



JUMPING TIME FRAMES

Actor Shruti Haasan says it was fun to prep for her character, an older woman, in the upcoming film *Yaara*

LEISURE

P2



VIJAYAN REELS OUT STATS

Though Covid cases rise in Kerala, CM Vijayan defends state with statistics, saying everything is under control

TWO STATES

P7



SERIOUS THREAT

Locust attacks are posing a serious threat to food security in parts of East Africa, India and Pak

INTERNATIONAL

P10

Airborne transmission ‘distinctly possible’: CSIR

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 21: Alluding to the emerging evidence, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) chief Shekhar C Mande has asserted that airborne transmission of COVID-19 is indeed a "distinct possibility" and advised people to wear masks even in enclosed spaces. His remarks came days after the World Health Organization acknowledged the emerging ev-

idence of airborne spread of the novel coronavirus.

In a blogpost on CSIR's website, Mande referred to findings of various studies and wrote, "All these emerging evidences and arguments suggest that indeed airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is a distinct possibility." The CSIR chief advised people to avoid large crowded gatherings, keep enclosed places like workplaces well-ventilated and wear masks even in enclosed spaces.



"In open spaces, the small-sized droplets get dissipated in the air very quickly. Moreover, emerging evidence also suggests that the encapsulated virus in such droplets also gets inactivated by sunlight. However, the concentration of virion-encapsulated droplets is likely to be higher in places that are not well ventilated," he said substantiating his claims.

Earlier this month, the WHO had acknowledged the

emerging evidence of airborne spread after an open letter by over 200 scientists outlined evidence that showed floating virus particles can infect people who breathe them in. For months, the WHO had insisted that Covid-19 is transmitted via droplets emitted when people cough or sneeze. Droplets that do not linger in the air, but fall onto surfaces - that's why hand-washing has been identified as a key prevention measure.



Keonjhar: MDM, free textbooks, clothes from DMF



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, July 21: In a major step, students of Classes IX and X in government and aided schools in Keonjhar district will now receive free textbooks, uniforms and mid-day meals with funds under the district mineral development foundation (DMF) from this academic year onwards.

It will be implemented at a cost of ₹22 crore annually with the DMF fund in line with the recommendations of the National Education Policy (draft), 2019. This will benefit 50,000 students of Classes IX & X of the district every year.

Further, Class X students who perform well in the Board of Secondary Education examination will be given scholarships ranging from ₹10,000 to ₹40,000 based on marks scored.

The main objectives of the initiative are to prevent drop-outs after Class VIII, address their nutritional needs during adolescence, encourage them to successfully complete their schooling cycle and support them financially to pursue higher studies beyond Class X level.

It is seen that out of every 100 children enrolling for Class 1 in the district, less than 60 continue their studies beyond Class X. One of the key factors for the high transition loss is the sudden withdrawal of support provided to students in the form of free textbooks, uniforms and mid-day meals after Class VIII. In a socio-economically backward district like Keonjhar where more than 55% of people belong to SC& ST, the initiative will transform secondary education in the district, in coming years.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Is this how you are planning to save democracy? You gave me only 20 cr but the tapes say I got 35!!

SHORT TAKES

MP Governor Tandon dead

Lucknow: Madhya Pradesh Governor Lalji Tandon (85) passed away here Tuesday after a prolonged illness. His son and UP minister Ashutosh Tandon confirmed the news. Lalji Tandon was admitted to the Medanta hospital on June 13 after he complained of urinary problem and fever. He, thereafter, developed complications in liver and kidney and even underwent a surgical procedure. He was put on ventilator later. Born April 12, 1935, Tandon is survived by his wife Krishna Tandon and three sons. The veteran leader has served as member of the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Parishad for two terms and also remained the Leader of House of the Council.



N95 masks with valves 'harmful'

New Delhi: The Centre has written to all states and Union Territories warning against the use of N-95 masks with valved respirators by people, saying these do not prevent the virus from spreading out and are "detrimental" to the measures adopted for its containment. The DGHS in the Ministry of Health said there is "inappropriate use" of N-95 masks, particularly those with valved respirators, by the public other than designated health workers.

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VARIATION	
SENSEX	37930.33	▲	511.34
NIFTY	11162.30	▲	140.10
DOLLAR	74.70	▼	₹0.14
EURO	85.40	▼	₹0.34
GOLD	₹49,442	▲	₹415
SILVER	₹57,000	▲	₹2995

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP	35.4°C	34.4°C	
MIN	27.4°C	25.4°C	
Humidity	94%	79%	Forecast
Rainfall	Trace	Nil	Partly cloudy sky

RETIREMENT AGE OF DOCS RAISED TO 65

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: The state government Tuesday enhanced the retirement age of doctors from 62 to 65 to meet the burgeoning demand for doctors in view of the pandemic.

Retirement age of all doctors of Odisha Medical and Health Services (OMHS) cadres as well as allopathic insurance medical officers under labour & employees' state insurance department has been raised from 62 to 65, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced.

Taking stock of the Covid situation in Khurda and Cuttack districts, Naveen said over 1 lakh migrants have returned to the two districts. In spite of the large influx, the situation is under control with recovery rate in Khurda at 70 per cent and in Cuttack at 71 per cent- much above the national average of 63 per cent.

"I appreciate the teams in both these districts for achieving higher recovery rates," he said. Naveen announced ₹15 crore each for the two districts from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) for Covid management. Besides, he sanctioned ₹20.64 crore from CMRF for running of dedicated Covid hospitals and Covid care centres for next three months.

He announced to set up a 150-bed (including 30 bed of ICU) dedicated Covid hospital by Aditya Ashwini Hospital in the capital city. Another special Covid hospital will come up in Nilanchal Hospital with 126 beds and 15 ICU beds within this week, he announced.

Similarly, 925 additional beds in Covid hospitals and Covid Care Centres are being established in Cuttack district.

The Chief Minister directed concerned officials to give special focus on slum areas in Bhubaneswar and congested areas in Cuttack to contain the spread of the virus. A special training and information centre for Covid-19 will be set up at SCB Medical College soon. The molecular genome lab in the medical college for viral and human host genome sequencing to predict the prognosis of Covid-19 patients will be upgraded.

All public services on single platform

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: As part of the 5T model of governance, the state government will bring in all public services under a common platform so that people will get all services by logging into the website named OdishaOne. The website will be launched in a month, official sources said.

Electronics and information technology department has developed a common frontend interface to make it more convenient for citizens. Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy Tuesday held a meeting to this effect, Tuesday.

Electronics and IT secretary Manoj Mishra said, this portal is not a substitute to departmental e-governance applications. It is an integrated service delivery framework for G2C services either through self mode or through common service center (CSCs) mode.

"OdishaOne portal has been designed in such a way that various departmental applications can utilize this framework irrespective of their



DIGITAL EDGE

- STATE GOVT TO LAUNCH ODISHAONE PORTAL FOR ALL PUBLIC SERVICES
- IT WILL BE INTEGRATED WITH DEPARTMENTAL SOFTWARE, PAYMENT GATEWAYS
- OFFICIALS TOLD TO INTEGRATE IT WITH THE PAYMENT GATEWAYS OF BANKS AND PAYTM

level of automation. Citizens will access online services of various departments through this single portal," Mishra said.

IT special secretary Manoj Patnaik

Bizarre: Kids fed booze to fight Covid

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, July 21: In a bizarre act, residents in Pasranpalli village under Padia block in this district did the unthinkable when researchers across the globe are struggling for a vaccine to ward off the threat of Covid-19, a report said.

Reports said around 50 children of the locality were served country liquor by villagers for what they claimed will boost their immunity and as a prevention against Covid-19.

The matter came to the fore after a video of the incident went viral in social media. Recently, the number of positive patients in the district has increased to 306 leading to panic among the residents.

The residents believe that consumption of country liquor will



CHILD ABUSE: Children taking country liquor in Pasranpalli village

keep the novel coronavirus at bay. Moreover, social distancing measures were not adhered to as

the children sat close to each other to drink liquor without wearing face masks.

Chinese vax yields immune response in phase 2 trial

AGENCIES

Beijing, July 21: A phase II clinical trial of a COVID-19 vaccine candidate, conducted in China, has found that it is safe and induces an immune response, a study published in The Lancet says.

Scientists, including those from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said the trial sought to evaluate the safety and immunogenicity of the vaccine candidate.

They said the results provide data from a wider group of participants than their earlier phase I trial, including a small sub-group of participants aged over 55 years and older.

However, the researchers cautioned that no participants in the current trial were exposed to the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV2, after vac-

cination. So they said it is not possible for the current study to determine whether the vaccine candidate effectively protects against SARS-CoV2 infection.

In the trial, the researchers used a weakened human common cold virus (adenovirus, which infects human cells readily but is incapable of causing disease) to deliver the genetic material which codes for the novel coronavirus spike protein into the cells.

The scientists said these cells then produced the coronavirus spike protein, and travel to the body's lymph nodes where the immune system creates antibodies. They said these antibodies then recognise the spike protein and fight off the coronavirus.

"The Beijing approach is based on the backbone of a conventional human, common-cold virus to which



Encouraging findings

PHASE II RESULTS PROVIDE DATA FROM A WIDER GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS THAN THEIR EARLIER PHASE I TRIAL

ANTIBODIES CREATED BY THE VACCINE RECOGNISE THE SPIKE PROTEIN AND FIGHT OFF CORONAVIRUS

some people have pre-existing antibodies and they therefore make a lower response in some people to the vaccine because people have pre-existing antibodies to their vector, so

may clear it before it has a chance to work properly," explained Danny Altmann, Professor of Immunology at Imperial College London in the UK, who is unrelated to the research team.

According to the scientists, 508 participants took part in the trial of the new vaccine candidate. Of these, they said 253 people received a high dose of the vaccine, 129 received a low dose, and 126 received a dummy treatment, a placebo.

The study noted that about two thirds of the participants were 18-44 years old, a quarter were aged 45-54 years, and 13 per cent were 55 years or older.

The participants were monitored for immediate adverse reactions for 30 minutes after injection, and were followed for any injection-site reactions within 14- and 28-days post-vaccination, the study noted.

It said serious adverse events reported by participants during the whole study period were also documented, and blood samples were taken from them immediately before treatment, and 14- and 28-days post-vaccination to measure antibody responses.

The findings revealed that 95 per cent (241/253) of the participants in the high dose group, and 91 per cent (118/129) of those in the low dose group showed either T cell or antibody immune responses at day 28 post-vaccination.

According to the researchers, the vaccine induced a neutralising antibody response in 59 per cent (148/253) and 47 per cent (61/129) of the participants, and binding antibody response in 96 per cent (244/253) and 97 per cent (125/129) of participants, in the high and low dose groups, respectively, by day 28.

95-year-old beats Covid in Ganjam



POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur July 21: A 95-year-old man managed to defeat COVID-19 as he was discharged from TATA COVID Hospital in Sitalapalli in Ganjam district July 18 after his two reports came out negative, health officials said Tuesday.

Udayanath Bisoyi, 95, was presented with flowers by doctors expressing their happiness on his discharge.

In praise of the doctors and the 95 year old COVID victor, Ganjam District Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange Tuesday took to his twitter handle and said, "It is the labour of the doctors and strong belief of the old man on the doctors that enabled the nonagenarian to defeat COVID-19."

Bisoyi, a resident of Chakunda village under Soroda block in the district, was released from the hospital last Friday.

"He did not have problems with blood sugar level or high blood pressure but had age-related conditions," said one of the staff members of the hospital.

Bisoyi tested positive for corona virus before two weeks and underwent treatment for more than 14 days. "My father has a great fighting spirit, for which he defeated the deadly virus and returned home," said one of his sons.

"If you have patience and a fighting spirit, you can beat this disease. Follow the instructions of doctors, trust them and take your medicines on time as they say," said Bisoyi while leaving the hospital after his recovery.



NOLAN'S TENET DELAYED

The Christopher Nolan-directed *Tenet* has been yet delayed again, this time indefinitely amid the growing Covid-19 crisis. Warner Bros. have removed *Tenet* from their release calendar, indicating an indefinite delay, reports *variety.com*.

NICKI ANNOUNCES PREGNANCY

Popular rapper Nicki Minaj announced her pregnancy by flaunting her baby bump in colourful posts on Instagram. Nicki and her husband Kenneth Petty are expecting their first child together. She shared the news on Instagram through several glamorous pictures of herself showing off her pregnant belly.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

You will achieve things today, not by the sleight of your hand but by your communication skills, says Ganesha. Your eloquence shall win many hearts. The stars suggest monetary benefits, but you need to guard against injury and minor ailments.

TAURUS

You are likely to confront a turning point in relationships today, foresees Ganesha. Because you are in need of some compassion and support, you will feel the need to spend time with friends and relatives. Your beloved or better half may bring a change in mood by helping you shed your negative frame of mind, says Ganesha.

GEMINI

You will be faced with a slew of demands from various people today, and you will find it difficult to meet all of them. However, you will be able to meet the requirements that need to be met to salvage the day. People will praise your intelligence and creativity, says Ganesha.

CANCER

Today is a crucial and fascinating day for you, predicts Ganesha. You will learn and gain from your bosses and elders. Peers and siblings may extend their full support to you. Your chances of winning legal battles are remote, so an out-of-court settlement may be your best bet.

LEO

If it's a fresh start that you have been looking for, then this day promises to give you just that, predicts Ganesha. If you have already chalked out any plans for your future, today is the day to initiate the implementation. Remember Lions, though, that rushing blindly into anything is not the solution. The slow and steady approach always works. Hence, consider executing your ideas in phases, advises Ganesha.

VIRGO

Today finds you ambitious and meticulous. Actions will not speak – they'll roar! Your planning and scruples will set the pace at work. Expect pats on the back from your bosses and a round of cheers from your peers.

LIBRA

Of late, you have been very concerned about the health of one of your close friends. Take this day to lay your fears to rest by spending time with that friend. Work can wait, as today you must prove to yourself, if not to others, that 'a friend in need is a friend indeed'. Ganesha wishes you the very best.

SCORPIO

Your mind shall take over the proceedings today. And it shall, in all likelihood, draw you to the work bench and keep your nose to the grindstone. But your heart will flutter like a butterfly, and if you manage to strike the right balance, you may win over your special one and your boss too, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Time to open up that can of confetti at the workplace today. Success never smelled sweeter. But you may bleed on the purchase front, says Ganesha, as in your revelry, you may just unknowingly end up shelling an extra buck or two on ordinary items.

CAPRICORN

The day will be a maze of complex problems and situations, but you will find your way out in no time, says Ganesha. At work, you may love to play the leader, but that makes you accountable, for both the good as well as the poor performance of your subordinates. In all likelihood, you may be held responsible for the poor performance of your team members. But all said and done, you will set high standards for yourself, and a perfect example for others to follow.

AQUARIUS

Today is an auspicious day, particularly for astrologers, healers, spiritual guides and gurus, says Ganesha. One will think twice before challenging you today. Greed is not a word in your dictionary, and today, you are even more inspired to work for humanity.

PISCES

Just as melting ice caps on faraway mountains can swell the oceans, concerted efforts you make now will have far-reaching beneficial consequences, says Ganesha. Do not be disheartened in the face of obstacles and keep soldiering on.

Shruti opens up on playing older woman in *Yaara*

MUMBAI: Actress Shruti Haasan says it was fun to prepare for her character in the upcoming film *Yaara*, as she was playing an older woman for the first time.

Shruti said: "The story is set in the seventies and then in the nineties, so it was lovely to jump time frames. The portion of the nineties is when we are playing older versions of our characters."

"This was the first time ever that I would be playing an older woman, so it was fun to prepare myself for that," The actress added.

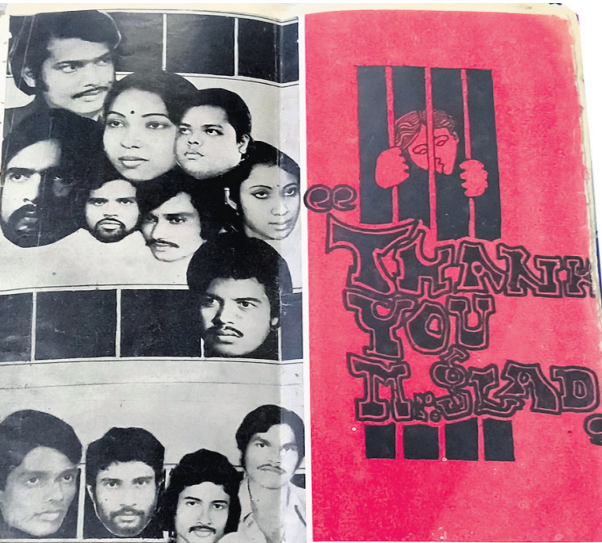
The film co-starring Vidut Jammwal, Amit Sadh, Vijay Varma, Kenny Basumatary and Sanjay Mishra, is slated to open on Friendship Day, July 30 on ZEE5.

The Tigamanshu Dhulia directorial is a Hindi remake of the French film *Gang Story*. The story of the film is set in North India, and is about the rise and fall of a group of four friends operating along the Indo-Nepal border.



'Thank you Mr Glad'

Eminent theatre personality and NSD alumnus Ajit Das said veteran actor Bijay Mohanty promised him to return to stage once he came back from Hyderabad but he didn't keep his words



A poster of play *Thank You Mr. Glad* in which Bijay Mohanty had appeared on stage for one last time

BIJAY MANDAL, OP

Thank you Mr Glad is not just a play the legendary Odia actor Bijay Mohanty acted in and as 'Mr Glad'. He was Mr Glad in real life also, said another stalwart of Odia entertainment industry Ajit Das.

