister K Palaniswami laid the foundation stone for the museum at Konthagai village to showcase the findings at the ancient Keeladi site, through

Earlier, archaeologists unearthed brick walls like structures said to be 2,600-years-old

Recently, skeletal remains of four juveniles were found during excavation at Konthagai site

The site was about four kilometres from Keeladi, as part of the sixth phase of excavation

video conferencing from the state Secretariat here.

This world-class museum will

be set up at a cost of Rs 12.21 crore on 0.81 hectares and would be executed by the heritage wing of the public works department (PWD), an official release here said.

It will showcase several thousands of artefacts dug out during the six phases of excavation at nearby Keeladi site, which, according to the state archaeology department, is the second urbanisation in India after the Indus valley civilisation. According to the Tamil Nadu Archaeology

Department, the cultural deposits unearthed during excavations at Keeladi could be dated to a period between 6th century BCE and 1st century CE. Earlier, archaeologists unearthed brick walls like structures said to be 2,600-years-old.

Excavations at Keeladi have revealed that it was the cradle of one of the oldest urban civilisations, dating to some 2,600 years.

So far, over 14,000 artefacts and other related items have been obtained.

of the day quote

The print media has been on the frontline of battling the novel coronavirus pandemic in the country



M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

Prime Minister fabricated a fake strongman image to come to power. It was his biggest strength. It is now India's biggest weakness



RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

I am saddened to learn of the passing of Congressman John Lewis. He was not only a leader of the American civil rights movement; his principled commitment to non-violence and justice made him an inspiration and a moral beacon to the world at large



DALAI LAMA | TIBETAN SPIRITUAL LEADER

SHORT TAKES

3 killed, 11 missing in cloud burst

Pithoragarh: Cloudburst and heavy rains wreaked havoc in two villages of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district Monday morning, leaving three people dead and as many injured. At least nine people are reportedly missing after the cloudburst in Taga village of Munsiyari and Gela village of Bangapani in Pithoragarh district. The cloudburst has caused damage to many houses in the two villages of Pithoragarh.

Cafe owner held for serving liquor

New Delhi: Delhi Police Sunday arrested a bar and cafe owner for serving liquor to at least 40 people inside his set-up in Paschim Vihar East area of the national capital. The 40 people, who had assembled to party, have been booked for the lockdown and social distancing violations. The bar and cafe owner has been identified as Tanmay Singhal.

Man booked for giving triple talaq

Hyderabad: A Hyderabad woman has alleged that her husband gave her triple talaq after an argument and dropped her off at her mother's place March 25. An FIR has been registered against the man Abdul Samee on the basis of the complaint. The woman has alleged in her complaint that after getting married in 2017, her in-laws were torturing her for additional dowry, gold every month.

Bangla cattle thieves killed

Silchar (Assam): Three suspected Bangladeshi nationals were killed by some unknown people at Bogrijan in southern Assam's Karimganj district, police said Sunday. Police said that three unknown Bangladeshi nationals, suspected to be cattle thieves, were killed Saturday night by some unidentified mob at Bogrijan under Patharkandi Police Station.

Lightning kills 5

Jhargram (WB): Five people died and 27 others injured in lightning strikes in West Bengals Jhargram district Monday, police said. Several parts of the district witnessed lightning strikes accompanied by heavy rain during the afternoon. Two persons each died in Jambani and Beliabera areas and one in Gopiballabhpur, police said.



Where did you (Sachin Pilot) want to reach in such a hurry? Whether you wanted to become Chief Minister at 43 and Prime Minister at 45 by joining the BJP

MARGARET ALVA | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

CHHATTISGARH GOVT LAUNCHES COW DUNG SCHEME

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel Monday launched Godhan Nyay Yojna under which the state government will procure cow dung from cattle rearers at Rs 2 per kg for production of organic fertilizers



Localised lockdowns dent economic revival

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 20: Even though deemed necessary, localised lockdowns along with hurdles to demand augmentation have slowed down India's economic recovery process.

State governments have imposed area specific lockdowns of limited duration to curb the spread of COVID-19 infections.

However, these lockdowns have also disturbed the supply chains and revival plans of the industry.

Presently, the rising cases of COVID-19 infections have led to a re-imposition of lockdowns in some important economic centres such as Bangalore and Hyderabad.

Economy watchers have opined that these sudden local lockdowns have added to many uncertainties facing the industry.

"These sudden localised or regional lockdowns have added to the uncertainties faced by businesses. It impacts their plans, strategy and supply chains, thereby slowing down the recovery process and in essence the revival of economic activity," Sunil Kumar Sinha, Principal Economist, India Ratings & Research said.

"The challenge in front of the economy is one of demand augmentation and this can happen if the government invests in quick turnaround infra projects and also provides a stimulus for private consumption."



SPECIFIC LOCKDOWNS OF LIMITED DURATION HAVE ALSO DISTURBED THE SUPPLY CHAINS AND REVIVAL PLANS OF THE INDUSTRY

ECONOMY WATCHERS HAVE OPINED THAT THESE SUDDEN LOCAL LOCKDOWNS HAVE ADDED TO MANY UNCERTAINTIES FACING THE INDUSTRY

SECTORS SUCH AS RETAIL, HOSPITALITY, TRANSPORT, TRADE, REAL ESTATE, AND CONSTRUCTION WILL BE UNABLE TO WITNESS ANY MEANINGFUL REVIVAL DUE TO SUCH DISRUPTIONS

vate consumption."

"Even though bumper harvest, healthy monsoon and festive season will side in demand generation, it is vital for the government to spend and to encourage consumption by all means possible for an early revival."

According to Suman Chowdhury, Chief Analytical Officer at Acuit Ratings and Research: "Such recurring lockdowns at the local level will be witnessed across India over the next few months till the incidence of fresh cases declines to acceptable levels or a vaccine is discovered. Clearly, this will continue to disrupt the services and the industrial sector and increase the risks of a higher contraction in GDP in the current year."

"The sectors such as retail, hospitality, transport, trade, real estate, and construction will be unable to witness any meaningful revival due to such disruptions."

"The COVID-19 shock has clearly derailed the growth path cyclically further, with 1QFY21 GDP looking to contract more than 25 per cent. Policy makers had earlier faced a stark trade-off between lives and livelihood as they imposed a national lockdown but now the localised lockdowns are hampering even the sequential growth momentum," said Madhavi Arora, Lead Economist, FX and Rates for Edelweiss Securities.

"Meanwhile, tepid fiscal response and the monetary transmission asymmetry would only mean the

downward growth cycle could stretch further. Domestic structural overhang in the form of strained balance sheet of private economic agents and global concerns might limit sustained sequential growth pick up ahead."

Last week, rating agency ICRA revised downwards its forecast of India's 2020-21 GDP contraction to 9.5 per cent from an earlier estimate of 5 per cent.

It cited the climbing Covid-19 infections resulting in a spate of localised lockdowns in some states and cities as the reason for the sharp downward revision.

ICRA said that these localised lockdowns are arresting the nascent recovery that had set in during May-June 2020.

NATURE'S FURY



View of a fruit market after a landslide in the area following heavy rain near Shimla, Monday

PTI PHOTO

FLOODS KILL SCORES IN ASSAM; 9 RHINOS DROWN

AGENCIES

Guwahati, July 20: Intense rain and floods in Assam have killed at least 84 people and displaced more than 2.75 million since May, authorities said Monday, as they tried to collect the bodies of nine rare rhinos drowned in the past 10 days.

Rescue teams were facing a double challenge of rising flood waters amid the novel coronavirus as villagers driven from their homes huddle in shelters.

"It's hard to enforce social distancing when people are being ordered to move away from the rising waters," said Sanghamitra Sanyal, a member of the northeastern state's flood management force.

"We're urging people to at least



cover their mouth and nose with a piece of clean cloth."

