



APPRECIATIVE DIVYA

Actor Divya Dutta thanks social media for making people talk openly about domestic violence against women

LEISURE

P2



TN HOTELS BLEED

With mounting debts, fiscal commitments, survival continues to be at stake, say Tamil Nadu hoteliers

TWO STATES

P7



CAT TESTS +VE

A pet cat has become the first UK animal to be infected with coronavirus

INTERNATIONAL

P10

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SHORT TAKES

Ash, daughter test Covid-19 negative

NEW DELHI: After being hospitalized for 10 days, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and daughter Aaradhya have tested negative for COVID-19. The duo has been discharged from Nanavati hospital. Abhishek took to Twitter to update the news. "Thank you all for your continued prayers and good wishes. Indebted forever. Aishwarya and Aaradhya have thankfully tested negative and have been discharged from the hospital. They will now be at home. My father and I remain in hospital under the care of the medical staff," he said.



IRREGULAR by MANJUL



No cineplex, no net connection. But we get our daily dose of entertainment. We watch news debates!

Ace album artiste Deepa Sahu dead



BHUBANESWAR: Deepa Sahu, a popular actress of Odia album industry, who had been battling uterus cancer for a long time, Monday died at a private hospital here. She was 37. The actress had been admitted to Capital Hospital a few days back following a deterioration in her health June 20. Later, she was shifted to AIIMS-Bhubaneswar and then to a private hospital where he breathed her last.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIAION
SENSEX	37934.73 ↓ 194.17
NIFTY	11131.80 ↓ 62.40
DOLLAR	75.01 ↓ ₹0.06
EURO	87.69 ↑ ₹1.01
GOLD	₹52,080 ↑ ₹1045
SILVER	₹65,291 ↑ ₹4068

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP		
MAX	37.2°C	37.2°C
MIN	26.1°C	25.0°C
Humidity	95%	73%
Rainfall	0.6mm	Nil
Forecast		Partly cloudy sky

Don't lower guard against Maoists, warn experts

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 27: The recent decision of the state government to remove five districts from the list of Security Related Expenditure (SRE), a central scheme exclusively meant for capacity building in Maoist-hit districts, is an indication of the waning Mao activities in Odisha. Once the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) approves the state's proposal, the number of districts under SRE will come down to 10 from 15. Earlier, six districts, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Gajapati and Ganjam had been knocked off from the list by the Centre in 2018.

Experts, however, warn against complacency creeping in the government, arguing that the districts



so removed were mainly extended Maoist zones and the government should continue to zero in on ultras in the core areas.

Noted Left Wing Extremism (LWE) expert and Assistant Professor of Political Science at the Sambalpur University, Rajat Kumar Kujur, said "Though the removal of Angul, Boudh,

Sambalpur, Deogarh and Nayagarh from SRE list is a significant achievement for security forces, the Maoists still have a strong presence in the border areas of Malkangiri and Baisa, Jereikela, Birmitrapur in Sundargarh. Now it is the duty of the government to convert these short-term gains into long-term successes by continuing develop-

ment work in the hinterlands and intensifying operations by the security forces."

Maoist outfits in Sundargarh had extended their activities to the neighbouring areas of Sambalpur while the Reds in Keonjhar had extended their grip to Deogarh, Angul and Dhenkanal.

Naxals operating in Kandhamal had engaged in various violent activities in Nayagarh district. Experts also warned that Maoists could exploit the current situation to regain their foothold by recruiting migrants returning to native places in the wake of the pandemic. The ultras can offer money to distressed returnees to entice them into their fold. Maoists in Chhattisgarh were found ferrying stranded migrants to their native districts to fetch

sympathy of tribals. The Reds generally use cultivation season from June to September as the recruitment period.

Kujur asserted that security forces had to break the recruitment process to foil their search bid to fill the vacuum of able leadership in Odisha.

The danger of Maoists regrouping themselves cannot be ruled out keeping in view the history of insurgency in India since independence.

"The geography of Malkangiri, Sundargarh will remain advantageous for Maoists because of rivers and dense forests. Security forces should continue their operations aggressively to eliminate the ultras," Bipin Bihari Mishra, ex-DG, told this paper. The security forces

have succeeded in thwarting Maoist activities in districts over past few years.

Security experts have, however, cited five major reasons behind the dwindling presence of Maoists in the state. They include intensified anti-LWE operation, lack of local leadership to guide the militias, lucrative rehabilitation policy, disillusionment of the lower rung militia with the higher-ups and tribals' support for development process.

The construction of Gurupriya Setu joining the cut-off areas to mainland has opened development opportunities for tribals. In a first of its kind incident, tribals in Janturai village in Swabhimana Anchal lynched a Maoist leader indicating the former's disillusionment towards LWEs.

47 MORE CHINESE APPs TO BE BANNED

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 27: The government has banned 47 more Chinese apps, taking the total number of mobile applications banned for being prejudicial to sovereignty, integrity and defence of the country, to 106, according to a source.

The source privy to the development said that the 47 additional Chinese apps that have been banned now were clones and variants of the apps which were blocked earlier.

An order to this effect was issued on Friday, the source said. The list of additional apps that have been banned was not immediately available, and there is no official word on the matter yet.

Earlier on June 29, the government had banned 59 Chinese apps, saying they were prejudicial to sovereignty, integrity and security of the country.

It has been reported that the announcement would take place officially shortly. The government earlier banned apps including CamScanner, SHAREit, Tik Tok, and UC Browser, among others. That ban was announced under



the provisions of Section 69A of the Information Technology Act.

A media report, citing government sources, said the government had also prepared a list of over 250 apps that would be examined for any user privacy or national security violations.

It is believed that some top gaming Chinese apps including PUBG Mobile would be part of the new list of banned apps. However, the government is yet to release the details pertaining to the development.

The government had ordered telcos to block access to all those apps as well as their related websites shortly after announcing the decision publicly through a press release. It also directed Apple and Google to remove the banned apps from their respective app stores in the country.

OAS officer suspended

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 27: A day after suspending Kalahandi deputy collector Anisha Das for dereliction of duty, the state government Monday suspended former deputy collector of Subarnapur, Iswar Chandra Das, for similar offences.

Revenue and Disaster Management Department issued an order to this effect. Das, an OAS officer, has been asked to stay in his present headquarters at Deogarh during his suspension. He was asked not to leave headquarters without obtaining prior permission of the Collector, Deogarh.

The District Collector had relieved him from duties June 3, 2020 due to indiscipline and negligence in duty. The government Sunday had suspended Kalahandi deputy collector Anisha Das on charge of dereliction of duty.

He will be entitled to the payment of subsistence allowance in accordance with Rule-90 of Orissa Service Code, the order added. The action against Das was taken based on a report submitted by project director of DRDA in Subarnapur district.

5 Rafale jets take off from France for India

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 27: The first batch of five Rafale jets Monday took off from France for India, officials said. The multi-role fighter aircraft are scheduled to arrive at Ambala air force station Wednesday, nearly four years after India signed an inter-governmental agreement with France to procure 36 Rafale jets for the Indian Air Force under a ₹59,000-crore deal.

The fleet is expected to significantly boost the IAF's combat capabilities at a time when India is locked in a tense border row with China in eastern Ladakh. Indian Ambassador to France Jawed Ashraf interacted with IAF pilots before they took off from France.

"Bon Voyage: Indian Ambassador to #France interacts with the Indian pilots of the Rafale. Congratulates and wishes them a safe flight to India with a single hop," the Indian Embassy in Paris tweeted. The first squadron of the Rafale jets will be stationed at Ambala air base.

The five Rafales are scheduled to be inducted into the IAF on Wednesday afternoon. However,



an IAF spokesperson said a formal induction ceremony will be held in mid-August.

Official sources said the Rafale jets are likely to be deployed in the Ladakh sector as part of the IAF's efforts to enhance its operational capabilities along Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China in view of the border row with the country.

The aircraft is capable of carrying a range of potent weapons. European missile maker MBDA's Meteor beyond visual range air-to-air missile and Scalp cruise missile will be the mainstay of the weapons package of the Rafale jets.

Meteor is the next generation of BVR air-to-air missile designed to revolutionise air-to-air combat. The weapon has been developed by MBDA to combat common threats facing the UK, Germany, Italy, France, Spain and Sweden.

Raj Speaker pulls out of SC; Guv concedes session

AGENCIES

Jaipur/New Delhi, July 27: Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra told the state government Monday that an assembly session can be called at a short notice if the agenda is a floor test, a conditional acceptance of the Congress demand as the party held protests and sought the President's intervention.

Congress workers held protests at major state capitals, including at the Raj Bhavans, seeking an assembly session in Rajasthan.

Mishra returned to the Ashok Gehlot government its redrafted



proposal on convening a session, asking it to submit another version after incorporating three suggestions.

These included giving a 21-day notice for the session.

But the Governor's note also offered the quicker alternative to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who is desperately trying to save his government after a rebellion by Sachin Pilot and 18 other Congress MLAs.

Even as it intensified its agitation outside, the Congress chose to pull out for now from a legal battle in the apex court.

In the Supreme Court, Rajasthan Speaker CP Joshi withdrew his petition against last week's high court order, asking him to defer action till July 24 on the disqualification notices to Sachin Pilot and the rebel Congress MLAs.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal told a bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra that the appeal had become infructuous after the apex court did not stay the directions passed by the high court, which then issued a fresh order asking for status quo on the notices.

BJP MLA Madan Dilawat's petition in the Rajasthan High Court against the merger of six Bahujan Samaj Party MLAs into the Congress in Rajasthan was dismissed on Monday, providing relief to the Gehlot camp which, even by its own admission, has only a bare majority in the House.

Doctored 'OCMR' approvals to fore

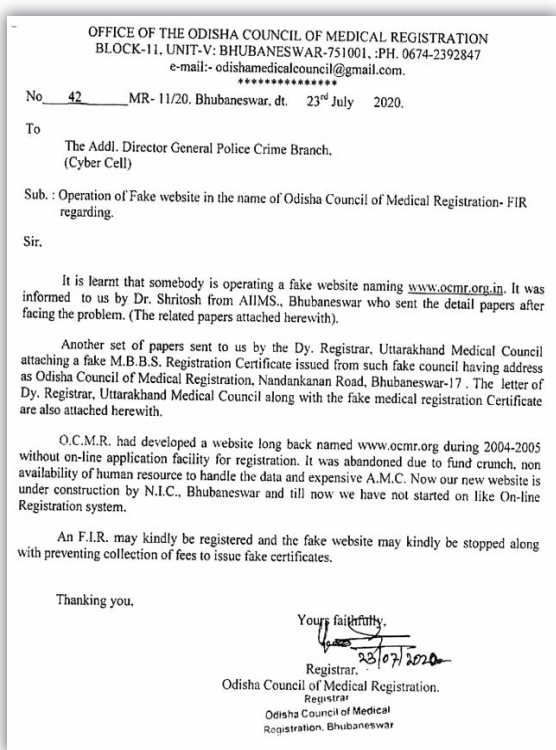
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 27: The Odisha Council for Medical Registration (OCMR), a state government body responsible for regulation of medical practice in the state, has stumbled upon a racket involved in supplying fake registrations to medical practitioners across the country.

The registrar of OCMR, Kamal Kanta Das, has written a letter to Additional Director General of Police, Crime Branch, seeking action against the people behind the racket. The cyber cell at the Crime Branch in Cuttack has registered a case and started a probe.

The OCMR is the official body to issue statutory permissions such as registration certificates, NOC and other testimonials necessary for practicing doctors. It also frames rules and keeps a watch on any mischief in connection with the medical practice in the state.

The OCMR discovered the fraud after Dr Shritosh of AIIMS-Bhubaneswar informed the body about a fake website. An aggrieved applicant sent a complaint to the



OCMR requesting it to take necessary rectifications in the website. He was, however, informed by the OCMR that the website, https://www.ocmr.org.in/ was a fake one and OCMR has not yet developed facilities for online registration.

Later, the OCMR received a letter from the deputy registrar of Uttarkhand Medical Council alleging the presence of the fake website. The deputy registrar also sent a copy of the fake MBBS registration certificate issued by the bogus council. He also sought action from his counterpart in Odisha to bust the racket.

OCMR received a letter from U'khand Medical Council alleging presence of the fake website

Sources claimed many people have secured fake certificates from the bogus council and are carrying out practice in other states. The fake website mentioned the office of OCMR at Nandankanan instead of the original location of OCMR at Unit-IV of the city. The fraudsters recently claimed on the fake site that doctors can apply for registration /renewal /transfer process online in view of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, Das informed the crime branch that the council had developed a website back in 2004-05 'www.ocmr.org' which has been lying defunct now. The OCMR is currently working along with NIC to develop a new website to provide online registration facilities to medical practitioners.

IAS RESHUFFLE

Surendra Kumar steel & mines secy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 27: In a minor reshuffle among senior IAS officers, the state government Monday transferred five officers. Additional Chief Secretary, Steel and Mines Department, Raj Kumar Sharma has been appointed as Agriculture Production Commissioner (APC) while 1993 batch IAS officer Surendra Kumar was named Steel and Mines Secretary, a notification issued by the General Administration (GA) Department said.

At present, Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mahapatra is handling the additional charge of APC. The government has also allowed Surendra Kumar to keep additional charge of chairman, Cuttack Development Authority (CDA).

IAS officer Anu Garg was named Secretary, Water Resources Department. She will continue to remain in additional charge of Women and Child Development & Mission Shakti Departments.

Similarly, Chithra Arumugam, who was serving as School and Mass Education Secretary, was posted as Secretary of Labour and Employees' State Insurance Department. MSME Secretary Satyabrata Sahu has got additional charge of School and Mass Education Department.



BSE Class X results July 29

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 27: Results of the annual matriculation examination conducted by the Odisha Board of Secondary Education (BSE) will be announced July 29, a minister said Monday.

The Class X results will be declared through video-conferencing at 9 am and students can check their scores from 11 am on the board's website, School and Mass Education (S&ME)

Minister Samir Ranjan Dash said.

SMS option for obtaining the results will also be available, BSE president Ramashis Hazra said.

As many as 5.60 lakh students appeared for the annual Class X board examination in 2,888 centres from February 19 to March 2.

The declaration of results was delayed due to cyclone Amphan and the coronavirus-induced lockdown, officials said.

PLUS II RESULTS

The results of annual Plus II examinations conducted by the Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) will be declared by the third week of August, the S&ME Minister said. While the results of examinations in Science and Commerce streams will be out by third week of August, the result in Arts stream will be announced by end of August, added the minister. The evaluation process was delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers assigned to carry out evaluation of answer sheets faced complications in discharging their duty due to shutdown in 20 districts. The S&ME department had written to the Chief Secretary to ensure evaluation to be conducted properly without obstruction so that the results can be declared at the earliest.

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You will be the focus of everyone's attention today – for your visual appeal or for your abilities. Ganesha suggests that you should make the best of the opportunity and recharge yourself.

TAURUS
This day you will be inclined to act tough and pick up a fight with everyone whom you are likely to encounter, warns Ganesha. Those who know you well will be at a loss to make anything out of your belligerent attitude and may not be able to keep up with you for too long.

GEMINI
You will be in the mood to spend the day doing the things that you really love. You will consider helping people in need and will be in a generous mood. Your charitable bent of mind will bring you elevated social status and improved self-esteem, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You may face unwanted events and circumstances. As a result you will feel sad, yet you will wriggle out of it with your efficiency. Put in efforts in studies, says Ganesha. remember that in success destiny is one per cent and effort 99 per cent.

LEO
You will spend an enjoyable day with your favourite relatives and friends. In the office also, you will be afforded rare co-operation from all your colleagues. Financial gains are indicated. It is a good time for lovers, who will experience an intimate bond with their partners, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
You are born with a talent for business. Your organisational skills too are flawless. Ganesha advises you to use all your creativity, innovative ideas and ability to motivate others to make progress in your business.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that you will be more careful about your outward appearance and will try to enhance it further. Towards the evening you may impress people around you when you attend a social function. Those of you who are single can put forth a marriage proposal to their beloved today and it will be accepted.

SCORPIO
You go on a shopping spree and that too with your beloved. This may be quite therapeutic for your relationship. You may be just happy to use your bargaining skills to the optimum. Spending lavishly, first on shopping and then on sumptuous dinner to treat your taste buds. What more one wants in life!

SAGITTARIUS
Someone from the opposite sex is likely to get attracted towards you. Enjoy being in the limelight. Today, you main activity becomes hanging around with friends and cherishing their company.

CAPRICORN
Celebrations are in the offing and all the near and dear ones are invited to the party. Today, you will enjoy yourself to the fullest, feels Ganesha. You will get the desired profits in the business irrespective of how hard you have worked to achieve them.

AQUARIUS
Today will not be your day. You will find it difficult to create a peaceful environment in your home and adding to the woes will your children who will be making things even more difficult for you to handle. There may be some family disputes also, and green-eyed neighbours will try to add fuel to the fire.

PISCES
You will work hard to organize you day to day routine but due to the ill alignment of the planets you will not be able to sort things out successfully today. Ganesha advises you to be patient and let things be as they are but also to hold on to the sentiments of change.



TOM HANKS, RITA WILSON
BECOME GREEK CITIZENS

Hollywood couple Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson are now officially citizens of Greece. The news was shared by Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis who can be seen posing with wife Marena Grabowski, and Hanks, 64, and Wilson, 63.

NATALIE PORTMAN EXCITED
TO PLAY 'MIGHTY THOR'

Actress Natalie Portman says she is very excited to take on the avatar of Mighty Thor in an upcoming instalment of the superhero franchise. The Oscar-winning actress is set to return to the Marvel Cinematic Universe with *Thor: Love and Thunder*.



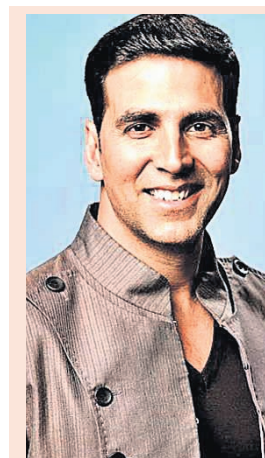
Miles to go before end of
domestic abuse: Divya



Mumbai: Actress Divya Dutta feels it is a good thing that we are at least openly talking about domestic violence against women now, thanks to social media, but says it is going to take many years to fully eradicate the social menace.

Divya had just starred in a short film titled *The Relationship Manager*, which addresses the issue of domestic violence. She says women should stop being silent over the matter, as has been happening for ages now. "Domestic violence is one of the issues that we not only need to address, but also continue to talk about. It is embedded in the upbringing of every woman that they have to let to go, they have to adjust. For generations, women are told that to keep their marriage and children happy, they have to adjust with violence. At least, we are talking about it now thanks to social media. But I know that it will take many years to eradicate. Talking about it is a hope," said the *Veer-Zaara* actress.

The story of the film is set in the time of lockdown, where a wife becomes the target of physical assault of her husband.



Akshay adapts to new way of working

New Delhi: Actor Akshay Kumar will soon be flying out of India on work for the first time since the Covid outbreak, and he is ensuring elaborate safety and precautionary measures for the entire crew.

Akshay is set to be in the UK soon, to start shooting for his upcoming film, *Bellbottom*, along with co-actors Vaani Kapoor, Huma Qureshi and Lara Dutta. The unit will be travelling to the UK in August for a start-to-finish schedule.

The producers are chartering a flight to fly the entire unit, along with medical facilities.

Along with medical-grade masks and face shields, the production house will also make it mandatory for all cast and crew to wear a wrist watch that will constantly monitor their oxygen levels, body temperature, blood pressure, stress levels and pulse. A centralised dashboard will constantly record the parameters of the entire unit.