"I have never seen him sad in our nearly 50 year-long association. He was completely at peace even in death. When I reached the hospital his eyes were open and as if he was asking me why I was so late," said the *Hakim Babu* actor while trying desperately to control his emotion.

Bijay Mohanty was not just a household name. He was and will probably remain the tallest ever star the Odia film industry has seen in terms of popularity. However, one should not forget that he was also a prolific theatre activist.

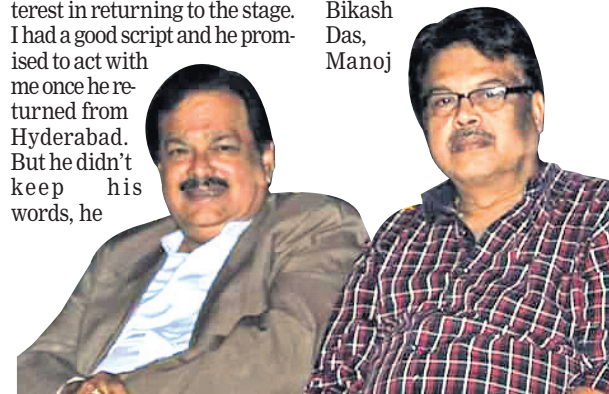
Ajit had a lot to say about the iconic play *Thank You Mr Glad*. "I was playing 'Dr Veer Bhusan', a nationalist who was sentenced to death by the British government while Bijay Babu played 'Mr Glad', a police officer. Glad kills Veer in the climax. It was an interesting drama which he (Bijay) had translated from Marathi play of the same name and directed it also. Even though Veer is set to be hanged

in a few days in the play, Mr Glad takes the former's help to save his pregnant daughter's life. Moved by Veer's gesture, Mr Glad shoots him dead. 'You need a hero's death instead of being just hanged like a commoner', the British officer says to justify his action. To which Veer offers his thanks and says "Thank You Mr Glad."

That may have been plot of the drama but in real life Ajit couldn't thank his friend for a long time and probably will never be able to. "He was busy with his film assignments and couldn't do theatre for a long time. However, a year back when we last met he showed keen interest in returning to the stage. I had a good script and he promised to act with me once he returned from Hyderabad. But he didn't keep his words, he

'cheated' me and went away. So, I won't say 'thank you' this time," said Ajit with emotion choking his voice.

Ajit's friendship with Bijay dates back to late 1970s when both were in National School of Drama (NSD) in New Delhi. Bijay was two years senior to him. After passing out of the country's premier theatre training institute, both joined as lecturers in Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalay that, over the years, has produced many eminent actors and directors like Hara Patnaik, Raimohan Parida, Minaketan Das, Ashrumochan Mohanty, Mihir Swain, Choudhury Bikash Das, Manoj



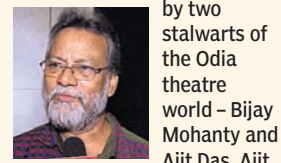
Ajit Das and Bijay Mohanty - Two pillars of Odia theatre

A MAN OF THEATRE

Bijay Mohanty, an alumnus of NSD, had acted in more than 150 plays and directed as many. This apart, he has written seven plays as a playwright and translated 16 major Indian plays written in Hindi, Marathi and Bengali into Odia. He also formed two theatre groups Yugechha at his native place Baripada and Rangamancha in Bhubaneswar to promote theatre

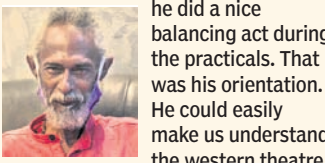
CELEBRITY STUDENTS SPEAK

MANOJ PATNAIK (Actor and director): Most of the present crop of actors, directors and technicians have been trained



by two stalwarts of the Odia theatre world – Bijay Mohanty and Ajit Das. Ajit Sir was a teacher in true sense but Bijay Sir was like a mentor, a friend, philosopher and guide. He used to call me 'Budda' (old man). He had the uncanny ability to explain things to students playfully.

CHOUDHURY BIKASH DAS (Actor and director) – We did not get much of a chance to interact with Bijay Sir during our theory classes. However,



he did a nice balancing act during the practicals. That was his orientation. He could easily make us understand the western theatre while he directed us during production of plays. I had the opportunity to see him on stage. He was playing 'Mr Glad', an English officer. Being a learned and sensible actor, he easily mixed up the British ascent with local dialects.

ANTARYAMI PANDA (Actor and stage designer): There was pin drop silence at the auditorium once Bijay Sir entered the



stage. He was a very cool director and kept the rehearsal room calm, he never shouted like many directors do. He would enact each and every scene during the rehearsal sessions to make it easier for his actors. Besides, he always kept us happy with proper plate loads delicious snacks.

ASHRUMOCHAN MOHANTY (Actor): It is a misconception among some outsiders that Bijay Sir never



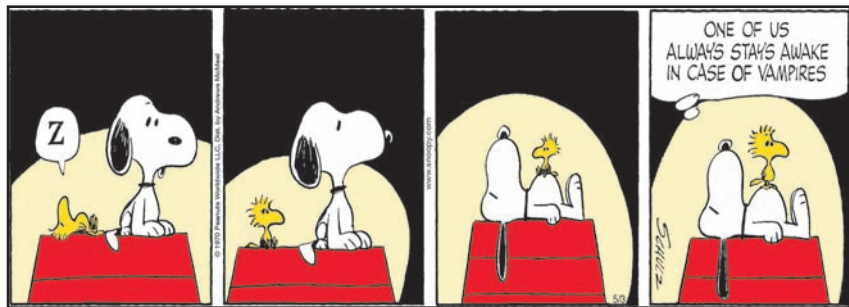
attended classes due to his shooting commitments. But the fact is he was a terrific teacher who could teach difficult topics in minimal time. Yes, he used to shoot frequently but would often give us tasks when he went on his assignments.

MIHIR SWAIN (Actor and director): Bijay Sir had a special quality. He was man of few words, but could get



across his thoughts precisely. He was very practical. Most importantly, he never imposed himself on students. He was also a very keen observer. Like a real teacher, he could sense the area of strength in a student and encourage him to work on it.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

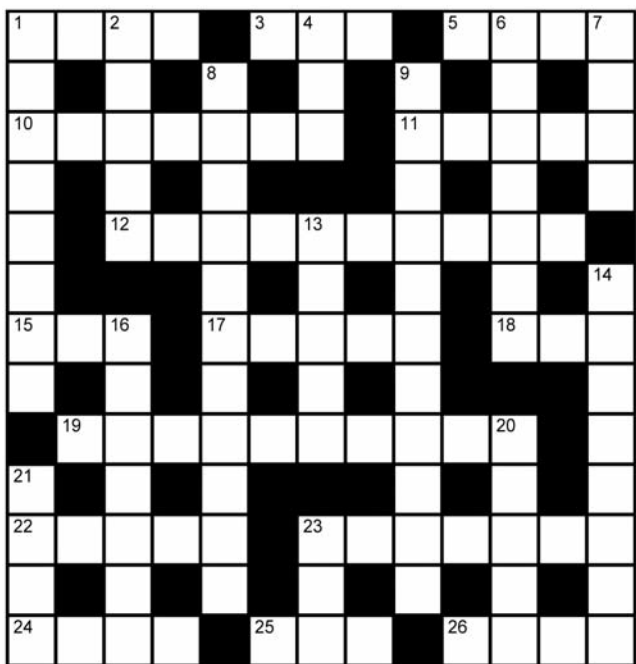


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Model's asset (3,4)
- 3 Make a move
- 5 Sea swallow
- 10 Ill will
- 11 Kick out
- 12 Like many old books (3,2,5)
- 15 Greek H
- 17 Museum piece
- 18 Lamb's mother
- 19 Bakery buy
- 22 Hurdles

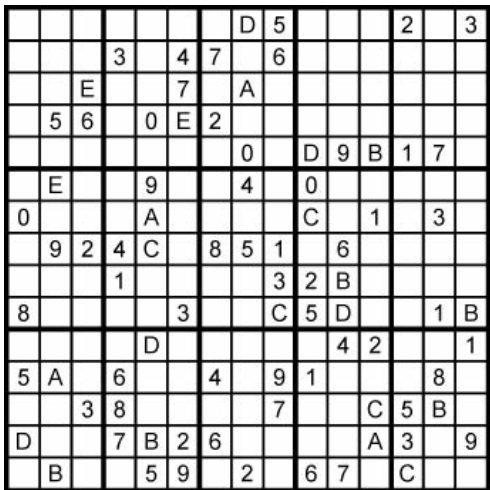
Down

- 23 Nom de plume (3,4)
- 24 Uncivil
- 25 Literary collection
- 26 Redact
- 1 Excuses
- 2 Optimist's motto (3-2)
- 4 Mangy mutt
- 6 Delete

- 7 Cairo's waterway
- 8 Ghost with a chip on it's shoulder
- 9 Elves in Irish folklore
- 13 Bogus
- 14 Standoff (4,4)
- 16 Red-faced
- 20 Oxlike antelope
- 21 Slightly open
- 23 Grenade part

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



ENHANCING BEAUTY

A gardener decorates a Shivling-shaped topiary with flowers at Jobra park in Cuttack, Tuesday

FOR A CATCH

A man casts his fishing net into Kuakhai river near Bhubaneswar, Tuesday



Puri coast no more a safe nesting site

ONLY 18, 953 OLIVE RIDLEYS HATCHED OUT AT THE FOREST DEPT HATCHERIES IN 2019-20 BREEDING SEASON

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, July 21: The Puri coast is no more an attractive or safe nesting site for the endangered Olive Ridley sea turtles, if the data obtained from the Forest division here is to be believed.

As per the data on marine species from Puri forest division, forest officials and volunteers had collected 48, 646 Olive Ridley eggs from 444 nests on the Puri coast in the 2019-20 breeding season. However, only 18, 953 baby turtles hatched out at the hatcheries set up by the Forest department. This was the lowest in last four years, said a Forest department official.

As per the data, the Forest department had collected 1, 21, 874 Olive Ridley eggs from 3,043 nests on Puri coast in 2016-17 breeding season. As many as 1, 05, 142 baby turtles had come out from the eggs at the temporary hatcheries



set up by the department.

Similarly, the department had collected 84,132 eggs from 1,616 nests on Puri coast in 2017-18 breeding season while 72,314 baby turtles had hatched out at Forest department hatcheries.

The data further revealed that a total of 75, 236 turtle eggs had

been collected from 804 nests on Puri coast in 2018-19 breeding season. Only 30,922 baby turtles had come out from the eggs during last breeding season, said the data. It is worth mentioning here that thousands of Olive Ridley turtles usually congregate at Puri and some other coasts in Odisha in the winter to lay eggs. A female turtle can lay up to 120 eggs at a time.

The sea turtles usually bury their eggs in sand to prevent from being devoured by predators. The eggs usually take 45 to 60 days to hatch, said a wildlife expert.

To facilitate the safe breeding of Olive Ridley turtles, the state government usually puts re-

Many environmentalists and wildlife experts blamed illegal fishing for downward trend in collection and hatching of turtle eggs

strictions on fishing on the coast from November 1 to May 31. This part, the Forest department usually sets up several temporary hatcheries to hatch the turtle eggs.

Many environmentalists and wildlife experts, meanwhile, blamed illegal fishing in the coastal sea for downward trend in the collection and hatching of turtle eggs in Puri coast. "Thousands of Olive Ridley turtles die due to illegal fishing in the restricted zones. Fishing through trawlers and mechanised boats in the restricted zone is causing the death of turtles. Even, dogs, jacks and birds are damaging turtle eggs by digging out the nests," said an environmentalist.

Assistant conservator of forests (ACF) Prashanta Kumar Swain said many turtle eggs were damaged due to unseasonal rains too.

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 21: In the light of Covid-19 and its resultant restrictions on institutions, studies and skill development training for differently-abled students in the state have taken a beating.

A number of them due to poor access to internet, digital literacy and other reasons are deprived of online education while several have physical barriers like blindness and deafness. Still some others are finding it tough to cope with the alternate method of learning.

Mili Pradhan is a blind student doing her B Ed from Cuttack. "Since March our classes are suspended. We have participated in online classes. Though we are not able to use all features of online classes, we are trying to cope with that."

Several students on the other side find it tough to manage their online classes through smart phones. A recent survey by Odisha-based voluntary outfit, Swabhiman, claimed more than half of their respondents found it tough to manage studied through online classes.

The survey hinted that several of them may also drop out of schools



if such alternate learning continues. The government has ordered schools including special schools shut. The government, however, has exempted therapy centres for kids with intellectual disabilities. Not only education, but skill development training has come to a halt for the differently-abled. Institutions claim trainers themselves are not well versed with online platform and need special training.

A number of differently-abled youths get training in the ministry of labour and employment managed-National Career Service Centre for the Differently-abled (NCSCDA), Pokhariput where they are trained in skills like tailoring, beauty parlour, mobile repairing and others free of cost. However such training has been suspended.

"We do some classes for pre-recruitment coaching for them and are planning to bring alternatives

to those who want to take help from us for skill development training. However, some practical problems like lack of training for online classes of trainers pose new challenges. We are trying to work out on these hassles," said Ram Kishore Sharma, assistant director, NC-SCDA, Bhubaneswar.

The state government, however, claimed it has worked out a plan to cater to the needs of different segments of disabilities as per their needs. Talking to Orissa POST, Bhaskar Jyoti Sharma, secretary, department of social security and empowerment of persons with disabilities (SSEPD) said, "We understand the fact that different types of disabilities need different multi-disciplinary approach and have worked on some and working out on others."

"We have produced audio books for blind students till Class VIII. It is likely to be ready by August 15. We have also been conducting one to one classes for kids with mental retardation, intellectual disabilities and cerebral palsy. We also work for advanced products to cater to the needs of special kids," he added.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Youth hacked in broad daylight in Capital

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: Making a mockery of the law and order situation in the Capital city, five miscreants Tuesday brutally attacked a youth in broad daylight at Bapuji Nagar, just a few metres from the Capital police station here.

The victim has been identified as P Narshimha of Radagadam Basti, a slum in Bapuji Nagar area under Capital police limits.

Narshimha reportedly attacked one N Surendra Das of the same slum while he was returning after answering nature's call in the wee hours of Tuesday in connection with a previous brawl. Surendra sustained injuries and was rushed to Capital Hospital. Surendra's family lodged a complaint against Narsimha at the

Capital police station, sources said.

Angered over the incident, Surendra's son Shiva Das along with some of his friends attacked Narsimha with a sharp weapon while he was lying in an inebriated condition near the overbridge at Bapuji Nagar in the afternoon.

The miscreants fled the spot when Narasimha's family members rushed to his rescue. Narsimha sustained several grievous injuries and was referred to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack.

Police have started investigation into the incident after registering two separate cases (279/20, 280/20) against both the warring parties. Police detained Surendra and one of his sons, Muna, in connection with the incident while accused Shiva and his aides are on the run.

Ex-IAS officer Priyabrata Patnaik dead

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: Retired senior IAS officer Priyabrata Patnaik died at a private hospital in Mumbai Tuesday. He was 67. The 1976-batch officer had been in

the hospital for the last 40 days and was battling against cancer. Family sources said he breathed his last at 7.30am Tuesday. Efforts are on to bring his mortal remains back to Odisha. The bureaucrat

served the state in various capacities including the CMD of Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation in the rank of chief secretary. He was also the president of Odisha Judo Association.

CPCB seeks report on river pollution

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has sought reports from the Odisha State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) on the pollution levels in 19 rivers and the action plan of the board to tackle the same.

In a communication to the SPCB, the central pollution watchdog has



asked the board to respond by September 15, 2020. This has come

to light after the National Green Tribunal earlier heard the matter and passed the direction on river pollution in the country.

The data collection from the CPSB is part of the exercise. Earlier, the CPCB had claimed that 19 rivers in Odisha have been polluted and contaminated. State government had also admitted the fact in a reply furnished in the Assembly.

Versatile actor Bijay laid to rest with state honour

ODIA FILM INDUSTRY WON'T GET A SECOND BIJAY MOHANTY, OPINE HIS FANS AND ADMIRERS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: Veteran actor Bijay Mohanty's mortal remains were consigned to flames at Satyanagar crematorium here, Tuesday with state honour. His son-in-law lit the pyre.

Only the family members and some close relatives were allowed to be present at the crematorium due to Covid-19 restrictions. Earlier on the day, his body was taken in a flower-decked vehicle from the hospital, where he was admitted for treatment, to his Rasulgarh residence - Vaishnav Monarch- and then to Utkal Sangeeta

Mahavidyalaya for his well-wishers and followers to pay their last tribute.

A guard of honour, as announced by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, was given at the Sangeet Mahavidyalaya.

Several prominent Odia film actors, directors, the students of the Mahavidyalaya paid their last tribute to the eminent actor at the Mahavidyalaya campus where the body was kept for an hour.

The body was taken to Satyanagar crematorium from the Mahavidyalaya after a guard of ho-



Actors Prashanta Nanda, Ajit Das, Raimohan Parida and other dignitaries at Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya to pay their last respect to the actor



The guard of honour being given to the actor, who passed away Monday

nour was given to the actor.

Though as per the Covid restrictions not more than 20 people are allowed, hundreds of people with masks on their faces were seen participating in the funeral procession to have a glimpse of the noted actor for the last night and to pay their homage.