Officials warned that the water

level in the Brahmaputra river was expected to rise by 11 cm (4.3 inches), two weeks after it burst its banks

OFFICIALS WARNED THAT THE WATER LEVEL IN THE BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER WAS EXPECTED TO RISE BY 11 CM, TWO WEEKS AFTER IT BURST ITS BANKS SWAMPING MORE THAN 2,500 VILLAGES

FLOODS HAVE ALSO INUNDATED THE KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK, HOME TO THE WORLD'S LARGEST CONCENTRATION OF ONE-HORNED RHINOCEROS

swamping more than 2,500 villages.

Assam, famous for its tea plantations, is hit by flooding every rainy season despite flood-control efforts.

Rights groups accuse corrupt officials of siphoning off funds meant for flood projects, resulting in shoddy construction of embankments which are often breached.

Floods have also inundated the Kaziranga National Park, home to the world's largest concentration of one-horned rhinoceros, with an estimated 2,500 out of a total population of some 3,000 of the animals.

"Nine rhinos have drowned and over 100 other animals have been killed," Atul Bora, Assam's Agriculture Minister who is Kaziranga's member of the Assembly, said.

With the park waist-deep in water, rhinos, elephants and deer have been forced to seek refuge on roads and in human settlements.

How Twitter failed to tame parody accounts in India

Parody accounts on Twitter were meant to post fun-laden tweets to delight the followers. Instead, they have become fake news factories

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 20: Parody accounts on Twitter were meant to post fun-laden tweets to delight the followers. Instead, they have become fake news factories, misleading the users on burning issues in India.

Twitter accounts that pose as another person, brand or organisation in a confusing or deceptive manner have seen a meteoric rise in India, tweeting misinformation to change the narrative of the day.

No one is spared in this misinformation war, be it politicians, media persons, celebrities and common Twitter users, who fall to the trap and retweet or file stories basis those parody/fake handles that have mushroomed on Twitter and the algorithms have miserably failed to track and flag/remove those.

In fact, India is such a big market for Twitter and it ought to have given far more attention to compliances under the Indian law, but it appears

that there is a lot of gap between what the law wants Twitter to do versus what Twitter actually does.

Today, Twitter is infested with fake and parody accounts in India. Most of these accounts are being used for the purposes of targeting a particular person or for the purposes of forwarding or perpetuating a particular philosophy, political, religious or otherwise.

"Most of the fake accounts are targeting individuals, often hitting them below their belt so as to prejudicially impact the reputation, goodwill, standing or repute in society," Pavan Duggal, a top cyber law expert and seasoned Supreme Court lawyer said.

The time has been such that intermediaries like Twitter now need to revise and review their existing strategies.

An aggrieved person should not be asked to go through another round of harassment in the hands of social media service providers by exposing



them to bureaucratic approach.

Twitter says its users are allowed to create parody, newsfeed, commentary or fan accounts. The company says it reviews impersonation

claims upon receipt of a valid impersonation report and does not "actively monitor users' content".

According to Virag Gupta, a lawyer who is arguing the case be-

fore Delhi High Court for disclosure of designated officers' details of Twitter and foreign social media companies in India, the whole exercise to take action on parody accounts by Twitter is flawed.

"It is ironic to see that Twitter asks the original account holder to furnish a copy of the FIR against the parody account impersonating him/her, and asks for their credentials rather than acting on the parody accounts that even have the verified Blue Tick. This is nothing but travesty of the Indian law caused by intermediaries like Twitter," Gupta said.

Twitter impersonation policy reads that if you are the impersonated party or an authorised representative, "you can file an impersonation report. If you believe an account is impersonating somebody else, you can flag it as a bystander by reporting directly from the account's profile".

However, there is no action against

several such parody/fake accounts that have left the fun part behind, and are now actively participating in spreading the misinformation.

Many political parties via their PR agencies are now hiring parody account holders on a monthly/yearly basis or pay per tweet/post basis to drive their objectives.

Duggal says that most of these social media platforms including Twitter don't have well thought-over policies or strategies on how to specifically deal with the peculiar challenges that parody accounts or fake accounts actually bring forward in the Indian context.

"Further, the law has also failed Indian citizens in this regard. The law has not mandated the adoption of a user-friendly approach by service providers, while dealing with affected persons in the context of their reporting of parody accounts or false accounts," he noted.

of the day quote

Shiv Sena paved the way to the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and removed roadblocks in the temple construction for the cause of Hindutva and not for politics



SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA MP

The way in which COVID-19 pandemic is assuming a horrible shape in UP -- the most populous state in the country, which is poor and backward -- is a matter of serious concern



MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

There is total fear and anxiety in public mind in Goa about the spread of coronavirus and spike in Covid cases across the state. The Goa government has not come out with an action plan on the control and management of the pandemic till date



DIGAMBAR KAMAT | FORMER GOA CM

SHORT TAKES

LeT module busted in Jammu

Jammu: The Special Operations Group (SOG) of Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Army busted a terror-funding module of the Lashkar-e-Taiba on Monday with the arrest of one person, officials said. Police said it had received a tip-off from a reliable source that the banned outfit LeT had activated a module of its members for carrying out terror activities in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in the Jammu region, and delivery of funds was to take place in Jammu in furtherance of this motive. "A team of SOG Jammu and Peer Mitha Police arrested Mubashir Bhat of Sazan in Doda, who is a part of the module and tasked by his handlers from across the border to visit Jammu and collect hawala money for use by terrorists and their supporters," police said.

Soldier arrested

Chandigarh: The Punjab Police arrested a soldier and three others in the illegal arms and drug smuggling case, which was busted last week with the arrest of a BSF personnel and three others, officials said here Monday. Eight people had been arrested in the case, said Director General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta. The police were probing the money trail to eradicate drug menace from the state. The DGP said Ramandeep Singh, a soldier, was apprehended from Bareilly in UP, where he was posted, on the basis of disclosures made by BSF constable Sumit Kumar.

Doctor ends life

Chennai: A doctor working in Stanley Medical College Hospital Monday jumped to his death from his hostel's building, police said. Kannan, 27, was a first-year postgraduate student in Orthopaedic Surgery Department. He hailed from Udulmalpet in Tamil Nadu. According to police, Kannan suffered head injuries as he hit the ground after jumping from the third floor of the hotel building. No suicide note was seized.

Man kills mother

New Delhi: A 22-year-old man stabbed his mother in south Delhi's Madangir area Monday morning. The 45 year-old woman was rushed to hospital where she was declared brought dead. "A PCR call regarding a son stabbing his mother was received. On receiving the information of the incident in Madangir Central Market, a team of police officials visited the place where a lady was found in an unconscious state.

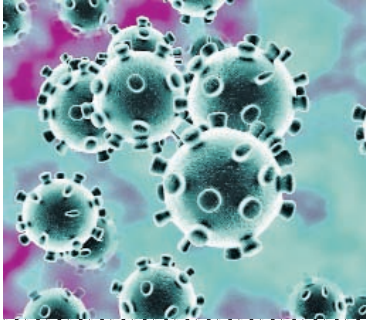


There are reports that beds in government hospitals of the two major cities of UP -- Lucknow and Gorakhpur -- are full. Coronavirus cases are rising and this condition of hospitals is worrying

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

K'TAKA BJP MLA TESTS COVID POSITIVE

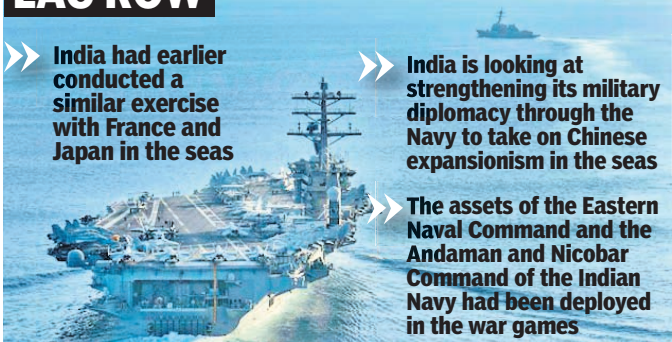
Ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's legislator from Karnataka's Koppal district Paranna Munavalli tested positive for coronavirus, an official said Monday



EYE ON CHINA: INDIA, US CONDUCT NAVAL DRILL

LAC ROW

India had earlier conducted a similar exercise with France and Japan in the seas



India is looking at strengthening its military diplomacy through the Navy to take on Chinese expansionism in the seas

The assets of the Eastern Naval Command and the Andaman and Nicobar Command of the Indian Navy had been deployed in the war games

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 20: Indian and the US navies carried out a swift exercise close to the Andaman and Nicobar islands Monday as the stand-off between India and China continues for over two months.