"The new normal has made us realise a different way of working that none of us could have imagined. As much as I'm happy to be back on the sets, it's also important for us to take care of everything around us," said Akshay.

MALAIKA'S MIXED
BAG OF EMOTIONS



Mumbai: Dance diva Malaika Arora recently stepped out for shooting amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. She took to social media and posted her experience of resuming work after four months of lockdown.

"Stepping out of the house to resume work after almost 4 months... had a mixed bag of emotions... excitement, nervousness, happiness, fear. Things are definitely not the same but the show must go on... Felt like my first day of school after a long vacation and I was so excited to meet all my friends," she wrote on Instagram.

Malaika shot for an episode of a dance-based reality shows. She later uploaded a video showing how safety precautions were followed by the staff when she arrived to shoot on the set.

"With extra precaution, extra efforts and a prayer that everything goes well, we all are restarting our lives and our work," Malaika wrote.

Odia cine industry
mourns Deepa's death

BHUBANESWAR: At a time when people were yet to come to terms with the demise of legendary cine actor Bijay Mohanty, Odia entertainment industry suffered another jolt Monday with the passing away of popular actress Deepa Sahu.

Many actors who had worked with Deepa, one of the most celebrated names in Odia album industry some years back, mourned the loss.

Actress **Snigdha Mohanty** said, "I just got the news about her demise. She was a young talent and left us so soon. May her soul rest in peace."

"I am saddened by the loss of our very dear Deepa Sahu. I remember of her as someone who set a trend in Odia album industry. May Almighty give strength to the family to bear the loss," mourned top actor **Sabyasachi Mishra**.

Bidusmita Dash Mantry, also a popular album actress, said, "She was part of my family. So much so, that I used to feed her during her last days. We are trying to perform her last rites at her native place Dhenkanal. My thoughts are with her bereaved family members."

Actor **Elina Mohanty** who worked with Deepa in many albums said, "She was a great soul and we shared some nice moments in the past. Fans still recall her performance in Odia albums. She, at her prime, was truly the queen of album industry. The entertainment industry will miss her for a long time. May her soul rest in peace."

Popular actor and Odisha Film Development Corporation

chairman **Satyabrata (Kuna) Tripathy** said that he had worked with her in movie **Nari Akhire Nian**. She was a talented actor and dancer who used to believe in maintaining discipline on the sets. It is unfortunate that she left the industry so early.

State film award winning actress **Lipi Mohapatra** said that Deepa was very close to her: "I was with Deepa Nani during her treatment at AIIMS-

Bhubaneswar. I still can't believe that she is no more with us."



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

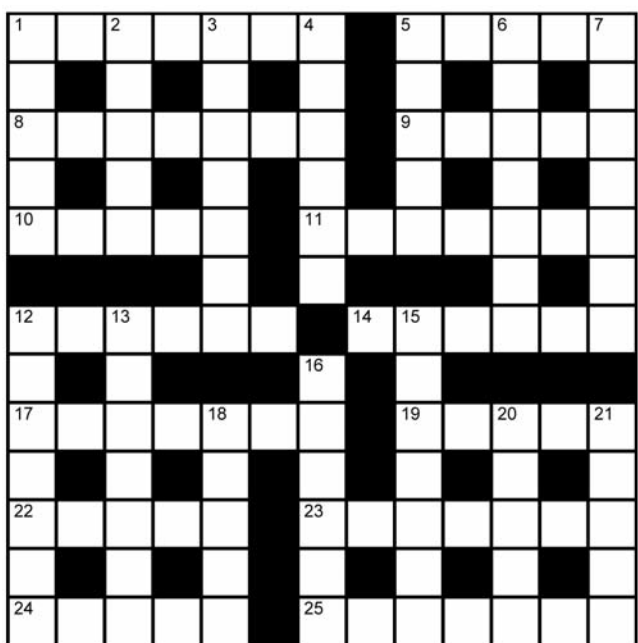


BREVITY



FUN
post

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Between's pal
- 5 Après-ski drink
- 8 Leading figure of fauvism
- 9 Outer wear items
- 10 Disreputable
- 11 Railroad support
- 12 Minded
- 14 Deviate
- 17 Cut short

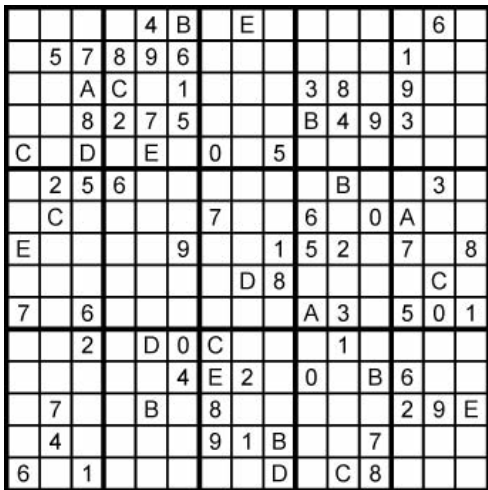
Down

- 1 Explosive devices
- 2 Aquarium fish
- 3 Fashionable (2,5)
- 19 Out of whack
- 22 Trojan War epic
- 23 Shakespeare character
- 24 Family members
- 25 Cut of meat

- 4 Accord
- 5 Secret store
- 6 Book part
- 7 Spartan
- 12 Simple wind instrument
- 13 Love or hate, e.g.
- 15 Newscast segment
- 16 Loathsome
- 18 Ocean motions
- 20 Ice house
- 21 Disdain

SUDOKU

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

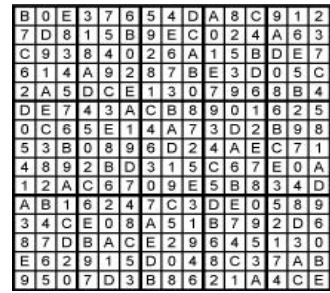


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



DEFT HANDS

A man busy preparing broomsticks near BOSE Ground in Cuttack, Monday

BOOSTING IMMUNITY

Homoeopathic medicines being distributed to the inmates of Utkal Balashram in Puri to boost immunity against Covid-19



WORLD NATURE CONSERVATION DAY

e-Commerce platforms boon for organic farming

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 27: Online sale of organic farming products has proved a boon for many like Balabhadra Naik, a farmer from a small village of Kalahandi district. Buoyed by the government support, he has joined the e-commerce sites and is now able to sell his organic paddy at ₹80 per kg.

Similar is the experience of other farmers who have adopted the method and started reaching out to the customers through online.

Many of them have registered themselves with the Union government's online platform, www.market-jaivikkhethi.in, where they get orders. As per government sources, a total of 16,868 organic farmers from Odisha are now selling their produce online. Many farmers belonging to Kalahandi, Rayagada, Koraput and other districts have joined the market of organic food which is growing in the state with time.

Organic farming in the state is gradually expanding with the Union as well as state governments emphasising on natural way of raising crops and vegetables.

According to data given by the Agriculture Ministry in Lok Saha



What is organic farming?

It is defined by the use of fertilisers of organic origin such as compost manure, green manure, and bone meal and places emphasis on techniques such as crop rotation and companion planting. Biological pest control, mixed cropping and the fostering of insect predators are encouraged under this method of cultivation.

In March 2020, altogether 95,312 hectares of land in the state are under organic farming under different state and central schemes. The government also claims that more than 65,000 farmers from Odisha are registered with the government as organic farmers.

People associated with organic farming claim that the farmers are

not only selling their produce online but also exporting them.

"A number of organic produce like mangoes and cashew nuts are being sold to other states like from Koraput to Delhi and others. Recently, many farmers exported mangoes to the dairy giant Mother Dairy in New Delhi while some went to Hyderabad firms. Links

16,868 ORGANIC FARMERS FROM ODISHA ARE NOW SELLING THEIR PRODUCE ONLINE

MANY FARMERS FROM KALAHANDI, RAYAGADA, KORAPUT AND OTHER DISTRICTS HAVE JOINED THE MARKET OF ORGANIC FOOD WHICH IS GROWING IN THE STATE WITH TIME

ALTOGETHER 95,312 HECTARES OF LAND IN THE STATE ARE UNDER ORGANIC FARMING UNDER DIFFERENT STATE AND CENTRAL SCHEMES

MORE THAN 65,000 FARMERS FROM ODISHA ARE REGISTERED WITH THE GOVERNMENT AS ORGANIC FARMERS

are now being established between the producers in remote villages to food processing units and other market players," said Atul Nayak, Project Manager, Agrabamee, Koraput which works with the farmers to boost organic farming.

The Union government has been encouraging organic farming through clusters in selected districts under 'Paramparagat Krishi

Vikas Yojana' (PKVY). In Dashwantpur block of Koraput district, 1,000 farmers in six panchayats are working hard to shun chemical fertilisers and adopt organic farming as a natural way to boost farming in the region.

The government has been giving financial assistance to each cluster for input costs, training, branding and other areas to give an impetus to organic farming in Odisha. The state government has also been working through state policies and schemes to give an impetus to organic farming and helping in market linkage.

"There is a good scope for organic farming in Odisha. There are some forest areas in Kalahandi and Kandhamal districts where organic farming is practiced for growing turmeric and ginger for the last 8-10 years with government support. Also, they have a good marketing network there," an official from the National Centre of Organic Farming, Ghaziabad told **Orissa POST**.

The Centre, through its regional centre in the state, has also been working to boost organic farming and train the farmers to avoid use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and adopt sustainable farming methods through organic farming.

TREATMENT OF COVID PATIENTS

SC seeks compliance reports from states

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, July 27: The Supreme Court, Monday, directed the states to file compliance reports with respect to the directions issued by the apex court regarding treatment of Covid-19 patients and dignified handling of bodies at the hospitals.

A three-judge bench of SC comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and MR Shah granted two weeks' time to the state governments to file the compliance reports.

The bench observed that an affidavit filed on behalf of the Union government does have the details of compliance of the directions.

"Mere direction to comply with the directions is not enough. The steps taken towards compliance of the directions have to be brought on the record," the bench said.

The apex court asked the chief secretaries of the states to file an appropriate compliance report. "The state governments/ Union

Territories have not filed affidavits giving details of compliance of various directions issued by this court June 19, 2020. We are of the view that the Chief Secretaries of the states have to take steps to ensure that directions issued by this court

in order dated June 19, 2020 are complied with. An appropriate compliance report be filed. We grant two weeks' time to the states/UTs to file an appropriate compliance affidavit," the bench said. The SC also asked the

Centre to file a detailed affidavit within two weeks giving the details of the compliance of the directions issued by the court.

Notably, the apex court had June 19 directed the Centre to constitute an expert committee to inspect and supervise all the government hospitals. The court had also asked the governments to prescribe reasonable fees for Covid-19 treatment and also install CCTV cameras in all Covid dedicated hospitals. The apex court had issued 11 directions regarding treatment of Covid-19 patients.



4 MEMBERS OF TITO GANG HELD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 27: Chauliaganj police Monday claimed to have foiled a robbery bid by arresting four criminals belonging to the gang of Sayed Usman Ali alias Tito from near Gandhi Square here.

"Somnath Sahu and Jitendra Sahu of Chauliaganj Matha Sahi, Ramchandra Nanda of Fakirpada in Jagatpur and Rashmi Ranjan Swain of Kurutunga in Khandrapara have been taken into custody while they were hatching a conspiracy to rob commuters on the national highway late Sunday night," said a police official confirming the arrests.

A country pistol and a few sharp-edged weapons were recovered from them. The four were history-sheeters and had been working at the behest of Tito, the official said.

The official said that they were tipped off about the assembly.

"The four along with two others had gathered at a ground on the rear side of the fuel station near Gandhi Square late Sunday night to hatch robbery plans. A team of Chauliaganj police, led by its inspector in-charge Tapas Pradhan, raided the ground and nabbed the criminals. Taking advantage of the darkness, two others managed to escape. While Somnath has six cases pending against him, Jitendra has 13 and Ramachandra has 3 cases against him with Chauliaganj police. Rashmi Ranjan has multiple cases registered against him with several police stations across state," said the official who was also the part of the team.

Efforts are on to track the absconders, the IIC said. A case (248/20) has been registered under Sections 399, 402 of the IPC and 25 of the Arms Act.

Food, lodging soon for plasma donors

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 27: With the novel coronavirus infections rising each passing day, the state government has asked the district Collectors to redesign their strategy to better fight the disease.

Talking to Collectors and chief district medical officers (CDMOs) over a video-conference Monday evening, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy asked them to make advance arrangements in all these matters keeping in view the scenario till end of August.

The Collectors were asked to enhance per day sample collection at least to 1,000 per day in hotspot district and up to 500 per day in other districts for early detection and treatment.


They were asked to utilise the antigen test kits and upload the test results in Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) portal on daily basis.

Additional Chief Secretary Health & Family Welfare PK Mohapatra said, "We have sufficient stock of testing kits and medicines. Around 1,16,000 antigen test kits have already been supplied to the districts. More kits will be supplied as per their demand."

The Collectors were advised to encourage and support plasma collection in all possible ways. Since plasma collection requires two days' activity (one day for different tests and other day for collection), the government has decided to provide food and accommodation facilities to the donors at the plasma bank.

Tripathy further instructed the Collectors to fix the place of their stay and make all logistic arrange-

CHANGE IN STRATEGY



Collectors were asked to enhance per day sample collection at least to 1,000 per day in hotspot district and up to 500 per day in other districts for early detection and treatment

The Collectors were advised to encourage and support plasma collection in all possible ways

The government is going to develop an online portal to facilitate the donors for self-registration

ments for smooth collection of plasma. It was at the meeting to provide travel assistance to the donors wherever required.

The government is going to develop an online portal to facilitate the donors for self-registration. The portal will have the details about availability of the plasma in different banks with their blood groupings so that the Covid hospitals could send their requisitions accordingly.

FOUR DISTRICTS TO RECEIVE HEAVY RAIN TODAY: MET

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 27: Predicting heavy rain, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Monday issued yellow warning for four districts-Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal and Angul.

These four districts will receive heavy rainfall in next 24 hours. The IMD said thunderstorm with lightning is also very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of north coastal Odisha, Ganjam, Kandhamal, Nayagarh, Khurda, Bolangir, Angul, Sonepur, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj, Tuesday.



The Met department has not issued any warning for next two days (July 29 & 30). However, light to moderate rain will continue to occur in parts of the state. On July 31, thunderstorm with lightning would occur at some places of Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Gajapati, Ganjam, Kandhamal and Kalahandi.

The southwest monsoon has been subdued over Odisha. Light to moderate rain has occurred at a few places over the districts of south coastal Odisha and at one or two places over the rest districts of Odisha in past 24 hours, it said.

ILLUMINATED SKY



Lightning in Bhubaneswar sky before rain Monday evening

OP PHOTO

Class X girl's body found hanging

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 27: The body of a minor girl was Monday found hanging from a tree in front of her residence at Dumduma under Khandagiri police limits.

The deceased was identified as Sasmita Jena, a Class X student of Mumtaj Alli High School in Nayapalli area.

The hands and legs of the girl were found tied with 'gamchhas' hinting at brutal murder of the minor. The deceased's face was also

Her family members said that the girl's alleged boyfriend had killed her and later hanged the body from the tree

found gagged with a napkin. Meanwhile, her family members said that the girl's alleged boyfriend had killed the victim and later hanged the body from the tree. Based on the

allegations, Kahandagiri police detained the boyfriend of the victim.

The deceased, who used to go to a place near her residence for learning music, came in contact with the accused there and subsequently fell in love with him. However, the family members were against the relationship.

However, some others claimed that the minor girl could have been killed by the relatives over the affair.

Police started an investigation into the incident after registering a case (439/20) in this regard.

IN COVID TIMES



A scooterist rides past a graffiti on coronavirus near Sundarpada in Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY

'Hepatitis B, C leading causes of liver cancer'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 27: Amid the novel coronavirus pandemic, the World Hepatitis Day is being observed this year with an aim to create awareness about the viral infection on the theme 'Hepatitis-free future'.

It may be noted that Viral Hepatitis is of five types - A, B, C, D and E - of which A & E spread through fecal-oral contamination whereas Hepatitis B & C are transmitted through blood and blood products.

Interacting with **Orissa POST**, Dr Sushant Kumar Sethi, senior consultant and head of Gastroenterology and Hepatology of Apollo Hospital, Bhubaneswar, said "Hepatitis B and C virus are the leading causes of liver cancer in the world. However, it is a con-



VITAL STATS

BETWEEN 2011 AND 2014, APPROXIMATELY 13,000 PEOPLE WERE SUFFERING FROM HEPATITIS IN ODISHA

IN CERTAIN TRIBES LIKE MANKIDIA AND JUANGA, HEPATITIS B PREVALENCE IS AS HIGH AS 15%

OUT OF 500 MILLION PATIENTS WITH VIRAL HEPATITIS MORE THAN 80% ARE UNAWARE OF THE DISEASE

cern that more than 80 per cent of patients with viral Hepatitis are unaware of this. Viral Hepatitis is not confined to one place but causes pandemic sometimes."

There is effective vaccination for Hepatitis B by which we can eradicate the dreaded disease.

Facts and figures: Between 2011

and 2014, approximately 13,000 people were suffering from Hepatitis in Odisha.

Moreover, prevalence of Hepatitis B is 2-3 per cent in Odisha whereas Hepatitis C is less than 1 per cent, according to various studies.

However, in certain tribes like Mankidia and Juanga, Hepatitis B

prevalence is as high as 15 per cent. Out of 500 million patients with viral Hepatitis more than 80 per cent are unaware of the disease.

Therefore, the World Hepatitis Day aims at creating awareness, prevention by screening and vaccination along with treatment for viral Hepatitis.

VIRUS CASELOAD SHOOTS UP TO 26,892

WHILE THE STATE REPORTED 1,503 FRESH CASES, SEVEN MORE DEATHS TOOK TOTAL MORTALITIES TO 147

POST NEWS NETWORK/AGENCIES

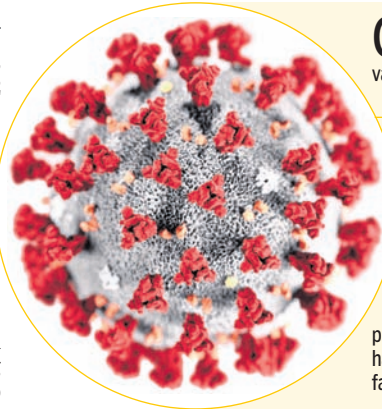
Bhubaneswar, July 27: State's COVID-19 tally shot up to 26,892 with 1,503 fresh cases, while the death toll rose to 147 as seven more people succumbed to the virus, an official of the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said Monday.

Three deaths were reported from Ganjam and a fatality each was recorded in Sundargarh, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Malkangiri, said the official, adding that most of the deceased were also suffering from other health conditions such as diabetes and hypertension.

Apart from 147 COVID-19 deaths, as many as 34 COVID patients have also died in the state but the authority attributed their deaths as 'other than COVID'.

Out of 1,503 new cases reported from 28 districts, 1,002 were from various quarantine centres while the rest 501 are local contact cases.

Ganjam district, Odisha's coronavirus hotspot, also accounted for the highest number of 491 fresh



Out of 1,503 new cases reported from 28 districts, 1,002 were from various quarantine centres while the rest 501 are local contact cases

Of the seven deaths, three were reported from Ganjam

581 persons, who had tested positive for the viral infection, recovered Monday

Odisha now has 9,337 active COVID-19 cases, the official pointed out, adding that 17,373 people have recovered from the disease so far in the state

cases, followed by Khurda (223), Cuttack (136), Gajapati and Kandhamal 73 each, Rayagada (68), Sundargarh (57) and Jajpur (51).