Snigdha Mohanty, who had acted with Bijay in multiple memorable movies, said "He was always an elder brother to me and will always occupy a special place in my heart. There was no role in which he did not shine. Be it negative or



Vijay's wife and actor Tandira Ray (L) at the Sangeet Mahavidyalaya

emotional or funny... whatever role he was given, he played with aplomb. There will be no second Bijay Mohanty."

Actor Sritam Das said, "I have acted with him in several iconic movies like Ram Laxman, Jeevan Sathi and others. He helped me a lot in my career and helped me in every way. I had met him a few days ago. I can't believe he has left us. His demise is an irreparable loss to Odisha."

One of his neighbours in the apartment, Chittaranjan Tripathy, a chartered accountant, said "We used to jog together. He was a pure hearted person and will be missed forever."

Actor and former MP Siddhant Mohapatra said he could never forget the memorable moments of his life when he shared screen space with the legendary actor. "He had played the role of my father in my first movie. He was always there to help me."

Actor Ashrumochan Mohanty said, "Bijay Sir guided Odia cinema like a lighthouse and was an all-rounder. No one can take his place."

Earlier, several eminent personalities like Anu Choudhury, Sabyasachi, Manas Mangaraj, Mahasweta Ray, Uttam Mohanty and others paid tribute to the actor on social media.

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Government of Odisha OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION, DHENKANAL e-Procurement Notice No. 4/Road Work/2020-21

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Name of the Work | : Road Works |
| 2. Total No. of Works | : 22 (Twenty Two) Nos. |
| 3. Estimated Cost | : Rs.10.53 lakhs to 83.58 lakhs (Approx.) |
| 4. Class of Contractor | : "D", "C", "B" & "A" Class |
| 5. Period of Completion | : 2 (Two) Months |
| 6. Availability of Tender | : 31.07.2020 at 11.00 A.M. to 10.08.2020 upto 5.00 P.M. |
| 7. Last date & time of seeking tender clarification | : 07.08.2020 upto 4.00 P.M. |
| 8. Date & time of opening of tender (Technical Bid) | : 12.08.2020 at 11.00 A.M. |
| 9. Date & time of opening of tender (Financial Bid) | : 13.08.2020 at 11.00 A.M. |

Sd./- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Dhenkanal

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Sl. No.	Name of the work	Approx. estimated cost in Rs.	Cost of tender paper including VAT @4% in Rs. (Non-refundable)	EMD amount in Rs.	Date of selling of tender paper	Last date of receipt of tender paper	Date & time of opening of tender
1	Annual maintenance of control & relay panels in MCR, S/Sy, UCP, Static Excitation System Panels, G.T. UAT, S.S.T., all associated switchgears, illumination system & such other Elect. Maintenance works on job contract basis. This is to support core group of OHPC workmen.	Rs.34.60.087/-	Rs.7080/- (Rs.8000/- @18%)	1% of quoted value	30.07.2020 to 13.08.2020	16.00 hrs. of 14.08.2020	16.30 hrs. of 14.08.2020

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OHPCLD-04/0022/11/0008/2021

PMFBY TO COVER 8 CROPS FOR 2020 KHARIF SEASON

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: The state government has decided to include eight major crops - paddy, groundnut, cotton, turmeric, ginger, millet, red-gram (arhar) and maize - under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) for the Kharif season, 2020.

The registration process for framers to get their crops covered under the scheme is in progress and will conclude July 31. Farmers can register with banks, insurance companies, primary agricultural co-operative societies (PACS) and Common Service Centers (CSCs) in panchayats and blocks.

This was revealed at a meeting presided over by Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy here Tuesday. As crop insurance registration is a voluntary matter for farmers, awareness campaign should be launched for the farmers in this regard.

Insurance companies, banks, field-level agricultural workers, farmers' clubs and producers' groups are urged to actively cooperate in the initiative.

Agriculture and Farmer Empowerment secretary Sourav Garg said that during the current Kharif season, eight crops have been included under the insurance scheme. The land record of farmers has been linked to the national crop insurance portal, he said.



AGRI INSURANCE

Paddy, groundnut, cotton, turmeric, ginger, millet, red-gram (arhar) and maize to be covered under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana for the Kharif season, 2020

Farmers have to pay 5 per cent of the sum insured for cash crops such as cotton, ginger & turmeric and 2 per cent for other crops

Farmers' registration will continue till July 31

Agriculture director Muthu Kumar said the amount of farmland insured had been steadily rising over the past four years. During the 2016 Kharif season, crops over an area of 12.57 lakh hectare were insured, while 13.46 lakh hectares were covered in 2017, 14.26 lakh hectares in 2018 and 18.52 lakh hectares in 2019, the director said.

Since 2014, crop testing has been successfully conducted through remote sensing applications and mobile apps. "Odisha is a leading state in this regard," Kumar said.

According to sources, the scheme determines the amount of insurance depending on the size of the farmland and the crop type. Farmers have to pay 5 per cent of the sum insured for cash crops such as cotton, ginger & turmeric and 2 per cent for other crops. State and Centre are bearing 50 per cent each of the remaining amount of the premium.

As Odisha is a state prone to natural disasters, the Chief Secretary has directed the officials concerned to include more and more farmers under the PMFBY.

SHUTDOWN IN SAMBALPUR FROM TODAY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: The district administration of Sambalpur Tuesday announced shutdown in the district from Wednesday in a phased manner till July 31.

A notification in this regard was published Tuesday by the office of Sambalpur Collector Subham Saxena which said that the shutdown will be imposed in the district in two phases.

The phase I shutdown will be enforced from July 22 to 25 while the second phase of shutdown will be from July 16 to 31.

"During this period, intra-district movement of public and private transport and closure of shops and establishment, government and private institutions and movement/assembly of people are restricted," the notification from the Sambalpur Collector office said. It also added, "No two wheelers except for the exempted categories mentioned will be allowed to ply during the period."

On the other hand, during the Phase II of the shutdown, all shops and commercial establishments, offices and institutions would remain closed and mobility of people restricted and no two wheelers except for the exempted categories mentioned would be allowed.

The office order has allowed very few institutions even government outlets to open during Phase I shutdown. Only emergency service providers have been allowed to operate.

NORMS THROWN TO WINDS



People ignore social distancing norms while waiting for trains at Bhubaneswar station, Tuesday. A few days ago, the Railway Protection Force had launched a drive to create awareness on social distancing to check the spread of Covid-19

5 months' ration for SFSS beneficiaries

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Tuesday, announced to provide free rice and dal to the beneficiaries of State Food Security Scheme for five months.

Patnaik directed the officials concern to distribute free rice and dal to the beneficiaries of State Food Security Scheme (SFSS) from



July to November through Public Distribution System (PDS). Each beneficiary of the SFSS would get 5 kg of rice and one kg of dal per

month for five months on free of cost.

Lakhs of beneficiaries excluded from the National Food Security Act (NFSA) scheme will be benefited due to the initiative taken by the Chief Minister.

Patnaik made the announcement keeping the interest of the poor of the state as the Covid-19 pandemic, shutdown and lockdown have badly hit the their livelihood.

DEOs told to act against schools sans recognition



The S&ME department has stipulated that all the schools should obtain certificate of recognition from the directorate of elementary education to run their institution

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: The Directorate of Elementary Education, Odisha wrote to all district education officers (DEOs) to submit action-taken reports against the private schools which are running without certificate of recognition.

The letter said that the DEOs have been requested to issue draft show-cause notices and take action against the private schools running without certificate of recognition. "Hence you are requested to furnish the report immediately for further action at high level," the letter reads.

As per rule, the School and Mass Education department has stipulated that all the schools should obtain certificate of recognition (CoR) from the directorate of elementary education to run their educational institutions. To obtain the CoR, schools have to meet norms under Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. After assessment the di-

rector will issue recognition for five years.

Earlier, **Orissa POST** had reported that about one-third private schools in Jajpur district run sans the certificate of recognition (COR) which is issued by the competent Elementary education department authorities, a report said.

Worthy to note, directorate of Elementary Education department had twice ordered Jajpur district administration- once November 26, 2018, and the second March 16 2019 to issue show-cause notices and take stringent actions against such schools running in the district after conducting proper inquiries in this regard.

There are over 300 private schools and colleges in this industrial district. About 10,000 students in Jajpur are studying in these schools. As per norms, private schools are supposed to be supervised regularly by a special investigation team (SIT), on specific criteria like registration details, infrastructure details and other management guidelines.

State's Covid toll breaches 100-mark

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: With six more fatalities Tuesday, the Covid-19 death toll in state crossed 100-mark taking the virus death toll to 103 in Odisha, an official of the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

At least 647 more people have tested positive for the disease, pushing the tally to 18,757, added the official.

All six fatalities were recorded from as many districts in the state.

"Regret to inform the demise of six Covid positive patients while under treatment in hospitals (sic)," the H&FW department said in a tweet, adding that all of them had comorbidities.

At least four of them were suffering from hypertension, one of them had cancer and another was a patient of bronchiectasis, the department said.

Apart from the six, two women—both Covid-19 patients—have also died in the state, but the H&FW department attributed the cause of their deaths to 'some other reasons'.

Of the 647 new cases, 431 were reported from quarantine centres, and 216 from local contacts. Ganjam reported the maximum number of fresh cases at 225, followed by Cuttack at 84, Khurda at 68, Rayagada at 47 and Balasore at 40.

Meanwhile, 400 persons recovered from the disease Tuesday.

The recoveries include 137 from Ganjam, 58 from Cuttack, 46 from Khurda, 41 from Koraput, 37 from



File photo of a medic collecting swab sample of a person for Covid-19 test in Bhubaneswar

■ At least 647 more people have tested positive for the disease Tuesday, pushing the tally to 18,757

■ Cuttack and Bhubaneswar reported 53 fresh coronavirus cases and 57 recoveries

Jajpur and 14 from Keonjhar.

With this, the number of active cases in the state currently stands at 5,315, while 13,309 people have recovered from the disease so far.

Twin city reports 53 fresh cases, 57 recoveries

The twin cities of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar reported 53 fresh coronavirus cases and 57 recoveries Tuesday, officials of the civic bodies said.

While 21 cases were detected in the Capital city, 32 persons tested positive for the viral infection in the Silver City. On the other hand, 49 persons who had earlier tested positive for the virus in Bhubaneswar have recovered. Similarly, Cuttack city saw eight recoveries from the infection Tuesday.

With this, Bhubaneswar has 614 active COVID-19 cases while 625 persons have so far recovered from the disease. The Capital city has so far seen 1,252 cases of the viral infection and 11 persons succumbing

to it. Cuttack, on the other hand, has 165 active cases of Covid-19 while 225 persons have so far recovered from the disease. The Millennium City has so far reported 398 cases and eight deaths of coronavirus. **Plasma therapy begins in Ganjam** Meanwhile, plasma therapy started in Ganjam district, a coronavirus hotspot in Odisha. Ganjam Collector Vijaya Amruta Kulange inaugurated the plasma therapy at MKCG Medical College and Hospital, Berhampur.

SRIMANDIR SERVITORS TEST POSITIVE

Meanwhile, sources said that two servitors of Srimandir who participated in the annual Rath Yatra in Puri were tested positive in the third round of the test. In adherence to Supreme Court order to allow servitors, the administration had conducted Covid tests on 2,667 persons, including servitors and temple managing committee members, in two phases—June 3 and June 22. The third test was inducted after completion of Rath Yatra—July 11 to 14 in the four-day camp. Swab samples of 2,301 persons involved in the annual festival of the deities were collected. Two servitors, who tested positive, referred to the Covid hospital for treatment.

2,400 transgenders apply for MBPY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: The state government has received overwhelming response from the transgender community following a notification by the state government for their inclusion under Madhu Babu Pension Scheme (MBPY).

The state Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department, Tuesday, said that nearly 2,400 members from the community have registered with the government for receiving financial assistance under MBPY. "About 2,400 members from the community have approached us and applied for the pension within a week. We're getting a good response from the people after the notification in this regard," Bhaskar Sarma, SSEPD department secretary said.

Rapid antigen test for 100 scribes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: About 100 journalists from the Capital city will be tested by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), under Covid-19 rapid antigen test, at Sahid Nagar Kalyan Mandap, Wednesday, as part of ongoing sero-surveillance survey.

As per sources, considering the level of exposure, BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary personally laid emphasis on conducting the test mostly on reporters. These tests are being conducted as part of random sampling of first round of Sero-Surveillance.

The analysis of the samples will be completed at RMRIC in 3-4 days and report will be handed over to BMC for further action. According to ICMR, those who test negative for Covid-19 by rapid antigen test

should be definitely tested sequentially by RT-PCR to rule out infection, whereas a positive test should be considered as true positive and does not need reconfirmation by RT-PCR test.

BMC SEEKS COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR CONTACT TRACING

The BMC Tuesday urged the citizens for their support to expedite contact tracing which will help in identifying patients or violators of Covid guidelines.

"Fight against this pandemic is a team effort backed by citizen cooperation. As city is witnessing many positive cases, anybody who comes across any positive case violating government norms or ignoring advice, can intimate the zonal offices of the civic body. Informer's identity will be kept confidential," a senior BMC official requested.

As per the sources, a 'COVID-19 Contact tracing desk' is managed by three OAS Officers deputised by state government. These are assisted by two senior medical officers and eight AYUSH doctors who assist in contract tracing. Once a positive is included in the information system the vigilant team starts its operation to trace its detail.

"We are also contemplating to expand our workforce designated for contact tracing in view of increasing cases. However, citizens can play a vital role by informing us about any COVID case which can be followed up by our field level surveillance team with help of Sachetakt teams. Closer community members have important role to support such initiative," the official said.

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Jajpur’s industrialisation brings its people more sorrow than joy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, July 21: The rapid industrialisation that has taken place in Jajpur since 1995 has hardly made any difference in uplifting the financial condition of the district’s people. Instead, the industrial units have burdened the people with respiratory diseases after taking away their land.

As per the information shared by the health department, as many as 201 people succumbed to TB in 2018 and 2019. Of them, 107 were from mining and industrial areas like Sukinda and Danagadi which means industrial areas accounted for 53 per cent deaths due to TB in the district.

As many as 85 villagers of Manpur village of Dhuligarh panchayat under Danagadi block have so far died under the impact of air pollution.

Worst still, a total of 2,800 TB patients have been identified in the district since 2018 till July 18, 2020. And 939 patients are from mines and industrial areas in the district.

From the above data, even a lay man can understand the prevailing alarming situation in the area.

Kalinganagar industrial area in



ALARMING SITUATION

Jajpur is among 106 most polluted cities in the country.

Kalinganagar is the second worst polluted city in Odisha. Earlier, the National Green Tribunal too expressed its concern over the increasing levels of pollution in Kalinganagar.

Local residents alleged that the plants habitually switch off their electrostatic precipitator (ESP) on holidays and during nights. As a result, hazardous smoke mixed with dust particles is released into the air. They held the Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) solely responsible for this.

“As we know it the air pollution has reached such a level that it can never be made worth living. We

are living on sufferance,” the locals lamented.

When contacted, regional officer, OSPCB, Kalinganagar, Pramod Kumar Behera, said he has not received any complaints on ESPs being shut on holidays and during nights. “Yet, we will conduct an investigation and if any plant is found guilty of shutting down its ESPs, action would be taken against it,” he informed.

These industries have also failed in providing jobs to local youths. A total of 24,596 unemployed youths have got their names registered with the district employment exchange. Shocking enough, only one of them has got employment through the exchange. And what is

- Kalinganagar industrial area is among 106 most polluted cities in the country and the second most polluted city in Odisha.

- Earlier, the National Green Tribunal too expressed its concern over the increasing levels of pollution in Kalinganagar

- Local residents alleged that plants habitually switch off their electrostatic precipitator on holidays and during nights. As a result, hazardous smoke mixed with dust particles is released into the air.

- Locals held the Odisha State Pollution Control Board solely responsible for this



more shocking is that not a single youth has been employed at mines and plants in Kalinganagar through this exchange.

ECONOMIC BLOCKADE



Scores of coal-carrying trucks lay stranded on Bankibahal-Tapia road under Hemagiri block in Sundargarh district Tuesday as locals of 11 panchayats resort to economic blockade, alleging that due to apathy of the MCL and the state government, the reconstruction of the road connecting to Jharkhand has been neglected

OP PHOTO

Woman loses entire family to Covid

POST NEWS NETWORK

Digapahandi, July 21: She is the lone member in her family to tell the horrific tale of COVID-19 after the pandemic claimed the lives all her family members.

Anuradha Panigrahi from Digapahandi area in Ganjam district recently returned home after winning the battle against the coronavirus. But her husband, father-in-law and mother-in-law

were not that lucky.

The family members had visited Chacha Nehru Primary School July 9 to get their swabs tested. They tested positive for coronavirus and were all shifted to Sitalapalli COVID-19 hospital in Ganjam district.

Her mother-in-law Janaki Patra was the first to lose her life to the virus. Sunday her father-in-law Krushna Patra breathed his last while undergoing treatment. And Monday, her husband

Jitendra Patra, 41, passed away, leaving her all alone. Jitendra used to run an electronics shop at Digapahandi market.

Having lost her entire family and shaken to the core, Anuradha stands at the crossroads of life unsure which way to go. She is yet to come to terms with her devastating loss. A bit of government help at this stage might lessen her burden, if not take away her pain, her neighbours said.

Coastal farmers fume as prawn gheries mushroom

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, July 21: Digging up channels for supply of seawater to prawn gheries has lead to salinisation of farmlands in Krushnapriyapur in Rajnagar block in this district, a report said.