The passing exercise or PASSEX involved the super carrier USS Nimitz returning from the South China Sea as it passes through Indian Ocean Region. A passage exercise is normally undertaken whenever an opportunity arises, in contrast to pre-planned maritime drills.

USS Nimitz (CVN 68) is US Navy nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and the world's largest warship armed with F/A-18F Super Hornets as well as F/A-18E Super Hornets. India had earlier conducted a similar exercise with France and Japan in the seas. The drills come soon after Indian Navy carried out an exercise in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to test its capabilities and be battle ready against Chinese forays in Indian Ocean Region.

The assets of the Eastern Naval Command and the Andaman and Nicobar Command of the Indian

Navy had been deployed in the war games. India is looking at strengthening its military diplomacy through the Navy to take on Chinese expansionism in the seas. In the next edition of the Malabar exercise, Australia is expected to join Navies of India, US and Japan, a move that could risk China's ire.

India is expected to clear the way next week for a formal invitation to Australia following final government clearance and consultations with the US and Japan. Expected to be held by the year end, the war game will complement growing strategic and security cooperation among the four countries.

Malabar 2020 will be taking place in the waters of Bay of Bengal by the end of this year. The last and the only time the Australian Navy had participated in this exercise was in 2007. The Malabar exercises between US and Indian navies were instituted in 1992. They were more regular since 2004 with other Asian nations joining in the annual event. China had objected to the only Australia participation in the drills along with India, Japan, US and Singapore in 2007.

Dalit man stripped, assaulted in K'taka

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Vijayapura, July 20: A 32-year-old Dalit man was allegedly stripped and assaulted by a group of 13 youths in Karnataka's Vijayapura for reportedly touching a motorbike of an upper caste owner, police said Monday.

"On a complaint by the Dalit victim (Kashinath Talwar), we have booked the 13 accused and investigating the incident, which occurred at Minajgi village near Talikoti on July 18," Vijayapura district Superintendent of Police Anupam Agarwal said here.

"Though Talwar claimed that he touched the bike by mistake and pleaded for mercy, he said the accused severely thrashed him with sticks and footwear and took off his pants while he lay on the road haplessly," Agarwal said, citing from the victim's 2-page complaint in Kannada.

A video clip of the assault went viral on the social media and triggered outrage in the district against the upper caste accused, as the intervention by the victim's parents did not stop them from carrying out the assault. Vijayapura is 524km northwest of Bangalore.

"A case has been registered against the accused under the SC/ST Act and the relevant sections of the IPC (Indian Penal Code) on the assault complaint," said Agarwal.

Talwar's father Yankappa also alleged that he, his wife and their daughter were also attacked by the accused when they tried to rescue him from being brutally assaulted.



"On a complaint by the Dalit victim (Kashinath Talwar), we have booked the 13 accused and investigating the incident, which occurred at Minajgi village near Talikoti on July 18," Vijayapura district Superintendent of Police Anupam Agarwal said

A video clip of the assault went viral on the social media and triggered outrage in the district against the upper caste accused, as the intervention by the victim's parents did not stop them from carrying out the assault

In a related development, two-three women in the village also filed a complaint with the police against Talwar for allegedly eve-teasing and flashing before them.

"We have summoned Talwar to inquire about his conduct as the women alleged that he teased them, touched them inappropriately and exposed his private parts while they were washing clothes outside their houses," Agarwal said.

Talwar is a daily wage worker in the village.

DELHI RECORDS LOWEST CORONA TALLY IN A MONTH

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 20: With 954 new coronavirus cases in the last 24 hours, the national capital recorded its lowest tally in a month, health officials said on Monday.

With this total tally rose to 1,23,747 cases and 3,663 deaths, with 35 deaths reported Monday. According to Delhi government's daily health bulletin, as many as 1,04,918 people have recovered, almost seven times the number of active cases which stand at 15,166. Total of 1,784 patients recovered in the last 24 hours.



The number of fresh cases is the lowest in a month. On June 23, the city had witnessed the highest single-day peak of 3,947 cases, but the number has come down steadily since then despite the number of tests increasing. Testing numbers in the city have also gone

RAIN HAVOC



Traffic policemen point towards a portion of a road that caved in following heavy rainfall, at Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway in Gurugram, Monday

VIRUS IMPACT

CISF passing out parade turns virtual

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 20: In the time of pandemic, even passing out parades of paramilitary forces have turned virtual.

Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy on Monday reviewed the passing out parade at CISF NISA Hyderabad through webinar. Eleven Assistant Commandants (probationer), 79 Sub-Inspectors and 10 Assistant Sub-Inspectors passed out from CISF NISA Hyderabad.

CISF DG Rajesh Ranjan and other senior officers were also present. Though it's a grand affair for the force, in times of Covid-19, for the first time, e-Passing Out Parade was organised. The Parade was witnessed electronically by the fam-

ilies, friends and general public.

In her welcome address, Director of NISA Hyderabad Anjana Sinha presented a report on the training activities. She complimented trainees for their sincerity and dedication and hoped the rigorous training imparted at the centre would stand in good stead in their professional career.

The DG emphasised the role of CISF in protecting vital installations. The CISF's endeavour was to nurture the core qualities, like discipline, turnout, physical fitness and professionalism of all the officers and personnel that render the vital edge in the functioning, he added.

During the occasion, the message from Home Minister Amit Shah was read by the DG. Shah praised the CISF officers and per-



sonnel for their uncompromising determination and immaculate professionalism in securing the citizens and national assets during the Covid-19 epidemic.

Applauding the CISF's growing role in the changing security scenario

of the country, Reddy said it creditably secured airports, critical and very sensitive establishments. He also praised the women CISF personnel and their role in securing the most critical assets of the nation.

"The officers who passed out

today, during the course of their training, acquired skills in a wide array of subjects, from indoor subjects like industrial security, security of buildings, monuments & vital installations, intelligence & surveillance, aviation security, IS duties, fire prevention & fighting, human rights, VIP security, forensic science, law, science & technology, modern electronic security gadgets, computers, human behaviour, CISF Act & Rules," read a statement issued on the occasion.

To meet and overcome the challenges of internal security and those arising from Naxal and terror groups, the trainees were subjected to jungle camp training, raids, ambush & counter-ambush, night navigation and QRT type practical training as well.

Hearing to resume Tuesday

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan High Court will Tuesday resume hearing the petition filed by Sachin Pilot and 18 other dissident Congress MLAs, challenging the disqualification notices issued to them by the Assembly Speaker. The hearing remained inconclusive Monday and Chief Justice Indrajit Mahanty said it will be concluded Tuesday. The order is also likely to be pronounced Tuesday. Abhishek Manu Singhvi, counsel for the Speaker, argued that the petition was premature as a decision was yet to be taken on disqualifying the MLAs from the House. He said there was no scope for interference by a court over the show cause notices issued by the Speaker.

Allegations baseless: Pilot

NEW DELHI/JAIPUR: Dissident Congress leader Sachin Pilot Monday dismissed as "baseless and vexatious" the allegations by a party MLA from Rajasthan that the former Deputy Chief Minister had offered him money to join the BJP, and claimed that it was an attempt to stifle the "legitimate concerns" he raised against the party leadership in the state. Pilot said he will be taking "appropriate and strictest possible legal action" against the MLA who "was made to" level these accusations. Congress MLA Giriraj Singh Malinga alleged that Pilot had offered him money to join the BJP.

Bihar floods hit 3L people

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, July 20: After torrential rain in the Terai regions of Bihar and Nepal, the water level in all major rivers of the state has risen. With several rivers flowing above the danger mark, nearly three lakh people in eight districts have been affected by the deluge.

