



AVOIDING LIMELIGHT

Actor Parineeti Chopra takes to Instagram to announce that she is going on a social media detox again

LEISURE

P2



NO TIPU CHAPTER

Karna drops a chapter on Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan from history book of Class VII students 'to reduce their syllabus'

TWO STATES

P7



DEADLY WILDFIRES

Nearly three billion animals were killed or displaced during the 2019-20 Australian bushfires

INTERNATIONAL

P10

Tribal man gets 2-km long canal dug in hilly terrain

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, July 28: Johan Pradhan is considered no less than a hero by people of Ranipanga village under Kotagarh block in Kandhamal district. Johan, the sarpanch of Ranipanga panchayat, is a real leader to his followers.

Under his leadership, the efforts of villagers to canalise stream water for irrigation have come true. This was an impossible task for years. A two-km long canal has been dug through hilly terrain which was always dry and difficult for farming. The canal has generated lots of hope for the people of his village.

The village is inhabited by 77 tribal families. In the hilly and rocky ground,



Villagers of Ranipanga digging the canal in the hilly tract

farming was not possible for them. Any work, most villagers migrate to other states in search of manual labour.

Johan was worried about the miseries of his co-villagers and thought of making use of the stream water in the area. Two streams flow down from two hills, about 2 km from the village. Their water goes waste. However, the problem was that the ground was so hard and rocky that it needed a lot of labour and funds for digging a 2-km long canal.

Owing to Covid-induced lockdowns, migrant workers had come back home and were sitting idle. Johan wanted to make the most of the situation and proposed the BDO to include canal digging under MGNREGS. Then, he convinced his co-villagers that if they can bring stream water through a canal, paddy farming and pisciculture can bring them

permanent livelihood and they will no longer go out for manual labour.

The villagers realized the potential of such a project and agreed to work for wages when they were sitting idle. ₹5 lakh was sanctioned for the project under the rural job scheme.

"We are happy that the canal will ensure a variety of farming throughout the year. Over 100 acres will get irrigation facility in the area. Villagers will no longer go out for work. I am happy over this project," he said. Farmlands in the area were dry most of the time due to lack of rain. Now, the stream water will be utilized to raise all kinds of crops enabling people to earn livelihood, Pradhan added.

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TPCL loath to carry Cesu workers' load

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 28: The state government has privatised the electricity sector to provide better services to consumers. However, the exercise has failed to serve the purpose. Many private companies have pocketed profits due to privatization of the power sector. But, the exercise has left a huge debt burden on the public exchequer. This apart, the power sector in Odisha has been witnessing technical as well as commercial losses due to poor infrastructure, sources said.

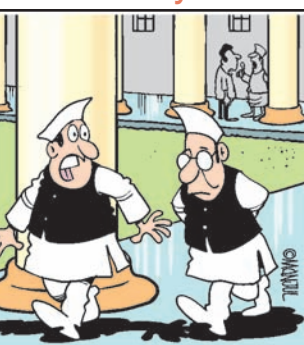
In this scenario, four discoms—Cesu, Nesco, Wesco and Southco—are not paying their pending dues to GRIDCO and Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL). In the meantime, the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission has handed over the management of Cesu to Tata Power Company Limited (TPCL). The properties of Cesu have been valued at ₹350 crore.

However, the Odisha Power Employees' Union has raised questions over the deal. The Cesu is yet to clear the dues worth ₹2011 crore to GRIDCO and

OPTCL. The latter has sought OERC's intervention. On the other hand, the TPCL expressed its inability to bear the burden of the parent company. It has filed a review petition at OERC seeking amendment to the MoU, sources added. The management and operation of the then Cescu was handed over to an American firm. The US-based firm had pushed the electricity company into insolvency and left its operation in 2002. Since then, the OERC was managing the Cesu by appointing an administrative officer.

The TPCL is now operating in the name of Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution. A pact in this regard was signed between the GRIDCO and TPCL. The state government has 49 per cent share in the discom while TPCL holds the balance. As per the MoU, TPCL will manage Cesu and would reduce its losses. It is learnt that TPCL is not willing to bear the burden of Cesu's employees. It has shown reluctance to comply with their service conditions. It has filed a review petition with OERC and sought permission to amend the service conditions of employees.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I doubt we'll ever return to power. See, our leader can't lie!

SHORT TAKES

BSE Class X results today

Bhubaneswar: Results of the annual matriculation examination conducted by the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) will be announced Wednesday—July 29, an official said. The Class X results are scheduled to be declared at 9 am through videoconferencing and students can check their scores from 11 am onwards on the board's website. School and Mass Education (S&ME) Minister Samir Ranjan Dash said the media, adding that SMS option for obtaining the results will also be available. As many as 5.60 lakh students appeared for the annual Class X examination in 2,888 centres from February 19 to March 2.

Case against two BJP legislators

Sambalpur: Town police Tuesday booked Sambalpur MLA Jayanarayan Mishra and Rengali MLA Nauri Nayak on charges of trying to barge into Sambalpur Collectorate, misbehaving with the ADM and violating Covid-19 guidelines. Both the MLAs had a scuffle with police while trying to barge into the Collector's office, alleging that the district administration did not properly conduct sanitization of the town. Curbs have been clamped on people visiting the Collectorate till August 31 in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

| MARKET WATCH | | | |
|--------------|--------|-----------|----------|
| INDEX | | VARIATION | |
| BOURSES | SENSEX | 38492.95 | ↑ 558.22 |
| | NIFTY | 11300.50 | ↑ 168.70 |
| | DOLLAR | 75.07 | ↑ ₹0.04 |
| | EURO | 87.82 | ↑ ₹0.15 |
| | GOLD | ₹52,660 | ↑ ₹559 |
| CURRENCY | SILVER | ₹66,330 | ↑ ₹ 802 |

| WEATHER | | | |
|----------|-----|-------------------|--------|
| | | BHUB | CTK |
| TEMP | MAX | 35.8°C | 35.0°C |
| | MIN | 25.4°C | 22.0°C |
| Humidity | | 92% | 79% |
| Rainfall | | Nil | Nil |
| Forecast | | Partly cloudy sky | |

Toll pain to add to pandemic

BISWA BHUSAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 28: To augment revenues in view of the worldwide pandemic, the state government is planning to collect toll on major state highways and other roads under the administrative control of the works department.