Prawn gheries are mushrooming in the area despite a direction by the Orissa High Court for their demolition. Reportedly, prawn gheries are spread over 7,000 acres of farmlands in and around the Bhitarkanika National Park.

Observers said that the gheri owners run their business with impunity in violation of guidelines of Central Empowered Committee, Wildlife Act, Revenue Act and Coastal Regulation Act.

The matter came to the fore after a delegation of farmers of Krushnapriyapur approached the district administration Friday and lodged a complaint in this regard.

The farmers warned of resorting to hunger strike if their demand for demolition of the prawn gheries is not addressed.

The farmers alleged that the gheri owners are digging up channels by their farmlands to take seawater to their gheries. The flow of the seawater has increased the salinity of their farmlands and led to loss of soil fertility. As a result, they are unable to carry out any cul-



tivation on their farmlands.

Sources said the mushrooming of prawn gheries in the seacoast of Kendrapara district has posed serious threat to agriculture and Bhitarkanika National Park due to administrative apathy. The mushrooming of gheries has often resulted in violent clashes between gheri owners and local farmers.

The death of a villager Kishore Sethy in gun firing over prawn farming in Kandira village in 2019 is a case in point.

A farmer Ramesh Das, who was part of the delegation, alleged that the prawn farming has completely destroyed agriculture in the area. More and more outsiders and locals are being drawn into this trade as this is very profitable. These people are illegally acquiring farmlands in the area to build their prawn gheries.

Another complainant, Uttam Barik said that the mushrooming

of prawn gheries is destroying the biological diversity of Bhitarkanika National Park.

The soil and water management in the prawn gheries and use of various harmful chemicals and medicines to help in growth of prawns is the reason behind the destruction of farmlands, he said.

The chemical mixed water discharged outside flows into the adjoining farmlands and destroys the fertility of soil as well as the environment. The chemical mixed water also destroys aquatic creatures in other water bodies in the area, he added.

Social activist Amarbar Biswal said rampant prawn farming has destroyed the peace and brotherhood in the area.

Sub-collector Jyotishankar Mohapatra said over 600 illegal prawn gheries have been demolished in the district so far and the process is continuing.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, July 21: Lemongrass farming projects in several parts of Mayurbhanj district taken up under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) have gone haywire.

According to farmers, several factors are responsible for the failure of the projects. They include wrong selection of farmland and irregularities in beneficiary selection. The projects were taken up in 25 hectares of 22 beneficiaries including Pradeep Kumar Mohanta of Budhakhhamari village under Baripada block spending Rs 70,85,613.

Financial year 2019-20 was set for the project to take off. While District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) was in charge of managing the project, deputy di-



rector horticulture was in charge of its execution.

Thanks to the lackadaisical attitude of the departments concerned, the project was commissioned in October last year.

Nine months have passed and the plants have not reached the height as they would have had by this time. Most of the plants have already died allegedly due to lack of proper care.

Markets, roads, lanes turn dumping yards in Angul

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, July 21: With the dumping of garbage at Panchamahala dumping yard halted after protest by local residents, market places, lanes and by-lanes are now looking no better than dumping yards with locals dumping heaps of garbage at these spots.

Garbage management has been a cause of major concern for the Angul civic body.

The civic body had earlier earmarked a number of places on the outskirts of the town for its dumping yard. Initially, Kumanda was selected but had to be given up due to stiff resistance from the nearby villagers.

Later, a place in Jarasinga village was identified which was also met with objection from the local residents after which Kushasingha village was selected as the designated



dumping zone.

It was only when the local residents vehemently opposed the project, the administration even offered them a visit to Bhubaneswar and Puri to show them the dumping yards there. But the villagers turned it down saying they would not allow a dumping yard near their village at any cost.

The latest dumping yard site chosen is near Panchamahala Benibenia Sahi. The dumping of garbage was also started for some days. But the villagers staged a

protest July 17, opposing the garbage dumping. This led to a tussle between the police and the villagers. As a result, dumping has been stopped.

As of now, tonnes of garbage can be found piled up everywhere in the town. While about 12 tonnes of garbage are supposed to be lifted every day, only five tonnes are being carted away.

The municipality has stopped sending dumping vans to Panchamahala dumping yard since the protest. What worsens the situation is that the micro compost centres (MCCs) in the city are also not properly functioning. Had they been functioning properly, the problem would have solved to some extent, some town dwellers observed.

The locals urged the administration to find a way out to solve the problem as piling of garbage would pose threat to their health.

GAJAPATI ADM DIES AT MKCG HOSPITAL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Paralakhemundi, July 21: The Additional District Magistrate (ADM) of Gajapati district Karunakar Raika passed away at MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur, Tuesday.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik tweeted condoling his death, “Deeply condole the demise of Gajapati ADM Sri Karunakar Raika. He was a very able administrator and greatly helped the district scale up its fightback against #COVID19. Spoke to Mrs Raika and conveyed condolences for the noble soul #OdishaSalutesTheCovidWarrior”

Sources said, due to some illness he had been admitted to MKCG some days ago. Raika died Tuesday morning.

However, the actual reason behind his sudden demise is yet to be ascertained. Sources said he was serving as an in-charge of the COVID hospital and COVID Care Centres in the district.

Man kills stepmom over property dispute

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, July 21: A man allegedly strangled his stepmother to death in their home at Gadabaguda Sahi in Nabarangpur district late Sunday night.

The deceased was identified as Runi Mohapatra (50) while the accused was Suryakanta Mohapatra.

Sources said Shridhara

Mohapatra of same area had married Runi after the death of his first wife. Shridhara has two daughters and one son Suryakanta from his first wife and a differently-abled son from his second wife.

Suryakanta had a dispute with his stepmother over property for the last four months. However, the situation turned ugly Sunday night. In the absence of Shirdhara,

Suryakanta killed his stepmother by strangulating her with a towel, when she was arranging rations inside the kitchen.

Meanwhile, Runi’s son, the sole witness of the crime, called his father and narrated the incident.

Shridhar reached the spot with police who detained Suryakanta.

Shridhar alleged that it was a pre-planned murder.

Talapada mangrove forest revival awaits Centre’s nod

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, July 21: The government has legislated policy on creating mangrove forests along the coastline to maintain ecological balance and protect coastal pockets from natural disasters.

This has been stressed under the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project (ICZMP).

Significantly, a mangrove forest has been created over 150 acres along the coast near Talapada panchayat under Remuna block, about 10 years ago. The sprawling mangrove forest has turned out to be a sanctuary for crocodiles.

An ambitious plan has been made for revival of Talapada mangrove forest so as to develop it as a special project. A proposal has been sent to the Central government for approval. But its approval is pending.

Over 40 fishermen who have been eking out their livelihood



SPECIAL PROJECT

LOCALS SAID, THE MANGROVE FOREST SHOULD BE GIVEN OFFICIAL RECOGNITION FOR ITS REVIVAL. PEOPLE OF COASTAL POCKETS LIKE INCUDI, TUNDURA, TALAPADA, SRIJANGA, RASALPUR, KULIGAON, MAHARAJPUR PANCHAYATS ARE OFTEN BATTERED BY NATURAL CALAMITIES LIKE CYCLONES

at Kantiachira river for months have claimed that they have seen crocodiles, snakes and various species of marine creatures in the forest.

This scenic spot has potential for tourism like Bhitarkanika if its natural assets are properly utilised.

In winter, tourists are drawn to

this place for picnicking. They enjoy the beauty of the place, the confluence of the river and the sea.

The forest department has created mangrove and casuarinas along 70/80 km of the coastline from Jaleswar to Talapada (the borders of Bhadrak district).

Besides, over 90 casuarinas forests

have been created along the coast in Jaleswar and Chandipur.

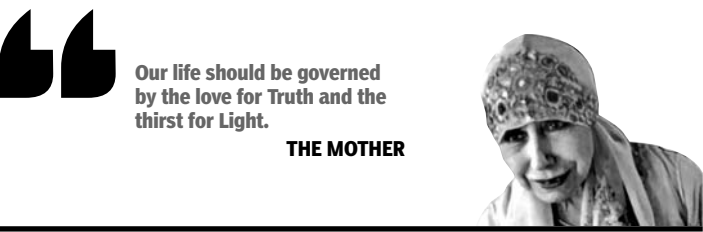
The district administration has sent a proposal to the Central government, seeking mangrove forest status to this forest. Officials have visited the area, but the final report about this project has not been submitted.

The Talapada mangrove forest should be given official recognition, apart from measures for its revival. People of coastal pockets like Inchudi, Tundura, Talapada, Srijanga, Rasalpur, Kuligaon, Maharajpur panchayats are often battered by natural calamities like cyclones.

The villagers say, revival of the mangrove forest will protect their villages.

As for the mangrove project, DFO Biswaraj Panda said over 90 casuarinas forests have been created under ICZMP along Jaleswar and Chandipur coast while plantation drives are being undertaken.

“An action plan has been made for Talapada mangrove forest to make it a special project. A proposal has been sent to the Central government for approval. Owing to Covid-19 situation, the process is getting delayed. Once the project is approved, its work will be started,” the DFO said.



The Detained

The Chief Justice of India SA Bobde has passed caustic comments against the lower judiciary for granting bail to deceased gangster Vikas Dubey. Justice Bobde has commented that there seems to be ‘institutional failure’ when parole was granted to Dubey despite there being 65 FIRs against him. CJI’s remarks are in keeping with his high office and needs to be heeded by lower judiciary across the country. Not just Vikas Dubey but criminals in general go scot free in the present day police-judicial setup. While the Uttar Pradesh police and political bigwigs were supposedly involved with Vikas Dubey and his gymnastics and gave him protection, the legal system also went along meekly with what the police wanted. There, of course, is the standard argument that a Court cannot go beyond what documents and arguments the public prosecutor produces at the behest of the police. While this is an accepted aspect of our judicial system, yet there are many instances where the judiciary refuses bail to applicants without rhyme or reason. Many bail pleas are rejected of people who do not have previous or concurrent allegations or FIRs. In other words, many times, history sheeters go scot free from the same court whereas others with no past records are dumped in jails for unlimited periods. It is not as if Indian judiciary is super prompt in dealing with cases. India, no doubt, is a country of litigants. The main judicial system of the formal courts has been proven ineffective in meting out quick justice.

While the CJI commented about Vikas Dubey getting bail, one is drawn to the fact that this could happen simply because there was immense media glare on Dubey. That too not only because he gunned down eight UP police personnel but more because of his links with the Chief Minister of that state. In a similar vein, the highest judicial authority of the land should also cast a look at the social and political detentions across the nation that the lower judiciary has been neglecting.

In any democracy, the elected legislature that forms the government is temporary while the legal system put in place by the Constitution is permanent. Here, the case of poet Varavara Rao, Sudha Bharadwaj, Arun Ferreira, Gautam Teltumbde and many others comes to mind. For 80 year old Rao, this is not the first time he has been detained. Languishing in a Maharashtra prison since early 2018, Rao has been shifted to Nanavati Hospital in Bombay for Covid 19 recently. It is said the old man is on his death bed, yet his bail plea is not being granted nor permission being given for family members to meet him. The court innocently asks the prosecution whether such permission can be granted and, with obvious refusal, denies the poet the opportunity to meet his kin towards, probably, the end of his life. While Rao was first arrested in 1973 for his fiery left oriented poetry that supposedly could incite people against the Establishment and ruffled the powers that be, he was again arrested during Indira Gandhi’s Emergency. This latest arrest of 2018 was again because of his poetic involvement and speeches that, police claims, was a cause for trouble at the Bhima Koregaon assembly of a huge crowd of Dalits on 1st January 2018. While it is technically still not ‘illegal’ to be a Dalit citizen of India, the reasons for the arrest and long detention of these intellectual activists have not yet been properly documented by the authorities. Simply labeling them ‘Urban Naxals’ should not be considered reason enough for the long detentions.

Another case that comes to mind is of Dr Kafeel Khan who, like many other students, activists and intellectuals, has been languishing in prison for supposedly giving inflammatory speeches against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) at Aligarh Muslim University in December 2019.

While, undoubtedly, any acts against the sovereignty and unity of the country should be dealt with in a strong manner, yet putting people behind bars without speedy judicial process seems to be giving an impression the courts might be heeding political bosses in matters where they should not be interfering. Any institution, especially the judiciary, needs to protect itself and has to demonstrate its impartiality for common citizens to have faith in it. When serious charges such as treason are leveled against citizens, it is imperative that trials progress in such a manner that not only justice is done but it has to be seen to be done also. The country looks up to the judiciary to play its important role in safeguarding the basic tenets of democracy and preserving the freedom of Indians in their own land.

WISDOM CORNER

- “

There’s a fine line between genius and insanity. I have erased this line.

”

OSCAR LEVANT
- “

There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humour.

”

CHARLES DICKENS
- “

By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.

”

CONFUCIUS

WORDSWORTH

Swain

It is noted that the word Swain nowadays seems to occur only as an invariably jocular synonym for suitor (itself almost always jocular), and in the two nautical compounds boatswain and coxswain. It is said that this was once a more general term for a male person, but not so. It came into English from Old Norse sveinn, a lad, but began its life in medieval England in reference specifically to a young man attending a knight, hence a fairly lowly servant. Later, still in medieval times, it broadened to take in any male servant or attendant. By the end of the 16th Century it seems to have shifted into the countryside, because it came to mean a farm labourer, shepherd, or similar male worker. Because of these associations with rustic simplicity, poets borrowed it for a country gallant or lover, a sweetheart or wooer of a fair maid. These days, as you say, it only appears in poetic contexts or humorously. The two nautical terms are specific applications of the idea of a male servant charged with some duty or responsibility. The first is obviously from boat; the second derives from cock or cockboat, a ship’s boat, a word which came into English from Old French coque, itself based on a Latin word meaning a block of wood.

LOL

LETTERS TO MOTHER

Three sons lived abroad, leaving their mother alone at home. One day, they sat together and discussed the gifts they gave their elderly mother. The first said, “I built a big house for her.” The second said, “I sent a Mercedes for her.” The third smiled and said, “I’ve got you both beat. You remember how Mom enjoyed reading the Bible? And you know she can’t readwell any more. I sent her a remarkable parrot that recites the entire Bible. It took Elders in the church 12 years to teach him. He’s one of a kind. Mama just has to name the chapter and verse, and the parrot recites it.” Soon thereafter, Mom sent out her



IN JEST THIS

Ph.D. has more to it than meets eye



Melvin Durai

MALATHI SPENT FOUR YEARS EARNING A PH.D. IN VETERINARY EPIDEMIOLOGY; I SPENT FOUR YEARS LEARNING HOW TO SPELL “EPIDEMIOLOGY.”

Many people would be reluctant to put “Ph.D.” next to their names on a book cover, but it was important for Mary, a trained clinical psychologist, to show that she was qualified to analyse her uncle’s behaviour.

I’ve always been impressed with those three letters, even before my wife, Malathi, earned the right to put them next to her name. Most people believe that Ph.D. stands for “Doctor of Philosophy.” That’s not true at all. Ph.D. stands for “permanent head damage.”

A Ph.D. can put more stress on a human brain than almost any endeavour, except perhaps for negotiating peace in the Middle East. If you visit any large university, you can easily spot the Ph.D. candidates. They’re the ones walking around in a daze, muttering to themselves, without having smoked anything illegal.

Mary Trump, Donald Trump’s niece, has published a book called “Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World’s Most Dangerous Man.” It’s a catchy title, but what also caught my eye were the three letters next to Mary’s name on the book cover: “Ph.D.”

Many people would be reluctant to put “Ph.D.” next to their names on a book cover, but it was important for Mary, a trained clinical psychologist, to show that she was qualified to analyse her uncle’s behaviour.

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FOCUS WORLD

WORSENING WATER WOES

The Covid-19 pandemic is likely to transform our behaviours, attitudes, and policies in many areas. For the sake of overcoming the public-health crisis and enabling economic recovery, one must hope that water and wastewater management will be among them.

Delivering clean water and ensuring proper wastewater management has been a global concern since the late 1970s. Significant progress towards this objective was made during the 1980s, which the United Nations declared the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. But the ultimate goal – to ensure that every human on the planet had access to clean water and sanitation by 1990 – was not achieved.

The world tried again in 2000, with the less ambitious Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of halving the share of the population without sustainable access to clean water and sanitation by 2015. This time, the UN declared victory, but included anyone with access to water at all – clean or not.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the UN’s members in 2015, were supposed to pick up where the MDGs left off. Again, the target is clean water and proper sanitation for all. The deadline this time is 2030. But, as in the past, the barriers to success are formidable. When the SDGs were introduced, the UN estimated that 785 million people worldwide lacked access to “even a basic drinking water service.” The true number is probably far larger. According to UNICEF and the World Health Organization, some 2.2 billion people do not have safely managed drinking water services, and 4.2 billion do not have safely managed sanitation services.

Contaminated water and poor sanitation are linked to transmission of diseases – such as cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis A, typhoid, and polio – that affect hundreds of millions of people every year. Making matters worse, nearly 25 per cent of health-care facilities worldwide lack even basic water services.



It seems likely that the Covid-19 crisis will increase demand for cleaner, safer water and more reliable and effective wastewater treatment everywhere...But success is far from guaranteed, not least because the pandemic also seems to be strengthening another trend: declining trust in public institutions

This is not a developing-economy problem. In the United States, for example, two million people do not have access to piped water. Moreover, the water that people do receive often does not qualify as clean or safe: the high-profile cases of Flint, Michigan, and Walkerton, Canada – where people are suffering long-term health problems, and even premature death, owing to contaminated water – make that abundantly clear.