Relief and rescue operations are on in the flood-affected areas. However, the Opposition alleged that relief has been left to God and the affected people have also been left in the lurch. According to the Bihar water resources department, the Bagmati river was flowing above the danger mark on Monday at Dhang, Sonakhan, Dubadhar in Sitamarhi, Katunja and Muzaffarpur in Beniabad, and Hayaghat in Darbhanga while the Budhi Gandak river, near the Rosra rail bridge in Samastipur, was also flowing above the danger mark.

The water level of the Kamla Balan river crossed the danger mark at Jhanjharpur and Dhenraghat in Mahananda Purnia. Though the water level in the Kosi river remained stable, the Gandak river was in spate.

The water level of Kosi, near Veerpur barrage, was rising on Monday. The water level of the Gandak river, near the Balmikinagar barrage, was also rising. Water resources secretary Sanjeev Hans said that as per the Indian Meteorological Department forecast, almost all the major rivers in the state will maintain a 'rising trend' in the next 72 hours.

Corona tally: India breaches 11L-mark

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 20: With the highest single day spike of 40,425 novel coronavirus cases in past 24 hours India's Covid tally reached 11,19,043, according to Health Ministry data Monday. With 681 fresh deaths the pandemic toll touched 27,497.

India once again crossed one lakh cases within three days. India crossed 10 lakh Covid-19 cases on July 17, and added another one lakh before July 20. The highest spike in cases was reported from Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat.

Karnataka, the new hotspot state, is nearing 65,000 cases, as Maharashtra remained the worst-hit state, with 3,10,455 cases and 11,854 casualties followed by Tamil Nadu with total 1,70,693 cases, and 2,481 deaths. States with more than 10,000 cases include Karnataka, Gujarat, UP, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Haryana, Andhra, Telangana, Assam and Jammu and Kashmir.



We want a positive relationship with China but we can't see behaviour like that and not call it out
DOMINIC RAAB | UK FOREIGN SECRETARY

PAKISTAN'S POPULATION CONTINUES TO GROW RAPIDLY

Pakistan's total population is estimated at 220.9 million and it is growing rapidly with an annual fertility rate of 3.6 children per couple, according to a report



of the day quote

As law enforcement agencies see a rise in people exploiting the coronavirus crisis to commit fraud, the CPS continues to evolve its response to the challenges we all face

ANDREW PENHALE | HEAD OF THE SPECIALIST FRAUD DIVISION AT THE CPS

To say that I'm 100% confident that we'll get a vaccine, this year or indeed next year, is alas, just an exaggeration. We're not there yet

BORIS JOHNSON | BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

Ukrainian experts would take part in decoding the black boxes from plane crash, alongside experts from France, the United States and Canada

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKIY | UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Saudi King hospitalised

Dubai: Saudi Arabia's King Salman has been admitted to a hospital in the capital, Riyadh, for medical tests due to inflammation of the gallbladder, the kingdom's Royal Court said Monday in a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency. The statement said the 84-year-old monarch is being tested at the King Faisal Specialist Hospital. The brief statement did not provide further details. King Salman has been in power since January 2015.

Pakistan resumes anti-polio campaign

Islamabad: Pakistan launched a special five-day anti-polio campaign Monday in selected districts across the country to vaccinate children against the crippling disease, four months after the drive was suspended due to the coronavirus outbreak, officials said. Pakistan on February 17 launched a countrywide anti-polio campaign to vaccinate about 39.6 million children under the age of five as the government appealed to the people for their support to eradicate polio.

Chevron buys Noble for \$5bn

New York: Chevron will take over Noble Energy for USD 5 billion in the first big deal announced since the coronavirus pandemic shook the energy sector. Chevron, based in San Ramon, California, has been shopping for assets since last year and with crude prices down more than 30 per cent this year, it jumped Monday with its all-stock offering for the independent Houston oil and gas driller.

UK Queen heads for holiday

London: The UK's Queen Elizabeth II and her husband Prince Philip are set to move to Balmoral next month for a socially-distanced holiday with family after four months in isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, media reports said. The 94-year-old monarch has been in self-isolation in the Windsor Castle for four months, reportedly shielding from all but a handful of relatives and close friends.

Kim fires officials

Seoul: North Korea's leader has sacked officials building a hospital after they pressed the public for contributions, media reported on Monday, the second rebuke linked to the high-profile project in a country where such problems are rarely publicised.

UK suspends extradition treaty with Hong Kong

AGENCIES

London, July 20: Britain's government suspended its extradition arrangements with Hong Kong Monday, after China imposed a tough new national security law.

As tensions grow with Beijing, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said he had concerns about the new law and about alleged human rights abuses in China in particular in regard to the treatment of the Uighur minority.

An arms embargo on China will be extended to Hong Kong, he said. "We will protect our vital interests," Raab said. "We will stand up for our values and we will hold to China to its international obligations." Raab followed the example of the United States, Australia and Canada by suspending extradition arrangements with the territory.

The review of the extradition measures comes only days after Britain backtracked on plans to give Chinese telecommunications company Huawei a role in the UK's new high-speed mobile phone network amid security concerns fueled by rising tensions between Beijing and Western powers.



Johnson's government has already criticised China's decision to impose a sweeping new national security law on Hong Kong. The UK has accused the Beijing government of a serious breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration under which the UK returned control of Hong Kong to China in 1997, and announced it would open a special route to citizenship for up to 3 million eligible residents of the community. Beijing has objected to the move. China's ambassador to Britain, Liu Xiaoming, recently described the offer as "gross interference"

in Chinese affairs. Liu told the BBC's Andrew Marr on Sunday that Britain was "dancing to the tune" of the U.S. and rejected the allegations of human rights abuses against the mainly-Muslim Uighur people.

He accused Western countries of trying to foment trouble with China. "People say China (is) becoming very aggressive. That's totally wrong," he told the BBC "China has not changed. It's Western countries, headed by United States — they started this so-called new Cold War on China."

UAE launches historic first mission to Mars

REUTERS

Dubai, July 20: Emiratis brimmed with joy and pride as the UAE made history Monday by successfully launching its spacecraft "Al Amal" towards Mars from a Japanese launch centre, marking the Arab world's first interplanetary mission.

Al Amal, or Hope Probe, weighing 1.3 tonnes was launched from the H-2A rocket from Japan's remote Tanegashima spaceport at 1.58 am local time. The ground control room in Dubai erupted with joy after the successful lift off. Hundreds of scientists, space enthusiasts and the UAE's leadership cheered as the upper stage containing the probe separated from the launch rocket, the protective shields and its solar panels were deployed with clockwork precision.

The solar panels will charge the batteries of the spacecraft for its 495,000,000 kms journey to Mars. Within a couple of hours, it was confirmed that the ground segment at Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre in Dubai has received and communicated the first signals with the Hope Probe. UAE president Sheikh Khalifa has praised the talented team who had masterminded the landmark Mars mission. "With pleasure and great pride, we have followed up on the announcement of the successful launch of the Hope Probe, the idea of which was conceived and developed inside our national research and political institutions," he said. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, said the nation watched the successful launch of the Hope probe with "pride and joy."

"We embark on a new chapter in space, led by our exceptional youth. Congratulations to the UAE for this historic achievement," Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, said the nation watched the successful launch of the Hope probe with "pride and joy."

"On behalf of all Indians living in UAE, we congratulate UAE leadership and all Emirati friends for successful launch of Mission Hope to Mars today morning and salute undeterred commitment of scientists even during tough times of COVID," the Consulate General of India in Dubai tweeted. NASA administrator, Jim Bridenstine, also lauded the UAE's efforts.



SAFETY AMID PROTEST



A woman wears a mask as activists protest against the government's restrictions following the coronavirus disease outbreak in Berlin, Germany

REUTERS

Paris turns the Seine into open-air cinema

Cinemas have reopened in France, but occupancy levels remain very low

REUTERS

Paris, July 20: While the cinema drive-in may have gotten a boost as lockdowns gradually come to an end amid the Covid-19 outbreak, in Paris film fans can now munch on their popcorn watching a movie from a boat on the river Seine.