Ganjam district continued to be in the top with 9,169 positive cases followed by Khurda (3,620), Cuttack (1,825), Sundargarh (1,110) and Gajapati (1,056).

Meanwhile, 581 persons recovered Monday.

The recoveries include 160 from Ganjam, 77 from Khurda, 43 from Gajapati, 34 from Cuttack, 32 from

Malkangiri and 25 from Bargarh.

Odisha now has 9,337 active COVID-19 cases, the official pointed out, adding that 17,373 people have recovered from the disease so far in the state.

City's tally breaches 2,100-mark

The Capital city's COVID-19 tally breached 2,100-mark with detection of 159 fresh cases in Bhubaneswar Monday.

Of the fresh cases, 118 were detected from quarantine centres and 41 were local contact cases, the

Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) said.

The civic body claimed to have detected a maximum of 44 cases from Trinath slum in Nayapalli area, followed by 20 from Aiginia area, on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, and 13 from Unit-III in Kharavela Nagar locality.

Meanwhile, 102 persons in City who had earlier tested positive for the viral infection recovered from the disease Monday, the civic body said.

With this, Bhubaneswar has 1,125 active virus cases while 1011 have so far recovered from the disease. The Temple City has so far seen 2,150 COVID-19 cases and 12 deaths due to the viral infection.

The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC), meanwhile, detected 65 COVID-19 cases Monday.

While 59 were quarantine cases, six were local contact cases, said the CMC, adding that it also recorded eight recoveries.

The Silver City has 423 active cases while 304 have recovered from the infection. The Millennium city has so far seen 736 COVID cases and nine deaths due to the virus.

RECOVERIES TOUCH 17K-MARK

The number of COVID-19 patients recovered from the virus infection crossed 17,000 mark after another 581 persons suffering from the disease recuperated Monday. With this, the number of the total recovered cases in the State increased to 17,373. The recovered cases are being discharged. A maximum of 160 patients from Ganjam district recovered followed by 77 from Khordha, 43 from Gajapati, 34 from Cuttack, 32 from Malkangiri and 25 from Bargarh district. A total of 23 from Bhadrak, 19 from Keonjhar, 17 each from Angul and Kandhamal, 14 each from Jagatsinghpur and Sambalpur and 12 each from Mayurbhanj, Rayagada and Sundargarh districts also recovered. While 10 from Balasore, nine each from Jharsuguda, Kendrapara and Puri districts recovered from the disease, eight from Dhenkanal, seven from Jajpur, six from Balangir and five from Boudh among others.

Human clinical trial of Covaxin begins in state

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 27: The much-awaited human clinical trial of indigenously developed Covaxin, a possible vaccine against novel coronavirus, began at an institute here Monday, a senior official said.



jointly working for the preclinical as well as clinical development of this vaccine. It has already received the approval for phase one and two by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI).

The selected volunteers will be given two doses within a gap of 14

Covaxin is the first indigenous vaccine developed by India against COVID-19 and is derived from a strain of SARS-CoV-2 isolated by ICMR-National Institute of Virology, Pune

The response from the volunteers has been extremely encouraging. Many people are still coming forward to be part of the trial, an official said

Those interested to volunteer for the project may contact the institute by registering online at ptctu.soa.ac.in

State thanks Delhi AIIMS for surgery of conjoined twins

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 27: The state government Monday sent an appreciation letter to AIIMS-New Delhi for successful operation of conjoined twins- Jaga and Kalia.

"I, on behalf of Government of Odisha express my sincere gratitude to the team of doctors and paramedics, those who conducted the successful surgery of the conjoined twins of Kandhamal, Odisha famously known as Jaga-Kalia. It is one of the rarest rare surgeries, thus making history in medical sciences," Health additional chief secretary PK Mohapatra wrote to



AIIMS director.

The twins Jaga-Kalia of Milipada village under Phiringia block in Kandhamal district were admitted in AIIMS—Delhi in July 2017, where they were surgically separated by more than 20 doctors in two phases in September of 2017. After that, the twins were treated in the institutions for two years.

3 chain snatchers nabbed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 27: Commissionerate Police arrested three accused involved in a chain snatching case that happened June 25 at Bhingarpur chowk under Baliaanta police limits.

The accused have been identified as Biswajit Swain alias Liyu (26), Silu Samal (22) and Sibasish Das alias Raja (22). All of them are residents of Korua village under Nuagaon police limits in Jagatsinghpur district.

While briefing about the arrest, DCP Umashankar Dash said these accused on a motorcycle had waylaid a couple—Sulochana Pati and her husband.

Holding them on gun point, they looted a gold chain and a vanity bag containing two mobile phones, cash and some documents from the couple who were returning home on a bike from Bhubaneswar.

During the course of investigation, the snatched mobile phone was tracked and after proper identity description of the accused, a raid was conducted and all the accused were arrested Sunday, he informed.

One gold chain (10 gram), two gold lockets (5 grams), two mobile phones (snatched ones), two mobile phones of the accused, Rs1000 in cash, one country made revolver and the bike have been seized from their possession, he further informed. They were court for-

warded Monday.

Dash also informed that investigation is underway to trace the miscreants who in a shocking incident snatched gold jewellery from a female. The miscreants entered the elderly woman's house while her husband was away for some reasons. They reportedly badly injured the ear of the victim with a knife while snatching away the ornament.

"Two special teams have been formed to track the snatchers. I appeal people to share any information if they have about the snatchers involved in two incidents occurred Sunday dialing 100," Dash said.

WB-bound trains terminated amid total lockdown

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 27: Due to complete lockdown in the state of West Bengal July 29 (Wednesday), train services will be affected from ECoR region.



Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Special Rajdhani Express will not have stoppages at Hijli July 29

The Bhubaneswar-Howrah Bhubaneswar Special train, Sealdah (Kolkata)-Bhubaneswar Duronto Special Express, Bhubaneswar-Sealdah Duronto Special Express stand cancelled.

This apart, Secunderabad-Howrah Falaknuma Special Express from Secunderabad will be terminated at Bhubaneswar and will not go up to Howrah Wednesday.

Similarly, Howrah-Secunderabad Falaknuma Special Express will start from Bhubaneswar instead of Howrah Wednesday and will be cancelled from Howrah to Bhubaneswar on the same day.

Also Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Bhubaneswar Special Rajdhani Express will not have stoppages at Hijli July 29 and Bhubaneswar-New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Special Purusottam Express will not have stoppage at Purulia.

Passengers of above trains should note this and are advised to be prepared accordingly.

City gets another Covid hosp

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 27: Aditya Ashwini Hospitals in Chandrasekharpur was Monday added to the list of Dedicated COVID Hospitals (DCH) in the city making total seats in the DCHs to 1,175 and the total ICU beds 115. The new hospital has 150 beds including 30 ICU beds and 21 high dependency unit (HDU).

It can be mentioned here that while KIMS COVID Hospital in the city has 500 beds including 45 ICU beds, the IMS-SUM Hospital has 525 beds with 25 ICUs with it. These two also come under the DCH category. The DCH category health-care facilities are meant to treat serious and critical COVID patients.

Currently, the COVID Health Centre (CHC) at Urban Community Health Centre, Patia, is having 60 beds



for the treatment of mildly symptomatic individuals. Another 50 will be added soon to UCHC at Dumduma area under this category.

Similarly, the city has COVID Care Centres (CCC) for asymptomatic and very mild symptomatic patients. While the High-Tech Medical has 550 beds under this category, the SIDBI Jaydev Vihar has 40 beds under its belt to treat patients.

Interestingly, COVID Care Homes (CCHs) are being planned for three administrative zones of the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) area and these

CCHs will be developed with the contribution from the MLA Local Area Development (MLALAD) Fund of the respective MLAs of the city. These CCHs will have 50 beds each.

Sources in BMC also informed that various resident welfare associations, non-government organisations and religious bodies have also given proposal to come forward with COVID Care homes in near future.

Summing up, all the seats at the DCH, CCC, CHC and CCH combined will be 3,521 and the number of ICU beds will be 115 and 21 HDU beds respectively to serve the growing number of COVID patients.

It can be mentioned here that with the city aiming for 1,400 tests in a day, more and more cases are being detected from various health-care centres and mobile testing centres across the State Capital.

ODISHA CONGRESS PROTESTS IN FRONT OF RAJ BHAVAN

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Slamming BJP for the ongoing political crisis in Rajasthan, Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) leaders Monday protested under the banner 'Save Democracy, Save Constitution' in front of the Raj Bhavan here.

"The BJP is trying to destabilise the governments in Congress ruled states by unethical means. The saffron party is trying to lure the MLAs making promises of positions in ministries and financial packages," alleged PCC president Niranjan Patnaik.

Alleging that the Rajasthan governor is acting as a BJP agent, he said, the governor is not allowing to convene the assembly session even as Ashok Gehlot and his Cabinet are demanding it.

Rajasthan Crisis

THOROUGH CHECKING



Policemen check commuters near Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar (top) and Cantonment police station in Cuttack during lockdown hours Monday

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Women risk lives fishing in croc-infested rivers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, July 27: The coronavirus pandemic has created an unprecedented situation for the people residing in the remote corners of this district. The situation has become acute with the return of migrant workers to their homes. In such a situation, people are mortgaging their lives and taking up dangerous jobs like fishing in crocodile infested rivers and creeks to earn a living due to lack of any alternative means of livelihood, a report said. As a result, they often fall prey to crocodiles. The awareness programmes conducted by the forest department have gone for a toss.

These people could be seen in rivers and creeks inside Bhitarkanika National Park catching fish as soon as the tide recedes in the sea. These people catch fish and prawns from the rivers inside the park and sell them in the market. However, what they earn in return is far less than the hard work they put in and the life risk involved in the job. A fisherwoman Seeta Maiti alleged that the fish traders gain the most from the fish catch. The fisherwomen catching fish sell prawns at Rs 70-80 per kg, while the fish traders sell the same at Rs 200-800 per kg depending on the market conditions.

Alarmingly, more women and minor girls could be seen catching fish and prawns from these water bodies than men.

According to a report by the forest department 16 persons have died in crocodile attacks during the last 10 years. However, locals claimed the number of deaths in crocodile attacks could be more



than 40 during this period. Moreover, several persons have been injured in crocodile attacks. Some of them have been discharged after recovery while a lot more are still undergoing treatment.

A woman Kalpana Mandal, 32, of seaside Talachua village said catching prawns from the water bodies inside the sanctuary is a daily affair for her as the male members of her house work outside of the state. The money sent by them is insufficient to manage a large family of hers for which she and other women in her village catch fish and prawn from the water bodies inside the sanctuary to boost their family income. She however sounded a word of caution stating that one has to be fearless, vigilant as well as skilled while catching fish from the crocodile infested water bodies inside the sanctuary.

Another woman Parbati Maiti said, that three types of methods are adopted while catching prawns from the rivers. May use traditional fishing nets like 'Jhumpa' and 'Munduli' while snare and fishing nets are used in some other places.

A piece of chicken meat or a small fish is used as bait in a snare to catch fish and prawns, she said. Prawn is caught in large numbers during night. Villagers get inside the rivers at night holding lanterns, torches and emergency lights to catch prawns.

Narayan Haldar, president of Odisha Fishermen Association said over 3,000 fishermen families are residing in the seaside villages and earn their living by catching fish and prawns. He lamented that at least five fishermen and women die every year in crocodile attacks but they hardly get adequate compensation from the forest department.

Debashis Bhoi, forest range officer, said there are lots of crocodiles in the water bodies inside the sanctuary. These reptiles become violent during their breeding season and end up killing humans who enter the water bodies to catch fish. The forest department is regularly conducting awareness programmes and arresting people illegally catching fish but these measures have failed to deter violators, Bhoi added.

16-YEAR-OLD, BATHING IN RIVER, KILLED BY CROCODILE

KENDRAPARA: A 16-year-old boy was killed by a crocodile in Kendrapara district, officials said Monday.

The incident happened on Sunday when the boy, Rudra Narayan Behera, was taking bath in the Kharasrota river in Parimukundpur village, they said.

The crocodile came out of the river and pounced on him, a forest official said. The mutilated body was later fished out by fire brigade personnel, he said.

His family will be given Rs 4 lakh compensation as per the state government's scheme related to the death of a person due to attack by protected wild animals, he added.

Lethal assault by crocodiles and consequent retaliatory attack by human beings have become a regular affair in this part of the state, the forest official said.

About a dozen people and hordes of domestic animals lose their lives each year as a result of the

conflicts, he said.

These are most frequent during the monsoon and winter months, the nesting season of the estuarine crocodiles, the forest official said. It has been observed that adult crocodiles, under normal circumstances, do not leave their territory to chase human beings on land, unlike terrestrial predatory animals such as tigers.

Most often, the mishaps occur when the victims intrude into their habitat, for illegal fishing, poaching, firewood collection and honey collection, he said.

The crocodiles, in the wake of depleted food reserves in the river system, also stray into nearby rivulets and nullahs.

The number of saltwater crocodiles, the species which are not found in any other river system in Odisha, stood at 1,757, as per the census conducted in January in the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary.



Man denied ambulance over Covid-19 scare dies



The deceased's minor son pleading with the ambulance driver to ferry his father to the hospital.

A RARE CATCH OF OVER 700 KG

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, July 27: A large and rare Stingray fish was caught by fishermen off the Digha coast along Odisha-West Bengal border Monday.

Sources said the fish weighed over 700kg. This variety of Stingray is locally known as 'Hatikanika' as it resembles the ear of an elephant. The fish was caught by fishermen from Jaleswar in Balasore district who had ventured deep into the sea.

The fish was brought to the shore and later a fish trading company in Ranighat locality of West Bengal bought it at a price of Rs 50,000. The news spread like wildfire and soon there was a huge



crowd to catch a glimpse of the fish. Later, the fish was taken in a vehicle to Kolkata where the company plans to sell it for a premium. Sources said the fish may be sold either for consumption or for medicinal use.

Villagers lose sleep over elephant menace

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boinda, July 27: For the people living in 15 panchayats close to Handapa forest range in Angul district, sleepless nights have become the 'new normal'. They alleged that a marauding herd of elephants coming from Rairakhol forest is constantly terrorising them. Hence they cannot sleep at night fearing attack by the herd.

The villagers said that a tusker in the herd has so far killed eight people and the animals have destroyed standing crops on 1,017 farmlands in the last seven years.

Panic has affected the villagers to such an extent that even a rumour about the herd entering the area prevents them from venturing out after dusk. "We are living in constant fear. The farmers are losing their hard-grown crops to these pachyderms. The tusker which has so far trampled eight villagers to death should be tranquillised and relocated to Nandankanan zoo," observed Pati Sahu, a resident of Kanteikulia village.

According to some villagers, the Handapa range, stretching over an area of 18,894 hectares, has 15 panchayats on its fringes. It has been a common practice for elephants to sneak into Handapa range from



Rairakhol forest. Earlier they used to have enough food in Handapa range. However, over the years the density of the range has substantially decreased due to the actions of the timber mafia and the forest department not being proactive. As the herd is not getting sufficient food in Handapa range, it has been raiding the villages.

Those that have so far been killed by the tusker are Tara Biswal of Handapa village (February 27, 2014), Lochan Pradhan of Purunapani village and Taruni Dehury of Thelakanali village (May 3, 2016), Hadibandhu Rath of Kundali village (April 24, 2017), Manjulata Sahu (August 1, 2019) and Bidyadhar Sahu of Pratappur village (September 15, 2019), Bichitra Behera

of Batrakhol village (December 26, 2019) and Debaki Behera (March 5, 2020).

Sources said the herd has also destroyed 127 thatched and asbestos houses. During the same period, the elephants have damaged 592 acres of paddy crops and 265 acres of vegetables. The pachyderms have also caused extensive damage to mango, banana and jackfruit trees planted in 160 acres.

Sujit Mohapatra, a resident of Rajanpal village, alleged the forest department officials are not patrolling regularly. "This apart, most of the villages have poor mobile network. So the villagers have problems in informing the officials about the movement of the elephants," he said.

"The forest department is providing compensation to the affected families and farmers. However, that is not being done in a proper manner with many left out," alleged the villagers.

Since the forest department has failed in protecting the lives and properties of the villagers, resentment is brewing among the residents of the affected areas.

When contacted, Handapa ranger, Chaitanya Behera said, "As people are destroying jungles, they are damaging the habitats and corridors of the elephants. So, in search of food, they often sneak into the villages. We are taking steps to drive away the elephants. We have dedicated teams for the job and we are also providing compensation."

Panic has affected the villagers to such an extent that even a rumour about the herd entering the area prevents them from venturing out after dusk

How this village became a bird paradise

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kamakhyananagar, July 27: To understand how closely nature, birds and human beings are related to each other, Nua Rekula village under Kamakhyananagar block in Dhenkanal district will be a perfect destination.

As one enters Nua Rekula, he will be welcomed with a continuous yet pleasant chirping of about 10,000 birds. They have nested in 10 large trees in the village.

If you think these birds are native to this area, you are mistaken. This time every year these winged guests come here for mating and laying eggs. And the huge trees in the village provide them with a perfect place for having their nests.

This season, these winged guests arrived at Nua Rekula in June itself. Presently they are laying eggs. They will return to their natural habitats in October when the chicks come out of eggs.

These birds come to this village from faraway places every year not so much for the huge trees but for the love and care they get from the villagers.

The villagers treat them as their guests. During these four to five months, they make it a point not to disturb or cause any harm to the birds. Besides feeding them all through this period, they take great care of chicks if they fall off trees.

Meanwhile, Nua Rekula has already earned a name for itself as a bird paradise. The hunters of nearby villages know better than



THE VILLAGERS TREAT THEM AS THEIR GUESTS. DURING THESE FOUR TO FIVE MONTHS, THEY MAKE IT A POINT NOT TO DISTURB OR CAUSE ANY HARM TO THE BIRDS. THEY FEED THEM ALL THROUGH THIS PERIOD AND TAKE GREAT CARE OF CHICKS IF THEY FALL OFF TREES

to hunt birds here.

According to the villagers, the birds had been flocking onto a huge tree close to the famous 'Hadajoda Kendra' (a fractured bone care centre) for 40 years. It has been four to five years that they have started flocking onto the other trees in the village.

Over the years, people have begun to believe that the birds bring good luck to the village. They believe, more the number of visiting birds, more prosperous their village will be. All the villagers take great care of these winged guests.

"Forget our belief about these birds being the harbinger of prosperity. The scenes these colourful birds offer us in mornings and evenings when they fly from the trees fluttering their

wings in flocks are real and precious," a villager said.

"Seeing them flying in flocks is indeed a feast for the eyes. The scene is to be seen to be believed," they added.

"Beauty apart, the avian guests help the ecosystem thrive as they keep the number of insects to a minimum level. It helps the farmers of our village immensely," another man said.

Tehsildar Sanjay Kumar Rout, also an ornithologist, says, "The seasonal guests mostly include six to seven varieties of birds. Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Middle Egret and Pond Heron are the most noticeable ones. During their stay here, they get plenty of food. Small fish and insects are their favourite food."

WINGED GUESTS

A PERSON ENTERING NUA REKULA, WILL BE WELCOMED WITH A CONTINUOUS YET PLEASANT CHIRPING OF ABOUT 10,000 BIRDS. THEY HAVE NESTED IN 10 LARGE TREES IN THE VILLAGE

THIS TIME EVERY YEAR THESE WINGED GUESTS COME HERE FOR MATING AND LAYING EGGS. AND THE HUGE TREES IN THE VILLAGE PROVIDE THEM WITH A PERFECT PLACE FOR HAVING THEIR NESTS

"The female birds change their colours at the time of mating and this offers a scene out of any of famous avian lands in foreign countries. They play a significant role in maintaining the ecological balance," he added.