Not surprisingly, such incidents have eroded trust in water utilities. Today, at least 3.5 billion people worldwide – in both developed and developing countries – lack confidence in the quality of the water they receive. In South Asia, with over 1.7 billion people, there is not a single town or city where people trust their water utilities. Those who can often rely on bottled water or point-of-use water-treatment systems.

The Covid-19 crisis could be a turning point. Yes, universal access to clean water and sanitation has been on the world’s radar since the late 1970s. But the current pandemic has made it a universal interest. While frequent hand washing is widely regarded as one of the

most effective ways to prevent the transmission of Covid-19, the UNICEF/WHO estimate implies that three billion people worldwide lack the facilities to do so. And with the pandemic underscoring the link between clean water and public health, the bar for what qualifies as “clean” has been raised.

The Covid-19 crisis is also changing how people think about wastewater – a resource that has been grossly undervalued in the past. As some cities have recognised, properly treated wastewater can be channelled toward human, industrial, agricultural, and environmental uses. Wastewater is also a valuable source of energy, but very few utilities worldwide use it that way. Overall, cities in developed countries have a much better record when it comes to collecting and treating wastewater. But even they are not realising its full potential. As WHO has noted, analysis of wastewater’s composition can provide reliable information on pathogens and chemicals at the population level. In 1989, Israel introduced wastewater surveillance to measure the spread of poliovirus strains that

could cause poliomyelitis. Now, wastewater analysis is emerging as an important way to assess community spread of Covid-19. Contaminated untreated wastewater itself does not appear to pose a transmission risk. But it offers a means of gauging infection rates in communities, and a possible early-warning system for new outbreaks. In the Netherlands, traces of the Covid-19 coronavirus were detected in untreated wastewater six days before the first case was reported. Traces were detected in untreated wastewater in the Swiss city of Lugano when only one case had been confirmed, and in Zurich after only six infections. Wastewater surveillance showed that community transmission in Valencia, Spain began earlier than previously believed.

Australia, which has also detected the virus in untreated wastewater, now plans to carry out routine testing to anticipate outbreaks. Tokyo has already begun to take weekly samples from untreated and treated sewage. Samples from 15 sewage treatment plants will be frozen and stored until methods for extracting and analysing the virus are established. Crucially, such approaches can work only in places with effective wastewater collection and management.

It seems likely that the Covid-19 crisis will increase demand for cleaner, safer water and more reliable and effective wastewater treatment everywhere. This could accelerate progress toward the SDG on water and wastewater. But success is far from guaranteed, not least because the pandemic also seems to be strengthening another trend: declining trust in public institutions. Changing this will require water utilities all over the world to improve their management and communication practices significantly.

Cecilia Tortajada is editor-in-chief of the International Journal of Water Resources Development. Asit K. Biswas is Visiting Professor at the University of Glasgow.

@PROJECT SYNDICATE



A Ph.D. is hard because, unlike a bachelor’s or master’s degree, you cannot buy your research papers on the Internet. You must conduct original research. Originality is important, because your research will likely be published in a prominent scientific journal and read by as many as seven people. Yes, it could make you “world famous in your field.”

But not everyone can achieve fame in a prominent publication like the Journal of Indeterminate

Variable Engineering (JIVE). Some must settle for a lesser publication like the Journal of Unappreciated Native Kitsch (JUNK).

If you’re lucky, you’ll be invited to present your findings at an academic conference, where other people with Ph.D. degrees will nod their heads, clap their hands and pretend they understand what you’re saying.

Of course, before you can achieve such celebrity image, you must complete your Ph.D. You must resist the temptation to just drop out and become a normal human being, one who has no chance of attaining that blissful state known to university professors as “tenure.” Tenure allows you to become a permanent fixture at a university, outliving not just the chairs and desks, but also most buildings. Tenure allows you to live a grander, more stable life than the poor untenured masses.

Yes, a Ph.D. can definitely improve your life. It has definitely improved mine. I mean, my wife’s. I just hope she never writes a book entitled: “Too Little and Always Enough: How I Made the Mistake of Marrying the World’s Most Unproductive Man.”

Adieu Bijay

Sir, Odia cine-goers can never forget ‘Bhuli Huenaa’, an emotion-packed film directed by the late Bijay Mohanty, doyen of the vernacular film industry. He dominated the Odia film industry for four decades, starting from his debut in 1977 with Chilika Tire that eventually brought him the national award. A product of the National School of Drama, New Delhi, and a compatriot of the likes of Naseeruddin Shah, Raj Babbar and Om Puri, this most popular actor, both on stage and screen, reigned the industry by sheer acting skills and winning the hearts of millions. A recipient of the prestigious Jaydev Award from the Government of Odisha for lifetime achievement in film career, Bijay Mohanty didn’t look back after his heroic rise in filmdom. He became a household name in the entertainment arena. Awarded many times for his spectacular performances in scores of meaningful films in Odia, he established a prime place in everyone’s heart. He unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha elections in 2014, but didn’t regret the loss as he realised politics was not his cup of tea. On his sad demise, the Odia film industry is in tears.



Sanjib Das, CUTTACK

Lightning deaths

Sir, Many people are dying of lightning. Data says most of these deaths happened in Jharkhand, UP, MP, Bihar and Odisha. Even in the month of June, 96 people died of lightning in Bihar in a single day. This is a major worry for those working in agriculture fields. Lightning comes like a bolt from the blue, and cannot be anticipated. In some cases, deaths were due to negligence. So, local administrations are urged to create awareness among the people on safety aspects.

Santosh Kumar Mohanty, Safa, CUTTACK

Consumer rights

Sir, Consumer Protection Act 2019 has come into force from this Monday, July 20, with several added features to safeguard interests of consumers. But a big question is why some basic changes are not incorporated in the act. National Anti-Profitteering Authority (NAPP) working under Department of Revenue should be shifted to Department of Consumer Affairs. Unfortunately there is no provision for feedback and suggestions. There is no provision to prevent cheating through gimmick packaging, and there is cheating as regards weight of packed products, for instance.

Subhash Chandra Agarwal, EMAIL

Trapped in a well, leopard rescued after six days

A VILLAGER FIRST SAW THE 2.5-YEAR-OLD LEOPARD ON TOP OF THE ABANDONED WELL 5-6 DAYS AGO AND ASSUMED THAT WOULD LEAVE SOON

HOWEVER, AFTER THREE DAYS, HE HEARD ECHOES OF THE BIG CAT CRYING FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE DRY WELL, WHICH PROMPTED HIM TO ALERT THE FOREST DEPT

We rescued the leopard Monday evening following a 56-hour complex rescue operation

D. MAHESH KUMAR | DEPUTY CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS

AGENCIES

Bangalore, July 21: Karnataka forest department officials have rescued an enfeebled female leopard, trapped at the bottom of an 80-foot deep well for six days at Karapur village in the buffer area of Nagarhole Tiger Reserve, an official said Tuesday.

“We rescued the leopard Monday evening following a 56-hour complex rescue operation,” Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) D. Mahesh Kumar told IANS.

A villager first saw the 2.5-year-old leopard on top of the abandoned well 5-6 days ago and assumed that would leave soon.

However, after three days, he heard echoes of the big cat crying from the depths of the dry well, which prompted him to alert the forest department.

“By the time the villager reached out to us, the feline had already spent three days inside the well. We struggled a lot just to analyse and devise a strategy to rescue it,” said Kumar.

To further complicate the rescue prospects, the leopard was not at all responding to the luring and tactics of the forest officials such as a trap, bait or meat as it hid inside a crevice at the bottom of the well.

“Even any bait failed to attract the animal’s attention despite suffering starvation and dehydration for six days. It had absolutely no energy. We even put some ladders for the big cat to climb,” Kumar said. Some chicken and mutton did not appeal to the hungry big cat while a live-chicken bait also suffered the same fate. After several attempts, Sunday, the leopard came out to slurp some water which the forest officials had arranged at the bottom of the well.

The rescue efforts also included hiring a fabricator to design a makeshift cage for a forest ranger to lock himself in it and descend into the depths of the well, yet he failed to stimulate the leopard for a rescue. Hard-pressed, Kumar said the department also took some technical help to set up a CCTV camera near the crevice with illumination to obtain footage and images of the leopard to monitor its behavioural patterns in a bid to save its life.

After all the efforts failed, he said the officials realised that it is better to tranquilise the leopard with an immobiliser injection to net it and raise it up. “Finally, we lowered a sharp

A BACKGROUND

The Nagarhole Tiger Reserve stretches between Kodagu and Mysuru districts, covering an area of 643 sq km. This park was declared the thirty seventh Project Tiger, tiger reserves of India in 1999. It is part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.

In the last decade there has been enormous activity undertaken both by the government and certain NGOs to relocate tribals to the periphery of the forests. The relocation efforts are part of a larger focus to conserve the existing tiger populations and elephant habitats which were under serious threat due to change in lifestyles of the tribal folk resident within the forests. There has been much resistance to relocation efforts from the oldest groups of tribals but success has been met in last few years.

In 2001, the Karnataka state government sanctioned Rs 2 crores to dig elephant proof trenches and install solar fencing around the park to prevent elephants from straying into the farmers’ fields. In 1997, tribal activist groups won a public interest litigation in the Karnataka High Court to halt the setting up of a resort called the Gateway Tusker Lodge planned to be set up by the Taj Group of Hotels. With nearly 125 villages present inside the park, many NGOs are actively working to protect the tribal communities. In 2000, the first relocation attempts, initiated by a World Bank funded eco-development project of the local tribal population, was begun with 50 tribal people.

the leopard, Kumar said the forest department will take a call after the veterinarians decide if it is fit to be released into the forest. The leopard is found to be in good health now.

“More than 100 forest department staff and officers, supported by the local villagers, enabled us to bring out the leopard alive,” said Kumar, crediting the success to a team effort.

Karapur village in HD Kote taluk is about 200 km southwest of Bangalore.

Yedi in no mood to extend lockdown

THE 9-DAY RENEWED LOCKDOWN IN BANGALORE URBAN AND RURAL DISTRICTS ENDS AT 5 AM TODAY

AGENCIES

Bangalore, July 21: In an address to the people of Karnataka through television news channels and social media platforms, Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa Tuesday said there would be no more lockdowns in the southern state from Wednesday.

“As lockdown is not a solution to defeat Covid-19, there will not be any more lockdown in Bangalore or anywhere in Karnataka,” Yediyurappa told the people in a 20-minute address in Kannada from here Tuesday evening.

The 9-day renewed lockdown in Bangalore Urban and Rural districts ends at 5 a.m. Wednesday.

“The only way to fight corona virus pandemic is to compulsorily wear mask, wash hands and maintain social distancing by every citizen. Each citizen has to take care of his/her health by strictly following the guidelines,” asserted the Chief Minister.

Restrictions on movement of people and vehicles will continue in containment areas across Bangalore and cities and towns where more Covid cases are reported. Admitting that there was a delay in getting test reports earlier, Yediyurappa said steps have been taken to ensure they (reports) were delivered in 24 hours.

“We have been taking measures to contain the virus spread in the



state since mid-March and control the situation in hotspots. A real-time dashboard has been set up to track beds for Covid-19 patients,” the Chief Minister reiterated.

Referring to reports of Covid positive patients attempting to commit suicide, the chief minister appealed to them not to resort to drastic action but recover soon.

Refuting the opposition Congress charges of irregularities and corruption in the purchase of medical equipment, Yediyurappa said not a rupee had been misappropriated and all expenditure had been accounted for.

“I appeal to the opposition to make constructive criticism but not hinder our work and service to the people in this hour of crisis. This is not the time to bicker but co-operate with the government in fighting the pandemic,” he added.

...lockdown isn't a solution to defeat Covid, there won't be anymore lockdown in Bangalore or anywhere in Karnataka. The only way to fight coronavirus pandemic is to compulsorily wear mask, wash hands and maintain social distancing by every citizen

BS YEDIYURAPPA | CHIEF MINISTER, KARNATAKA

50-bed dedicated Covid hosp opens

BANGALORE: To meet the growing need for hospitalisation of coronavirus patients amid rising cases, a 50-bed dedicated Covid hospital-cum-emergency training centre has been opened in the city’s northwest suburb, an official said Tuesday. “As Covid cases are peaking in the city, there is a dire need to increase hospital beds for treating positive cases on priority,” said Karnataka Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar after unveiling Prakriya super-specialty hospital. The private hospital also has a 40-room Covid care centre to quarantine asymptomatic patients. “The hospital also has facility for deliveries of pregnant Covid-infected women, dialysis for the infected, and an operation theatre for emergency surgeries of virus-affected patients,” said its chief executive Srinivas Chirukuri in a statement. While the main hospital wing will continue to treat non-Covid patients, its new wing is dedicated to Covid patients, whose numbers have been spiking after the state government began to unlock the city from June 1. “We have ensured protection to our doctors, nurses and support staff with personal protection equipment (PPE) and training, as it has become a challenge to get them and make them work in a Covid hospital,” added Chirukuri.

As fresh Covid cases sting Kerala, CM reels out stats

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, July 21: Even as the number of Covid cases is rising, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who is under fire from the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), here Tuesday, used statistics to say everything was under control and there was no need of panic.

During the day, 720 new cases were reported, taking the Covid tally to 13,994. It included 528 local infections. There are 8,056 active cases in the state.

Vijayan used Monday’s data to support his case. Monday, there were 36,906 cases and 596 deaths across the country, 4,985 cases and 70 deaths in Tamil Nadu, and 3,648 cases and 72 fatalities in Karnataka.

He accepted being concerned about rise in cases and added, by July 23, 742 Covid first line treatment centres with 69,215 beds would be ready. By July 19, 187 such centres with 20,404 beds had started functioning, he added.

2 students who wrote Kerala entrance exam test Covid +ve KOCHI: Even as numerous requests were made to postpone the Kerala Engineering Architecture Medical (KEAM) entrance examination which was held July 16, the state government refused to do so and Tuesday two students who



VIJAYAN'S ARGUMENTS

In the early days, critics said there was low reporting of cases. Now when the cases are rising, they are saying there's a huge spike. We can't do anything about those who feign ignorance

Many fail to understand that population density in Kerala was double the national average and the state had the largest percentage of senior citizens

Despite all that, the fatality rate in Kerala is 0.33 per cent, against 4.4 per cent in Gujarat, 3.8 per cent in Maharashtra and 2.1 per cent in Karnataka

wrote the exam in the state capital have tested positive for the coronavirus.

A third person, another student's father also has now turned Covid positive, said health authorities.

The invigilators and volunteers have also been directed to be in home quarantine.

Despite, numerous requests from various quarters, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan was adamant to hold the KEAM as scheduled and after the examination got over, he had appreciated and congratulated all those who worked to see the exam went off well.

Cops watch speedster techie's Insta post, seize his superbike

AGENCIES

Bangalore, July 21: Bangalore police have seized a software engineer's 1,000cc superbike after a video of him riding at nearly 300 km per hour (kmph) on a city flyover went viral on social media, said an official Tuesday.

“Going at a dangerous speed of almost 300 kmph at Electronic city flyover, putting his own and others life at risk...,” said Joint Commissioner of Police Sandeep Patil. Patil said the Central Crime Branch (CCB) has seized the bike and handed it over to the traffic police department for further action.

In the video, which is more than a minute long, 29-year-old Muniyappa, is seen zooming on his blue motorcycle. Beginning near Madiwala, the 13-km-long flyover terminates at Electronic City where several IT offices are located. “Muniyappa was speeding on the flyover because the lockdown is offering him the option of empty roads. The traffic

While going at a dangerous speed of almost 300 km ph at Electronic city flyover, he is putting his own and others life at risk

SANDEEP PATIL | JOINT COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

The speedometer reads 299 km ph (from the video)

From pandemic to smuggling of gold; Vijayan in quagmire

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, July 21: After months of hogging the headlines for ‘effective’ tackling of Covid-19 in Kerala, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's image has taken a beating. First due to the controversial gold smuggling case and now for the coronavirus spread across the state.

Things were all fine for Vijayan and state Health Minister K.K. Shailaja ever since the Covid pandemic got first reported in the country, when a girl medical student who arrived from Wuhan – the epicentre of coronavirus, turned positive at Thrissur.

Since then the ruling Vijayan government, appeared to have got a new lease of life, especially Shailaja, when she made headlines in ‘Washington Post’ and close to 50 international media organisations, simply because the way she handled the pandemic situation, when the so-called developed countries found the going tough.

Vijayan the tough task master, who for a while kept away from the centre stage, soon realised that it's time to join the ‘party’ and took over from Shailaja and soon got prime time TV viewership through his daily interactions with the media.

But things started to go a bit awry ever since the four international airports opened up to Vande Bharat Mission flights brining in the Kerala diaspora from May 7.

Since then, the number of daily Covid positive cases started rising steadily, first by 100-mark and in the past three days the daily positive cases crossed the 2000-mark and



in between Vijayan admitted that it has achieved the dreadful, ‘community spread’ in two coastal hamlets, located at a stone's throw from Vijayan's office.

Hitting hard at Vijayan and the flawed Covid tackling strategy was Leader of Opposition Ramesh Chennithala.

“Vijayan announced victory in Covid even before the war had started, in his daily PR exercise and when the ‘enemy’ (Covid) actually came before the state, the state has failed, as figures now reveal. Vijayan also has admitted that there has been a community spread,” said Chennithala.