As part of Paris Plages, the yearly transformation of sections of the Seine into man-made beaches, moviegoers on Saturday were able to board 38 electric boats for a free showing of the 2018



French comedy Le Grand Bain.

While the virus has been under control with fatalities and the number of people in intensive care falling, daily cases have increased ahead of the summer holiday season. The disease has killed more than 30,000 people in France. The artificial beaches on the

banks of the Seine in central Paris and the Bassin de la Villette, a man-made lake in the north-east of the city, have been a roaring success since they were launched by Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë in 2002.

As well as sand and views of central Paris' architecture, Paris Plage offers sporting opportunities such as fencing, giant table football, and open-air gyms looking out over the Seine, although this year the tighter health restrictions have limited some of the activities.

AGENCIES

Beijing, July 20: China's latest coronavirus outbreak has spread to a second city in the northwestern region of Xinjiang.

One of the 17 new cases reported on Monday was in the ancient Silk Road city of Kashgar, the regional government said on its official microblog. The remainder were in the regional capital of Urumqi, where all other cases have been reported since the outbreak that has now infected at least 47 people emerged earlier this month.

Authorities in Urumqi have tried to prevent the spread by closing off communities and imposing travel restrictions. Xinjiang is a vast, thinly populated region of mountains and deserts and had seen little impact from the pandemic that emerged from the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year and was largely contained within China in March.

Another five new cases reported Monday by the National Health Commission were imported. China also said 5,370 people had been arrested for pandemic-related crimes between January and June. More than 40% were charged with fraud, the state prosecutor's office announced on its official microblog. Another 15% were charged with ob-



Xinjiang's capital Urumqi has been grappling with a virus crisis since last week

But the virus has spread to China's westernmost city Kashgar, authorities said

The financial hub saw 106 infections Sunday, the highest rise since January

struction of law enforcement, with others accused of producing and selling fake and shoddy goods, creating public disturbances, and transporting and selling endangered species. Although faulted for allowing the virus to spread from Wuhan, China's government has been credited with imposing rigid and sometimes draconian measures to contain the outbreak, and people have overwhelmingly complied with orders to wear masks, display certificates of good health and maintain social distancing.

NEW POLL REVEALS TRUMP 15 POINTS BEHIND BIDEN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, July 20: A new poll has revealed that US President Donald Trump was 15 points behind presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden in the run-up to November's election, it was reported.

The ABC News/Washington Post poll released Sunday which revealed a close margin, 54 per cent for Biden and 44 per cent for Trump, was the fifth consecutive high-quality national poll that showed the former Vice President ahead of Trump by 10 points or more, reports Politico news.

Of the nine such polls conducted since the second half of June, Biden has led Trump by double digits in seven of them.

Prior to the release of the ABC News/Washington Post poll on Sunday, Biden held a 9-point lead in the RealClearPolitics average.

Meanwhile, a Quinnipiac University poll released last week, 45 per cent of registered voters had a favorable opinion of Biden, and 43 per cent viewed him unfavorably. That was up slightly from 42 per cent favorable, 46 per cent unfavorable in June. Similarly, 44 per cent of voters surveyed by an NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll last week said they had a positive opinion of Biden, while 46 per cent viewed him negatively. Meanwhile, Trump's favourable ratings are in the tank, the Politico news report said. Majorities in the Quinnipiac (61 per cent unfavourable) and NBC/WSJ (54 per cent negative) polls gave the President poor image ratings. Trump's re-election campaign has disputed the results of public polling, arguing that the President runs stronger against a "defined" Biden in their internal tests.

Dawood takes back seat as another don hits headlines in Karachi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Karachi, July 20: When Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's blue eyed Minister Ali Haider Zaidi Saturday accused an opposition Sindh Minister of sheltering a drug cartel, it was not an off the cuff political barb at the Bhutto family.

In a tweet the next day, Zaidi accused Bilawal Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (ruling in Sindh province) of being involved in "kidnapping, extortion, corruption...even murder".

For India and the world, the port city of Karachi seems to be ruled by underworld don Dawood Ibrahim. But in Sindh, many like Ali Haider Zaidi feel that organised crime gangs have been unleashed in Pakistan's largest city by a co-terie of ministers in the PPP ruled provincial government.



In fact, the Bhutto family is often targeted by its rivals for patronising one of the most dreaded underworld dons, Uzair Baloch, who is involved in the killing of more than 150 people. Uzair is presently lodged in Karachi Central Jail, but he operates his gang from behind the bars. India's most wanted fugitive, Dawood Ibrahim, is reportedly residing here at the posh

Clifton area, and continues to detach himself from local rivalry over drugs, extortion and crimes like kidnapping for ransoms.

Dawood's notorious D-Company focuses more on international syndicate crimes and Hawala operations. As of now, D-Company's feud with Lyari gangs has not come to light. Lyari, a densely populated Karachi borough, is



infamous for its criminal gangs, mostly involved in drugs and gun running.

At the moment, Lyari gangs affiliated to Uzair Baloch (41) rule the roost in this port city where the underworld primarily thrives on drugs smuggled from Afghanistan.

Uzair shot into limelight when he gunned down rival underworld lord Pappu Ashraf in 2013.

According to records of Karachi police, Uzair with around 20 armed men barged into a bungalow in the posh Defence Housing Area (DHA) and abducted Ashraf, his two aides and later killed them. Having dual citizenship of Pakistan and Iran, Uzair used his political clout while shifting between the two countries. To tame the dreaded gangster, the authorities in 2017 handed over Uzair to the Army to investigate a case of espionage.

Meanwhile, Federal Maritime Minister Ali Haider Zaidi shared a video with the media, revealing an unholy nexus between Uzair and the Bhutto family. In a bid to expose PPP President Asif Zardari, a video containing a statement of an insider, known as Jan Habib, was released by Zaidi.

According to Geo TV, Jan Habib revealed that the PPP would trans-

fer police officers on the whims of Uzair. "This is true. IG Sindh's transfer was also done and the interior ministry used to stand at their (the gangsters') door in the form of Rehman Malik," Jan alleged.

In the video, Jan claimed that Uzair had personally met Zardari. Jan said, "Zardari met Uzair and it was an important meeting. Uzair called me and said Zardari called him and wanted to meet him and he has to go (to the meeting) with Qadir Patel. Zardari wanted his so-called 'brother' (Uzair) to contest elections from Lyari."

The allegations of Imran Khan's close aide Zaidi has once again shifted focus to the underworld of Karachi. The heat is mainly on the Lyari gangs, but can later affect the D-Company, which maintains close relations with the political leadership in Pakistan.

of the day quote

Huge debt on the balance sheet of telcos continues to be an overhang, and the financial position of industry must improve for investors to make the most of the upside

SATHISH GOPALIAH | PARTNER, DELOITTE INDIA

While retailers are doing their bit by following stringent hygiene practices, the policymakers too need to support to ensure economic revival. Consumption is important for the country as it supports the business environment

KUMAR RAJAGOPALAN | CEO, RAI

Due to the SC ban on construction because of pollution and the COVID-19 lockdown, we have lost close to six months of time. In order to cover up, we are using the advanced steel structure technology which will not only save 40% time but also help expedite delivery of the project by July 2022

MOHIT GOEL | CEO, OMAXE

SHORT TAKES

Power demand expected to fall

New Delhi: India's electricity demand is likely to fall by up to 6% this fiscal due to the reimposition of lockdown restrictions in many parts of the country, ratings agency Icra said Monday. According to Icra, all-India power demand in financial year 2019-20 was 1,291 billion units. With the reimposition of lockdown restrictions in many parts of the country, the demand is likely to decline by 5-6% in FY21 over FY20, against the earlier estimate of 1% degrowth made in April 2020, Icra said.