According to Kamakhyananagar western region range officer Bibhudananda Mishra, these birds have turned the area into heaven, literally. "The forest department is taking all measures to protect these guests from hunters. We are getting all supports from the villagers," he added.

An Ayurveda practitioner Sarveshwara Patra says, "The entire area is filled with a distinct stench for four to five months owing to the droppings of these birds. That said, the villagers never drive them away."

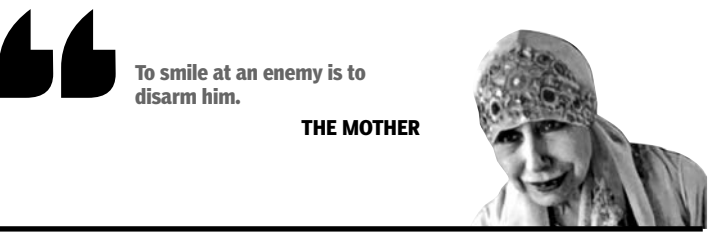
Government of India
Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions
Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances
PRIME MINISTER'S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TO BE PRESENTED ON 31.10.2020

Applications are invited for **District Performance Indicators Programmes of Government of India and Innovations in Public Administration.**
(A) The District Performance Indicators Programmes are:
(i) Inclusive Development through Credit Flow to the Priority Sector,
(ii) Promoting People's movements: "Jan Bhagidari" in the district,
(iii) Improving service delivery and redressal of public grievances.
Eligibility: - Districts are eligible to compete for the Awards for the above **District Performance Indicators Programmes.**
(B) Awards for Innovation in Public Administration will be considered in the following fields:
"Environment conservation, disaster management, water conservation, energy education, health, women and child centric initiatives etc."
Eligibility: - Organisations of Central/State Governments/Districts are eligible to apply for the Awards in Innovations.
(C) Aspiration District Programme
Eligibility:- All Aspiration Districts
(D) Namami Gange Programme
Eligibility:- 57 District Ganga Committees

Online Applications may be submitted on the designated portal from **01.08.2020** Last date for filling applications online on PM Awards' portal will be **15.08.2020**
Modalities and other details of the scheme are available on PM's Awards Portal (**pmawards.gov.in**) and the link of which is also available on website of the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (**http://darpg.gov.in**).
Contact person for further clarification
Director (AR)
Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances,
5th Floor, Sardar Patel Bhawan, Parliament Street,
New Delhi - 110001. Telefax: 011-23743030
Email: **satish.kj@nic.in**

Sd/- (Kamal Kumar Thakur)
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India
011-23401428

davp 32101/11/0001/2021



Bhoomi Pujan

Hopefully, the long standing dispute over Ram Mandir-Babri Masjid will come to some kind of calming down on Wednesday, 5 August 2020. The issue of Ram Lala has been dragging for over a century and it has always taken the garb of politics more than religious devotion. Undoubtedly, the persona of Ram is only mythical and definitely not historical. When emotions run high, then the issue of proof does not matter. It would also be improper on our part to comment about the veracity of any given particular geographical location as the birthplace of a mythical Perfect Man. The Ramayana has been an integral part of Hindoo beliefs and as the protagonist of that war based religious story, Ram has invoked the sense of perfection of human existence. There are of course contrarians who believe that many acts of Ram as husband, brother or king do not necessarily embody the best that is expected from a male in an ever evolving world.

The Bhoomi Pujan or foundation stone laying ceremony has been long awaited with bated breath by many Hindoos. Prime Minister Narendra Modi must have been blessed for some good deeds for which he has been ordained to be the lucky one to lay this foundation stone. Here too, people have piped up with views that do not deserve too much attention. There are those who draw a parallel to the 1951 inauguration of the newly built Somnath temple in Gujarat by the then President Dr Rajendra Prasad. These critics claim that the 5 August 2020 event should also have been presided over by the current President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind. While citing this issue, the critics claim that Kovind laying the foundation stone would have a much stronger ramification in the breaking of the caste barrier and unification of Hindoo society. While the critics can be ignored, their contention about breaking the inner divisive walls of Hindoo society should not be ignored.

That apart, there is, of course, the apprehension of people misunderstanding an officially sponsored congregation like this in the times of Covid-19. While the Prime Minister and a few other VIPs may be able to retain suitable distances from others, the idea of social distancing amongst the small chosen crowd of priests and Ram Mandir leaders may be difficult to control. It is not only the fear of spread of the disease from this congregation but, more importantly, the message that goes out because of this officially organized gathering. While Covid rages on uncontrollably across India, people should be constantly reminded by well known public figures such as the Prime Minister and other luminaries that everyone must forcibly refrain themselves from getting into crowded areas. Citizens have to be told, over and over again, that the spectre of the disease is not imaginary and nor is the terrible damage to the nation's economy. It is an admitted fact that Indians are most stubborn with their bad habits. They are people who love to be in the midst of crowds. Unlike many other nationalities where people prefer to be left alone, we, as a race, always want physical proximity to others. It is these habits that could damage India in the long run. It is not only the issue of social distancing but the message has to be absolutely clear that the focus of the government at Centre is to fight Covid-19 in the best possible way and try to revive the economy before sections of society lose all means of livelihood. Projecting the Bhoomi Pujan as a priority at these difficult times might not go down well with politically uninvolved Hindoos struggling to find ways and means to get their next meal.

5 August 2020 may open a new chapter wherein there will be a general satisfaction among sections of the Hindoo populace, mostly in north India that have been eager for the construction of the Ram Mandir. However, for Odias of this state, our Lord Jagannath has the highest place in our minds, souls and hearts.

WISDOM CORNER

- The secret of life, though, is to fall seven times and to get up eight times.

PAULO COELHO
- One who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.

CONFUCIUS
- Tomorrow never comes, it is always today.

OSHO

WORDSWORTH

Swoose

It wasn't the earliest mention of this curious hybrid, the first having been in the Harrison Times of Arkansas in 1911, though it, too, referred to a bird accidentally bred in Norfolk. The name must have been fairly widely known by 1920, since a horse named Swoose was racing then. The Daily Mail mentioned the birds several times that year, reporting that the young sweese were terrorising the farmyard and killing ducks. "Of late," the paper noted, "their character has been relapsing into such savagery as may prove their ruin." News of the birds spread widely. If we are to believe this American report, their name briefly became part of the vernacular: "Much public interest is evinced in these queer birds and nowadays when an ill-tempered husband rouses his wife to the point of retaliation, she gives vent to her feelings in the culminating insult: "You swoose!," as stated in Wisconsin State Journal, 5 September, 1920. A few other sweese appeared in the 1920s and 1930s as crosses between various breeds of goose and swan that were kept together on farms. The word reached the hit parade in 1941 when Alexander the Swoose, a song performed by the Kay Kyser band, reached number 3 in the charts. This led directly to the most famous swoose, a B-17 bomber that American forces based in Australia had created by cannibalising other aircraft and nicknamed the Swoose because of its hybrid character. It was piloted by Frank Kurtz, who in 1944 named his daughter after the plane. Swoosie Kurtz has become a well-known actress. She was once asked whether she had thought of changing her name: "Change it to what — Tiffany? It's been an advantage. It's unforgettable. I'm the only one."

Synaesthete

This word is moderately common in the psychological and artistic fields. It refers to a person who has some kind of cross-wiring in the brain, so that things which ought to be perceived by one sense are instead felt in another. The most common form is for language, sounds and tastes to be sensed as colours. For a synaesthete, the words on this page might have colour associations; many musicians say that different keys evoke characteristic colours; or those affected may experience the sense of taste as hues. For any one individual, the transfer between senses is always the same, but there seems to be no accord between affected individuals about what sensation evokes what effect. The science writer Alison Motluk, a synaesthete, has remarked that "The astonishing realisation is not that these characters are imbued with colours but rather a world could exist in which they were colour-free, neutral, characterless. It would be like finding out one day that, while you have been savouring the smells of freshly baked bread, of brandy, of chocolate, all your life, your friends have only been able to taste them." The term synaesthesia was coined at the end of the nineteenth century by Sir Francis Galton for what had been and sometimes is still called coloured hearing. He derived it on the model of anaesthesia from the Greek prefix syn-, for things that are like one another, plus aisthesis, meaning sensation.

LOL

DIAMOND RING

In the morning, shortly after waking up, a young couple was at their coffee table.

The wife appeared very pleasant that day. The husband was his usual self. The wife initiated a conversation. She said, "In my dream, I saw you in a



jewelry store and you bought me a diamond ring." "Really," the husband asked her in surprise, and then added, "I had the same dream and I saw your rich dad paying the bill."



Jagdish Rattanani

IT IS SAID THAT A TIME OF CRISIS TESTS METTLE, RESILIENCE AND CHARACTER. THE INDIAN ECONOMY AND ITS KEY DRIVERS ARE LIKELY TO COME OUT POOR ON THESE FRONTS

SPECTRUM AGRICULTURE

Make farmer king, make India strong

Indian agriculture is a complex mix. It has myriad problems and the solutions suggested are often not practical. Interestingly, the largest beneficiaries of the food dolo to the 80 crore poor are the producers of the food grains!

Shivaji Sarkar

OVER THE YEARS, CORPORATE CARTELS HAVE CREATED LOBBIES TO CONTROL THE BASE OF INDIAN ECONOMY – AGRICULTURE. IT IS PROFIT-ORIENTED, BUT AT THE COST OF SUSTENANCE OF THE FARMING COMMUNITY

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

FOCUS ECONOMY

COVID BUSTS MYTHS

The economy is in a bad shape. Everyone knows and experiences the adverse impacts of a fall in growth. In a way, all reference points have disappeared like they do in a tsunami. We don't know if the sea is on the land or the land is in the sea. Marooned in such a situation, official economic indicators have little meaning.

Yet, some pointers are available on the extent of the collapse though the government has cautioned the people against any comparisons with the past. Factory output as measured in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), which tracks manufacturing, mining and electricity, is in a free-fall. The IIP for April and May, the first two months of lockdown, reports a 45 per cent fall from the same period last year. The collapse, not unexpected, comes on the back of negative numbers that began showing up pre-pandemic in the last fiscal. For example, IIP was down 4.3 per cent in September 2019, with mining down 8.5 per cent, manufacturing down 3.9 per cent and electricity down 2.6 per cent.

The national economy is hit hard by the pandemic at a time it was already weak. The numbers quantify one part, but they also point to what can't be measured – the yet-to-come cascading impact on investments, spending patterns and overall attitudes and behaviour that could dramatically alter some basic constructs.

Take the example of cement, in which India has the second highest installed capacity in the world with some one million people employed therein. The industry shut shop during the lockdown and opened up as the lockdown eased. But, it still has unused stocks that reflect the weak off-take in construction, which reflects the collapse of demand. This scenario is likely to worsen as more companies in IT services space take to working from home and dramatically lower their office space usage.

So, even if there is a pick-up in IIP, it will run into show stoppers of the kind that will emerge from several quarters as businesses and citizens adjust to changing paradigms. Clearly, it is too early to read 'green shoots' (a term used



For a crisis like the pandemic that is far worse, India enters with an economy that is far weaker than we have known for a long time

five times in the government's Macroeconomic Report, June, 2020) into numbers even when they indicate a pick-up.

Consider, then, the "crucial cushion to external shocks" in the nature of forex reserves at \$475.64 billion as on July 10. This looks robust by itself till one appreciates the fact that the total external debt stood at \$558.5 billion (March-end, 2020 figures). Total reserves can finance only about 85 per cent of external debt; and short-term residual maturity (maturing in less than 12 months) of external debt accounts for some 50 per cent of total reserves. This was fine in a stable world. In a geopolitical climate brimming with volatile hotspots, this should not offer comfort. Accretion to reserves was high in 2019-20 at \$59.3 billion but as economist Dr. RK Pattnaik has noted, it contains an unusually high "other capital receipts" portion of \$18.4 billion, which includes forex that came in but was in all likelihood not deployed as the market turned messy and the pandemic spread across the globe. This tells us of the huge gaps that now stand between plans, investments and execution, again an indication of uncertainty that points to dangers in the external sector in a world where globalisation is in retreat.

India's current account balance may generate a small surplus in the first quarter of this fiscal but this will be because the economy has stalled, leading to a collapse in imports. That isn't good news either.

India weathered the 2008 financial crisis rather well but that came at a time the nation had recorded a five-year period of growth in the region of 8 per cent. For a crisis like the pandemic that is far worse, India enters with an economy that is far weaker than we have known for a long time. In the January-March quarter of 2019-20, growth was down to 3.1 per cent – taking India back to the so-called Hindu rate of growth of the pre liberalisation days. For the full year, growth was 4.1 per cent, the lowest recorded in 11 years.

At the same time, inflation is up and has crossed the upper limit of 6 per cent in April-May-June quarter, telling us that prices have risen beyond tolerance level, just when incomes have fallen drastically. RBI has lowered rates repeatedly (cumulatively 225 basis points from February 2019 to date), but the classical argument that this would lower rates to retail borrowers and businesses, making it easier to buy and invest more, remained a mythical story.

There is clearly an immediate crisis but the Indian economy also faces a larger crisis of vision, direction and integrity. Numbers can't tell us about this crisis and indeed a crisis like Covid-19 conceals inherent weaknesses. It is the inherent weaknesses that do not allow the nation to look up almost three decades after liberalisation promised to unshackle India and unlock its entrepreneurial energies.

Instead, we have had one worse – an unresponsive public sector

of the past replaced by a post-liberalisation private sector that continues to pull privilege, comfort and support of public institutions and stays far less answerable to people and to Parliament. The story of rising NPAs that have led to a fall in trust in banking sector tells us not only of the collusion between crooked bankers and businesses but also of the failure of the sector to regulate, appraise and take a call on what should be its fundamental activity – whetting ideas and proposals, giving out loans and monitoring their use. It tells us of the cover that the system offers to those who take public money and misuse it or divert it with impunity, and of a regulatory system that holds none of this to account. On July 19, it was the All India Bank Employees Association that released a list of willful defaulters – the term itself is an oxymoron but it is so legitimised that we don't stop to think how it might look if the crime were a little different – like willful murderers, or willful dacoits. Yet, it is the AIBE that wants an ordinance to go after these people, not the government. All of this is pre-Covid stash but it will determine how we respond to the pandemic.

It is said that a time of crisis tests mettle, resilience and character. The Indian economy and its key drivers are likely to come out poor on these fronts. The way businesses pushed or coerced the government while a majority of the "leaders" and Twitterati CEOs fell silent when labour laws were suspended by many states tells us again that India may have opened up and liberalised three decades ago but the license-quota-permit Raj did not go away. The 'yes-man' culture lives on. The loot continued. The looters changed. In a vibrant economy, downturns can come and go. Disruptive change opens opportunities for new players who drive innovation, new products and services as some of the entrenched vacate space. In an economy oiled by high order graft, downturns expose grimy layers. Nothing happens. The poor suffer even more.

Jagdish Rattanani
is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR.
THE BILLION PRESS

The kisan credit card or simply bank loans. Government institutions selling seeds, fertilizer or other support do it at commercial rates and a bogey had been created that the farmers are dependent on the government. The mandis, despite many flaws, served them well and assured payments. The mahajan (moneylender) system found their roles limited, but not eliminated.

The Sukhis are still there for smaller tillers who do not find it easy to have bank support. The new ordinances are euphoric about a pan-India market – a complex and expensive system, "larger" involvement of private sector, a euphemism for multinational involvement in the farm sector, which is operating for almost two decades through various "cash and carry" wholesale trade. Some Indian firms too have entered the scenario. In Kashmir, some companies have monopolised apple trade through their leased orchards; in other places, motley groups manage partially grape, orange, mango and spices trading.

Many have emerged as parallels of FCI. But, farmers have a concern. They become their pawn and alternative support is difficult

once a contract is signed. The ordinances for demolition of this alternative are a concern for many farmers' organisations. Again it is all private investment that most official functionaries take pride in. That is the plus and minus. The plus is "investment". The minus is it creates a larger chunk of farmers looking for direct government support for survival.

The lockdown has opened up the chinks. The government is trying to correct it through enormous stock it built in FCI warehouses through the years of toil. It is distributing food grain worth ₹1.5 lakh crore for free till at least November 2020, from April onwards for over 60 per cent of the population.

Despite years of deliberations, the nation has got into the same quagmire of government support to farming instead of promoting individual farmer's capabilities. The APMC mandis have flaws though it is a robust system. Since it is still an ordinance, the policymakers need to relook at this for removing the flaws but prevent its demolition. The ordinance should for now not be enacted into statutory law.

Over the years, corporate cartels have created lobbies to con-

trol the base of Indian economy – agriculture. It is profit-oriented, but at the cost of sustenance of the farming community. The farmers need monetary support all through the year. They need small credits. This is provided by buyers at mandis and adjusted against final sales. The payments to farmers are assured in the system. Yes, this creates a kind of bondage too. There are instances of it being exploited as well.

The pan-India market is there in mandis as well. Many farmers have taken their produce from Punjab to sell at Bihar mandis for better price. The present ordinances try to legalise that but creating monolith of large corporate players. Politically it suits various operators as election funding in bulk is assured. Practically, the nation is creating a convoluted system, where the involvement of the government at micro level would increase.

There is another apprehension. Sizeable sections of the farmers may be controlled through Vikas Dubey-type goons creating severe law and order issues – in short perpetuation of more powerful Sukhis and dumping more costs on the state.

Happiness & success

Sir, Success and happiness are two different concepts. Success is tangible but happiness is elusive and difficult to hold. Success is material, but happiness is extraterrestrial. Now the goal of the mankind is material prosperity and self-aggrandisement. A happy man may be unsuccessful but a successful man is not always happy. Then, what is the secret of happiness? I reckon that adhering to the principles as enshrined in the holy scriptures and 'shastras' is the way forward. Happiness may be fleeting but it gives durable pleasure. For a Karma Yogi, happiness is the benchmark for perfection. When success is achieved, happiness follows. Money can buy goods but not happiness. Happiness is the elixir of life.
Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

Justice delayed

Sir, The 'encounter killing' of an ex-maharaja of Bharatpur in Rajasthan and seven-time legislator Raja Man Singh took place in 1985. The case carried on and on, and the judgment was delivered now by a lower court. The Mathura district and sessions judge found seven policemen guilty. These cops will now go in appeal to the higher court. This, sadly, is the way India is being governed! Justice so delayed is justice denied.
Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

IIT-M working to make your car rides smoother

THE INSTITUTE SAYS ‘CARBON NANOTUBE COMPOSITES’ RESEARCHERS HAVE DEVISED METHOD TO REDUCE VIBRATION DURING CAR RIDES

AGENCIES

Chennai, July 27: The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) Monday said its researchers working in the field of ‘Carbon Nanotube Composites’ have yielded promising results that can contribute greatly in reducing the vibration during car rides.

“The outstanding properties of carbon nanotubes (CNTs) – nanometre-sized molecules made of rolled-up sheets of carbon atoms – can tremendously improve mechanical, thermal and electrical properties of polymers,” Prathap Haridoss from the Department of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, IIT Madras, said in a statement.

According to the research team, polymer composites, materials formed by combining polymers



Of the numerous attractive properties of CNT-polymer composites, their vibration damping properties make them useful in aerospace, automobile and construction industries

PRATHAP HARIDOSS | DEPT OF METALLURGICAL AND MATERIALS ENGINEERING, IIT MADRAS

with various additives, have been used for a long time in recorded history for various purposes.

Many polymers, loaded with various types of reinforcing fillers, are the mainstay of daily use articles, from automobile parts to construction components.

Their study, published in the peer-reviewed international journal Nanoscale Advances, revealed that the research team is working to-

wards developing and testing interesting polymer composites.