The state works department has asked chief engineer-roads and chief engineer-World Bank projects to identify stretches and roads where toll can be collected.

"I am directed to request you to identify and report the stretches of roads for considering the feasibility towards award of new toll gates to Odisha Bridge & Construction Corporation Limited (OB&CC) for collection of toll through a regular auction process," works additional secretary RK Acharya wrote to two chief engineers.

The department has sought a list of feasible roads from the engineers following the proposal of OB&CC Ltd.

The corporation, in its proposal, said, "It is noticed that a number of state highways have improved and been

BUMPIER RIDE AHEAD

The toll fee imposed by the National Highways Authority of India on various NHs is already pinching the road users

The move will be an additional burden on people, who are already in distress due to pandemic, hike in prices of fuel & essential commodities



widened to two lanes over last few years under the State Highways Development Plan (SHDP) and have enough potential for toll traffic. Collection of toll on these roads shall generate good revenues for the highway maintenance and shall ease the burden on government funds."

No doubts that the move will be an additional burden on people, who are already in distress due to pandemic

and price hike of fuel & essential commodities. Besides, the toll fee imposed by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) on various NHs is pinching road users.

At this pandemic situation, the revenue collection has drastically fallen in the state. Therefore, with an aim to get additional revenues, the government has taken the move, sources said. Justifying the proposal, an official of

Body cremation sans Covid report okayed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 28: The state government has allowed the cremation of bodies of COVID-19 suspects without waiting for their test reports to avoid delay in the conduct of last rites, officials said. Additional Chief Secretary, Health, PK Mohapatra has directed all District Collectors and municipal commissioners to follow the new rule.

"It is clarified that as we are in the midst of a global pandemic, as a measure of abundant precaution, in all such cases the dead body may be disposed of as per COVID norms, in compassionate consultation with the family of the deceased," Mohapatra said a letter to district officials Monday night.

There has been a delay in cremation of bodies in the state as officials waited for the COVID-19 test report of the victim after his or her death. In Ganjam district, the body

of a policeman was allegedly abandoned at a hospital because his test report for COVID-19 was awaited.

The additional chief secretary said the new norm will reduce the trauma faced by the grieving family and there will be no delay in disposal of the body. If a suspected COVID-19 patient under treatment or quarantine dies before his swab can be tested, the body may be disposed as per the COVID norms without insisting on the test report, he said. On July 25, the state government had issued detailed guidelines for disposal of the bodies of COVID-19 patients. It had said that the body shall be handled and transported in a "decent" manner.

The guidelines also said that while disposing the body at the crematorium or the burial ground, the family members of the victim may be allowed to perform the last rites according to their faith without touching the body.

HOPES SOAR



One of the five Rafale jets, which took off from France Monday and is on its way to India, being refuelled midair. The Rafale aircraft are covering a distance of nearly 7,000 km with a single stop in UAE.

SC imposes ₹50k fine on state for delay in filing plea

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, July 28: Expressing dissatisfaction over the lackadaisical attitude of the officials causing an inordinate delay in filing a petition, the Supreme Court Tuesday imposed ₹50,000 penalty on the state government.

A three-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Ajay Rastogi and Aniruddha Bose also directed that the state government should hold an inquiry, fix responsibility and recover the cost from the delinquent officer and file the certificate of recovery in this court.

"There is an inordinate delay as set out in the application of 587 days (learned counsel states that it is a mistake and it should be 531 days). Be that as it may, the application for condonation of delay reflects a saga of movement of file from one department to the other with no cogent explanation why for months together files have been detained in the department," the bench said.

The apex court also observed that these are categorise as "certificate cases" filed by the departments to obtain an order of dismissal from the court so that they can go back and say that they have made all endeavours to limit the loss to the state.

"However, there is something to be said on the merits of the matter, that is why we are inclined to issue notice on the application for condonation of delay as well as on the special leave petition but subject to deposit of Rs50,000 with the Supreme Court Advocates on Record Welfare Fund. The needful be done within four weeks," the bench said.

43 pc of Indians suffering from depression: Study

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 28: Ever since the pandemic hit India over five months back, followed by an unprecedented lockdown, stress levels have been on the rise with 43 per cent Indians suffering from depression, according to a new study. Conducted by GOQii, a smart-tech enabled preventive healthcare platform, the study surveyed over 10,000 Indians to understand how they have been coping with the new normal.

According to the study, 26 per cent respondents were suffering from mild depression, 11 per cent were feeling moderately depressed, and six per cent were facing severe

PANDEMIC BLUES
26%
SUFFER FROM MILD DEPRESSION, 11 PC MODERATELY DEPRESSED, SIX PC HAVE SEVERE DEPRESSION
MORE THAN 59 PC OF THE POPULATION SAID THEY HAVE LITTLE PLEASURE IN DOING THINGS THESE DAYS
OVER 57 PC OF THE RESPONDENTS COMPLAIN OF FEELING TIRED OR HAVING LITTLE ENERGY THROUGH

symptoms of depression. "The last five months have been unexpected. The situation has taken a major toll on the mental health of citi-

zens. With the series of lockdowns, anxiety, job cuts, health scares, and the overall volatile environment, stress levels are at an all-time high.

"Copious amounts of stress can lead to depression. With the current lockdown and lifestyles drastically changing, we have seen that 43 per cent of Indians are currently plagued with depression and are learning to cope with it," the study said.

To monitor the severity of depression in the respondents, the study relied on self-administered Patient Health Questionnaire or PHQ-9 (a form of primary care evaluation of mental disorders).

It took into account nine aspects of an individual's daily routine, including interest levels in activities, appetite, sleep cycles, ability to concentrate, and energy levels.