Updated models of Vespa launched

Mumbai: Piaggio India Monday launched the updated versions of its Vespa VXL and SXL range of scooters with BSVI-compliant engines at a starting price of ₹1.10 lakh (Pune price). The company also rolled out the new 125-cc Aprilia Storm scooter with disc brake and digital cluster priced at ₹91,000 (Pune), Piaggio India said in a release. These premium scooter models were displayed at the 2020 Auto Expo in Greater Noida in February this year.

WTC ties up with CoHo

New Delhi: World Trade Centers (WTC) has tied up with co-living operator CoHo to offer around 10,000 beds (across cities like Gurgaon, Noida, Ahmedabad and Chandigarh) for providing rental housing to students and working professionals. WTC's partnership with CoHo is under revenue-share model for converting its residential assets into co-living spaces for millennials. "We have entered into partnership with WTC to run co-living centres. We will manage these properties," CoHo founder and CEO Uday Lakkar said.

Cargo handling tumbles over 30%

New Delhi: Container cargo handling at India's major ports dropped over 30% during the April-June quarter of the current fiscal amid the coronavirus pandemic, as per data by ports body IPA. Container cargo in terms of TEUs (twenty foot equivalent unit) at India's 12 major ports dropped 32.28% to 1.74 million in the first quarter of the current fiscal, according to the latest data from the Indian Ports' Association (IPA). In terms of tonnage, the container cargo declined 30.11% to 26.34 MT in the quarter.

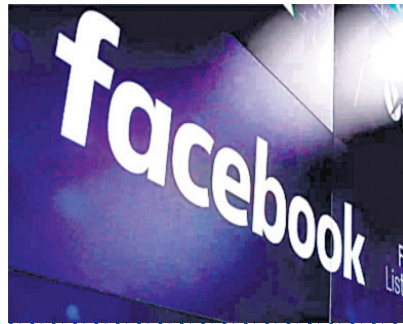


We are strengthening our rural distribution and focusing on neighbourhood stores and online sales to drive growth after delivering a "stunning" performance in April-June in the peak of coronavirus-induced lockdown

VARUN BERRY | MD, BRITANNIA

IPRS, FACEBOOK INK DEAL

Indian Performing Rights Society (IPRS) has reached an agreement with Facebook, wherein users of the social media platform will be able to use IPRS' music repertoire for video and other social experiences on Facebook and Instagram



'Country's debt-to-GDP ratio may rise to 87.6%'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 20: The economic turbulence due to COVID-19 is expected to push India's debt-to-GDP ratio higher, according to a SBI Ecowrap report Monday. Together with the declining GDP growth, debt-to-GDP ratio has been adversely affected in all countries.

"India's debt-to-GDP ratio has increased gradually from ₹58.8 lakh crore (67.4% of GDP) in FY12 to ₹146.9 lakh crore (72.2% of GDP) in FY20," it said. Higher borrowing this fiscal was likely to increase the gross debt to around ₹170 lakh

crore (87.6% of GDP), it added.

According to the report, external debt is estimated to increase to ₹6.8 lakh crore (3.5% of GDP) in the expected gross debt for FY21.

"Of the remaining domestic debt, component of state's debt is expected at 27% of GDP. Interestingly, the GDP collapse is pushing up the debt-to-GDP ratio by at least 4 per cent, implying that growth rather than continued fiscal conservatism is the only mantra to get us back on track," it said.

"We reiterate the current thinking of rating downgrade in policy circles is a false negative as India's



rating is likely to face a litmus test of downgrade in FY21, depending on what we have done to bring growth back to track," the SBI

In the current situation, the nominal GDP growth is likely to contract significantly and, based on this, India's interest growth differential will turn positive in FY21, said the SBI Ecowrap report

Ecowrap report said.

This higher debt amount will also lead to shifting of the FRBM target of combined debt to 60% of GDP

by FY23 by 7 years with the target now seem achievable in FY30 only.

"The moot point is the sustainability of the debt. The current foreign exchange reserves are sufficient to meet any external debt obligations. On the internal debt, since most debt is domestically owned, its servicing is not an issue," it said.

"In the current situation, our nominal GDP growth is likely to contract significantly and based on this our interest-growth differential will turn positive in FY21, thus raising serious questions on debt sustainability," the SBI Ecowrap report said.

India should focus on food security, feels eminent economist



RICHARD DAVIS WOLFF

AGENCIES

Kolkata, July 20: A predominantly rural economy like India should use its population in low density non-urban areas to prevent the spread of coronavirus and build a more manageable food security system to counter the pandemic triggered slowdown, says eminent American economist Richard Davis Wolff.

Wolff, who believes climate change, inequality, racism, instability and the COVID-19 pandemic have converged to make the global economic crisis more acute and long-lasting, said India's anti-pandemic programmes should not just involve funding but also focus on constructing social distancing protocols for rural conditions.

"In predominantly rural economies like India, lower (non-urban) population densities should be made to work against the viral (coronavirus) spread and likewise a stress on building up food security should be more manageable," Wolff, professor emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst faculty, said.

He added, India's anti-pandemic programmes should involve funding but also systemic assistance in two key areas, to construct social distancing programmes and protocols for rural conditions and to prioritise the creation of growing, processing, and storing food.

'Exports from India-based sellers cross \$2 bn mark'



REUTERS

New Delhi, July 20: Amazon.com Inc's total exports from small and medium sellers in India, part of a company programme to export products to global markets, have crossed the \$2 billion mark, two company executives said on Monday.

Amazon's "Global Selling" programme was launched in India, a key growth market for the company, in 2015. The programme, also operational in other markets, has helped more than 60,000 Indian sellers export products to 15 Amazon websites, the company said.

During a visit to India in January, Amazon boss Jeff Bezos said the US e-commerce company would invest \$1 billion in digitising small- and medium-businesses in India and expected to export Indian-made goods worth \$10 billion by 2025.

Current sales are still a fraction of total exports of goods and services, which are estimated at nearly \$530 billion in the financial year that ended March 31.

TELCOS' AGR-RELATED DUES

SC reserves verdict on payment timeline

The Centre had earlier urged the top court that telcos be given up to 20 years for the payment of dues in staggered manner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 20: The Supreme Court Monday said it will not hear "even for a second" arguments on re-assessment of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) related dues of telecom companies which run into about ₹1.6 lakh crore.

A bench of Justices Arun Mishra, S Abdul Nazeer and MR Shah reserved verdict on the issue of timeline for staggered payment of AGR-related dues by telecom companies. When issue of re-calculation of the dues was raised, the bench shot back: "We will not hear arguments for re-assessment (of AGR related dues) even for a second."

The bench also observed that 15 or 20 years is not a reasonable time period and the companies should come forward with appropriate time frame.

The Centre had earlier urged the top court that up to 20 years be given to telecom companies for the payment of dues in staggered manner.



The top court further said that it would examine bona fides of some telecom companies going into insolvency.

The top court, June 18, was informed by the Centre that the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has decided to withdraw 96% of the ₹4 lakh crore demand for AGR related dues raised against non-telecom PSUs like GAIL.

The court had however asked the private telecom companies including Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea to come out with a "reasonable payment plan", make some payment to "show their bona fide" and file their books of accounts for the last 10 years.

BIZ BUZZ

IndiGo to axe 10% of its workforce



New Delhi: The COVID-19-induced economic turbulence has led airline major IndiGo to decide to lay off 10% of its workforce. According to Ronojoy Dutta, CEO, the company, after carefully assessing and reviewing all possible scenarios, will require to bid "a painful adieu" to 10% of its around 27,000-strong workforce. "It is for the first time in the history of IndiGo that we have undertaken such a painful measure. This is indeed a very unfortunate turn of events from the optimistic growth trajectory we had carved out for ourselves just six months ago; but this pandemic has forced us to re-evaluate our best laid plans. "To help the impacted employees" tide over the uncertainties emanating from this decision, IndiGo has created a "GE Care package," Dutta said.