Their research will lead to a better understanding of the mechanisms of vibration damping in these types of polymers, which would, in turn, lead to designs of better vibration dampers in automobiles.

“Of the numerous attractive properties of CNT-polymer composites, their vibration damping

properties make them useful in aerospace, automobile and construction industries,” Haridoss said.

“Carbon nanotube-reinforced polymers combine the viscoelastic properties of the polymer with the interfacial properties of the CNT, resulting in enhanced vibration damping,” he added.

Thus, CNT loaded polymers can conceivably give you a smoother

ride on your car; but the team decided to find out why.

They used MWCNTs synthesised by different techniques and loaded them into Epoxy polymers. MWCNTs are made of concentric tubes of carbon, and the slide between the layers is believed to damp vibrations. Naturally, the efficacy of damping would depend on the nature of the MWCNTs.

“In order to visualize the damping effects of the two types of MWCNTs, the researchers performed computational simulation studies,” Haridoss said.

“Our simulation studies have shown beyond doubt that the vibration damping properties in MWCNTs arise from the interaction between atoms that constitute the inner and outer tubes rather than the inter-tube frictional energy loss.”

Set up committee on OBC reservation in medical courses: HC



AGENCIES

Chennai, July 27: After a long battle, the Madras High Court has directed the Centre to implement OBC reservation in the All India Medical Quota seats. The Court asked the Central government to form a panel comprising of Tamil Nadu officers to formulate a method of implementation of reservation in the all India quota seats.

The High Court Monday ordered the central government to set up a committee within three months to decide on the issue of 50 per cent reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in admissions to medical courses under the all-India quota.

Disposing of a batch of petitions filed by the ruling AIADMK, DMK, PMK and others to demand 50 per cent reservation for the OBCs in the medical college seats surrendered to the all-India quota, the First Bench comprising Chief Justice AP Sahi and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy said the Centre can also pass a law on the matter.

that only the Supreme Court can decide on the issue,” P.Wilson, Senior Advocate and DMK’s Rajya Sabha member, told IANS.

“The High Court also did not agree that reservation will dilute the merit since the merit list is prepared first and reservation is applied only later,” Wilson said.

According to him, the proposed committee will have representatives from the Health Ministry, MCI and the Tamil Nadu Health Department. “This will have an impact other states as well,” Wilson added.

The court said the committee should have representatives from the central and Tamil Nadu governments and the Medical Council of India (MCI).

“The High Court rejected the contentions of the MCI and the Centre. The court did not agree

Earlier, the Supreme Court declining to hear the pleas of various political parties and asked them approach the High Court on the matter. The central government had refused to grant 50 per cent reservation for OBCs as per the Tamil Nadu law in medical seats for 2020-21.

During the hearing, the Centre told the court that the state can follow its own law with regard to reservation in admissions, but it cannot exceed 50 per cent of the total seats.

On their part, the petitioner parties said that the Centre can decide on the subject only when a state government has not enacted a law on reservation. Only the state government has the power to decide on the reservation, it was contended.

GOLD SMUGGLING

NIA quizzes Kerala’s former IT Secy again



Sivasankar (L) has maintained during his earlier questioning that his relations with Swapna were personal and not linked to their activities



Sivasankar was Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Information Technology Secretary before he was removed from the posts after the racket came to light

AGENCIES

Kochi, July 27: NIA officials Monday began questioning now-suspended senior IAS officer M. Sivasankar for the second time in four days at the agency office here regarding the gold smuggling case that has rocked Kerala since the beginning of July.

Sivasankar was Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Information Technology Secretary before he was removed from the posts after the racket came to light.

The NIA had questioned Sivasankar in state capital Thiruvananthapuram for five hours Thursday and put him on notice to appear before the officials for further questioning Monday at NIA Kochi office.

The case first surfaced when PS Sarith, a former employee of the UAE consulate here, was arrested by the Customs Department July 5 when he was allegedly facilitating the smuggling of 30 kg gold in a diplomatic baggage from Dubai

to Thiruvananthapuram.

The case became murkier when the name of Swapna Suresh, a former employee of the UAE consulate and later employed with the IT Department, surfaced in the case. Her links with Sivasankar came up later during the investigation.

Another accused Sandip Nair of Kochi was arrested on charge of direct involvement in the smuggling. Sivasankar arrived in his own vehicle at the NIA office here around 9.20 am after nearly five-hour trip from the state capital.

Security at the NIA office was beefed up and no one except the media was allowed to stay put in front of the premises.

Police officials took the IAS officer inside the NIA office and after the mandatory Covid test, he was escorted to a special room for questioning. Sivasankar was also served breakfast before his questioning began.

A woman IPS officer from the NIA has arrived from Hyderabad to lead the agency officials in questioning Sivasankar, while other officials will be linked online from various offices during the process.

The Customs had first quizzed Sivasankar for nine hours, after the case surfaced and they arrested Sarith. Swapna and Sandip were arrested by NIA from Bangalore.

Sivasankar would be questioned from a prepared list of questions by the NIA officials. His statements given to the Customs as well as the NIA last week are also with the probe team.

HOSTILE CONDITIONS FOR HOSPITALITY BIZ

With mounting debts, fiscal commitments, survival continues to be at stake, say Tamil Nadu hoteliers

AGENCIES

Chennai, July 27: No profit in takeaways, mounting debts and fiscal commitments, including salaries, have made survival of hotels and restaurants in the state difficult in these pandemic times, according to insiders.



Hotels in Chennai and those in the Tier-II and III cities which offer takeaway menus, find the response from the people to be slow and unprofitable, owing to the pandemic.

As part of its efforts to curb the spread of coronavirus in Tamil Nadu, the state government has allowed hotels and restaurants only takeaway services.

There are an estimated 50,000 hotels and restaurants in Tamil Nadu and they have been allowed to provide takeaway services of food items but not dine-in.

Some hotels even launched takeaway menu options which can be ordered over phone, allowing people to enjoy a sumptuous meal sitting in the safety and comfort of their homes.

“Lodges and hotels are suffering due to lack of business and the parcel (takeaway) service has seen only 25 per cent business and is least profitable,” M Venkada Subbu, president, The Tamil Nadu Hotels Association, said.

Uncertainty continues to shadow the sector and the hoteliers are not sure when the conditions would improve and pave the way for usual business activity, he said.

“Even if the hotels reopen in a big way from August 1, there will be no business for the next two months. Thereafter, it may pick up,” Venkada Subbu told PTI.

R Rajkumar, secretary, Chennai Hotels Association, expressed concern over the revenue loss in the business ever since the lockdown came into force March 24.

“There has been no business for



There are around 50,000 hotels and restaurants in Tamil Nadu

Lodges and hotels are suffering due to lack of business and the parcel (takeaway) service has seen only 25 per cent business and is least profitable, says M Venkada Subbu, president of The Tamil Nadu Hotels Association

the past four months. Despite this, we are duty bound to pay salaries to our staff who are still on the rolls,” he said.

Revenue loss and payment of salaries are not the only problems afflicting the hospitality sector as various taxes add to the burden.

“We are paying property tax,

water tax, rent and power bills too. And the important point is several hotels have been converted into quarantine facilities. We will have to disinfect all the rooms, only when normal life resumes,” Rajkumar said. Post lockdown, the hotels may find difficulty in convincing prospective clients that the rooms have been disinfected and are fit for use, he added.

The ban on hotels and lodges renting out accommodation continues in the state, although the government has allowed restaurants to sell takeaways.

Sending the staff who chose to remain during the lockdown, lack of business and mounting fiscal commitments would amount to sealing their own fate, reasons Venkada Subbu.

“So, we divided the remaining staff into two groups and are making them work in two shifts of 15 days each, thus utilising their services and paying them salaries as well,” he said. In order to stay afloat, the hotel associations are looking up to the Central and state governments for sops like GST refund at least for a year besides a waiver off all taxes due to the pandemic conditions, and help them meet their fiscal needs.

Body of Covid victim cremated after locals’ hour-long protests

AGENCIES

Kottayam, July 27: The body of a Covid-19 victim, whose cremation was marred by protests Sunday, was finally cremated here under tight police security late in the day, officials said Monday.

The police also booked a municipal Councillor of the BJP and 30 persons for preventing the cremation of the 83-year-old man at a public crematorium at Muttambalam, after locals raised fears of the spread of coronavirus.

Amid protests by local residents Sunday evening, public representatives including Kottayam MLA Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan intervened and the cremation of the elderly person who died due to coronavirus infection was put on hold.

However, the body was cremated at around 11.15 pm Sunday as per the Covid-19 protocol, officials said Monday.

Denying a dignified farewell to

Councillor of the BJP and 30 persons booked for preventing the cremation of the 83-year-old man at a public crematorium in Muttambalam

the Covid-19 victim, a number of local residents had prevented the cremation, saying they feared contracting the infection.

The protesters had blocked the entrance of the crematorium run by the Kottayam Municipality, alleging the body was brought to the common crematorium after a Church refused to allow burial of its dead follower’s body in its cemetery.

The incident happened on a day when Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu expressed anguish over stigmatising Covid-19 patients and denial of a dignified farewell to those who succumb to the contagion.

Chennai hosp fits heart pumps in Russian toddler

AGENCIES

Chennai, July 27: In a complex seven-hour operation, a three-year-old Russian boy was successfully operated upon and two artificial heart pumps known as Berlin Heart were implanted, said MGM Healthcare Monday.

The boy had earlier suffered two cardiac arrests where the heart stopped beating and had to be resuscitated with manual compressions. In a statement, MGM Healthcare, a private hospital, said the artificial heart pumps will support the right and left side of the heart of the boy who weighs 10 kg.

The marathon surgery was performed in collaboration with engineering support teams from the UK and Germany guided by state-of-the-art virtual technology owing to travel restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, MGM Healthcare said.

The three-year-old boy suffered from a heart condition called restrictive cardiomyopathy wherein the walls of the lower chambers of the heart, called the ventricles, are



Three-year-old Lev Fedorenk was brought to Chennai as he was suffering from a heart condition, which eventually required a heart pump

too rigid to expand and receive any blood.

The parents of the boy flew him to Chennai for consultation with K R Balakrishnan, chairman and director of Cardiac Sciences and director of the Heart and Lung Transplant and Mechanical Circulatory Support Programme.

The boy was initially treated

with medications for around two months, but unfortunately his condition started worsening. He became critically ill and was admitted to MGM Healthcare.

According to the hospital, the boy’s condition continued to deteriorate and he suffered cardiac arrests twice, where the heart stopped beating and had to be resuscitated

with manual compressions.

The only option possible for such a small child was an artificial heart pump and since both the right and left side of his heart were affected, he needed two heart pumps.

Small pumps for such a small child known as Paediatric Biventricular pumps are made only in Germany by a company called Berlin Heart, the statement said.

However, the challenge was to fit the cannula needed for the pump inside the boy’s small chest cavity. Additionally, managing anaesthesia and surgery on such a small child wearing the mandatory personal protection equipment called for the best of clinical expertise.

Experts from multiple backgrounds and countries joined via tele-conference to support the team in Chennai.

Commenting on the treatment, Dr Balakrishnan said, “This was a huge challenge, given the prevailing circumstances. Berlin Heart will support the circulation of this child till the heart recovers or he gets a transplant.”

The implant procedure was per-

formed May 25.

Post-implant, the boy was kept under observation for a few weeks. The child has recovered remarkably well and has gained weight in a very short time and has been discharged from the intensive care unit. He is absolutely fine now, Dr Balakrishnan added.

According to Suresh Rao KGA, co-director, Institute of Heart and Lung Transplant and Mechanical Circulatory Support and HOD, Cardiac Anaesthesia, newborns with heart failure or children suffering from severe heart insufficiency do not really have much of a choice.

“A heart transplant most of the time is the only possibility for survival. The problem which the doctors are facing is that there is hardly a chance to keep their patient’s condition stable until heart transplant becomes possible. Waiting times are much too long until donor hearts become available. The demand for life-saving heart-assisting devices, which could bridge the time by mechanically supporting the heart function, is enormous,” Rao said.

of the day quote

Draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2020, and the proposed changes in environmental clearance process for infrastructure projects will routinely legitimise illegality and promote land grab, not development

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

The Chinese have occupied Indian land. Hiding the truth and allowing them to take it is anti-national. Bringing it to people's attention is patriotic

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

Pleasure to hear from FM Gabi

Ashkenazi of Israel. The India-Israel partnership is currently focussed on combating the COVID challenge. Even as it does, the larger agenda of cooperation continues to move forward

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

3 members of a family shot dead

Kasganj (UP): Three members of a village head's family were shot dead and three others injured at Hodalpur village in Kasganj district of Uttar Pradesh, police said Monday. The victims are family members of Satyavati, the head of Hodalpur that comes under Soron police circle jurisdiction. Her husband Vijendra Pal, Pramod and Guddu were injured in the shootout and admitted to a government hospital.

Woman's body found in suitcase

Ghaziabad (UP): An unidentified body of a woman was found stuffed in a suitcase in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad district Monday, police said. An unattended suitcase was spotted by locals in Sahibabad area in the morning. The body has been sent for post-mortem, an officer said. An investigation has been launched and efforts are on to identify the identity of the deceased, the officer said.

Elephant hit by train, dies

Rishikesh: A two-year-old elephant calf was found dead in the Lachhiwala range of the Dehradun forest division Monday. The young elephant was found dead in a ditch near the railway tracks in Nakraunda village, Dehradun DFO Rajiv Dhiman said. Prima facie, it seems that the animal fell into the ditch after being hit by a train, which led to its death, he said. The elephant died at 5.30 am when Delhi-Dehradun Janshatabdi Express passes through the area, the DFO said.

8 killed in MP road mishap

Chhatarpur (MP): Eight persons, including four children, were killed Monday afternoon in a collision between an SUV and two motorcycles in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur district, police said. The incident occurred between Chandranagar and Toria villages on Chhatarpur-Panna road, about 45 kms away from the district headquarters, Khajuraho Sub-Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Manmohan Singh Baghel said. All the victims, including two women, were travelling on two motorcycles.



I am with BJP, I was with BJP and I will remain with BJP. All reports of differences with BJP are misleading and malicious

MUKUL ROY | WEST BENGAL BJP LEADER

GOVT LAUNCHES 'MAUSAM' APP FOR WEATHER FORECASTS

Earth Sciences Minister Harsh Vardhan Monday launched a mobile application which will provide city-wise weather forecasts, nowcasts and other warnings



SC reserves verdict on PM CARES Fund

THE PETITIONER SOUGHT ORDER FOR TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM PM CARES FUND TO NDRF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 27: The Centre Monday strongly defended the PM CARES Fund in the Supreme Court saying it's a public trust meant to receive "voluntary contributions" to fight COVID-19 pandemic and the budgetary allocations for NDRF and SDRF are not "being touched".

The statement was made by the Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, before a bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan which reserved its order on one of the prayers of the PIL, filed by NGO 'Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPIL)', seeking a direction that all the money collected under the PM CARES Fund for the COVID-19 pandemic should be transferred to National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).

The Centre March 28 had set up the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund with the primary objective to deal with any kind of emergency situation like the one currently posed by the COVID-19 outbreak and provide relief to those affected.

The Prime Minister is the ex-officio chairman of the fund and the defence, Home and Finance ministers are its ex-officio trustees.

During the hearing, the Solicitor General told the bench, also comprising Justices SK Kaul and MR



The Centre March 28 had set up the PM CARES Fund with the primary objective to deal with any kind of emergency situation like the one currently posed by the COVID-19 outbreak

THE PETITIONER'S ADVOCATE CLAIMED THAT AN AUDIT OF THE NDRF IS BEING CONDUCTED BY THE CAG BUT THE GOVERNMENT HAS SAID THE AUDIT OF THE PM CARES FUND WILL BE DONE BY PRIVATE AUDITORS

Shah, that the PM CARES Fund is a "voluntary fund" while funds to the NDRF and SDRF (State Disaster Response Fund) are made available through budgetary allocations.

"It is a public trust. It is a body where you can make voluntary contributions and no budgetary allocations to the NDRF or SDRF are being touched. What has to be spent will be spent," the law officer said, adding that no law has been violated.

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for the petitioner NGO, said they are not doubting the bona fide of anyone but the creation of the PM CARES Fund is allegedly in

During the hearing, the Solicitor General told the bench that the PM CARES Fund is a "voluntary fund" while funds to the NDRF and SDRF are made available through budgetary allocations

contravention of provisions of the Disaster Management Act.

He claimed that an audit of the NDRF is being conducted by the Comptroller and Auditor-General (CAG) but the government has said the audit of the PM CARES Fund will be done by private auditors.

Dave questioned the validity of the PM cares fund and alleged that it was a "fraud on the Constitution".

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for another party, said that all CSR contribution benefits are given to the PM Cares Fund and they are denied to the state disaster relief funds and "these are very

serious issues which need to be looked into".

Mehta said that a national plan was prepared in 2019 and that had included the ways to deal with the "biological disaster".

"That time no one knew of COVID. It is biological and public health disaster plan which is part of national plan. So this contention that there was no plan is factually wrong," he said, adding that the plan to tackle such disasters changes with the need. "We cannot have a constant and static plan and needs to be updated from time to time," the law officer said.

Dave, however, said a "special plan" must be brought for the COVID to ensure a coordinated approach to deal with its challenges.

On June 17, the apex court had asked the Centre to file its response on the plea, which has sought a direction that all the contributions made by individuals and institutions for the COVID-19 pandemic should be credited to the NDRF, rather than to the PM CARES Fund.

Will not contest polls till J&K is a UT: Omar

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 27: Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah, who was released from a prolonged detention some time back, has said that he will not contest Assembly elections till the time J&K remains a Union Territory.

In an opinion piece published in a newspaper, Omar Abdullah has written that he will not be contesting Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. He has written, "As for me, I am very clear that while J&K remains a Union Territory I will not be contesting any Assembly elections. Having been a member of the most empowered Assembly in the land and that, too, as the leader of that Assembly for six years, I simply cannot and will not be a member of a House that has been disempowered the way ours has."

Omar Abdullah has also written about a meeting he attended with Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of the abrogation of Article 370 August 5, 2019 when Jammu and Kashmir was stripped of its special status and bifurcated into two Union Territories.

"Some of us, senior office-bearers of the J&K National Conference, had a meeting with the PM just days before the August 5 develop-



ments. It's not a meeting I will forget in a hurry. One day I may write about it but propriety precludes me from saying more than that we left the meeting with a completely different impression about what was going to unfold in the next 72 hours. In one fell swoop, everything we had feared came to pass," said Omar Abdullah in his article.

The former Chief Minister, in his article has also said that the promises made to Jammu and Kashmir were not fulfilled and the removal of Article 370 was "not the right thing to do".

"J&K participated in democratic processes, shared in nation's development but the promise made with it wasn't kept. Removing 370 may have been the popular thing to do, but going back on a nation's sovereign commitments was not the right thing to do," the NC leader has said.

He also said, "After the re-election of Prime Minister Modi, rumours started to float about the intentions of the BJP to use its absolute majority in the Lok Sabha to implement its poll promise of abrogating Article 370."

GOAT 'ARRESTED' FOR NOT WEARING MASK

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kanpur (UP), July 27: In a bizarre incident, the Kanpur police 'arrested' a goat that was roaming in the Beconganj area here 'without wearing a mask'.

The incident took place over the weekend and the Beconganj police picked up the goat and took it to the police station in a jeep.

When the owner of the goat learnt that the police had taken it away, he rushed to the police station. He pleaded with the cops and the police finally let him take back his goat but warned him not to allow the animal to roam on the road.

Circle officer, Anwarganj po-

lice station, Saifuddin Beg, however, said that the police had found a youth without a mask, who was taking the goat along.