The gold smuggling case with large scale ramifications first surfaced when P.S. Sarith, a former employee of the UAE Consulate here, was arrested by the Customs July 5 when he was facilitating smuggling of 30 kg gold in diplomatic baggage to Thiruvananthapuram from Dubai.

It turned murkier when the name of Swapna Suresh, a former em-

ployee of the UAE Consulate here and employed with the state IT Department, surfaced. The case turned full circle when its links with senior IAS official M. Sivasankar, who has been suspended and booted out from two key posts – principal secretary to Vijayan and also the State IT secretary, were unearthed.

Adding more trouble was when Arun Balachandran's links with the smuggling gang surfaced and he too was unceremoniously removed, causing a huge dent on Vijayan's image. Balachandran was Chief Minister's IT Fellow and later held a key post in the IT department.

Chennithala said the stage has come when whatever Vijayan does to dodge out from the case, is not going to happen, as his two key officials have links with the smuggling gang.

Chennithala has written to CPI-M general secretary Sitaram Yechuri highlighting the way Vijayan is running the show.

Karna govt hikes NHM docs' salaries to ₹45K

As many as 2,000 Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani and Siddha (AYUSH) doctors are set to benefit

AGENCIES

Bangalore, July 21: The Karnataka government has hiked the salaries of doctors under the National Health Mission (NHM) to Rs 45,000 per month, said a Minister Tuesday.

“NHM doctors’ salary hiked to Rs 45,000 per month, state government to bear the cost,” said Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar.

As many as 2,000 Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani and Siddha (AYUSH) doctors are set to benefit from the hike, effected after a meeting chaired by Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa.

Sudhakar said the doctors who were agitating for the hike have withdrawn their agitation now.

Similarly, he said the issue of raising the salaries of Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) will be taken up in 2-3 days.

Sudhakar said testing for the virus will be increased in the containment zones.

“Booth level committees to conduct door to door survey for early detection of Influenza Like Illness (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) and vulnerable persons,” he said.

The Minister said that private hospitals should not hesitate to admit Covid positive pregnant women and come forward to treat Covid patients.

Meanwhile, Karnataka registered 3,648 new Covid positive cases, a majority of them emerging from Bangalore, increasing the state's tally to 67,420 while 72 more suc-

cumbed to the virus, an official said Monday.

“New cases reported from Sunday 5 p.m. to Monday 5 p.m., 3,648,” said a health official.

With 1,452 infections, Bangalore city accounted for the highest number of cases, sending its tally rising to 33,229 cases, out of which 25,574 are active.

Among the new cases, excluding Bangalore, Ballari accounted for 234 cases, followed by Bangalore Rural (208), Dharwad (200), Vijayapura (160) and Mysuru (149) among others.

Meanwhile, 72 patients succumbed to the virus across the state, including 31 in Bangalore itself, taking the total number of deaths to 1,403.

Most of the deceased suffered from Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) and had fever, cough and breathlessness as symptoms. A few fatalities also suffered from Influenza Like Illness (ILI).

On a positive note, 730 patients have been discharged, raising the total discharges to 23,735. Of the total 67,420 cases, 42,216 are active and 580 of them are in the ICU.



of the day quote

The statement of Sharad Pawar is Bhagwan Ram drohi. It is not against Modi, it is against Lord Ram. If the PM reaches Ayodhya for two hours (for the temple ceremony), how will it spoil the economy

UMA BHARTI | BJP LEADER

The Shiv Sena had made a big contribution, and (Shiv Sainiks) shed their blood and made sacrifices for the cause of Ram temple construction

SANJAY ROUT | SHIV SENA MP

Rahul Gandhi is tweeting on a daily basis. It seems the Congress will become a party of tweets as they are doing no work among the people and losing one leader after another

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

₹20K reward on Vikas Dubey's bro

Lucknow: The Yogi Adityanath government has announced a reward of ₹20,000 on Deep Prakash Dubey, the brother of slain gangster Vikas Dubey. Deep Prakash Dubey has been absconding since July 3 when the massacre took place in Bikru village of Kanpur district in which eight policemen were shot dead by Dubey and his gang. Deep Prakash Dubey, according to police sources, was aware of his brother's activities and is an accomplice in his unlawful deeds.

Demand for lifting curbs on Bakrid

Deoband (UP): Islamic seminary Darul Uloom Deoband has sent a letter to the Yogi Adityanath government with five demands for the upcoming Bakrid festival. Darul Uloom spokesman Mufti Ashraf Usmani said in the letter that, it has been said that namaaz should be allowed in mosques with proper social distancing. He said arrangements should also be made for slaughter of animals and the ban on sale of goats should be lifted.

12-yr-old girl raped by neighbour

Muzaffarnagar: A 12-year-old girl was raped by her neighbour in a village under Kotwali Police Station here, police said Tuesday. The incident took place Monday when the girl was alone at home as her family members had gone out, they said. The accused has been identified as Kareem and is absconding. A case has been registered against him, SHO of Kotwali Police Station Anil Kapervan said. The incident came to light when the victim's mother returned home from work, Kapervan said.



India needs to draw up its immunisation strategy now itself on the administration of vaccine for COVID-19 on the population when it comes out

KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW | BIOCON EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON

RARE ORCHID IN DUDHWA FOUND BEARING SEEDS AFTER A CENTURY

Almost 118 years after it was rediscovered inside the dense forests of the Dudhwa reserve, the rare orchid specimen, known as Eulophia obtuse, is bearing fruits (seeds), giving much hope for its pollination and captive breeding



POLICE OFFICER'S 'SUICIDE'

CBI grills Rajasthan CM's aide amid political crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 21: The CBI Tuesday questioned Congress MLA Krishna Poonia and Deva Ram Saini, the OSD to Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, in connection with the alleged suicide by a police officer in Churu district May 23, officials said.

A team of the CBI's special crime unit in Delhi is in Jaipur to record statements in connection with the death of Rajgarh Station House Officer (SHO) Vishnudutt Vishnoi, whose body was found hanging from the ceiling of his official residence.

The team questioned Saini, the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to the Rajasthan Chief Minister, for nearly two hours, while Poonia was quizzed for about two-and-a-half hours at her residence, the officials said.

This was the second time Poonia, an Olympian, was questioned in connection with the matter. The agency had quizzed her for nearly three hours at her Jaipur residence on Monday evening, the officials said.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) have alleged that Poonia was putting pressure on Vishnoi, which triggered his drastic move, a charge denied by the Sadulpur MLA.

The questioning comes at a time when Gehlot is engrossed in a pitched battle with his bete noire, Sachin Pilot, who has been ousted from the post of Deputy Chief Minister, which, in turn, has raised questions over the stability of the Congress government in Rajasthan.

The Congress is facing a rebellion



CBI's special crime unit team in Delhi is in Jaipur to record statements in connection with the death of Rajgarh SHO Vishnudutt Vishnoi, whose body was found hanging from the ceiling of his official residence

The team questioned Saini, the Officer on Special Duty to the Rajasthan Chief Minister, for nearly two hours, while Poonia was quizzed for about two-and-a-half hours at her residence

by Pilot and 18 other MLAs against Gehlot. A probe by the state police into horse-trading charges, based on tapped telephonic conversations purportedly of some leaders, has turned the situation murkier.

Sources, however, said the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is conducting the probe into the police officer's alleged suicide, a case handed over to it by the state government itself, professionally.

They added that people are being questioned to know about various aspects of the case and it does not

mean that they are being accused as the final picture will emerge only after the completion of the investigation.

The Rajasthan government had handed over the probe in the matter to the central agency.

The state had, in 1990, communicated to the Centre its denial of "general consent" to the CBI to carry out an investigation within its territory through a letter. On Monday evening, the Rajasthan government issued a notification reiterating its position. The notification said prior approval will have to be taken from the state government on a case-by-case basis to investigate any crime falling under Section 3 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act.

Vishnoi's brother had filed a complaint with the Rajasthan police, alleging that the deceased was under pressure, which led him to take the drastic step. Two suicide notes were recovered from the SHO – one addressed to his parents and the other to the superintendent of police (SP) of Churu.

Mamata launches campaign for 2021 Bengal Assembly elections

AGENCIES

Kolkata, July 21: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Tuesday took on the Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, saying it had deprived Bengal in every possible way.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief also launched her party's election campaign for the 2021 Assembly elections. "They are playing dirty game of politics. The BJP is trying to break Bengal. The Centre has not given anything to us. The BJP is purchasing MLAs in different states to topple governments," Banerjee said addressing a virtual meeting on the occasion of July 21 Martyrs' Day celebration.

She said the BJP thought they could rule all the states, but that won't be possible in Bengal. "They are maligning our government.

They are playing dirty game of politics. The BJP is trying to break Bengal. The Centre has not given anything to us. The BJP is purchasing MLAs in different states to topple governments

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM



The Centre has insulted us by not giving anything even after the devastating Cyclone Amphan. But they will not be able to capture Bengal," Banerjee said.

She asked party members to take a pledge to defeat the BJP in the Assembly polls, scheduled next year. "I urge everyone to gear up for the next's Assembly polls so that we can again assemble here July 21 next year and celebrate our electoral victory. We will defeat them in such

a way that all BJP candidates will lose their poll deposits," she said, pointing out that a wounded tigress was even more ferocious.

Banerjee said she was not scared of the Centre and urged people to keep faith in the TMC. "I know they (BJP) will start fresh conspiracy against me after this. But I am not scared. I know how to fight and I will not budge. They might torture me also, but I am not scared," she said.

PUNJABIS, JATS STRONG BUT HAVE LESS BRAIN: TRIPURA CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, July 21: Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Deb has stirred yet another controversy by saying Punjabis and Jats are physically strong but less brainy while Bengalis are known to be very intelligent.

Every community in India is known for its certain type and character, the BJP leader said while addressing a programme at the Agartala Press Club Sunday.

The Congress has termed Chief Minister's remarks "shameful and unfortunate".



"For Bengal or Bengalis, it is said that one should not challenge them when it is regarding intelligence. Bengalis are known as very intelligent and it is their identity," Deb was heard saying in the clip. Whereas, Punjabis and

Jats are known for their physical strength, he said.

"When we talk about the people of Punjab, we say he's a Punjabi, a Sardar. They may have less intelligence but are very strong. One can't win them over by strength but with love and affection. A large number of Jats live in Haryana. So what do people say about Jats? Jats are less intelligent but are very healthy. If one challenges a Jat, he will bring a gun from his house," Deb said.

However, Deb apologised for his statements comparing Punjabis and Jats with Bengalis Tuesday.

Railways, industry players meet on pvt train services

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 21: Even as the Indian Railways plans to introduce first set of 12 private trains in 2023, followed by 45 more in the next fiscal, according to an initial timeline drawn by the railways, the national transporter has called a pre-bid conference for the interested private players to seek clar-

ifications, officials privy to the development said Tuesday.

A senior Railway Ministry official said, "A pre-bid conference is going on currently where the interested private players can raise their queries and the railways will revert to them with clarification in the coming days."

The official said that in this conference the private parties may ask for some clarifications or may give some suggestions to the Railways. "And after a careful study Railways will reply to them," he said.

Another railway ministry official said that till Monday evening, about 15 parties have downloaded the forms by paying ₹2 lakh fee. "These

15 parties have shown initial interest, but there are sufficient numbers that the people are coming forward," the official added.

The national transporter in a formal kick-start to its plans to allow private entities to operate passenger trains on its network, this month invited proposals from companies to run 151 modern passenger trains on 109 pairs of routes across the country. The project would entail a private sector investment of about ₹30,000 crore.

As part of the plan for private trains, the railways has planned to introduce 12 trains in 2022-23, 45 in 2023-2024, 50 in 2025-26 and 44 more in the next fiscal, taking the total number of trains to 151 by the end of FY2026-2027.

The request for qualification (RFQ), which was floated July 8, is likely to be finalised by November, the financial bids will be opened by March, 2021 and selection of bidders is planned by April 31, 2021, according to a timeline for introduction of private passenger trains prepared by the railways.

A pre-bid conference is going on currently where the interested private players can raise their queries and the railways will revert to them with clarification

CRAFTSMANSHIP



A man works on an idol of Hindu god Ganesh, the deity of prosperity, before the Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Mumbai, Tuesday

RAJIV KILLER 'THREATENS SUICIDE'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vellore (TN), July 21: Rajiv Gandhi assassination case convict Nalini Sriharan, lodged in the special prison for women here, threatened to end her life, a senior jail official said Tuesday.

Her legal adviser said a representation has been given to authorities to shift her to Chennai Puzhal prison considering her safety. Nalini's threat to end her life came after a co-prisoner, who was in a nearby cell, complained against her to authorities.

The co-prisoner, also a life convict, alleged that the Rajiv case convict was harassing her by giving more and more work and requested that her cell be changed, a top prison department official said. Following the complaint, jail authorities questioned Nalini and changed the cell of the complainant.

"Nalini, during questioning started a quarrel with the jailor. She said the complaint of the co-prisoner was false and that she did not harass her. Nalini said she will commit suicide if the cell of the co-prisoner was changed," the official said.

Man beaten to death for harassing woman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kota (Rajasthan), July 21: A 30-year-old man died allegedly after eight-nine family members of a woman attacked him with sticks, iron rods and stones at a village in Rajasthan's Jhalawar district for harassing her, police said Tuesday.

Nine people, including the woman, have been booked and eight of them arrested in connection with the killing, they said.

The incident took place on Monday noon at Sumer village under the Khanpur police station limits.

The deceased man was identified as Tokiya alias Raju Bagri (30), a resident of Sumer village. He was a notorious goon in the village and was involved in several crimes and unlawful activities including harassing and troubling women in the village, Khanpur Station House Officer (SHO) Kamalchand Meena said.

LALJI TANDON 1935-2020

Lucknow loses its favourite son

He lived in Lucknow and Lucknow lived in him. With his passing away, a part of Lucknow has also ceased to exist.

Lalji Tandon, 85, was one of the tallest BJP leaders in Uttar Pradesh but, more importantly, he belonged to a generation of politicians that no longer exists.

Tandon kept an open house and never hemmed in himself in political boundaries. His friends were found in every party and he would hold impromptu chat session with them on an almost daily basis. Journalists, officers, political leaders, businessmen and people from all walks of life could troop in without an appointment and feel welcomed.

Lalji Tandon began his political journey as a member of the Legislative Council, went on to become a minister and then Member of Parliament before he was appointed Governor in

Bihar and then Madhya Pradesh.

However, he made sure that he remained connected with the people, irrespective of their caste, class or stature.

His mornings were spent in his ancestral home in Sondhi Tola in Chowk area. Visitors were invariably treated to steaming hot 'jalebis', 'samosas' and 'makkhan malai' – a local delicacy.

His afternoons and evenings were spent in his official bungalow and fritters were served with endless cups of hot tea. At regular intervals, he would host 'chat' parties and personally attend to the guests amid political banter.

A close friend of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he never flaunted his connections, even though Vajpayee would invariably head to Tandon's home for a meal whenever he was in Lucknow.

Lalji Tandon was a moderate when

it came to political ideology. Though a committed party worker, he never came to the forefront of the Ram temple movement and steered clear of rabble rousing that was so typical of the era.

It was this posturing that endeared him to opposition leaders.

Journalists found a father figure in him and, often, vented their ire against the governments in his drawing room. He would simply smile away the blues and veer the conversation to other topics. Lalji Tandon knew Lucknow like the back of his hand.

One could spend hours listening to his anecdotes about the Nawabs of Lucknow and the importance of the monuments of an era gone by.

A food connoisseur, he knew exactly which dish was cooked to perfection in which restaurant. He would relate the history or a dish, explain the ingredi-

ents that went into it and made no bones about his disdain for pizzas and burgers.

An excellent host, his parties would be known for their delicious spread – all vegetarian – and guests would often ask Tandon to fix the date for the next party even before one was over.

In Chowk area, where he lived all his life, Tandon enjoyed a remarkable rapport with the local people and it was only through his efforts that the area could be given a makeover after demolishing an ancient structure located in the middle of the market.

With his demise, an era of politics has come to an end in Uttar Pradesh – an era where views were freely exchanged without rancour and malice, where social interactions rode over political boundaries and where friendships did not depend on class and status.



of the day quote

The pandemic has laid bare just how hard it is for people in this country to find access to quality caregiving they need for themselves, or to juggle the responsibilities of working and also caring for family members

JOE BIDEN | FORMER VICE PRESIDENT OF THE US

The UK blatantly interfered in China's internal affairs and contravened international law and the basic norms governing international relations

LIU XIAOMING | CHINESE DIPLOMAT

President Donald Trump, whether he knows it yet or not, he will be leaving the White House, despite the latter's refusal to commit to the 2020 election results

NANCY PELOSI | US HOUSE SPEAKER

SHORT TAKES

‘China trying to hack vaccine data’

Washington: The Justice Department Tuesday accused two Chinese hackers of stealing hundreds of millions of dollars of trade secrets from companies across the world and more recently targeting firms developing a vaccine for the coronavirus. The indictment, which officials expected to discuss at a news conference, says the hackers in recent months had researched vulnerabilities in the computer networks of companies publicly known for their work in developing vaccines and treatments.

Thunberg donates funds to fight nCoV

Stockholm: Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has said she will donate 100,000 euros (\$114,000) to help tackle the spread of the coronavirus in the Amazon rainforest. Thunberg announced on Twitter Monday that the funds will be given to SOS Amazonia, a campaign led by climate protest group Fridays For Future Brazil, the BBC reported. It will be the first donation to come from a \$1.14 million windfall Thunberg received for being awarded the Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity.