"Our study indicates that an in-

creasing number of people across the country are dealing with mental health issues triggered by the spread of the coronavirus and the consequent lockdown. "The mounting uncertainty is the basis of the high stress index which can be controlled with a balanced diet, changes in lifestyle and appropriate sleep patterns," said Vishal Gondal, Founder and CEO, GOQii.

Those feeling depressed complained of having little interest or pleasure in doing things, feeling hopeless, dealing with erratic sleep cycles, poor eating habits, low levels of energy, low self-esteem, having trouble concentrating, being restless, and having thoughts of self harm.

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES You will remain undecided today, which is quite unlike you, says Ganesha. This will lead to speculation, which is not a bad thing by itself, unless you put all your money into the bargain. Also, be careful not to take wild guesses in love and relationships.

TAURUS There is a strong likelihood of some dispute or misunderstanding cropping up between you and your parents. This, Ganesha assures, could easily be resolved through a positive, meaningful dialogue. You will be clear, coherent and persuasive in your communications.

GEMINI Your health interests will take precedence over career, says Ganesha. There are indications that you will spare more time working out at a gym. Those in the field of marketing and advertising will have a fabulous time.

CANCER You are likely start the day in the best of spirits today. Your enthusiasm and cheerfulness will be infectious, and you will be able to lift the mood wherever you go. However, your enthusiasm can be short-lived and pumelled under the weight of some bad news, leaving you distraught.

LEO Call it the momentary re-ignition of the spark of brilliance and energy, this day finds you at the peak of your dynamism. Ganesha predicts a fantastic day for all, especially those in the freelancing business, as your imagination and inspiration reach new heights and motivate others to excel.

VIRGO Your ambitions and desire to undertake more work will be very prominent today. After working hard all day, try to get yourself some recreation and relaxation, perhaps at a private party, a social gathering or maybe even at a marriage reception, says Ganesha.

LIBRA You never let a favour go unacknowledged, or let a ridicule pass by unanswered. So, it's time to settle those old accounts that are so important to you, feels Ganesha. This will increase chances of interesting developments that will continue to surprise you throughout the day.

SCORPIO Expressing your feelings becomes important at some point of time. Today, you are in a mood to express emotions for your near and dear ones. And why not? After all, they need to be appreciated. Though your heart is full of emotions today, do not express in a way that you become vulnerable in eyes of general public.

SAGITTARIUS A balanced day is in store today. Find yourself as much at home as at your desk. You may engage in a time of fun and games with your buddies. But when it comes to family, something more practical, like rearranging your house, is on the cards.

CAPRICORN If you are a sports person, you will enjoy both good health and fame, while engineers will mull investing money in new business ventures, foresees Ganesha. But make sure you know what you are doing, a minor slip can cost you a fortune, and you would have realised by now that repenting won't undo anything.

AQUARIUS Money matters are very important, and your family will demand your presence in all financial dealings. At work, things will be more comfortable. You may also get new projects. Ganesha predicts a trip in the offing.

PISCES Your inherent dynamism and energy will sparkle forth today. Freelancers will be struck with inspiration, and will conjure masterpieces. Pleasant surprises await you in the evening, says Ganesha.



SOPHIE TURNER, JOE JONAS WELCOME FIRST CHILD

Hollywood couple Sophie Turner and Joe Jonas have become proud parents of a girl. They have named their child Willa Jonas. "Sophie Turner and Joe Jonas are delighted to announce the birth of their baby," *eonline.com* quoted a representative for the couple as saying.

GOLDEN GLOBES 2021: DATES ANNOUNCED

The 78th annual Golden Globes will be held in February 28, 2021. The gala has been pushed back almost two months from its annual early January date owing to the ongoing Covid pandemic, reports *variety.com*



Veteran actress Kumkum no more

| Kumkum's notable films | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mr. X In Bombay Mother India Son Of India Kohinoor Ujala | Naya Daur Shreeman Funtoosh Raja Aur Runk Lalkaar Geet |

Mumbai: Veteran Hindi film actress Kumkum, who worked in around 115 films, passed away Tuesday at her residence in Bandra, Mumbai. She was 86.

Television director and late comedian Jagdeep's son Naved Jafri tweeted to confirm the news. "We have lost another gem. I have known her since I was a kid and she was family. Rest in peace Kumkum aunty," Naved wrote on Twitter. Several social media users paid condolences to the late actress. A user wrote: "May her soul rest in peace."

"Loved her performances. She was a good actress," wrote another user.

The cause of her death is yet to be officially announced. Kumkum was born Zaibunissa on April 22, 1934, in Hussainabad, Bihar. Her father was Nabab of Hussainabad. She was spotted by Guru Dutt, who was looking for a good dancer to picturise the immortal song *Kabhi Aar Kabhi Paar* for his 1954 film, *Aar Paar*. Dutt finalised Kumkum and the song went onto become a huge hit. Dutt then gave her a role in his 1957 classic, *Pyasa*. Kumkum worked with Shammi Kapoor in *Mem Saheb* (1956) and had a lead role opposite the actor *Char Dil Char Raahin* (1959).

A fine Kathak dancer, she trained under Pandit Shambhu Maharaj. She starred opposite Ashim Kumar in the first Bhojpuri film, *Ganga Maiyya Tohe Piyari Chadhaibo* (1963).

Alia urges to spread some love

Mumbai: Actress Alia Bhatt posted an adorable throw-back picture of herself from her childhood days on social media along with a message of love in the caption.

Alia took to Instagram, where she shared a black and white picture of herself from her childhood days. In the image, baby Alia can be seen looking at the camera and smiling with her curly hair falling on her face.

"Spread some love," Alia wrote alongside the image, which currently has 1.2 million likes. Alia's friends and colleagues couldn't stop gushing over the cute picture. Actor Ranveer Singh wrote: Awwwwww".

Actor Hrithik Roshan said: "Too sweet".

Actresses Deepika Padukone and Dia Mirza called Alia a "cutie". Alia's sister Shaheen Bhatt tagged Alia as her "angel". Actress Bipasha Basu described the Gully Boy actress as a "pudding."