"When he saw the police, he ran away leaving the goat behind wearing a mask".

so the policemen brought the goat to the police station. Later, we handed over the goat to its owner," he said.

One of the policemen who had brought the goat admitted that they found a lockdown violation because the goat was without a mask. "People are now making their dogs wear a mask so why not a goat?" he asked. The police apparently changed its version after it became the butt of jokes on social media.



NEAR, YET TOO FAR



People walk towards a culvert, flooded due to the swollen Swarnrekha river in Ranchi, Monday

PTI PHOTO

SC seeks UGC's response on holding final year exams amid pandemic

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, July 27: The Supreme Court Monday sought a response from the University Grant Commission (UGC) over its guidelines mandating universities across the country to hold their final year exams by September 30.

A three-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and MR Shah issued the notice in a batch of petitions filed in the court against the UGC guidelines.

The bench asked the UGC to file its response by July 31 - the next date of hearing.

During the hearing, Justice Ashok Bhushan asked Solicitor

General Tushar Mehta if he required time to seek instructions.

Mehta submitted that the UGC is only concerned with final year exams. He said that there are 818 universities in the country and out of these, 35 have not conducted final year exams. He appraised the court that 209 universities have completed the exams and 394 are in the process of conducting the exams. The Solicitor General further submitted that students have been given the option to take the exams online, offline, or a merger of both.

However, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for the petitioner, called the decision of the UGC unrealistic. He submitted in the court that the decision to hold final year exams amid the COVID-19 pandemic was "unrealistic and remarkable". He further argued that states have been given no discretion on the issue, despite expressing their objections.

Meanwhile, the Solicitor General submitted that the UGC would file a common reply to the batch of the petitions filed in the Supreme Court.

It is to be mentioned here that several petitions have been filed by the students from universities across the country challenging the UGC guidelines as being arbitrary, given that it would compel students to appear in exams during the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby posing a risk to their health.

BSP ISSUES WHIP TO VOTE AGAINST CONG

AGENCIES

Jaipur/ New Delhi, July 27: The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has issued a whip to all its six MLAs in Rajasthan to vote against the Congress if a floor test happens to check the strength of the Ashok Gehlot government. Gehlot has been struggling to keep his government afloat after a rebellion by Sachin Pilot and MLAs loyal to him.

All the six Bahujan Samaj Party's MLAs had merged with the Congress, which could lead to a tangle of technicalities as according to this definition, there are no BSP MLAs in the Rajasthan Assembly. The party led by former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati

had approached the Election Commission to consider these six MLAs as BSP MLAs during the Rajya Sabha polls, but the Election Commission had refused to intervene in that as it's the Speaker's domain. The BSP late Sunday issued a whip to R Gudha, Lakhman Singh, Deep Chand, JS Awana, Sandeep Kumar and Wajib Ali.

"Notices have been issued to the six MLAs separately as well as collectively, stating that since BSP is a national party, there cannot be any merger at the state level at the instance of the six MLAs, unless there is a merger of the BSP at the national level. If they violate it, they will be disqualified," the party ruled.

FOREST HOME GUARD MOWED DOWN BY MINING MAFIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, July 27: A forest home guard was mowed down by a tractor when he along with his colleague tried to stop suspected members of a mining mafia inside the Sariska Tiger Reserve in Alwar, police said Monday.

The accused are yet to be arrested. The tractor has been seized, they said. The victim, Kewal Singh, was rushed to a hospital after the incident on Sunday but he succumbed to injuries, the police said. "We are investigating the case based on the details provided by the guard who was present with the deceased at the time of the incident. The accused will be arrested soon," Alwar Superintendent of Police Tejaswani Gautam said.

Forest home guard Kewal Singh were patrolling in Baldevgarh area of the reserve when they came across suspected illegal mining.

NSA against MP man for raping woman: Police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Alirajpur (MP), July 27: The stringent National Security Act (NSA) was imposed on a man in Madhya Pradesh who was arrested Monday for allegedly kidnapping a woman and raping her in confinement for 20 days, the police said.

Rehmat Khan, 32, was arrested after the woman escaped and approached the police, an official said. He had kidnapped the 20-year-old woman from Dhar district, said Superintendent of Police Vipul Shrivastava. "Rehmat is a history-sheeter with nine cases against his name. He also has three cases of kidnapping and rape. He has already served a jail sentence in one rape case," the official said.

By boat and on foot, Assam hunts for plasma for COVID patients

REUTERS

Guwahati, July 27: When doctors in flood-ravaged Assam urgently sought plasma of a particular blood type for a COVID-19 patient this month, health officials sent a boat for a marooned donor who had recovered from the disease weeks ago.

With coronavirus cases surging in Assam and critical medicines running low, local authorities are rolling out the red carpet for now-cured patients - all for their blood plasma believed to be rich in virus antibody, although research on its efficacy has not been conclusive.

Assam says that symptomatic patients who donate plasma four

weeks after recovery will get preference in government jobs and housing. For example, a donor may get extra marks if he or she is tied in any test or interview for a job.

It is also offering to cover travel and other expenses for donors from outside the state, and has been making its frontline workers scour the state - sometimes wading through flood waters - to bring willing participants to plasma donation centres.

The success of the overall effort is crucial for Assam, one of the poorest states that is short of remdesivir and tocilizumab to treat severe COVID-19 patients. Delhi and Odisha are also courting plasma donors as India's total infections have leaped to 1.4 million with



Flood-affected villagers are transported by boat to safety at Kachua village in Nagaon district in Assam

REUTERS PHOTO

nearly 33,000 deaths. "Recently, we wanted O-group

plasma for a patient, a doctor," Assam Health Minister Himanta

Biswa Sarma told this news agency. "When we learned that a person was willing to donate, people went to his house by boat, brought him to the hospital and got the donation done."

He declined to identify the donor but said the recipient was doing well.

Plasma from a previously infected person can be used to treat up to two moderately ill patients, Sarma said. Without timely treatment, such patients' condition can potentially worsen, further straining the limited pool for medicines.

Grey market

Assam, where floods have so far killed around 100 people and affected roughly 3 million, is pre-

dicting coronavirus infections will peak in mid-September. It has so far reported more than 32,000 cases with 79 deaths.

Its push for plasma comes as India, the world's biggest suppliers of generic drugs, scrambles to end a local shortage of remdesivir and tocilizumab.

Sarma said that until recently, Assam was receiving only 12-16 remdesivir vials a day, compared to a demand for at least 100. But the situation eased when Assam got 400 vials from a local company some days ago, he said.

"Still, people are not doing enough production and obviously a grey market has emerged as a result," Sarma said.

of the day quote

Rahul Gandhi has not learnt from his mistakes. He had insulted our soldiers at the time of the surgical strike, the Balakot airstrike and now again he has insulted them

There are people who want jobs and there are traders, businessmen, contractors who are not getting the right person for their work

I request Centre to clear state's financial dues to help it effectively fight COVID-19 pandemic

SHORT TAKES

Chhattisgarh extends lockdown

Raipur: The Chhattisgarh government Monday decided to extend the ongoing lockdown in coronavirus- hit areas, including capital Raipur, Bilaspur and Durg, till August 6 to check the deadly infection's spread, an official said. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting of cabinet ministers and senior officials chaired by Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel at his official residence here, the public relations department official said.

Murder accused escapes

Ranchi: A murder accused and coronavirus positive patient escaped from the Covid-19 centre in Latehar district of Jharkhand on Monday, police said. According to Police, the man was arrested on July 14 in the murder case of a BJP leader Jay Bardhan Singh. He was taken on police remand for interrogation.

Pakistan violates ceasefire

Jammu: Pakistan troops again indulged in unprovoked ceasefire violation on the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Monday, following which the Indian Army retaliated befittingly, an official said. "Pakistan initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation around 10.30 am today by firing with small arms and shelling with mortars along the LoC in Mankote Sector of Poonch district. The Indian Army is retaliating befittingly," Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Devender Anand said.

Iyer resigns

New Delhi: Drinking Water and Sanitation secretary Parameswaran Iyer has tendered his resignation from the post, according to a Personnel Ministry order issued Monday. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has accepted the resignation of Iyer with effect from August 21, 2020, the order said. Iyer, a 1981-batch IAS officer (retired) of Uttar Pradesh cadre and well-known sanitation specialist, was in February this year given one-year extension, for the second time, till April 30, 2021.

Jumbo found dead

Kolkata: A full-grown elephant was found dead in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district Monday, less than a week after carcasses of two elephants were discovered in the district, a senior forest official said. Chief Wildlife Warden Ravikant Sinha said the elephant was found dead near a tea estate in Nagrakata area.



What a coincidence. Whenever China attacks, its strength is huge and ours is less...but China has always suffered the consequences

NITYANAND RAI | UNION MINISTER

LALU TESTS NEGATIVE FOR COVID

Jailed RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav, currently undergoing treatment at a Ranchi hospital for multiple ailments, has tested negative for COVID-19, a senior doctor at the facility said Monday



Corona patient found dead

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Prayagraj (UP), July 27: A 57-year-old corona patient, who was caught on camera walking out of the hospital, was found dead Sunday evening. His body was found in some bushes, just 500 metres from the hospital. His family has accused the hospital of 'negligence', adding that he 'escaped' after he faced harassment.

The hospital administration, however, has denied the accusation. According to reports, the man was admitted to the Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital, with COVID-19 symptoms on Friday evening. He had complained of breathing problems.

The family said that the patient had called them on Saturday morning, hours before he 'escaped' from the hospital. He reportedly said his complaints at the hospital had gone unheard and he was not being given proper treatment. "I felt suffocated, probably because of the ventilator. I tried to tell a few people here to help but no one listened," the man reportedly told the family.

SFJ THREATENS SIKH SOLDIERS

The US-based proscribed outfit Sikhs For Justice is instigating Sikh defence personnel in the backdrop of the recent martyrdom of four Sikh soldiers in Ladakh sector during the recent clashes with Chinese troops at Line of Actual Control

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 27: Amid the border tension with China in eastern Ladakh, designated terrorist outfit and pro-Khalistan group Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) has started targeting soldiers of the Sikh community in the Indian Army, threatening them to desert the force, intelligence agencies warned Monday. The agencies have alerted the armed forces and security establishments about the terrorist outfit's nefarious activities. Pakistani ISI has been backing the malicious campaign launched by the SFJ. The US-based proscribed outfit Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) is instigating Sikh defence personnel in the backdrop of the recent martyrdom of four Sikh soldiers in Ladakh sector during the recent clashes with Chinese troops at Line of Actual Control.

The outfit members in the call are "motivating Sikh Indian soldiers not to get martyred for India". They are inciting people by saying that India has a history of "not supporting Sikh people that is why they should leave Indian Army". As per the message, Sikh people are being asked to join the 'Sikhs For Justice' campaign wherein on joining they will get ₹5,000 more than their present salary in Indian Army. It was found that Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, chief protagonist of 'Sikhs for Justice', has uploaded a highly provocative video (duration 138 seconds) on June 18 instigating the Sikh soldiers of Indian Army to desert and join his secessionist outfit.



A similar audio message (115 seconds) of Pannun directly instigating the Sikh soldiers, was also sent to Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) subscribers, in Punjab and nearby areas through the international telemarketing numbers the same day. The message was later also disseminated through social media.

Pannun, in the video, has falsely claimed that only Sikh soldiers were killed in the conflict and has accused India of using Sikhs in the Army as 'watchmen'. "Pannun has also claimed that though the theatre of conflict was 'Kashmir' but the 'sacrifice' was made by Sikhs. He also stated that SFJ would pay salary plus ₹5,000 to the Sikh soldiers deserting Indian Army.

JeM handlers shared code: NIA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 27: The over ground workers of terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) in Jammu and Kashmir were in touch with their handlers in Pakistan, who used to send locations of freshly infiltrated terrorists and also shared code words for receiving them to driver Sameer Ahmed Dar on secure messaging applications, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) claimed in its charge-sheet in the Nagrota infiltration and transportation module case.

The revelations were made in the chargesheet filed by the anti-terror probe agency against six accused persons in the JeM Nagrota infiltration-transportation module case before the special NIA court in Jammu.

An NIA spokesperson said that the agency filed the chargesheet against Sameer Ahmed Dar, Asif Ahmed Malik, Sartaj Ahmed Mantoo, Suhaib Manzoor and Zahoor Ahmed Khan, all resi-



The revelations were made in the chargesheet filed by the anti-terror probe agency against six accused persons in the JeM Nagrota infiltration-transportation module case before the special NIA court in Jammu

dent of Pulwama, and Suheel Javid, a resident of Budgam, under several sections of the Indian Penal Code, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Arms Act, Explosive Substances Act and the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act.

Covid-19 fatality rate dips to 2.28%

INDIA HAS SECURED PLACE AMONG COUNTRIES SHOWING THE LOWEST FATALITY RATES IN THE WORLD, ACCORDING TO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 27: Amid spike in Covid-19 cases with the latest highest single-day rise of 49,931 cases in the last 24 hours, the coronavirus fatality rate is progressively falling and has dipped to 2.28 per cent.

India has secured place among countries showing the lowest fatality rates in the world, according to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). The Ministry said focused efforts of the government on early detection and isolation through aggressive testing and efficient clinical management of hospitalised cases helped lower the case fatality rate and improve the recovery rate.

With effective containment strategy, aggressive testing and stan-

dardised clinical management protocols based on a holistic standard of care, the fatality rate had dipped, it added. "The case fatality rate is falling. It's 2.28 per cent at present," the Ministry data showed. Continuing the streak of over 30,000 recoveries a day for the 4th successive day, the Ministry said 31,991 patients were discharged in the last 24 hours.

It has taken the number of recoveries to 9,17,567, showing 64 per cent recovery rate. Because of low mortality and more people recovering, the recovered cases exceeded the active cases (4,85,114) by 4,32,453 on Monday. "Medical attention continues to be provided to all active cases in hospitals and home settings," it said.

During the day, India reported the highest single-day spike of 49,931 cases, taking the total to 14,35,453. With 708



new deaths, fatalities crossed 32,771. Being the third-worst hit country, India is now adding 100,000 cases in less than three days. Last Monday, India had crossed the 11 lakh-mark and within seven days it added 300,000 more cases.

Maharashtra remained the worst-hit state after recording single-day spike of 9,431 cases, taking the state's tally to 3,75,799. Of this, 13,656 people have died. Maharashtra is followed by Tamil Nadu (2,13,723),

Delhi (1,30,606), Karnataka (96,141) and Andhra Pradesh (96,298).

The national capital recorded a single-day spike of 1,075 cases, taking the tally beyond 1.3 lakh cases. Of this, 11,904 were active cases, 3,827 fatalities and 1,14,875 discharged. States and UTs that recorded less than 1,000 cases were the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (324), Dadra and Nagar Haveli (914), Chandigarh (887), Mizoram (361), Meghalaya (702) and Sikkim (545).

On the global front, the number of Covid-19 cases has topped 16.1 million, and deaths crossed 647,000, according to Johns Hopkins University. As of Monday, the number of cases stood at 16,199,796 and fatalities rose to 647,910, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering's (CSSE) latest update revealed.

WARM MESSAGE

PM GREETs UDDHAV ON HIS B'DAY

PINDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, July 27: Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as leaders of ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi and opposition BJP Monday greeted Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on the latter's 60th birthday.

In a warm message, Modi said: "Best wishes to Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackerayji on his birthday. I pray for Uddhavji's long and healthy life". The PM said that a birthday is a day to reminisce of the past, as well as chart a course for the future.

"I believe today will give you more strength to achieve the goals of the development of the state and the country," said Modi. Leaders of the MVA - comprising Shiv Sena, Nationalist Congress Party, and Congress - also greeted Thackeray.

In their messages, state Congress President and Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat wished Thackeray the best of health and a long life while NCP MP Supriya Sule wished Thackeray a "healthy year ahead".

BJP's Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnis and state BJP President Chandrakant Patil also extended greetings to Thackeray, wishing him a long and healthy life. The Shiv Sena launched a fleet of 12 fully-equipped ambulances -- one for each Sena Vibhag in the city -- for the benefit of Covid-19 patients, as part of Thackeray's birthday celebrations. On July 25, Thackeray had made a personal appeal to all party leaders and workers not to crowd his home or office to wish him on his birthday. In view of the Covid pandemic, he announced, he would not celebrate his birthday but suggested that his partymen organise medical camps, blood and plasma donation drives, for public benefit.

J&K ambulance driver's effort amid pandemic draws praise

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, July 27: In the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, it is not only the health workers and doctors who are taking the lead, but the ambulance drivers, who are always on the move to attend medical emergencies, are also at the forefront of the battle.

Srinagar-based ambulance driver Jameel Ahmad has moved most of the Covid-19 bodies from hospitals to burial grounds since the outbreak of the pandemic. "So far I have moved close to 90 Covid bodies, including three CRPF jawans," Ahmad said.

Ahmad also doubles up his efforts by helping to perform the last rites of Covid victims when needed. His courage, compassion and sense of service have been widely acclaimed. "It is my duty to take part in the funeral prayers of the deceased at the burial grounds and to ensure that the final rites are performed properly," he said.

Ahmad added that he has to remain careful to ensure that he does not catch the infection and become a spreader of the dreaded disease. "I try and follow all the social distancing protocols," he said. The efforts of Ahmad have won him appreciation from different quarters. He was recently felicitated by the J&K government for his selfless service. "My efforts were appreciated and I was given a shawl and a certificate," he said. Jammu and Kashmir has seen a surge in the number Covid-19 cases in recent times. Till Sunday, over 17,000 people were infected of which 312 people have died.

In the last three decades of militancy in Kashmir, ambulances have played an important role in keeping the hospitals running under challenging circumstances. Clearly, the efforts of the ambulance staff like Ahmad are carrying forward that legacy.

SOAKED IN DEVOTION



Women police officers offer prayers to Lord Shiva during the holy month of 'Shravan' in Thane, Monday

PTI PHOTO

Edu dreams fade for millions in digitally divided India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Mumbai, July 27: The digital divide stretches long and deep across the expanse of India, further separating the haves from the have-nots and the tech-empowered from the tech-deprived with millions of children struggling to keep up with the challenges of online classes.

The coronavirus pandemic that forced people into their homes and forced schools and colleges to move to virtual classes has edged education dreams with conditions aplenty -- a computer or at least a smartphone, proper internet connectivity and uninterrupted power supply.

The education playing field, never really level, is now potholed and bumpy as students, and their teachers, in cities, towns and villages scramble to cope with the demands

of the times.

Children in a small settlement in the floodplains of the Yamuna along the Delhi-Noida border; for instance, have never had it easy. They would cross the river in a boat to reach school, just minutes away from the bright lights of the national capital and its suburb. Four months ago, when India went into lockdown, their odds increased manifold.

Joshna Kumar, 12, has a phone but often no electricity so it is difficult to attend her online classes everyday. Most residents of the settlement rely on Charan Singh, a cattle-rearer who visits daily, to charge their phones. And so does she.

"Every evening I give my phone for charging. He brings it charged next morning," she said, sitting on a charpoy in the backyard of her home, quickly scrolling through her Whatsapp messages to take down notes and finish her home-

TESTING TIMES



work. To save battery, Joshna keeps the brightness of her phone low.

Her 10-year-old brother studying in the same school mostly stays away from class. When he does attend, Joshna has to miss school and catch up through pre-recorded

videos. Their father is a daily wage worker and another phone cannot happen for them.

Her story finds echo in Faridabad, Haryana, where Suchi Singh, a Class 8 student, said there is only smartphone between her three sib-

lings and her. So, the four take turns in attending class.

That Suchi, a topper, is forced to miss class troubles her father Rajesh Kumar, a newspaper vendor, but he said he has no option. A smartphone is a luxury when he is struggling to provide for his family. "E-classes have made life difficult," he said, pessimistic about what the future holds for him and his children.