Deliveries of cruiser bike 'Jawa Perak' begins

Bhubaneswar: Classic Legends Pvt. Ltd. announced the beginning of delivery of the Jawa Perak from July 20 across the country. It has been designed and developed as a factory custom and is the BSVI compliant machine. India's first Factory custom is powered by a 334cc liquid-cooled, single cylinder, four-stroke, DOHC engine, producing 30.64 PS of power and 32.74 Nm of torque. The motorcycle is priced at ₹1,94,500, ex-showroom, Delhi. Anupam Thareja, co-founder, Classic Legends said, "Built on the idea of India's first factory custom, the Perak is just that and now it is out on its prowl. We are proud of our creation and today we offer it to our customers to enjoy." The Jawa Perak is available with a range of easy finance options, with the company offers 50% off on first 3 EMIs.



India to store crude oil in US

New Delhi: India plans to store its crude oil in US strategic petroleum reserves for use not just during emergencies but also for trading to capture any price advantage, officials said. India and the US July 17 signed a preliminary agreement for cooperating on emergency crude oil reserves, including the possibility of India storing oil in the US emergency stockpile. "It is a good concept but comes with a lot of riders," a senior government official said. For one, India will have to pay a rental for hiring the storages in the US. This rental will be on top of the international price for oil.

RIL-Google smartphone deal threatens Chinese firms

REUTERS

New Delhi, July 20: A \$4.5 billion deal under which Alphabet's Google will collaborate with India's Reliance Industries on a new smartphone likely heralds a big shake-up for the world's second-largest mobile market, industry executives and analysts say.

Reliance boss Mukesh Ambani, announcing the partnership at his company's annual meeting last week, said Google would build an Android operating system (OS) to power a low-cost "4G or even 5G" smartphone that Reliance would design.

The new phone is set to pose a major challenge to Chinese ven-



dors such as Xiaomi and BBK Electronics, owner of the Realme, Oppo and Vivo brands, which currently dominate a \$2 billion market

for sub-\$100 smartphones in India. Powered by a clever mix of Bollywood, cricket-driven marketing and product features such as

THE BIG SHAKE-UP

The new Android-OS phone by Google is set to pose a major challenge to Chinese vendors like Xiaomi and BBK Electronics

The Chinese firms sell roughly eight of every 10 smartphones in India

Reliance's ambition to hand a smartphone to every Indian could also win subscribers from telecoms rivals Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel

powerful cameras, the Chinese firms sell roughly eight of every 10 smartphones in the country. "If history is anything to go by,

Reliance will undercut other brands and pose a real threat to the low-end smartphone market," said Rushabh Doshi of tech researcher Canalys.

Reliance executed a similar plan in 2017 with the launch of the JioPhone, a no-frills device that gave users internet access for as little as \$20. JioPhone now has more 100 million users, many of whom are internet first-timers.

"They (the Chinese players) are likely to cut their price to compete and their margins could shrink," said A Gururaj, the former India head of contract manufacturers Wistron and Flextronics. "I see the Google-Jio phone as a big hit."

Reliance's ambition to hand a smartphone to every Indian could

also win subscribers from telecoms rivals Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel, who still have hundreds of millions of users with old-style feature phones on basic 2G networks.

Realme declined to comment. Reliance, Xiaomi, Oppo and Vivo did not respond to requests for comment. Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

CONTENT IS KING

The alliance will see Google invest \$4.5 billion in Reliance's digital unit, which houses telecoms and fibre businesses as well as music and movie apps. Jio has also since April won the backing of global financial and tech investors including Intel and Qualcomm.

MESSI SCORES TWO AND CREATES ANOTHER IN BARCELONA'S 5-0 ROUT OVER ALAVES; LEGANES RELEGATED DESPITE FIGHTING DISPLAY



Individual achievements (indicating scoring and assist records) are always secondary. I wished it could have come along with the league title
LIONEL MESSI

AGENCIES

Vitoria, July 20: Lionel Messi ran the show as dethroned La Liga champions Barcelona took out their frustrations on Deportivo Alaves, winning 5-0 at the Mendizorroza.

Title winners in Spain for each of the past two years, Barcelona surrendered their crown to Real Madrid this season and there might be fallout from that setback still to come.

At Alaves, however, it was a case of Barcelona showing they remain the most watchable team in Spain when they find their rhythm, a double from Messi and further goals from Ansu Fati, Luis Suarez and Nelson Semedo doing the damage.

Barcelona threw away their lead in the title race after a handful of post-lockdown draws allowed Madrid to steal a march and losing to 10-man Osasuna on Thursday reflected their misery, leading to questions being asked about coach Quique Setien's future. It was a thoroughly different story, Sunday. The visitors had already hit the

ARGENTINE'S RECORD 7TH PICHICHI AWARD

VITORIA: Lionel Messi secured a record seventh Pichichi award after the Barcelona star finished the 2019-20 season as the leading scorer in La Liga. He finished the league season with 25 goals to his name in 33 appearances after finding the target twice against Deportivo Alaves. The Argentinian had equalled Athletic Bilbao great Telmo Zarra's record of six awards last season, but he is now out on his own after another superb campaign in front of goal.

MESSI'S PICHICHI AWARDS

2009-10, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 & 2019-20

Alaves goal frame three times, through Riqui Puig, Arturo Vidal and Messi, before they took a 24th-minute lead through Fati. Messi was the creator, with his cross from the right having the sting slightly taken out of it by a minor deflection before dropping perfectly for Fati to crack into the bottom-right corner.

The second goal in the 34th minute came when Barcelona burst at pace and located their talisman in the centre of the penalty area.

Puig dutifully laid the ball into Messi's path from the left, and after shimmying delightfully to deceive goalkeeper Roberto Jimenez, the Argentinian stroked the ball home from close range. Vidal had a header well saved by Roberto from Messi's terrific cross, before Suarez made it 3-0 in the 44th minute, nodding home after great link-up play from Messi and Jordi Alba.

Semedo replaced the injured Clement Lenglet early in the second

LEO DETHRONES XAVI IN ASSIST RECORD

VITORIA: Lionel Messi has set a new record for most assists in La Liga in a single season, surpassing former Barcelona teammate Xavi in the process. The Barcelona forward played the ball into the box for 17-year-old winger Ansu Fati to knock in for the opening goal against Deportivo Alaves Sunday. The assist was Messi's 21st in the league this term, breaking the record his former teammate Xavi set in 2008-09. Messi had matched Xavi's figure in last week's 1-0 victory against Real Valladolid, when he became the Spanish top-flight's first player to register 20 goals and 20 assists in a single campaign.

half and left his defensive station to surge into the Alaves box and smash home a fourth goal in the 57th minute. Messi guided home a cross from Alba in the 75th minute, and suddenly Barcelona were all smiles.

Leganes end Real's winning run

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, July 20: Real Madrid ended their Spanish league title-winning campaign with a 2-2 draw that relegated Leganes after four straight seasons in the first division.

The result also ended Real's 10-game winning streak following the pandemic break. Zinedine Zidane's team had sealed their record 34th league title — and first in three years — Thursday Real ended five points ahead of second-place Barcelona — 87 to 82.

Leganes, led by Mexican coach Javier Aguirre, had entered the match one point behind Celta Vigo, the first team outside the relegation zone.

Celta, winless in the final seven rounds, survived despite being held 0-0 by last-place Espanyol. It will play in the top flight for a ninth straight year next season. Espanyol and second-to-last-place Mallorca had already been relegated.

Sergio Ramos opened the scor-

ing for Real with a header in the ninth minute for his sixth goal since the league resumed. Leganes restored parity with Bryan Gil's goal in first-half stoppage time before Marco Asensio gave Madrid the lead again from close range in the 52nd.

Roger Assale equalised again with a shot from inside the area in the 78th but the hosts were not

able to get the winner despite some good chances near the end. They wanted a penalty for a hand ball inside the area in the final minutes but video review let the game continue.

Leganes were unbeaten in the last five rounds, with three wins and two draws. The team from southern Madrid last played in the second division in 2015-16.