Filmmaker Zoya Akhtar commented: "Her royal cuteness." Alia's mother Soni Razdan labelled her as "sweetie pie." Speaking of Alia's projects, she will be seen sharing screen space with Ranbir Kapoor and Amitabh Bachchan in Ayan Mukerji's *Brahmastra*.



'Never thought I would call De Niro a friend'

Mumbai: Veteran actor Anupam Kher says he never thought he would get an opportunity to work with Hollywood icon Robert De Niro, and also have the fortune of calling him a friend.

Kher took to Instagram and shared a picture of himself along with De Niro, which was taken at the Hollywood star's apartment in New York, and was clicked by director David O Russell.

Kher had a role in Russell's 2012 release, *Silver Linings Playbook*,

which featured Robert De Niro in a pivotal role.

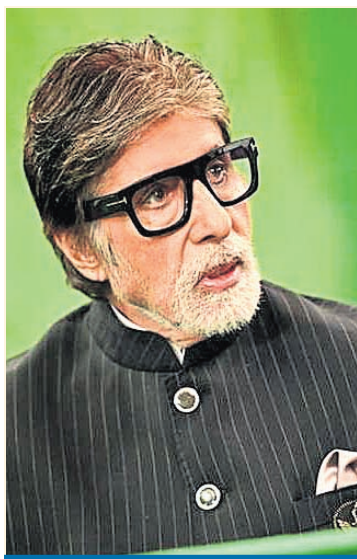


Anupam Kher with Robert De Niro

He wrote: "Story of this pic: There won't be a single actor in the world, aspiring or established, who won't

be an ardent fan of this phenomenal legendary actor #RobertDeNiro. As a drama school student I had done a special paper on two of his earlier films *Mean Streets* and *Taxi Driver*."

"Never in my wildest dreams had I ever thought way back in 1977 that one day I will get an opportunity of not only working with him in #SilverLiningsPlaybook but will also have the good fortune of calling him my friend," added the Saraansh actor.



Big B loses cool over death wish by haters

Mumbai: Amitabh Bachchan has reacted sharply to trolls in an open letter he wrote from the Covid-19 ward in a Mumbai hospital. He penned the note to anonymous trolls who have been wishing his death due to the novel coronavirus. "they write to tell me... I hope you die with this Covid".

"Hey Mr Anonymous... you do not even write your Father's name... because you do not know who Fathered you... there are only two things that can happen... either I shall die or either I shall live. If I die you won't get to write your diatribe anymore, by weathering your remark on a celebrity name... pity." He added: "The reason for your writing to be noticed was, because you took a swipe at Amitabh Bachchan... that shall no longer exist... !! If by God's grace I live and survive you shall have to be 'weathering' the 'swipe' storm, not just from me, but on a very conservative level, from 90+ million followers."

PARINEETI on social media detox again

Mumbai: Actress Parineeti Chopra is going on a social media detox again. She took to Instagram Stories and wrote: "Time for another social media detox... See you soon fam!"

This is the second time the actress took a detox from social media without giving reasons for her break.

The actress had earlier taken a break from social media in April.

She had written: "Gonna take a much needed detox from social media for a few days. Some time is needed and important. See you all on the other side."

On the film front, she will be next seen in *Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar*. The film is directed by Dibakar Banerjee, and also stars her *Ishaqzaade* co-star Arjun Kapoor.

Parineeti will also be seen in the Hindi remake of the Hollywood psychological thriller *The Girl On The Train*, which is being directed by Ribhu Dasgupta. The film is based on Paula Hawkins' 2015 bestseller of the same name. The Hindi version stars Kirti Kulhari, and also features Aditi Rao Hydari and Avinash Tiwary in pivotal roles.



FUN post

PEANUTS



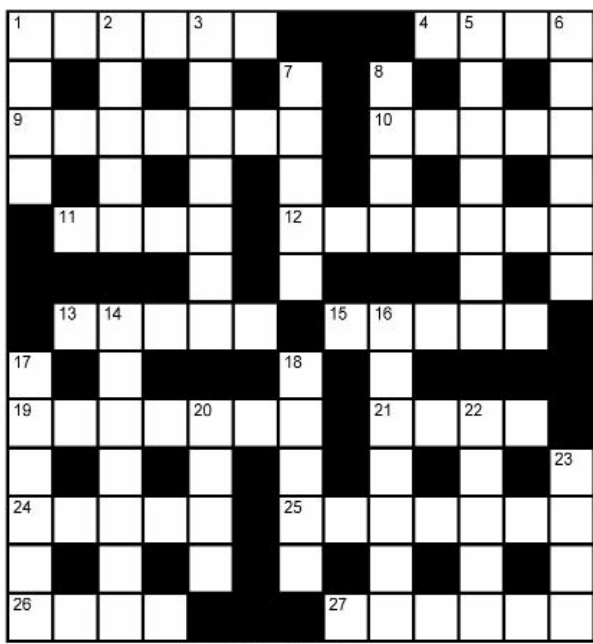
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



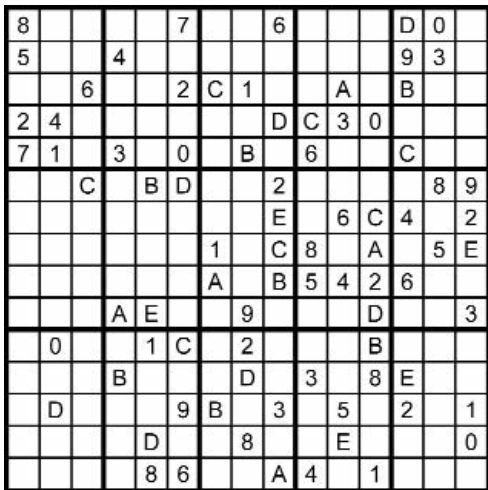
CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Clutter
 - 4 Bridge
 - 9 Tornado
 - 10 Hypnotised
 - 11 Antares, for one
 - 12 Swift graceful antelope
 - 13 Concert venue
 - 15 Outbuildings
 - 19 Steamed
 - 21 Pear-shaped instrument
 - 24 Squirrel's stash
 - 25 Hug
 - 26 Church niche
 - 27 Sew
- Down
- 1 Airport and jacuzzi sights
 - 2 Damp
 - 3 Not right now (5,2)
 - 5 Propelled a rowboat
 - 6 Health care providers
 - 7 They croak until they croak
 - 8 Interrogate
 - 14 Spheres
 - 16 Flatfish
 - 17 Canal site
 - 18 Venomous snake
 - 20 Deliver a tirade
 - 22 Plot of land
 - 23 Interlock