Hundreds of kilometres away in Mumbai's Aarey Colony, Jyoti Randhe, a Class 10 student in a municipal school, shares a smartphone with her mother who takes it to work. Her classmate Roshni Nere has to divide her phone time with two sisters who also take e-classes. Roshni's mother said she is worried about her future and appeals to authorities to at least equip them with the required technology. Some students don't have that option either.

of the day quote

The tragedy of COVID-19 we know, with the number of new infections that we have seen today, that there will be many further deaths in the days ahead

MICHAEL KIDD | AUSTRALIA'S DEPUTY CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

To me, even if the numbers (COVID cases) were much lower, it would still be and would have been worth the sacrifice we made. Life first before everything

RODRIGO DUTERTE | PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT

At a time when the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban have a historic opportunity to come together at the negotiating table for peace talks, the tragic reality is that the fighting continues inflicting terrible harm to civilians every day

DEBORAH LYONS | SPECIAL UN ENVOY

SHORT TAKES

Pak's smart lockdown policy

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said Monday that the smart lockdown policy adopted by his government was proving successful in containing the spread of the novel coronavirus which has claimed 5,842 lives and infected 274,289 people in the country. Talking to journalists, Khan said his government was under pressure to implement a strict lockdown, but he resisted it to create a balance between opportunities for livelihood and saving people from COVID-19.

Kim Jong marks war anniversary

Seoul: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has visited a national cemetery and handed out commemorative pistols to army officers, state media reported Monday, as he pushes to muster public support for efforts to contain a potential coronavirus outbreak. On Sunday, North Korea said that Kim had put a city near the border with South Korea under lockdown and declared a state of emergency after a person with suspected COVID-19 symptoms was recently found there.

Bangladesh thanks India

Dhaka: Bangladesh Monday thanked India for providing 10 broad gauge diesel locomotives, with its Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen saying it would help bring both sides even closer and further take the "rock solid" bilateral relations to new heights.

Half of B'desh affected by floods

Dhaka: Almost half of Bangladesh remained in the grip of floods Monday, which have also claimed the lives of 119 people. According to the daily flood situation report of the country's disaster response coordination center, the victims were reported in 21 (out of 64) districts since June 30, reports Xinhua news agency.

Hurricane Douglas threatens Hawaii

Honolulu, Hawaii: Hawaii braced for Hurricane Douglas on Sunday as the storm approached the Pacific archipelago, after the year's first Atlantic hurricane lashed Texas.



It's great that baseball is back, and other sports are back. I hope everyone's standing; I hope they're not going to be kneeling when the flag is raised. I don't like to see that

DONALD TRUMP | US PRESIDENT

TRUMP'S NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER TESTS COVID-19 +VE

President Donald Trump's National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien has tested positive for the coronavirus — making him the highest-ranking official to test positive so far



China seizes US consulate in Chengdu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing/Chengdu, July 27: China Monday said it took control of the US consulate in Chengdu after it was formally closed as per Beijing's directive in retaliation to America's move to shut down the Chinese diplomatic mission in Houston.

"At 10am July 27, as required by the Chinese side, the US Consulate General in Chengdu was closed," the Foreign Ministry said in a press release. Chengdu is the capital of southwest China's Sichuan province.

Later in his media briefing, Foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said, "this morning, US personnel evacuated the Consulate in accordance with Chinese requirements, and the US consulate in Chengdu was closed".

He said the Chinese competent authority then entered from the main entrance and took over the premises. He defended the closure of US Consulate as a legitimate response to US ordering the closure of Chinese Consulate in Houston.

"The current situation between China and the United States is something we do not want to see, and the responsibility rests solely with the US," he said, adding that China once again urge the US to immediately correct its mistakes and



create necessary conditions for the relationship between the two countries to return to the track of normal development.

Asked whether Chinese personnel entry into US Consulate in Chengdu was due to American officials entering Houston mission, Wang said the US has seriously violated international law and basic norms of international relations and initiated political provocations first.

"China has the right to take countermeasures reciprocally and safeguard its legitimate rights and interests," he said in a statement.

The American flag over the building was lowered at dawn, according to Chinese state-run broadcaster CCTV, and onlookers were moved

back as a heavy police presence surrounded the consulate, which Beijing ordered to shut Friday in a tit-for-tat move.

Last week, the US government ordered the closure of China's consulate in Houston, Texas, claiming the mission had been involved in a larger Chinese espionage effort using diplomatic facilities around the US.

The US State Department in a statement Monday expressed disappointment over the closure, saying the consulate "has stood at the centre of our relations with the people in Western China, including Tibet, for 35 years."

"We are disappointed by the Chinese Communist Party's decision

THE CONSULATE, WHICH OPENED IN 1985, HAS ALMOST 200 STAFF, INCLUDING ABOUT 150 LOCALLY HIRED EMPLOYEES

THE TWO COUNTRIES CLOSED DOWN THEIR CONSULATES AS THE TIES BETWEEN THE WORLD'S TWO LARGEST ECONOMIES REACHED AN ALL-TIME LOW

and will strive to continue our outreach to the people in this important region through our other posts in China," the statement said. Strict traffic controls were put in place around the US consulate premises before the closure.

Shortly before 11 am, several cars, a white ambulance, and dozens of Chinese workers were seen leaving the Chengdu Consulate as dozens of people lingered nearby, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

Several side streets, as well as a main road leading to the consulate were blocked, with dozens of policemen guarding the intersections.

Cranes hoisted containers inside the main entrance of the US Consulate, while crowds gathered to witness the "historic" moment, taking photos and recording videos, state-run *Global Times* reported.

CHINA WARNS OF FRESH FLOODS

The country is already facing one of its worst floods since 1998 with water breaching record levels at key waterways and lakes



AGENCIES

Beijing, July 27: China announced that the third flood of the year hit the vaunted Three Gorges Dam Sunday (July 26) and that it will peak Tuesday (July 28).

The country is already facing one of its worst floods since 1998 with water breaching record levels at key waterways and lakes.

Torrential rain triggered the third flood peak of the Yangtze river Sunday, putting the Three Gorges Dam under severe pressure as China grapples to mitigate the impact of the deluge that has already impacted more than 45 million people and resulted in losses worth billions of dollars.

Authorities have issued warnings of possible new flood peaks in the near future, requiring the Three Gorges Dam to reserve enough space for possible floods.

China began building the controversial Three Gorges Dam in 1994 as part of the government's heavy investment in flood control projects. It is the world's largest hydroelectricity dam spanning Asia's longest river, the Yangtze, and has an average capacity three times its counterparts built prior to 2000.

The mega-dam is capable of handling inflows of up to 83.7 million litres per second, with the most recent peak inflow reaching over 60 million litres last week.

Cat tests nCoV+ve

The British Environment Ministry said 'all available evidence' suggested the cat had contracted the virus from its owners, who had both tested positive for Covid-19

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

London, July 27: A pet cat has tested positive in England for the new coronavirus that causes COVID-19, the government said on Monday in the first confirmed case of an animal being infected with the virus in Britain.

The British environment ministry said "all available evidence" suggested the cat had contracted the coronavirus from its owners, who had both tested positive for COVID-19. Both the cat and the humans made a full recovery and there was no transmission to any other animals or people in the household, the ministry said without identifying the individuals involved. "This is the first case of a domestic cat testing positive for COVID-19 in the UK but should not be a cause for alarm," said Yvonne Doyle, medical director at Public Health England. "The investigation into this case suggests that the infection was spread from

humans to animal, and not the other way round," Doyle added. The government said the infection was confirmed in lab tests Wednesday, adding there was no evidence that cats could transmit the virus to humans. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has said cats are the most susceptible animal species to the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus and are able to transmit it to other cats.

"Tests conducted by the Animal and Plant Health Agency have confirmed that the virus responsible for COVID-19 has been detected in a pet cat in England," Chief Veterinary Officer Christine Middlemiss said.

"This is a very rare event with infected animals detected to date only showing mild clinical signs and recovering within a few days."

The WHO has said it will investigate the possibility of cat-to-human infection, but its chief scientist has said there is "very little risk" from domestic animals.



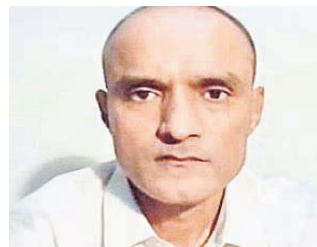
JADHAV CASE

Pak govt presents ordinance in National Assembly

AGENCIES

Islamabad, July 27: The Pakistan government Monday presented an ordinance in the National Assembly in view of the International Court of Justice's ruling in the case of Indian death-row prisoner Kulbhushan Jadhav, despite protests by the Opposition parties.

Under the 'International Court of Justice Review and Reconsideration Ordinance 2020', which was enacted May 20, a petition for the review of a military court's decision can be made to Islamabad High Court through an application within 60 days of its promulgation.



Jadhav, the 50-year-old retired Indian Navy officer, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and terrorism in April 2017. India approached the ICJ against Pakistan for denial of consular access to Jadhav and challenging the death sentence.

The Hague-based ICJ ruled in July 2019 that Pakistan must undertake an "effective review and reconsideration" of the conviction and sentence of Jadhav and also to grant consular access to India without further delay. Under the law, the ordinance should be presented in Parliament.



A federal law enforcement officer is covered in red paint during a protest against racial inequality and police violence in Portland, Oregon

SAFETY AMID PROTEST

INDIA ABROAD

Girl falls to death in Sharjah

Sharjah: A 14-year-old Indian girl died after falling from a high rise building in Sharjah, police said Monday. A Sharjah Police official told *Gulf News* that a probe has been launched to determine if the incident, which took place in the city's Al Tawaun area Sunday night, was a case of suicide. The girl had suffered serious injuries from the fall, the police official said. She was transferred to a hospital, but was pronounced dead on arrival.

Salesman accused of rape in Dubai

Dubai: An Indian salesman has been accused of raping a woman inside her home in Dubai, threaten her with a knife and stealing 200 dirhams under the influence of alcohol, it was reported. The Dubai Court of First Instance heard Sunday that the 39-year-old Indian woman went to drop her son to the school bus pick-up point outside her building in the Naif area of Dubai in February, reports *Gulf News*. She returned to her apartment when the 23-year-old defendant approached her, put a knife to her throat and asked her to enter the apartment. He is also accused of filming the incident with his mobile phone. The Dubai Public Prosecution charged the defendant, who is currently in custody, with rape, robbery and illegally consuming alcohol.

Man sentenced to life for killing wife

Dubai: A Dubai court has sentenced an Indian man to life in prison for stabbing his wife to death in broad daylight at a parking lot of the victims office, the media reported. The court Sunday heard that Vidhya Chandran, 40, a mother of two, was stabbed to death by her 44-year-old husband, Ugesh C.S., September 9, 2019, reports *Gulf News*. Hailing from Kerala, Vidhya was supposed to fly home with her children that night to celebrate Onam. While the wife's family said the husband had been harassing her for several years, the defendant told police that he suspected she was cheating on him by having an affair with another man.

World's biggest Covid-19 vaccine study begins

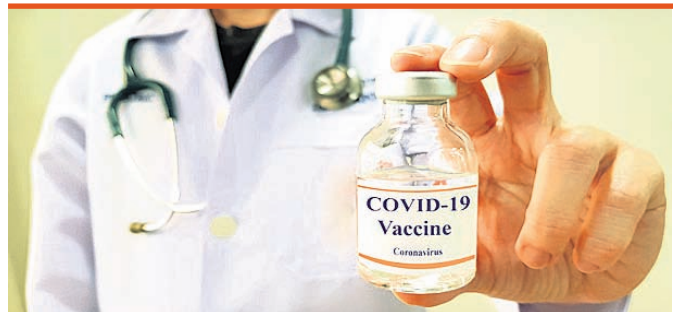
MODERNA'S PHASE 3 COVE STUDY, WHICH INVOLVES ABOUT 30, 000 HEALTHY ADULTS, IS THE WORLD'S BIGGEST COVID-19 VACCINE STUDY AND IS BACKED BY THE US GOVERNMENT

AGENCIES

Washington, July 27: The world's biggest COVID-19 vaccine study got underway Monday with the first of 30,000 planned volunteers helping to test shots created by the U.S. government — one of several candidates in the final stretch of the global vaccine race.

There's still no guarantee that the experimental vaccine, developed by the National Institutes of Health and Moderna Inc, will really protect.

The needed proof: Volunteers won't know if they're getting the real shot or a dummy version. After two doses, scientists will closely track which group experiences more infections as they go about their daily routines, especially in



areas where the virus still is spreading unchecked.

"Unfortunately for the United States of America, we have plenty of infections right now" to get that answer, NIH's Dr Anthony Fauci recently told *The Associated Press*.

Several other vaccines made by China and by Britain's Oxford

University earlier this month began smaller final-stage tests in Brazil and other hard-hit countries.

But the US requires its own tests of any vaccine that might be used in the country and has set a high bar: Every month through fall, the government-funded COVID-19 Prevention Network will roll out a

SEVERAL OTHER VACCINES MADE BY CHINA AND BY BRITAIN'S OXFORD UNIVERSITY EARLIER THIS MONTH BEGAN SMALLER FINAL-STAGE TESTS IN BRAZIL AND OTHER HARD-HIT COUNTRIES

THE PANDEMIC "CONTINUES TO ACCELERATE", WITH A DOUBLING OF CASES OVER THE LAST SIX WEEKS, THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION CHIEF SAYS

new study of a leading candidate — each one with 30,000 newly recruited volunteers.

The massive studies aren't just to test if the shots work — they're needed to check each potential vaccine's safety. And following the same study rules will let scientists eventually compare all the shots.

Next up in August, the final study of the Oxford shot begins, followed by plans to test a candidate from Johnson & Johnson in September and Novavax in October — if all goes according to schedule. Pfizer Inc. plans its own 30,000-person study this summer.

That's a stunning number of people needed to roll up their sleeves for science. But in recent weeks, more than 150,000 Americans filled out an online registry signalling interest, said Dr. Larry Corey, a virologist with the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Institute in Seattle, who helps oversee the study sites.

If everything goes right with the final studies, it still will take months for the first data to trickle in from the Moderna test, followed by the Oxford one.

Johnson launches UK fitness drive

REUTERS

London, July 27: Prime Minister Boris Johnson used his struggle with his own weight Monday to urge the British to get fitter and tackle widespread obesity that could heighten coronavirus risks.

New government measures to help people shed weight include banning TV and online adverts for junk food before 9.00 p.m., ending "buy one get one free" deals on such foods, and flagging calories on menus of large restaurants plus possibly on alcohol.

Boris Johnson, 56, who has lost more than a stone (6 kg) since a life-threatening brush with COVID-19, was responding to research showing that those who are obese or overweight are at increased risk of death or severe illness from the disease.

business

of the day quote

We are optimistic, as we pave the way forward, that healthy demand will rise as global trade picks up. With the easing of lockdown restrictions, the logistics industry will definitely be at the centre of growth and a prime contributor to a recovering economy



KETAN KULKARNI | CMO AND HEAD, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, BLUE DART EXPRESS

The 75% fall in exports of passenger vehicles in Q1 of FY21 is due to the COVID-19 related disruptions globally, which has led to closure of plants and dealerships, supply chain disruptions, curfews in cities and interruptions in international trade



RAJESH MENON | DIRECTOR GENERAL, SIAM

The agriculture sector is doing very well and is expected to grow at least to the tune of 3 to 4%. The minimum support price program by the government was a huge hit not only in good states like Punjab and Haryana but also in other smaller states



AJIT RANADE | PRESIDENT AND CHIEF ECONOMIST, ADITYA BIRLA GROUP

SHORT TAKES

SpiceJet to begin long haul flight

New Delhi: SpiceJet will operate its first long-haul flight from Amsterdam August 1 to repatriate Indians "waiting" to come from Europe, the airline said Monday. Scheduled international passenger flights have been suspended in India since March 23 in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, special international charter flights are permitted on a case to case basis by aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

Avra Labs gets CDSCO nod

Hyderabad: Avra Laboratories Pvt Ltd, a city-based pharma company, has been granted regulatory approval by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) to manufacture and market Favipiravir API, which will help patients suffering from COVID-19. The company, in a press release, said it has developed an alternative low cost and highly efficient manufacturing process.

Concessional credit for farmers

New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday said banks have sanctioned ₹89,810 crore to about 1.1 crore Kisan Credit Card (KCC) holders to help farmers meet finances for kharif sowing and allied activities. As part of the ₹20.97 lakh crore stimulus package, the government had announced ₹2 lakh crore of concessional credit through KCC to 2.5 crore farmers, including fishermen and those involved in animal husbandry.

Carpet industry seeks support

Kolkata: The handmade carpet industry has written to Textiles Minister Smriti Irani, seeking export assistance in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting the supply chain. The Carpet Export Promotion Council, in a letter to Irani, said the industry is totally export-oriented and employs more than 20 lakh weavers who are mostly located in rural areas.



The challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in navigating the regulatory ecosystem include issues with accessing collateral free loans, market linkages, information asymmetry about government schemes and capacity building

JAHNABI PHOOKAN | PRESIDENT, FICCI FLO

GLOBAL BIZ ACTIVITIES IN COAL MINING TO END

Deutsche Bank, in a revamp of its policies for fossil fuels, will be ending business activities worldwide related to coal mining by 2025 at the latest. The German lender also said that, effective immediately, it would not finance new projects in the Arctic or oil sand projects



Hughes to invest \$50 mn in Bharti-led consortium



AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 27: Hughes Network Systems, the global leader in broadband satellite networks and services, on Monday announced to invest \$50 million in the Bharti Enterprise-led consortium of the UK government, to acquire the bankrupt satellite company OneWeb.

Hughes will also continue as a technology and distribution partner to OneWeb, the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite operator which had launched 74 satellites before filing for Chapter 11 protection in March, said a statement.

"Our continuing and strengthened involvement with OneWeb extends naturally from our position as a leading geostationary satellite operator and ground network innovator, along with a meaningful partnership with Bharti and longstanding relationship with the UK through our business operations in both countries," said Pradman Kaul, President, Hughes.

Sunil Bharti Mittal, Founder and Chairman, Bharti Enterprises said: "The investment by Hughes underlines OneWeb's exciting commercial prospects, reflected in the ongoing discussions with some of the world's leading strategic and financial investors."

India Inc's foreign borrowings slipped 81% in June

AGENCIES

Mumbai, July 27: India Inc's borrowing from foreign market slipped over 81% to \$1.02 billion in June this year, data from Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed Monday. The domestic companies had raised USD 5.40 billion from the overseas markets in June 2019.

Of the total fund raised by the Indian companies, USD 851.81 million was borrowed through the automatic route, while the rest of the funds came in via approval route, as per the RBI data on external commercial borrowings (ECB) for the month of June 2020. Rural Electrification Corporation Limited (REC Ltd), the government owned institution to promote rural power projects, was the only company to raise USD 170 million through the approval route of ECB for the purpose of on-lending.

Among the major borrowers who tapped the automatic route of ECB were: TVS Credit Services raising USD 100 million for on-lending, and Johnson Matthey India Pvt Ltd - USD 132.10 million as working capital loan.

Ibibo Group Pvt Ltd which is into travel and tour business raised USD 99.04 million as working capital loan, while food products manufacturer Adani Wilmar raised USD 45 million for modernisation purpose, showed the RBI data.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 27: RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das Monday advised banks to proactively raise capital and not wait for a difficult situation to arise amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Banks are staring at a risk of soaring bad loans due to the coronavirus crisis and would therefore require capital to survive.