Nepal to resume flights from Aug 17

Kathmandu: Nepal will resume domestic and international flight operations starting from August 17, over four months after they were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 20, the government had banned all passengers, including Nepalis, from entering the country.

Israeli strikes in Syria kill five

Beirut: A Syrian war monitoring group said Tuesday that Israeli airstrikes the previous day on military posts south of the capital, Damascus, killed five foreign fighters and wounded several others. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said it wasn't immediately clear if the dead were Iranians or members of Iran-backed groups.

Pompeo holds talks in UK

London: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo held “candid” discussions in London with one of America's closest allies Tuesday, amid growing tensions between the West and China.



All foreigners and Chinese nationals should carry the negative COVID-19 test certificate before entering China

WANG WENBIN | CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN

POPULAR SEAFOOD SPECIES IN SHARP DECLINE

Fish market favourites such as orange roughly, common octopus and pink conch are among the species of fish and invertebrates in rapid decline around the world, say researchers



‘CHINA TRIED TO SEIZE INDIAN LAND USING COVID-19 CRISIS’

AGENCIES

Washington, July 21: The US House of Representatives has unanimously passed an amendment to the National Defense Authorisation Act (NDAA), slamming China's aggression against India in the Galwan Valley and its growing territorial assertiveness in and around disputed areas like the South China Sea.

Passed unanimously by the House of Representatives along with scores of other amendments, it said that the expansion and aggression of the People's Republic of China in and around disputed territories, such as the Line of Actual Control, the South China Sea, the Senkaku Islands, is of significant concern.

The bipartisan amendment states Congress' opposition to Chinese aggression against India in the Galwan Valley on the India-China border, and expresses its concern to



ward the growing territorial assertiveness of China. China has used the distraction of the coronavirus to attempt to seize territory belonging to India, as well as to press its territorial claims in the South China Sea, it said.

China claims almost all of the 1.3 million square mile South China Sea as its sovereign territory. China has been building military bases on

artificial islands in the region also claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

China has impeded commercial activity like fishing or mineral exploration by countries like Vietnam and the Philippines.

Ties between China and Japan have been strained by a territorial row over a group of islands in the East China Sea, known as the

The National Defense Authorisation Act said that India and China should work towards de-escalating the situation along the LAC

The troops of India and China are locked in a standoff in several areas along the LAC in eastern Ladakh since May 5

The situation deteriorated last month following the Galwan Valley clashes that left 20 Indian Army personnel dead

Senkaku islands in Japan and the Diaoyu islands in China.

“India is a critical, democratic partner in the Indo-Pacific,” Chabot said in a statement after the House passed the NDAA amendment. “I am a strong supporter of our bilateral relationship, and I stand with India, and all our partners in the region, as they confront China's hostile acts of aggression,” he said.

NCP meet fails to resolve PM Oli-Prachanda feud

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, July 21: The much-awaited meeting of Nepal's ruling communist party Tuesday failed to sort out the differences between Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and the rival faction led by party executive chairperson Pushpa Kamal Dahal “Prachanda” as political issues did not figure during the brief deliberations held in the absence of the premier.

The meeting of the Standing Committee of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) was held at the Prime Minister's official residence at Baluwatar in the national capital but it did not discuss political issues, said Ganesh Shah, member of the Standing Committee and a senior party leader. Prime Minister Oli did not attend the meeting of the

45-member Standing Committee, he said, adding that the next meeting of the top body of the NCP will be held a week later.

The meeting took place after it was postponed seven times to allow Oli and Prachanda more time to the rival faction led by party executive chairperson Pushpa Kamal Dahal “Prachanda” as political issues did not figure during the brief deliberations held in the absence of the premier.

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UK ‘top target’ for Russian spying: Parliamentary panel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, July 21: The UK is one of Russia's top Western intelligence targets, an influential UK parliamentary panel has concluded in a report released Tuesday.

The House of Commons Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC), which has oversight over the country's intelligence services, concluded in a long-awaited report on feared Russian influence in British affairs that “immediate action” is needed to assist the country's intelligence services tackle the “very capable adversary” in the form of Russia. “It appears that Russia considers the UK one of its top Western intelligence targets... This is likely to be related to the UK's close relationship with the US, and the fact that the UK is seen as central to the Western anti-Russian lobby,” notes the 50-page report.

“The way forward lies with taking action with our allies; a continuing international consensus is needed against Russian aggressive action. The West is strongest when it acts collectively and that is the way in which we can best attach a cost to [Russian President] Putin's



actions,” it adds. Described as a major inquiry, spanning a number of evidence sessions with a broad range of witnesses over the course of eight months in addition to a substantial volume of written evidence, the report also expresses concern over the failure of the British government to conduct a proper assessment of Russia's interference in the lead up to the 2016 referendum in favour of Brexit.

“We have not been provided with any post-referendum assessment of Russian attempts at interference,” notes the cross-party committee report, in a sharp rebuke.

“Even if the conclusion of any such assessment were that there was minimal interference, this would nonetheless represent a helpful reassurance to the public that the UK's democratic processes had remained relatively safe,” it adds.

The committee pointed to open source studies which reflected a “preponderance of pro-Brexit or anti-EU stories” on Russian media and the use of “bots” and “trolls”, as evidence of Russian attempts to influence the process and expressed concern that the British intelligence services did not conduct a thorough analysis of it.

RIVER THAMES SEVERELY POLLUTED WITH PLASTIC

Crabs contained tangled plastic in their stomachs, including fibres and microplastics from sanitary pads, balloons, elastic bands and carrier bags

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

London, July 21: The River Thames in London has some of the highest recorded levels of microplastics for any river in the world, scientists have estimated, adding that 94,000 microplastics per second flow down the river in places.

The quantity exceeds that measured in other European rivers, such as the Danube and Rhine, the BBC reported Tuesday.

“Flushable” wet wipes were found in high abundance on the shoreline forming “wet wipe reefs”.

Researchers at Royal Holloway University of London, are calling for stricter regulations on the labelling and disposal of plastic products.

They warn that careless disposal of plastic gloves and masks during the coronavirus pandemic might make the problem of plastic pollution worse.

“Taken together these studies



show how many different types of plastic, from microplastics in the water through to larger items of debris physically altering the foreshore, can potentially affect a wide range of organisms in the River Thames,” the BBC quoted Professor Dave Morritt from Royal Holloway, as saying. “The increased use of single-use plastic items, and the inappropriate disposal of such items, including masks and gloves, along with plastic-containing cleaning products, during the current COVID-19 pandemic, may well exacerbate this problem.”

Tiny bits of plastic have been found inside the bodies of crabs living in the Thames.

Armed man seizes bus, holds 10 people hostage in Ukraine

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lutsk (Ukraine), July 21: An armed man seized a long-distance bus and took people in it hostage in northwestern Ukraine Tuesday launching an hours-long standoff with police, Ukrainian authorities said.

About 10 people are currently being held hostage, Ukraine's Security Service said in a Facebook statement. Police earlier had put the number at 20. It was unclear how many people had been on board to start with, and whether any escaped. Police sealed off the centre of Lutsk, a city 400 kilometres (250 miles) west of the capital Kyiv. The assailant is armed and carrying explosives, police said. They said he threw a hand grenade that failed to explode at officers and shot at them at least twice during the still-ongoing siege. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said negotiations with the man are currently underway. “We're doing everything to free the hostages,” Zelenskyy told reporters.

The man called the police himself at 9:25 am (0625 GMT) after taking control of the bus and introduced himself as Maksim Plokhoy, Deputy Interior Minister Anton Gerashchenko said on Facebook.

In a Telegram account reportedly belonging to him, Plokhoy apparently admitted to taking people on the bus hostage, said that “the state has always been and always is the first terrorist” and demanded that top Ukrainian officials release statements on their social media pages calling themselves terrorists.

FLOODING IN CHINA WORSENS



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, July 21: Breached levees have trapped more than 10,000 people in an eastern Chinese town as flooding worsens across much of the country, local authorities said Tuesday.

High waters overcame flood defenses protecting Guzhen, a town in Anhui province, Sunday, the provincial government said on its official microblog.

Flood waters rose as high as 3 meters (10 feet), the official Xinhua News Agency quoted Wang Qingjun, Guzhen's Communist Party secretary, as saying.

About 1,500 firefighters were rushed to carry out rescues in the province, where weeks of heavy rains have disrupted the lives of more than 3 million people, Xinhua said. China's Meteorological Administration said more heavy rainfall along the Yellow River and Huai River is expected over the next three days.

At least 141 people have died or gone missing in flooding since the beginning of June, with more than 150,000 houses damaged and direct economic losses estimated at about \$9 million. On Sunday, a dam in Anhui was blasted to allow flood waters to flow downriver.

Locust attacks pose serious threat to food security in India: UN agency

LARGE AND AGGRESSIVE SWARMS OF THESE CROP-DEVOURING SHORT-HORNED INSECTS RECENTLY INVADED OVER TWO DOZEN DISTRICTS OF DESERT AREAS IN RAJASTHAN, MADHYA PRADESH AND GUJARAT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, July 21: Locust attacks are posing a serious threat to food security in parts of East Africa, India and Pakistan as a result of changing climate conditions that can be linked to human activity, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) has said.

The specialised agency of the United Nations said extreme weather events and climatic changes such as increases in temperature and rainfall over desert areas, and the strong winds associated with tropical cyclones, provide a new environment for pest breeding, development and

migration. In Pakistan, authorities declared an emergency in February, saying locust numbers were the worst in more than two decades.

WMO cited an article in Nature Climate Change and said while desert locusts have been here since biblical times, recent intense outbreaks can be linked to anthropogenic climate change and the increased frequency of extreme weather events.

“Attribution of a single event to climate change is difficult. However, climatic changes such as increases in temperature and rainfall over desert areas, and the strong winds associated with tropical cyclones, pro-



vide a new environment for pest breeding, development and migration. This suggests that global warm-

ing played a role in creating the conditions required for the development, outbreak and survival of the

locusts,” scientists from the Intergovernmental Authority on Climate Prediction and Applications Centre said (ICPAC).

The article cited the role of Indian Ocean warming, intense and unusual tropical cyclones in the region and heavy rainfall and flooding as playing an important role.

WMO said the first-wave of infestations at the end of 2019 destroyed 70,000 ha of farmland in Somalia and Ethiopia, and 2,400 km of pasture land in Kenya.

A recent assessment in Ethiopia estimated that between December 2019 and March 2020, locusts damaged 114,000, 41,000 and 36,000 ha of

Sorghum, maize and wheat, respectively, according to ICPAC.

ICPAC, which is a WMO regional climate centre, said that locust swarms have been reported in the last 14 days in northern Kenya, eastern and north-eastern Ethiopia.

Adult locusts are also in large numbers in the areas where hoppers and bands were spotted in June which is in the trajectories of migrating swarms.

Climatic conditions suitable for desert locust development are forecast to be highly suitable in Uganda, southern to east of Sudan, eastern Ethiopia, northern Somalia and northern Kenya.

of the day quote

Unlock 1.0 coupled with increase in demand from the rural market has boosted the retail sales with respect to May numbers



ASHISH HARSHARAJ KALE | PRESIDENT, FADA

With the changes in the working environment, the current situation is a testament that employee efficiency is greater than actual physical presence



DINESH RAMAMURTHI | CHIEF HR OFFICER, OYO

The talent in India is truly exceptional and we are looking forward to expanding our DevOps, IT, Security, and Business Operations teams here as we scale our operations



VELCHAMY SANKARILINGAM | PRESIDENT, PRODUCT & ENGINEERING, ZOOM

SHORT TAKES

MF industry folio count rises 9 pc

New Delhi: Mutual funds industry has witnessed a 9 per cent growth in folio count to nearly 9 crore in 2019-20 on the back of addition in investors account by several fund houses including Axis MF and ICICI Prudential MF. Industry experts said addition of folios indicates investors' maturity and understanding about market risks associated with the mutual fund schemes. According to data from Association of Mutual Funds in India, the number of folios with 45 fund houses rose to 8.97 crore.

Govt segregates operation routes

New Delhi: To minimise accidents and enhance marine environment, the government Tuesday announced separate operation routes for merchant and fishing vessels in south-west Indian waters. The Arabian Sea around the country's south-west coast is a busy route with a substantial number of merchant ships passing through the area along with a large number of fishing vessels also operating there, resulting in collisions and loss of lives at times. There have been reports of collisions resulting in damage of property, environmental pollution, and loss of lives.

Domestic mining to fall over 20 pc

New Delhi: The domestic mining and construction equipment (MCE) sector is likely to see a volume decline of over 20 per cent in calendar year (CY) 2020 on account of loss of sales in April and May, and an overall weakness in the economy, Icrs said Tuesday. The domestic credit rating agency said it continues to maintain negative outlook for the domestic MCE sector based on the prevailing overall scenario. After three strong years and industry volume peaking at about 94,000 units, CY2019 saw industry volume fall by 16 per cent, it said.

Vodafone Idea shares tank 8%

New Delhi: Shares of Vodafone Idea Tuesday tumbled 8 per cent, a day after the Supreme Court said it was not reasonable to give 15 to 20 years period for paying AGR dues by telecom companies. The stock tanked 8.08 per cent to close at ₹8.31 on the BSE. During the day, it plunged 9.84 per cent to ₹8.15. On the NSE, it tumbled 7.69 per cent to close at ₹8.40. Bharti Airtel also declined 1.39 per cent to close at ₹567.75 on the BSE.



Further steps might be initiated by the Centre to sustain the economic revival process as high frequency indicators have shown visible economic green shoots

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FM

INDIA'S GDP TO CONTRACT 6.1 PER CENT: NOMURA

Economic activity continues to remain weak and will lead to a 6.1 per cent contraction in India's GDP in the current fiscal, foreign brokerage Nomura stated.



EU reaches historic deal on pandemic recovery

REUTERS

Brussels, July 21: European Union leaders clinched an historic deal on a massive stimulus plan for their coronavirus-throttled economies in the early hours of Tuesday, after a fractious summit lasting almost five days.

The agreement paves the way for the European Commission, the EU's executive, to raise billions of euros on capital markets on behalf of all 27 states, an unprecedented act of solidarity in almost seven decades of European integration.

Summit chairman Charles Michel called the accord, reached at a 5.15 a.m. (0315 GMT), a pivotal moment for Europe.

Many had warned that a failed summit amid the coronavirus pandemic would have put the bloc's viability in serious doubt after years of economic crisis and Britain's recent departure.

World shares climbed to their



European Council President Charles Michel (R) and European Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen

highest since February and the euro briefly hit its strongest since March on news of the deal.

"This agreement sends a concrete signal that Europe is a force for action," a jubilant Michel told reporters.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who spearheaded a push for the deal with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, hailed it as truly historic.

Leaders hope the 750 billion euro (\$857.33 billion) recovery fund and

Strong in symbolism

While strong in symbolism, the deal came at the cost of cuts to proposed investment in climate-friendly funds and did not set conditions for disbursements to countries

The Netherlands led a group of so-called frugal states with Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, insisting that aid to worst-hit countries should be mainly in loans

The recovery plan now faces a potentially difficult passage through the European Parliament and it must be ratified by all EU states

its related 1.1 trillion euro 2021-2027 budget will help repair the continent's deepest recession since World War Two after the coronavirus outbreak shut down economies. Germany Economy Minister

Peter Altmaier said that, with the agreement, the chances of "a cautious, slow recovery" in the second half of this year had increased enormously.

While strong in symbolism, the deal came at the cost of cuts to proposed investment in climate-friendly funds and did not set conditions for disbursements to countries, such as Hungary and Poland, seen as breaching democratic values.

In an unwieldy club of 27, each with veto power, the summit also exposed faultlines across the bloc that are likely to hinder future decision-making on money as richer northern countries resisted helping out the poorer south.

The Netherlands led a group of so-called frugal states with Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, insisting that aid to Italy, Spain and other Mediterranean countries that took the brunt of the pandemic should be mainly in loans, not in non-repayable grants.

LinkedIn lays off 960 jobs globally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 21: Professional networking site LinkedIn Tuesday said it is slashing about 960 jobs globally, about six per cent of its worldwide staff, amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The company, which is part of tech giant Microsoft, has about 1,200 employees in India. It also has a development centre in Bengaluru.

When contacted, LinkedIn did not comment on the impact of the job cuts on its India operations.

We have made the extremely difficult decision to reduce approximately 960 roles, or about 6 per cent of our employee base, across our global sales and talent acquisition organisations (GSO and GTO)...these are the only layoffs we are planning, LinkedIn CEO Ryan Roslansky said in a note to employees.

He added that COVID-19 is having a sustained impact on the demand for hiring, both on the company's talent solution business and on the company in general.

In GSO and GTO, there are roles that are no longer needed as we



adjust to the reduced demand in our internal hiring and for our talent products globally, he said.

Roslansky said affected employees in North America, Brazil, and parts of APAC (Asia-Pacific) will be with the company till August 21, while impacted employees in Dubai will be there till September 29.

The company has also begun consultation with employees in Ireland, the UK and Australia about potential impacts to roles, and the company will continue to work through the process locally.

The top executive said employees who work in France, Sweden and Spain will learn more about proposed impact to roles during August, and employees in Italy will hear about proposed impacts in September.