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

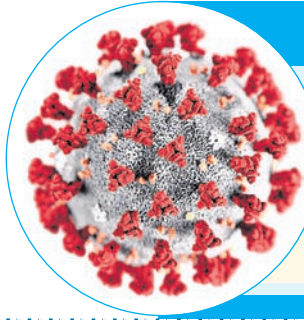


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



POOR MAINTENANCE

Creepers and grasses cover decorative structures at Cuttack railway station in the absence of regular maintenance



COVID-19 TRACKER

| | INFECTED | RECOVERED | DEAD |
|--------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| World | 1,67,29,838 | 1,02,95,270 | 6,58,974 |
| India | 15,16,738 | 9,71,330 | 33,866 |
| Odisha | 28,107 | 18,061 | 154 |

ILLEGAL USE OF FOREST LAND IN CITY

NGT issues imprisonment warning to Khurda Collector

The tribunal May 20, 2019 had asked the Collector and the DFO to submit an inspection report which was not complied with

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 28: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has warned the Khurda District Magistrate and Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of civil imprisonment for not complying with the earlier order of the tribunal.

This comes after the Khurda Collector and DFO failed to submit an inspection report even after one year of the NGT order. The tribunal has now given one last chance to furnish the report before proceeding with exemplary actions.

The case relates to use of forest land near Jaydev Vihar in Bhubaneswar by many reputed hotels and commercial establishments for non-forest use and the alleged inaction of the government machinery

The tribunal in its order said that the inspection report had not been filed by the Inspection Committee in terms of order dated May 20, 2019 although time had been sought for the purpose August 30, 2019, November 25, 2019 and January 20, 2020.

"In view of the continued non-compliance, we are of the view that appropriate coercive orders are called for against the members of the committee namely, the District Collector and Divisional Forest Officer, Khurda district, but before we do so, we are inclined to grant one more opportunity to them to file

NORMS FLOUTED



The case relates to use of forest land near Jaydev Vihar in Bhubaneswar by many reputed hotels and commercial establishments for non-forest use and the alleged inaction of the government machinery

The petition alleged that 563.039 acres of revenue forest land was used for non-forestry purposes without getting approval under Forest Conservation Act 1980 from the Environment Ministry

A CAG report in March 2012 had also confirmed violation of Forest Conservation Act in terms of allotting the Revenue Forest Land to various hotels and establishments without obtaining forest clearance

the report before the next date."

"...failing which exemplary coercive orders shall be issued against them which shall include punitive measures like cost and civil imprisonment. It may be noted that the order passed by the tribunal is enforceable as a decree and is executable in terms of Section 51 of the Code of Civil Procedure," the written order of the NGT said.

The tribunal had May 20, 2019 asked the Collector and the DFO to take cognisance of the allegations in the case and conduct an inspection of the area in question and ascertain the genuineness of the allegations. It asked them to take action against the errant and also submit a factual and action taken report before the tribunal

within two months.

A petition was filed in this regard before the NGT alleging inaction of the state government institutions for checking illegal and unauthorised use of 563.039 acres of revenue forest land for non-forestry purposes by constructing buildings, hotel and commercial establishments without getting approval under Forest Conservation Act 1980 from the Environment Ministry.

A CAG report in March 2012 had also confirmed violation of Forest Conservation Act in terms of allotting the Revenue Forest Land to various hotels and establishments without obtaining forest clearance. The next hearing of the case is posted to September 10, 2020.

Tiger census paints grim picture in Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/New Delhi, July 28: It's no more burning bright. Yes, the tiger population in the state has been reduced from 45 in 2006 to 28 in 2018, as per the Tiger Census of India data.

The census states that the poor and continued decline in tiger status in Odisha is a matter of concern. Tiger population in the state was 45 in 2006, but it reduced to 32 in 2010 and stands at 28 in 2014 and 2018 Census.

The report says that the population in the block of Simlipal and Satkosia is severely depressed and is estimated to be around 18. The Census emphasises upon recovering the tiger population by controlling poaching of tigers and their prey through snaring.

The report also stated that around 12 tigers are utilising the Simlipal tiger reserve while eight are within the reserve. In Satkosia, there is only one tiger. The block consisting Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary and Udanti Stanadi Tiger reserve of Chhattisgarh is home to around three tigers.

The study suggested that Bonai

forest division is a potential site for the tiger recovery if Simlipal tiger population is restored. This

INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY

The report says that the population in the block of Simlipal and Satkosia is severely depressed and is estimated to be around 18

In Satkosia, there is only one tiger. The block consisting Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary and Udanti Stanadi Tiger reserve of Chhattisgarh is home to around three tigers

division is connected to Simlipal through forests of Dhenkanal and Keonjhar division.

The Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary in Bargarh district was camera trapped for the first time for the national tiger estimation program. The report says that one tiger

was detected in the sanctuary. A total of 141 camera traps were laid in Simlipal and 4,400 trap nights were spent in capturing tiger pictures. Only 8 individuals were



recorded within the Reserve though 12 were found utilising the Reserve as per data collected during 2018-19. However, the unique feature is that melanistic tigers were recorded in

Simlipal which is the only place in the world that has them. Significantly, the Census re-

vealed that India's tiger population stands at 2,967 - 70 per cent of the global tiger population. The detailed report was released Tuesday by Union Environment and Forest Minister Prakash Javadekar.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra

FACT FILE

| State | Tigers 2014 | Tigers 2018 | Percentage increase |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Madhya Pradesh | 308 | 526 | 71 % |
| Karnataka | 406 | 524 | 29 % |
| Maharashtra | 190 | 312 | 64 % |
| Kerala | 136 | 190 | 40 % |
| Odisha | 28 | 28 | 0 % |

Modi had released summary report on the "Status of Tigers in India" in July 2019.