FINAL STANDINGS

#	TEAM	M	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	REAL MADRID	38	26	9	3	45	87
2	BARCELONA	38	25	7	6	48	82
3	ATLETICO MADRID	38	18	16	4	24	70
4	SEVILLA	38	19	13	6	20	70
5	VILLARREAL	38	18	6	14	14	60
6	REAL SOCIEDAD	38	16	8	14	8	56
18	LEGANES	38	8	12	18	-21	36
19	MALLORCA	38	9	6	23	-25	33
20	ESPANYOL	38	5	10	23	-31	25

Champions League
Europa League Qualification

Europa League
Relegation



AGONY: Leganes players look dejected; one of their players is consoled (inset) by a Real Madrid player, Sunday

No Ballon d'Or this year amid pandemic

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, July 20: The prestigious Ballon d'Or will not be awarded this year because the coronavirus pandemic has disrupted the soccer season.

Awarded by France Football magazine, the Ballon d'Or has been given out every year since Stanley Matthews won the first one in 1956. Lionel Messi has won it a record six times — one more than longtime rival Cristiano Ronaldo.

The magazine started giving out a women's award in 2018, but that has also been put on hold. "It's such a strange year that we couldn't treat it as an ordinary one. Let's say that we started talking about (making the decision) at least two months ago," France Football editor Pascal Ferre told this agency in a telephone interview.

"It isn't a decision we took lightly but we had to accept it couldn't be a normal or typical Ballon d'Or winner, and what really worried us it that it wouldn't be fairly awarded."

Because the game's rules have been modified during the pandemic, the award itself was impacted. "The season started with

certain rules and ended with other rules. In January and February, soccer was played in front of full stands. Then from May and June it was with empty stands," Ferre said.

"Then we had the five substitutes rule and not three. Then other changes happened in terms of the competitions, notably the final eight (eight-team knockout format) for the Champions League when it had started with home and away legs."

With the European Championship and the Copa America postponed this year, the Champions League would have massively weighed on the award's outcome but with a format inadvertently providing a shortcut for an eventual victory.

The Kopa Trophy for the best player U-21 and the Lev Yashin award for best goalkeeper have also been canceled this year, Ferre said.

To fill this year's gap, the magazine created another trophy: the France Football Dream Team. The magazine's jury of 180 will elect history's best team from a shortlist of five players in each position.

Blues cash in on De Gea howlers

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, July 20: At least David De Gea was spared having a crowd inside Wembley to witness his latest mistakes in the Manchester United goal. Gifted goals to beat United 3-1 Sunday, Chelsea will be returning to the national stadium August 1 to face Arsenal in an all-London FA Cup final.

De Gea's first mistake came in the 11th minute of first-half stoppage time. Olivier Giroud's close-range deft touch from Cesar Azpilicueta's cross was pushed into his own goal by De Gea.

United, which was rocked by Eric Bailly being hospitalized with a first-half head injury, returned to the field early for the start of the second half but was just as sloppy.

Diving to his left, De Gea let Mason Mount's long-range strike go through his gloves. There was shared United culpability for the 46th-minute goal since Brandon Williams gave the ball away around the halfway line with a misplaced pass that Mount seized on.

It summed up United's misfortune that the third goal in the 74th came from captain Harry Maguire accidentally turning the ball past De Gea at the near post when under pressure from Chelsea's Antonio Rudiger.



Chelsea players celebrate a goal; Man United goalie David de Gea haplessly looks at the ball rolling into the nets following his howler

Usually Sergio Romero plays in goal for United in the FA Cup. De Gea hadn't played in the competition since the 2018 final when Chelsea beat United.

With three years remaining on De Gea's contract, United has a quandary over the future of one of its highest-paid players who was once considered one of the world's top goalkeepers.

United can so often rely on winning a penalty. But even earning

a 19th spot-kick of the season — converted by Bruno Fernandes in the 85th after Anthony Martial was fouled by Callum Hudson-Odoi — could not spark a late comeback.

It means Frank Lampard's first season as Chelsea manager will end with a cup final. It will be a harder route to a second final in August, with Chelsea trailing 0-3 to Bayern Munich in the Champions League round of 16.

Leicester lose to Spurs

LONDON: Leicester's 0-3 loss at Tottenham in the Premier League Sunday means the 2016 champions risk dropping out of the top four after being there since September.

Fifth-place United remains only behind Leicester on goal difference and has a game in hand against West Ham on Wednesday before playing Brendan Rodgers' side Sunday.

Chelsea is a point ahead of Leicester going into Wednesday's game at newly crowned champion Liverpool and Sunday's finale against Wolverhampton.

Tottenham's victory over Leicester was secured by Harry Kane setting up the opener before netting twice to take his tally to 23 goals in this injury-restricted season.

Tottenham, which moved up to sixth place in its pursuit of a Europa League place, took the lead in the sixth minute after Son Heung-min ran onto Kane's pass before sending in a shot that was deflected in by James Justin.

Lucas Moura played in Kane for a low finish in the 37th and the Brazilian set up the striker again three minutes later for a shot curled into the far corner.

GM Harikrishna finishes 2nd in Biel rapid event



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 20: Indian Grandmaster P Harikrishna finished second in the rapid section of the 53rd Biel International Chess Festival in Switzerland.

The World No.26 scored 10 points, two less than Radoslaw Wojtaszek of Poland, who finished on top, late Sunday.

German teenager Vincent Keymer also had 10 points, but he had to settle for third place as his tie-breaker score was inferior to that of Harikrishna. England's veteran Michael Adams finished fourth with eight points.

Earlier, the Indian GM had finished on top in the ACCENTUS Chess960 tournament, with 5.5 points. Harikrishna (Elo 2690) remained unbeaten through the seven rounds. The tournament continues Tuesday with the classical event.

The Biel Chess Festival, the first major event to be played over the board amid the COVID-19 pandemic, is being organised by adhering to all health protocols.

At the chessboard, the distance is increased by having two tables between the players. All pieces, boards and chess clocks are cleaned after each game. Also, spectators are not allowed at the venue.

WT20 makes way for IPL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, July 20: The ICC Monday postponed the World T20 (WT20) in Australia owing to the pandemic, paving the way for the BCCI to organise the IPL during the October-November window.

"The ICC today (Monday) confirmed the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Australia 2020 has been postponed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic," the ICC said in a statement.

The WT20 was scheduled Down Under from October 18-November 15 but Cricket Australia, in the



tine arrangement of 16 international teams.

In addition to this, the 2023 50-over World Cup in India was pushed from March-April to the November window to give more time for the qualification process.

"At today's meeting of the IBC Board (the commercial subsidiary of the ICC), windows for the next three ICC men's events were also agreed to bring clarity to the calendar and give the sport the best possible opportunity over the next three years to recover from the disruption caused by COVID-19," said an official.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, July 20: Ben Stokes removed Jermaine Blackwood (55) off the final ball before tea to leave the West Indies on 137/5 and ignite England's chances of winning the second Test on the final day at Old Trafford Monday.

England has a minimum of 41.2 overs to take the final five wickets for a victory that would tie the series at 1-1 ahead of the third and final Test starting Friday, also in Manchester.

If the West Indies hold on for a

draw, it will retain the Wisden Trophy having beaten England in a home series last year. Shamirh Brooks (52 batting) was unbeaten at the crease.

The tourists were rocking at 37/4 after Stuart Broad trapped Roston Chase lbw for his third wicket of the innings, for the loss of 25 runs. The paceman has six wickets for the match on his recall to the team after being dropped for the first test.

Yet it was Stokes who has been England's star, once again. Before taking that crucial wicket of

Blackwood, the all-rounder had gone into limited-overs mode to plunder 78 not out off 57 balls to help England to 129/3 before captain Joe Root declared with his team having a lead of 311 runs.

England made 92 runs off 11 overs after resuming on 37/2, effectively taking the game away from the West Indies.

BRIEF SCORES (AT TEA): England 469/9d & 129/3d (Ben Stokes 78 n o); West Indies 287 & 137/5 (Jermaine Blackwood 55, Shamirh Brooks 52 batting; Stuart Broad 3/31). Match to continue.