"In fact, I have already advised banks and the NBFCs to undertake COVID stress tests and raise capital ahead of the curve rather than waiting for a situation to arise, and these are the issues which we are constantly working on in RBI," Das said at a CII event.

As per the latest Financial Stability Report (FSR) released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI),



As per the latest FSR released by RBI, gross NPAs of all banks may jump to 12.5% by the end of this fiscal under the baseline scenario, from 8.5% in March

gross non-performing assets of all banks may jump to 12.5% by the end of this fiscal under the baseline scenario, from 8.5% in March 2020.

"If the macroeconomic environment worsens further, the ratio may escalate to 14.7% under the very severely stressed scenario," the report released last week said.

The resilience of Indian banking in the face of macroeconomic shocks was tested through macro

stress tests which attempt to assess the impact of cumulative shocks on banks' balance sheet and generate projections of gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratios and capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRARs) over a one-year horizon under a baseline and three adverse - medium, severe and very severe - scenarios, the report said. Earlier this month, Das had said building buffers and raising cap-

ital will be crucial not only to ensure credit flow but also to build resilience in the financial system.

"In such a situation, it has become a lot more important that the banks have to improve their governance, sharpen their risk management skills and banks have to raise capital on an anticipatory basis instead of waiting for a situation to arise.

"Proactively, it is necessary for both public and private sector banks to build up adequate capital buffers," Das had said.

The economic impact of the pandemic -- due to lockdowns and anticipated post lockdown compression in growth -- may result in higher non-performing assets and capital erosion of banks, he had said.

GST COMPENSATION

Centre releases ₹1.65L cr to states; Odisha gets ₹5,122 cr

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT ODISHA MAY MOP UP ₹8,750 CRORE FROM SALES TAX AND VAT ON PETROLEUM PRODUCTS



PNN/AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 27: The Centre has released over ₹1.65 lakh crore as GST compensation to states for 2019-20 financial year, including ₹13,806 crore for March, the Finance Ministry said Monday.

"The central government has recently released GST compensation of ₹13,806 crore to states for March, 2020. Taking this amount into account, entire compensation up to 2019-20 has been released to states," the Ministry said in a statement.

The total amount of compensation released for 2019-20 is ₹1,65,302 crore whereas the amount of cess collected during the year

was ₹95,444 crore.

To release the compensation for 2019-20, the balance of cess amount collected during 2017-18 and 2018-19 was utilised.

In addition, the Centre had transferred ₹33,412 crore from Consolidated Fund of India to the Compensation Fund as part of an exercise to apportion balance of Integrated GST (IGST) pertaining to 2017-18, it said.

Under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) law, states were guaranteed to be paid for any loss of revenue in the first five years of the GST implementation from July 1, 2017. The shortfall is calculated assuming a 14 per cent annual growth in GST

collections by states over the base year of 2015-16.

Meanwhile, Odisha received a GST compensation of ₹5,122 crore for the Financial Year 2019-20.

According to a media report, Odisha had estimated to receive a GST compensation of ₹6,200 crore for 2020-21. The state GST is the single largest component of state's tax revenue. The report also claims that the state GST is likely to make ₹15,469 crore in FY'21.

It is estimated that Odisha may mop up ₹8,750 crore from Sales Tax and Value Added Tax (VAT) on petroleum products, indicating a hike of 9.4% over the RE (Revised Estimate) of 2019-20.

BIZ BUZZ

IndiGo announces up to 35% pay cuts for senior staffs

New Delhi: IndiGo Monday said it is implementing "deeper" pay cuts of up to 35% for its senior employees in order to reduce its cash outflow amid the coronavirus pandemic. From May onwards, IndiGo had implemented pay cuts of up to 25% for its senior employees. The "deeper" pay cuts came after the airline's announcement July 20 that it would lay off 10% of its workforce due to the economic crisis caused by the pandemic. In an e-mail Monday, IndiGo CEO Ronjoy Dutta told employees, "I will increase my personal pay cut percentage to 35%. I am asking all senior vice presidents and above to take a 30% pay cut, all pilots will see their pay cut percentages increased to 28%, all vice presidents will take a 25% pay cut and associate vice presidents will take a 15% pay cut."

PNB gets new General Manager

Bhubaneswar: Mukti Ranjan Ray joined as General Managers (GM) of Zonal Audit Office of Punjab National Bank in Bhubaneswar. Ray was General Manager of Erstwhile United Bank of India which amalgamated into Punjab National Bank (PNB) along with Oriental Bank of Commerce. He has an immense experience of 36 years in 'field experience' and has been working in different positions since 1983. He has also worked as Chief Regional Manager of Sambalpur Region between 2011-13 and Bhubaneswar Region between 2016-18. Prior to his present posting he was posted as GM of Priority Sector. Apart from Odisha he has worked in West Bengal, Assam, Delhi and Tripura in various positions.



MUKTI RANJAN RAY

Huawei cuts India revenue target by up to 50%

Mumbai: Chinese telecom company Huawei Technologies Co has cut its India revenue target for 2020 by up to 50% and is laying off more than half of its staff in the country, as reported by a private newspaper Monday, amid calls to boycott Chinese goods. Huawei's India unit said the report suggesting layoffs of more than half of Huawei staff in the country was untrue, but did not elaborate. The newspaper said the company was targeting \$350-500 million in revenue for 2020, compared with roughly \$700-800 million it was aiming for earlier in Asia's third-largest economy. The newspaper said that the company was cutting 60-70% of its Indian staff, excluding those in R&D and the global service centre. Huawei's India unit said it continues "to work closely" with all customers in the country.



India to remain key global supply chain partner: Boeing India

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 27: Despite COVID-19 induced economic turbulence, aero space major Boeing India plans to maintain its systems and components sourcing activity in India. The company sources components close to \$1 billion a year from more than 200 suppliers in India.

"India will continue to be a key contributor to our global supply chain. Our sourcing from India stands at close to \$1 billion a year from more than 200 suppliers who are manufacturing critical systems and components for some of Boeing's most advanced products," Boeing India President Salil Gupte told IANS.

"Our commitment to India remains strong and is for the long-term. We want to contribute to the

growth of India's aerospace industry; that's why we're investing in commercial aviation and defence."

According to Gupte, the aerospace major supports the government's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiatives by developing Indian MSMEs through skilling and upskilling initiatives.

"Our growing installed platform base with commercial and defence customers in India and our expanding supplier base makes it imperative for us to invest, develop and nurture talent," he said.

"Through our skilling initiatives, we are training hundreds of pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers, technicians, and frontline factory workers across India with our industry partners like Tata, Rossell Techsys, Jaivel and Lakshmi



Machine Works. With these initiatives, among others, we are focused on creating a robust aerospace and defence ecosystem in India."

On the COVID-19's impact on commercial aviation, Gupte said the recovery will take longer because of the pandemic's depth and global nature.

He described the impact as more severe than either the 9/11 terrorist attacks or the global financial crisis.

"We anticipate it will take several years for travel to return to 2019 levels and a few years beyond that to return to long-term trend growth. Yet the fundamentals that have driven air travel for the past five decades remain intact," Gupte said.

"We've always seen the industry innovate, respond, and grow over time because of its close connection

to the global economy - and of course the desire of people everywhere to fly, when they have the chance."

Besides, Gupte anticipates a 'three-speed recovery' process for the industry over the next several years.

"Recovery will begin with domestic air travel, followed by regional international travel, followed by long-haul travel," he said.

"Our industry's recovery will be shaped by several factors, from public health to government policies to economic growth and consumer

Our commitment to India remains strong and is for the long-term. We want to contribute to the growth of India's aerospace industry; that's why we're investing in commercial aviation and defence

SALIL GUPTÉ | PRESIDENT, BOEING INDIA

confidence."

Additionally, he pointed out that operators globally are assessing business needs, passenger demand and their fleets.

"Airlines have aggressively cut costs by parking thousands of airplanes. In addition, many are moving up retirements of older aircraft to simplify their fleet, improve operational efficiency and reduce maintenance costs," Gupte said.

"These aircraft retirements will pave the way for future deliveries as airlines seek greater versatility and efficiency in their operations. In many instances, operators are taking advantage of opportunities to grow cargo capabilities to meet demand, by utilizing dedicated cargo aircraft and at times re-purposing passenger aircraft to carry more goods."

Ronaldo's impact decisive for Italian giants' ninth straight Serie A title

Juve on cloud 9



associated press
Rome, July 27: It's no exaggeration to say that Cristiano Ronaldo had more of an impact on Juventus' record-extending ninth straight Serie A title than anyone else. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner matched a record by scoring in 11 straight league matches before the break for the coronavirus pandemic and quickly regained his form during the restart by reaching the 30-goal mark after only 30 games in his second season in Italy. For his 31st goal, Ronaldo scored the opener when Juventus beat Sampdoria 2-0 Sunday to seal the title with two games to spare. Ronaldo needs only one more goal to break a tie for the Juventus single-season record for league goals set by Felice Borel in 1933-34. Ronaldo's 10 goals after the lockdown are more than any other player has scored in Europe's top five leagues, with Manchester City's Raheem Sterling and Bayern Munich's Robert Lewandowski each scoring nine. "Records are always important, but the important thing is that the team win," Ronaldo said. "These things are nice, but the scoring title is a natural process that comes as a consequence of scoring to win games for the

Until recently, the most consecutive titles won in Serie A had been five, first set by Juventus from 1931-35. The five-season streak was then matched by Torino from 1943-49 – including a period interrupted by World War II; and Inter Milan from 2006-10. Juventus already has the longest streak in Europe's top five leagues. Although Bayern Munich, who recently won the Bundesliga title for the eighth straight time, aren't far behind. The longest top-flight streak anywhere in Europe was 14 set by Latvian club Skonto from 1991-2004 and Lincoln of Gibraltar from 2003-16. The one major criticism surrounding Juventus' previous eight titles was that the team wasn't pretty to watch. The first three titles won under Antonio Conte and then the next five under Massimiliano Allegri involved teams characterized for their suffocating defense and timely counterattacks.

First-year coach Sarri was expected to install his eye-opening system of swift passing and offensive wizardry – a system he honed to near-perfection at Napoli before overcoming doubters to direct Chelsea to the Europa League title last season. But with individual stars like Ronaldo, Dybala and Higuain able to decide matches on their own, the consensus is that 'Sarriball' hasn't quite been fully implemented in Turin yet. If Sarri can get his preferred midfielder Jorginho to leave Chelsea and join him at Juventus next season, however, the coach could make more of an impact. In the meantime, Sarri can enjoy his first major title in Italy – and his only trophy in his home country since guiding Sansovino to the Serie D Italian Cup championship in 2003. Sarri's first two chances at a title this season were lost – to Lazio in the Italian Super Cup in December, then to Napoli in the Italian Cup final last month. So dominant in Serie A, Juventus' bigger goal at this point is to win the Champions League. The Bianconeri host Lyon in the delayed round of 16 second leg August 7 needing to overturn a 0-1 loss from February. If Juventus can do that, it will advance to the final eight in Lisbon.

team." At 35, Ronaldo has started every match since the restart. The Portuguese talisman has developed an effective partnership with Paulo Dybala during the restart.



Nepomniachtchi inflicts another defeat on Anand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Chennai, July 27: Former World Champion Viswanathan Anand's struggles continued in the USD 150,000 Legends of Chess online tournament as he suffered his sixth consecutive defeat with a 2-3 loss to Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia. Anand started the sixth round match with a draw as he came up with good defensive moves to keep the Russian at bay in a 53-move draw. However, Nepomniachtchi went ahead by pulling off a 34-move win in the second game. The third saw the players sign peace after 48 moves. The five-time World Champion then fought back well to claim the fourth game in 42 moves to push the contest into the Armageddon (a tie-breaker). Nepomniachtchi won the decisive tie-break in 41 moves to shatter the hopes of the 50-year old Indian superstar and left him winless after

six rounds. World champion Magnus Carlsen continued his winning run and tops the standings with 17 match points. Nepomniachtchi is second on 16 followed by compatriot Vladimir Karmnik (12). Anand, who is making his debut on the Magnus Carlsen Tour, lies ninth with three points. Legends of Chess is a unique event where Carlsen, Ding Liren, Nepomniachtchi and Anish Giri, semifinalists at the Chessable Masters (part of the Magnus Carlsen Tour), received an automatic invite and are up against six legends aged 40-52, who have been at the top of world chess at various points in their career.

RESULTS (ROUND 6): Ian Nepomniachtchi beat Viswanathan Anand 3-2; Magnus Carlsen beat Ding Liren 2.5-1.5; Anish Giri beat Peter Leko 2.5-1.5; Vladimir Kramnik beat Boris Gelfand 3-2; Peter Svidler beat Vasily Ivanchuk 3-2.

LEGENDS OF CHESS TOURNEY

England name squad for Ireland ODIs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Southampton, July 27: Left-arm pacer Reece Topley made a return after four years as England Monday named a 14-member squad for the three-match ODI series against Ireland beginning here Thursday. Eoin Morgan will captain the side while Moen Ali will be his deputy. Three players were also named as reserves. The 26-year-old Topley has taken 16 wickets in 10 ODIs but last represented England in the World T20 in 2016. He had issues with his back and went under the knife in 2018. He was Sussex's leading wicket taker in the Blast last year. Sam Billings, Liam Dawson and David Willey also made a comeback to the England squad for the series which will be played behind closed doors in a bio-secure environment. Billings is making a return after two years, having missed out of a World Cup selection after dislocating his shoulder. Willey, on the other hand, missed out the 50-over showpiece as Archer was preferred over him.

REDS SIGN OFF IN STYLE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Newcastle, July 26: Liverpool crowned their Premier League-winning season with a 3-1 victory over Newcastle to equal Manchester City's record for wins and set a club record for points Sunday. Goals from Virgil van Dijk, Divock Origi and Sadio Mane gave the champions their 32nd win from 38 games – matching Man City's record – while 99 points over the season is the second highest-ever total, one point less than City's in 2017-18. Liverpool finished 18 points ahead of second-place City, one point short of City's record margin from 2017-18. Liverpool coach Jurgen Klopp opted to start his last game of the season with his fear-some forward line of Roberto Firmino, Mane and Mohamed Salah as substitutes, and the visitors were shocked when Dwight Gayle scored for Newcastle in the first minute.



It took some time for the champions to work their way into the game before Van Dijk finally equalized in the 38th after rising the highest to meet Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's free-kick. Origi made it 2-1 in the 59th when he made some space for himself

on the left edge of the penalty area before drilling his shot inside the far post. Klopp brought on his three star forwards in the 64th. Salah hit the post two minutes later before Mane wrapped up the win with a brilliant curling finish in the 89th.

FACTBOX

- Juergen Klopp's side sealed the title with seven games to spare, eclipsing Manchester United (2000-01) and Manchester City (2017-18) who sealed their respective titles with five games left
- Liverpool became the first team to win the league in eight different decades – 1900s, 1920s, 1940s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2020s.
- Liverpool's 3-1 victory against Newcastle United was their 32nd win of the season, equalling City's record for most victories in a Premier League campaign
- Liverpool's 2-0 win over Aston Villa July 5 extended their record of successive home wins in the league to 24. The previous record was City's mark of 20
- When they beat West Ham United in February it was their 18th consecutive league win, equalling Manchester City's record
- They beat Southampton 4-0 February 1 to move 22 points clear of City at the top of the table for the biggest lead in Premier League history. That grew to 25 points after a 1-0 victory against Norwich City
- Liverpool won 18 of their 19 games at Anfield, matching the achievements of Chelsea (2005-06), City (2011-12, 2018-19) and United (2010-11)
- Liverpool picked up 55 points from home games this season, the joint-most alongside Chelsea (2005-06), United (2010-11) and City (2011-12).
- Liverpool beat Newcastle on the final day of the season to set a new club record of 14 away wins in a league campaign
- Mohamed Salah became the first Liverpool player to score 20 goals in all competitions in three consecutive seasons since Michael Owen between 2000-01 and 2002-03



Red Devils thrash Foxes for CL berth

LEICESTER: Bruno Fernandes and Jesse Lingard scored as Manchester United beat Leicester City 2-0 Sunday to finish third in the Premier League and clinch a place in next season's Champions League at the home side's expense. Leicester, who needed a win to qualify for Europe's elite club competition, must settle for a Europa League berth after a poor late run in which they won only two of their last nine league games. Fernandes fired United ahead with a 71st-minute penalty and substitute Lingard sealed the win deep into stoppage time after a bad mistake by Leicester goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel.

The home side collapsed in the last 20 minutes. Fernandes released Anthony Martial with a defence-splitting pass after Hamza Choudhry lost possession in midfield and the Frenchman was tripped by Jonny Evans as he raced clear. The Portugal playmaker coolly converted the spot-kick, given after a VAR check, sending Leicester goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel the wrong way. Evans was shown a straight red card in stoppage time for a rash tackle on substitute Scott McTominay and Schmeichel gifted United a second goal moments later, as Lingard robbed him of the ball and slotted it into an empty net.

VARDY WINS PL 'GOLDEN BOOT'

LEICESTER: Leicester City striker Jamie Vardy won the Premier League's Golden Boot award for the top scorer after finishing the season with 23 goals. Vardy was unable to score in Leicester's 0-2 final day loss to Manchester United Sunday. The 33-year-old is the oldest player to win the award and the first from Leicester City and popped Arsenal's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Southampton's Danny Ings, who finished on 22 goals each. Manchester City's Brazilian keeper Ederson won the Golden Glove award after collecting his 16th clean sheet of the season against Norwich.

SPURS IN EUROPA LEAGUE, WATFORD RELEGATED

LONDON: Tottenham held on to secure a Europa League place with a 1-1 draw at Crystal Palace on the final day of the Premier League Sunday. Watford, on the other hand lost 2-3 at Arsenal to be relegated to English Championship. Harry Kane's early goal was enough for Spurs to better Wolverhampton Wanderers' result at Chelsea, a 0-2 defeat, to guarantee a top-six finish. Kane scored his seventh goal in eight games with a fine finish in the 13th minute after being set up by Giovanni Lo Celso. But Jeffrey Schlupp equalized from close range in the 53rd. At Arsenal, the Hornets' 20th defeat of the season left them second from bottom in the league, meaning they join Norwich City and Bournemouth in dropping down to the Championship when the new season starts September 12. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored twice, including a fifth-minute penalty and Kieran Tierney scored the other to put Arsenal 3-0 up inside 33 minutes. However, Troy Deeney and Danny Welbeck pulled two back for the visitors, but it was too little too late for Watford.

ECB receives Letter of Intent from BCCI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Dubai, July 27: The Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) Monday confirmed that it has received the official 'Letter of Intent' from the BCCI accepting their offer to host the 2020 IPL in the UAE. Last week, IPL chairman Brijesh Patel had announced the dates of the tournament, September 19-November 8, and said the tournament will be held in the UAE subject to Indian government's approval. "We have received the (official) letter and now wait on the decision from the Indian Government which will link the final deal," said Mubashshir Usmani, ECB secretary general, in a statement. While the Indian government's approval is awaited, Usmani stated both Boards have 'fully mobilised and have instigated discussions with the relevant authorities, including their respective internal working-committees, in preparation of hosting the tournament in a safe, protected environment'. Hosting the IPL in a foreign location amid the COVID-19 threat is going to be a major logistical challenge. However, the UAE economy is going to benefit substantially by hosting the T20 extravaganza. "There are many factors which influence the operations and logistics of hosting what is the world's most exciting, popular and lucrative tournament," commented Usmani. "This is a massive movement of people and equipment and we now need to bring in the experts to discuss all aspects of UAE hosting the IPL. This includes the Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah Sports Councils, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah Tourism Bodies and the respective Government entities – such as the Police Forces and the UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention," he said.