While the all India results of 2,967 tigers (2018) compared to 2,226 tigers in 2014 have brought cheer to tiger lovers, the two tiger reserves of Odisha, Satkosia and Simlipal, have revealed shocking decline in numbers. Most states have done well adding huge numbers in the four-year period after 2014.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Minor girl's death not honour killing, says DCP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 28: The Deputy Commissioner of Police, Umashankar Dash, Tuesday, ruled out media reports regarding the honour killing of a minor girl in Dumduma area in Khandagiri police limits here.

The deceased was identified as Sasmita Jena, a Class X student of Mumtaj Ali High School in Nayappali. Her body was found hanging from a tree in front of her house here Monday.

In a video briefing, Dash said, "Circumstantial evidences pointed out about the minor committing suicide."

However, he also said that the autopsy report of the girl will shed more light on the actual reason behind the death.

Speaking to Orissa POST, Dash denied that the cops did not get any evidence regarding the girl's limbs being tied or face being gagged during her death.

Police have been investigating the incident by registering a case (439/20) under Section 302 of the IPC on the basis of a complaint lodged by her family.

Plasma bank at Capital Hospital

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 28: In a bid to save lives of critically-ill Covid-19 patients, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Tuesday, inaugurated the second plasma bank of the state at Capital Hospital here.

Naveen said plasma banks will come up at IGH—Rourkela, VIMSAR—Burla and MKCG Medical College—Berhampur shortly. The first plasma bank was inaugurated at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack recently.

As preliminary result of plasma therapy for Covid patients in the state has been very encouraging, he hoped that plasma donation with the participation of more and more people will become a community driven people's movement. "It is the solemn commitment of the state government that no person will be deprived of access to latest medical technology," he said.

The Chief Minister praised the sincere and dedicated service of the doctors and paramedics in the fight against Covid. He urged all to work unitedly in order to encourage and strengthen their morale in this difficult situation.

He appealed to Covid recovered patients to donate plasma and register themselves by



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurates the second plasma bank of Odisha

Plasma banks will come up at IGH, Rourkela, VIMSAR, Burla and MKCG Medical College, Berhampur shortly

logging in the web portal (<https://covid19.odisha.gov.in>). The database will include their consent along with eligibility.

So far, plasma from 23 cured patients has been collected in two weeks' time. This has given us the confidence to expand the services to other parts of the state by adding more plasma centres.

Naveen also reviewed the Covid-19 situation in the state. He di-

rected the officials concerned to immediately provide ₹50 lakh compensation to the closest relatives of the Covid warriors who died on duty.

Expressing concern over negligence on attending non-Covid patients in hospitals, the Chief Minister has directed to ensure proper treatment for such patients. He also suggested strengthening the ambulance network in the state.

"Our priority is to save the lives of patients. All our steps should be focused on this," he said during the meeting.

In addition, he advised to provide the necessary medical assistance to the patients being treated at home and to pay special attention to monitoring their health condition.

Power demand dips 14% during lockdown

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 28: In view of lockdown following outbreak of Covid-19, the power demand in state has reduced by 14 per cent during March-June 2020 as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.

The captive power generation and consumption has reduced by 25 per cent in April, 12 per cent in May and 2 per cent in June, official sources said.

Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy has recently reviewed the impact of the pandemic on energy sector.

Because of the reduction in demand, the revenue gap of Gridco has widened. Gridco has to pay the fixed charges to power generating plants as per power purchase agreement. Therefore, the government has decided to extend necessary financial guarantee support to Gridco as power is a critical basic need.

Power distribution companies (discoms) of the state were asked to work out their own 'way forward' specifying the deliverables with timeline. Tripathy directed the

COVID IMPACT

Power distribution companies were asked to go for 98 per cent of the billing and collection

officials to optimise the use of existing networks, increase metering, billing and collection efficiency. The discoms were directed to achieve at least 98 per cent of the billing and collection capacity during this year.

Chief Secretary directed the officials to focus on reduction of AT&C loss, as reduction of 1 per cent AT&C loss leads to around ₹130 crore of revenue gain. The percentage of AT & C loss has reduced from 57 per cent to around 29.94 per cent during past 20 years.

Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mohapatra advised the department to redesign its investment in renewable power sector keeping in view the low cost availability of renewable energy from interstate market.



Nayak said the MHRD/UGC in its notification dated 06.07.2020 has insisted on holding UG & PG Final Term Examinations by the end of September-2020 online, offline and blended (online & offline) mode without taking any cognizance of impacts on student's safety, security and life risks.

"In our state, most of the students are from remote and rural pockets of the society. They do not have the requisite access to digital technology to appear for online examinations and they are also victims of the digital divide," said Nayak.

"In this context, the state government has rightly requested the MHRD/UGC to reconsider the decision to conduct of the examination mandatory and allow the state government to decide on the alternative methods for publication of the results as adopted by CBSE and ICSE," he added.

DMs told to monitor home isolation cases

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 28: The state government has issued a new set of guidelines to govern the monitoring of home isolation cases. All the Collectors have now been asked to act on the new norms.

The office of the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) has issued the new norms wherein it has asked the district Collectors to intensify the monitoring of the home isolation cases.

"Persons staying in home isolation in both rural and urban areas are to be religiously monitored by the Panchayat Nodal Officer/ Ward Nodal Officer to ensure that they follow the prescribed protocols," the



communication to Collectors said.

It also added, "Elaborate arrangements are to be made for monitoring the health of such persons and provide them with required medical assistance at the earliest possible time."

The SRC communication has also asked the Collectors to ensure taking necessary actions. "You are

The state govt has asked all the Collectors that the district emergency officer will be responsible for collection of data on home isolation from the blocks

hereby instructed to make necessary arrangement to monitor those at the district level on daily basis."