BIZ BUZZ

Passenger vehicle sales dip 38 pc in June



New Delhi: Passenger vehicle retail sales in June fell 38.34 per cent to 1,26,417 units as compared to the same month last year as COVID-19 continued to impact the sentiment of buyers, automobile dealers' body FADA said Tuesday. According to Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), which collected vehicle registration data from 1,230 out of the 1,440 regional transport offices (RTOs), passenger vehicle sales stood at 2,05,011 units in June 2019. Two-wheeler sales declined 40.92 per cent to 7,90,118 units last month as compared with 13,37,462 units in June 2019. Commercial vehicle sales plunged 83.83 per cent to 10,509 units as against 64,976 units in the year-ago period. Three-wheeler sales fell 75.43 per cent to 11,993 units last.

BEML bags Def Min order of de-mine equipment

Bangalore: State-run Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) on Tuesday said it has received a ₹557 crore order from the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for supply of 1,512 Track Width Mine Plough (TWMP), a de-mine equipment, for T-90 tanks used by the Army. The system, which would facilitate individual mobility to tanks while negotiating mine fields, will be manufactured at BEML facilities with the help of M/s. Pearson Engineering, UK, the company said in a release. It said, out of 1,512 Mine plough BEML will supply 100 numbers within 12 months, another 250 in subsequent years and order will be completed within seven years. According to BEML, under the Make in India policy the contract has Buy and Make (Indian) categorisation.



Collection efficiency of MFIs improve: Icrs

Mumbai: The collection efficiency of micro-finance institutions (MFIs) have witnessed an improvement in June following the easing of lockdown restrictions, says an Icrs report. It said relaxation in lockdown restriction has enabled domestic MFIs to re-establish their connect and convince a large number of borrowers to start paying their instalments as it will be cost-effective for them. This resulted in better than expected collection efficiency in June 2020 for the rating agency's sample of 21 MFIs, constituting around 70 per cent of the industry (except small finance banks). Icrs further said that based on discussions with industry players, borrowers in the rural areas who are engaged in agricultural, dairy, and allied services have performed better than borrowers from other industries.



Apple aims to be 100% carbon neutral for entire biz

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

California, July 21: Apple Tuesday unveiled its plan to become 100 per cent carbon neutral across its entire business, manufacturing supply chain and product life cycle by 2030, saying that within a decade, all its devices (iPhones, iPads, Mac and Apple Watches) will have net zero climate impact.

All Apple devices released in the past year were made with recycled content, including 100 per cent recycled rare earth elements in the iPhone Taptic Engine — a first for Apple and for any smartphone.

In its '2020 Environmental

Progress Report', Apple has detailed its plans to reduce emissions by 75 per cent by 2030 while developing innovative carbon removal solutions for the remaining 25 per cent of its comprehensive footprint.

"Businesses have a profound opportunity to help build a more sustainable future, one born of our common concern for the planet we share," said Apple CEO Tim Cook.



Businesses have a profound opportunity to help build a more sustainable future, one born of our common concern for the planet we share

TIM COOK | CEO, APPLE

"Climate action can be the foundation for a new era of innovative

potential, job creation, and durable economic growth. With our com-

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 21: Air India trade unions have complained to Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Puri that the government has now turned a blind eye to the management's ethnic cleansing at lower levels through compulsory leave without pay (LWP), redundancies and wage cuts.

In a letter to Puri, the Joint Action Forum of Air India unions said, "We are deeply ashamed to say that it seems that after praising our Air Indian Corona Warriors at grand functions, respectfully, the government has now turned a blind eye to this management's ethnic cleansing of Air Indians at the lower levels, through compulsory LWP, redundancies and wage cuts."

The Joint Action Forum of Air India unions strongly opposes this Compulsory Leave without pay scheme as it is an illegal practice and is not a voluntary scheme.

"In fact the Board resolution it-

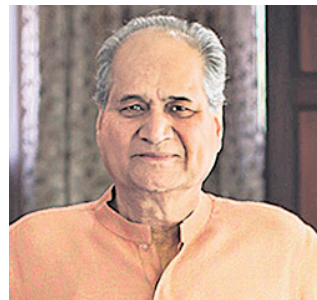


self empowers the Chairman and Managing Director with extraordinary powers, which seem akin to a High Court, to pack off employees on 2 years leave (extended to 5 years) at CMD's discretion or at the arbitrary whim of the Regional heads," the trade unions said.

"This said Compulsory LWP scheme violates every labour law put in place by Parliament and orders of the Supreme Court and various other courts and seeks to dispossess the lower categories workers of their legally guaranteed rights," it added.

The trade unions have pointed out that the redundancies are at the elite management cadre level and not the workers.

Rahul Bajaj steps down as chairman of Bajaj Finance



AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 21: Noted industrialist Rahul Bajaj will step down as Non-Executive Chairman of Bajaj Finance July 31, after being at the helm of the company for over three decades.

He will be succeeded by Sanjiv Bajaj, currently Vice Chairman, the Bajaj Finance said in a regulatory filing Tuesday.

"Rahul Bajaj, Non-Executive Chairman of the company, having been at the helm of the company since its inception in 1987 and the group for over five decades, as part of succession planning, has decided to demit the office as chairman of the board with effect from close of business hours on July 31, 2020," the company said.

Rahul Bajaj, however, will continue to serve the company as a non-executive non-independent director.

The company's board "has approved the appointment of Sanjiv Bajaj as Non-Executive Chairman of the company with effect from August 1, 2020, in place of Rahul Bajaj, the filing said.

India, US closing in on trade deal



REUTERS

New Delhi, July 21: India and the United States are closing in on a trade deal, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday, after two years of negotiations.

India is seeking concessions for generic drugs it exports to the United States in return for opening its dairy markets and slashing tariffs on farm goods as the two sides seek to clinch a new trade accord, three sources told Reuters.

They have been negotiating a limited trade pact aimed also at restoring zero tariffs on a range of Indian exports to the United States under its Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), from which the Trump administration withdrew last year, citing lack of reciprocal access to Indian markets.

"In the long term, I believe we have a quick trade deal which has some of the pending matters built up over the last couple of years, which we need to get out of the way quickly. We are almost there," Goyal said at the U.S.-India Business Council's India Ideas Summit, being conducted virtually.

Goyal further said New Delhi and Washington should look at a preferential trade pact with 50 to 100 products and services before moving to a free trade pact.

"We believe we should also look at an early harvest in the form of a preferential trade agreement rather than waiting for the gains of a free trade agreement, which can take several years to conclude," he said.

The 10-year Apple roadmap will lower emissions with a series of innovative actions.

Apple said it will continue to increase the use of low carbon and recycled materials in its products, innovate in product recycling, and design products to be as energy efficient as possible.

Apple's latest recycling innovation — a robot the company is calling "Dave" — disassembles the Taptic Engine from iPhone to better recover key materials such as rare earth magnets and tungsten while also enabling recovery of steel, the next step following its line of "Daisy" iPhone disassembly robots.

FULL-FLEDGED IPL IN UAE!

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 21: With the T20 World Cup's postponement clearing the decks for a full-fledged IPL, the glitzy event's Governing Council will meet in a week or 10 days' time to plan its next course of action, eyeing UAE as the host this year.

An IPL between September and early November has been made possible by the ICC's decision Monday to postpone the T20 World Cup in Australia, scheduled for October-November, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



"The IPL GC will meet within a week or 10 days and all decisions (including final schedule) will be taken there. As of now, the plan is to have a full fledged IPL comprising 60 games and most likely in the UAE," the IPL Governing Council chairman Brijesh Patel told this agency.

Asked about the main challenges in conducting the event in current scenario, Patel added: "Just the operational side of it. Whether you do it here or outside, it doesn't matter (with no crowds)."

The franchisees had already been working on their plans for the IPL even before the ICC announcement. With majority of the Indian play-



ers not having access to grounds amid the pandemic, teams will need at least three to four weeks to get them match ready.

Foreign players will fly in directly to the UAE from their respective countries. "Our players will need at least three to four weeks of training, if not more. We will finalise all our plans once the BCCI announces the dates. It looks like the IPL will be in the UAE and we are ready for that,"

a team owner told this agency.

Since India tour Australia for a four-Test series right after the IPL, training of the Test players is also an important issue.

Test specialists like Cheteshwar Pujara and Hanuma Vihari, who are not part of the IPL, are likely to train for the eagerly-awaited series in a bio-secure environment at the newly-renovated Motera Stadium in Ahmedabad during the time of the IPL.

More moot points & questions ahead of the IPL GC meeting:

- 1) More double headers expected (original schedule had only five double headers).
- 2) BCCI will need to provide a Standard Operating Procedure to IPL teams even though they will have their own SOPs in place.
- 3) Will the BCCI compensate teams for not being able to generate gate money this year?
- 4) Will there be virtual commentary from Star Sports? It was seen in the recent 3TC event in South Africa with the likes of Aakash Chopra, Deep Dasgupta and Irfan Pathan commenting from home.

A few fringe players are expected to join them at Motera along with the Indian team's support staff, which is free during the IPL.

Work from home has become the norm amid the pandemic, therefore, there is a possibility that IPL commentary will happen from the comfort of the living room, a safer and cost effective-option considering the likes of Sunil Gavaskar, who is 71, are involved.

The viewership is expected to be a record one with people craving for live cricket, something KXIP co-owner Ness Wadia has said.

However, it remains to be seen how much the broadcasters and teams are able to attract from the sponsors in the current financial climate.

Stokes displaces Holder as No.1 Test all-rounder



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, July 21: Ben Stokes has outdone West Indies captain Jason Holder to become the world's top-ranked Test all-rounder while also attaining a career-best third position among batsmen in the ICC Test Player Rankings, following a match-winning performance at Old Trafford.

Stokes ended Holder's 18-month reign at the top, becoming the first from England at the summit since Andrew Flintoff in May 2006. His tally of 497 rating points is the highest by any Test all-rounder since Jacques Kallis aggregated 517 in April 2008.

India's Ravindra Jadeja remains in third spot with Australian Mitchell Starc and Ravichandran

Ashwin rounding up the top-five. Among batsmen, Stokes is joint-third with Marnus Labuschagne, only behind Steve Smith and India skipper Virat Kohli, with specialist batsmen like Kane Williamson and Babar Azam below him in the list. His captain Joe Root is ninth. Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane have dropped a spot each to be eighth and 10th respectively.

Stuart Broad returned to the top 10 of the bowlers' rankings after claiming three wickets in each innings. He is now England's top-ranked bowler, one slot ahead of James Anderson, who dropped to 11th after being rested for the match.

In ICC World Test Championship, the win at Old Trafford has lifted England to third position in the points table. They are now on 186 points, six more than New Zealand. India lead with 360 points while Australia are second at 296. The West Indies remain on 40 points.

England level series

Manchester: Ben Stokes delivered crucial contributions with bat and ball to lead England to a 113-run win over the West Indies late on the final day of the second test, tying the three-match series at 1-1 Monday. Needing to bat out 85 overs to salvage a draw and retain the Wisden Trophy, the West Indies was dismissed for 198 with 14.5 overs and one hour left of a Test played at an empty Old Trafford. The third Test starts Friday and will also be in Manchester. England set the West Indies an unlikely victory target of 312 after declaring 11 overs into the day, having quickly added 92 runs - chiefly through Stokes - to get to 129/3. In reply, the visitors could only muster 198 before losing all their wickets.

POSTPONED WT20

Bought tickets to remain valid if Australia hosts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, July 21: The tickets sold for the now-postponed ICC T20 World Cup will remain valid if Australia hosts the edition in 2021 instead of India.

In case the event is shifted to 2022, all ticket-holders will be entitled to a full refund, the ICC stated on its website on Monday night after postponing the mega-event this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The tournament was to be played in October-November but will now be conducted later because of the pandemic.

The ICC has not yet announced which country will host which edition as there are operational issues that both the Indian and Australian cricket Boards need to sort out.

The world body had opened ticket booking through its ticketing partners and a significant number was already sold.

"Ticket holders are welcome to retain their tickets, noting, if Australia hosts in 2021, tickets will remain valid for fans who have already bought and will be automatically updated to reflect the new dates.

"If Australia hosts in 2022, for tickets already bought a full refund will be processed automatically," ICC stated in a series of FAQs.

Fans can retain their tickets until a date is confirmed for the event. Refund requests can be made until December 15 and they will be processed within 30 days after an online submission. The hospitality package will also remain valid for the 2021 fixtures.

FORMER AUSSIE PACER WONDERS HOW MUCH WILL SALIVA-LESS KOOKABURRA SWING

Bowlers hold key against India: Lee



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 21: Former speed merchant Brett Lee reckons Australia's pace triumvirate would hold the key during the year-end home Test series against India and is keen to figure out how much the kookaburra ball swings without saliva Down Under.

Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood form a fine pace attack for Australia. With the ban on saliva due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the world's fastest bowlers wants the custodians of the game to come up with an 'artificial substance' to maintain the balance between bat and ball.

"Playing at home obviously gives you that advantage, but that said I know that India will pack a full strength squad to tour Australia. I still believe if Australia is to win our bowlers hold the key," Lee told PTI



From L: Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood

in an exclusive interview.

The kookaburra seam is not as pronounced as Dukes or SG Tests balls and the flattening of seam coupled with ban on saliva will make it harder for bowlers of both teams.

"It will definitely change the way the game is played so we don't want to make it even harder for bowlers even more than it is currently is," said the 43-year-old Lee.

India's pace attack, which has been phenomenal in the past three years, has the capability of 'knocking over any top order' in world cricket but it will again boil down to how much the ball swings.

"India have got some extremely good pace bowlers that are capable of knocking over any top order. Once again I think it comes down to how the ball will swing or not swing in different conditions (Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne

and Sydney)."

And that is precisely the reason why Lee won't mind if an artificial substance is allowed even though his answer to whether ball tampering should be legalised was an emphatic no.

"Essentially you do need saliva to keep the new ball shiny and also the old ball to reverse swing. Usually (fast bowlers) use less saliva on a new ball compared to the old one. Maybe they need to come up with some artificial substance that they can use," the holder of 310 Test wickets asserted.

The best part about Australian cricket teams have been their iconic captains who have set benchmarks, said Lee. "Yes Australia have had some wonderful leaders which involves set the tone for the generations to follow. I was very lucky to play under two of my favourites in Steve Waugh and Ricky Ponting,"

said Lee, referring to the likes of Ian Chappell, Allan Border and Mark Taylor who preceded them.

Does he feel that Tim Paine can earn the same kind of respect consistently in a change room that has powerhouse performers like Steve Smith and David Warner.

"I think Tim Paine has done a tremendous job and should be complimented for the way that he has led the side. Keeping in mind he's had a few dramas to deal with, he's still the right man for the job," Lee said.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, all cricket boards are going through financial stress and Cricket Australia is no different. The speedster hoped that some normalcy will return in future.

"As any person in the workforce any time there is a pay cut that it definitely will affect them. Let's hope we get back to some form of normality as soon as possible."

CR7 brace takes Juventus close to title

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Turin, July 21: Over a three-minute span in the second half, Cristiano Ronaldo ensured Juventus would not lose to Lazio for a third time this season. Ronaldo's double strike in a 2-1 win Monday meant Juventus could clinch a ninth straight Serie A title this week.

With four rounds remaining, Juventus moved eight points clear of Inter Milan, nine ahead of Atalanta, and 11 in front of Lazio, which trailed the Bianconeri by just one point before the break for the coronavirus pandemic.

Juventus earned a measure of revenge after losing twice to Lazio in December - in Serie A and the Italian Super Cup.

Ronaldo converted a penalty after the VAR determined a handball, then finished off a counter-attack following a generous pass



from Paulo Dybala. Ciro Immobile pulled one back for Lazio with a penalty in the 83rd.

Ronaldo and Immobile are level atop the Italian league scoring chart with 30 each. Also, Ronaldo became the first player to score at least 50 goals in the Premier League, the Spanish Liga and Serie A. His 51 in Italy go with his 84 in the Premier League, and 311 in La Liga.

"Records are always important, but the most important thing is that the team wins," Ronaldo said. "We are a phenomenal team and we showed that again today, although we always want to improve and raise the bar."

Both sides hit the post in the first half; a headed volley from Juve's Alex Sandro, and a long-range effort from Immobile. Ronaldo also headed off the crossbar after being set up again by Dybala.

Archer tests virus negative, rejoins England for 3rd Test

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, July 21: Fast bowler Jofra Archer rejoined England for the deciding cricket Test against the West Indies after a second negative test for the coronavirus Tuesday.

Archer was removed from the squad last week on the eve of the second test after he breached the bio-secure rules with an unauthorised trip to his home in Hove.

He was placed in five days of isolation at Old Trafford's on-site hotel, allowed out only for carefully controlled solitary fitness work, and later fined about 15,000 pounds (USD 19,000) at a disciplinary hearing.

Having come into contact with an unnamed individual during his detour between Southampton and Manchester, Archer needed to test



negative twice before being allowed to return to the playing group.

His availability gives England a full set of six seamers to choose from for the series decider starting Friday in Manchester: Stuart Broad, Chris Woakes and Sam Curran contributed to the 113-run win Monday, while James Anderson, Mark Wood and Archer are fully rested after playing in Southampton.

Paddler Sathiyar signs for Polish Superliga team

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 21: Ace Indian paddler G Sathiyar Tuesday signed for Polish side Sokolow SA Jarsoslaw for the upcoming table tennis league in Poland. The Polish league is expected to commence in September.

The 27-year old paddler had earlier this year signed to play for Okayama Rivets in the Japanese T-League. He is likely to play 12 matches in the Japanese league.

"I want to use the time efficiently for more match practice when I am in Europe, so I signed the deal," Sathiyar told PTI after sharing the news on his twitter page. "I will be playing very less matches in Poland, probably around four or five."