The state government has asked all the Collectors of 30 districts that the District Emergency Officer will be responsible for collection of data on home isolation from the

blocks, compilation of the same and transmission to the office of SRC on a daily basis in prescribed format.

The state government had earlier allowed home isolation facilities for people with no symptoms or with mild symptoms with no comorbidities if the adequate facilities are there at home for home isolation for the COVID 19 patients.

"This strategy was formulated with a view to keeping the asymptomatic/mild symptomatic Covid-19 positive persons with no comorbidities in the friendly home environment and monitoring their health along with reducing the load on hospital infrastructure," the office of the SRC said.



An artisan paints clay idols of Goddess Khudurukuni in Kumbharsahi area of Cuttack, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

State nCoV tally breaches 28,000-mark; toll 154

POST NEWS NETWORK/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 28: State's Covid-19 tally crossed the 28,000-mark with detection of 1,215 fresh cases, while the death toll climbed to 154 as seven more patients, including a five-year-old boy, succumbed to the viral infection Tuesday, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

The state's virus caseload now stands at 28,107 as 1,215 positive cases were reported from 28 of 30 the districts of Odisha. While 753 cases were reported from different quarantine centres, 462 are local contact cases, added the official.

The seven fresh fatalities were reported from four districts. "While Ganjam reported three deaths, two were reported from Rayagada and one each from Khurda and Cuttack districts, the official pointed out. The five-year-old boy from Bhubaneswar was suffering from cerebral palsy with seizure disorder and he was the youngest Covid-19 victim, while the oldest was a 72-year-old man from Rayagada who had diabetes. A 45-year-old man from Cuttack who died was suffering from bronchial asthma

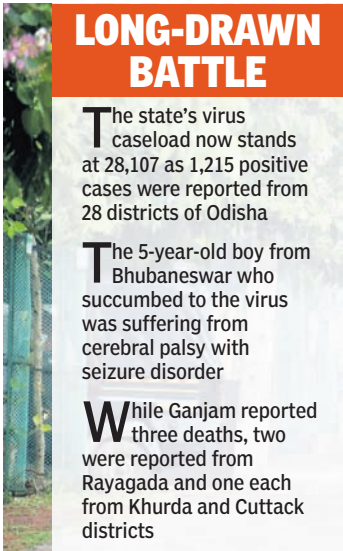
Plea in NHRC over Ganjam man's death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 28: A rights activist, Tuesday, lodged a complaint before the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) seeking its intervention in the heart wrenching plea of a minor boy before an ambulance driver to shift his ailing father to hospital for treatment at Prahalad Nagar in Berhampur of Ganjam district.

The video of the incident went viral drawing widespread criticism against the ambulance driver's behaviour.

The boy's father, Manoj Praharaj, was suffering from diabetes. The family members requisitioned 108-ambulance service after his health



LONG-DRAWN BATTLE

The state's virus caseload now stands at 28,107 as 1,215 positive cases were reported from 28 districts of Odisha

The 5-year-old boy from Bhubaneswar who succumbed to the virus was suffering from cerebral palsy with seizure disorder

While Ganjam reported three deaths, two were reported from Rayagada and one each from Khurda and Cuttack districts

and diabetes, said the official, the official said.

A 16-year-old girl died in Balasore, but the cause of her death was acute lymphocytic leukaemia with immune suppression. With this, the number of Covid-19 positive people who died of other diseases increased to 35 in Odisha, added the official.

Of the 154 fatalities, Ganjam dis-

trict accounted for the highest number of 85 deaths, followed by Khurda at 19, Cuttack 11, Gajapati nine, Sundargarh and Rayagada with six each, two each in Angul, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara and Puri, and one each from Malkangiri, Nayagarh, Kandhamal, Jajpur, Jharsuguda and Bargarh.

Odisha's coronavirus hotspot,

to pay compensation of Rs 20 lakh to the next kin of the deceased and send the proof of Compensation details to the commission within three weeks.

He also urged the rights body to direct principal secretary for state health department to ensure stringent action against the officials also submit action taken report to the commission within three weeks.

AMBULANCE DRIVER IN SOUP



Fire Service personnel sanitise a slum in Acharya Vihar area

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PLASMA DONORS FELICITATED



Minister of state for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra felicitates a fire brigade personnel, who donated plasma for the treatment of Covid-19 patients, at the office of Director of Fire Service in Cuttack, Tuesday. Altogether five fire brigade personnel were felicitated on the occasion. DGP (Fire Service) Satyajit Mohanty and other senior officials were present at the event

OP PHOTO

Thrust on phone-based grievance redressal at police stations in state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 28: Odisha police has issued a standard operating procedure (SOP) listing safeguards to be adopted at police stations while dealing with visitors during Covid-19 pandemic.



A woman enquires at Capital PS

For those visiting PSs

- Reception desks would be shifted from the main police station (PS) building to an isolated place on the campus
- While a transparent glass or plastic screen should be erected between visitors and reception personnel, a two-way intercom should be provided to the temporary reception desk
- People can drop their letters or applications in complaint boxes installed outside SP offices, police range offices and police stations

The guidelines, issued by Director General of Police (DGP) Abhay, emphasised on the need to shift the reception desks at the police stations from the main building to some isolated place on the campus and strengthen phone-based grievance system in order to curtail the number of visitors in view of the pandemic.

With many police personnel in several districts, mainly in Ganjam, getting infected with the novel coronavirus, the SOP has been circulated to the heads of all police establishments across the state asking them to take precautionary steps to keep the virus at bay.

Describing police stations and outposts as fundamental to the functioning of the district, the DGP said citizens visit the police stations for normal and emergency cases and adequate precautions should be taken in view of the virus outbreak.

As per the SOP, the reception desk area should be shifted from the main police station building to an isolated place on the campus where the complainants can be allowed to visit.

In case the police station does not have any other structure away from the main building, they should build a makeshift tent away from

the main building for the functioning of a temporary reception desk, it said.

While a transparent glass or plastic screen should be erected between visitors and reception personnel, a two-way intercom should be provided to the temporary reception desk

People can drop their letters or applications in complaint boxes installed outside SP offices, police range offices and police stations

Complaint boxes have been installed outside SP offices, police range offices and police stations to receive complaints from people. People can drop their letters or applications in these boxes, while important phone numbers should be prominently displayed at the main gates and other platforms.

SPs have also been asked to take steps to redress grievances of people on social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter.

'16 schools in Khurda running sans CoR'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 28: The Odisha Abhibhabak Mahasangha (OAM), Tuesday, sent a list of 16 private schools in Bhubaneswar that are allegedly running without certificate of recognition (CoR) to the DEO, Khurda and BEO, Bhubaneswar:

The development comes after Directorate of Elementary Education sent letters to all district education officers (DEOs) for submitting reports against the private schools running without CoR.

Co-chairman of OAM, Bhumohan B Patnaik said, "These schools in

The outfit requested the DEO and BEO to lodge FIRs against these schools as per order of Director, Elementary Education

Khurda district have not obtained CoR and NOC from designated authorities. The DEO, Khurda and BEO, Bhubaneswar should take strong steps and lodge FIRs against these schools for immediate action." Stating that this is illegal and ex-

ploitation of parents and students, Patnaik requested the DEO and the BEO to lodge FIRs against these schools as per order of Director, Elementary Education and provisions under IPC, where Section 75 of JJ Act, Child cruelty, Cheating, Child Extortion on forcefully collection of different fees without having proper CoR, NOC and etc.

These schools are also running without proper affiliation to CBSE and ICSE, he added. Earlier, the Directorate of Elementary Education, Odisha had written to all DEOs to submit action-taken reports against the private schools

which are running without CoR.

The letter said that the DEOs have been requested to issue draft show-cause notices and take action against the private schools running without certificate of recognition.

As per rule, the School and Mass Education department has stipulated that all the schools should obtain CoR from the directorate to run their educational institutions. To obtain the CoR, schools have to meet norms under Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. After assessment the director will issue recognition for five years.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 28: The state unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Tuesday said that the state government has failed in tackling the Covid-19 crisis and that it must take the assistance of the Centre in this regard.

BJP's Bhubaneswar President Babu Singh said that the Covid administration in the state capital is ill-prepared. He attacked the state government for failing in whole management of the global pandemic.

"The Covid-19 crisis in the state

is going out of control. The situation has become worrisome for Bhubaneswar and the people of the state feel insecure under such circumstances," he said.

He also added that in states like Delhi, the intervention of Union Home Minister Amit Shah worked well in tackling the situation and the same should be done in Odisha. He asked Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to take the help of the Union government in fighting the global outbreak in a better manner.

BJD legislator Ananta Narayan Jena, however, said that there is

no panic situation in the state. "We are in a far better situation than many other states. We have been able to take good care of the Covid-19 patients in the state. We are also conducting awareness programmes in Bhubaneswar"

He also said that Covid hospitals and other care systems are taking care of the people in the state. "There is no need to call the Home Minister for the work. The CM and the entire state government are sensitive enough to tackle the issue and they are working well in the COVID 19 fight," he said.

Narrow escape for schoolgirl as phone explodes in hands

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, July 28: A schoolgirl had a narrow escape when a smartphone which she was using for online classes exploded in her hand here Tuesday.

According to sources, the incident occurred when Rupsa, daughter of Bidiyadhar Palai and a resident of Balighai Adarsh Nagar in the Pilgrim City here, was attending her online classes through a cellphone in the afternoon.

"I was attending a class over WhatsApp when the cellphone exploded in my hands. I suffered minor injuries in my left hand. Thank God! I had a narrow escape," said Rupsa, a Class VII student of Kendriya Vidyalaya in the Holy City. The lockdowns and shutdowns have forced the educational institutions to impart education through online for a few months now.

Robbery bid foiled, two nabbed in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 28: Commissionerate Police has arrested two robbers who were planning to loot the commuters near Udayagiri hills under Khandagiri police limits.

The accused were identified as Dukhisayama Gochhi, 45, of Khurda Town area and Sagar Baliarsingh, 24, of Tangi in Khurda district. Gochhi has been staying at Bharatpur slum in Khandagiri while Baliarsingh has been residing in Keshura under Sahid Nagar police limits.

According to police, the PCR van staffers of Khandagiri police were tipped off about the suspi-

cious presence of the two accused persons at an isolated place near Udayagiri Hills Monday night. The cops rushed to the place and arrested the duo who was planning to loot the passersby. The police recovered one firearm, 4 rounds of live ammunition, one knife and a motorcycle from their possession.

The duo confessed to their involvement in as series of robberies and snatching incidents in the area during the past few months.

Police arrested the accused persons by registering a case (443/20) under various sections of IPC and Arms Act. The court sent the duo to judicial custody after rejecting their bail plea.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 28: The coronavirus-induced lockdowns and shutdowns have doomed the prospects of 'Rakhi' business in the Silver city. However, it has failed to dampen the spirit of Ishwar Sahu whose 'Covid Rakhi' is selling like hotcakes online.

Ishwar, a graphic designer of Thatari Sahi at Chauhagan, earns his living by making posters of cinemas, television serials and advertisements.

However, the lockdown has hit his livelihood hard. He tried to do something new and first prepared 3-D masks which bear the exact picture of the face of the user.

His new Rakhi packages are selling like hotcakes as he has been getting orders from various parts of the state as well as from neighbouring Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Delhi and Bangalore.

He makes home delivery of the orders he receives in the town with-

These 'Covid Rakhis' sell like hotcakes



out any extra charges. Till now, he has sold over 500 pieces of Covid Rakhis, he said. He is helped by his two deft hands Mukesh Mallick and Seshdev Sahu.

Social media platforms are flooded with the messages of indigenously made Rakhis and endearing hampers with adorable messages leaving the buyers spoilt for choices. And Ishwar too has joined the band-

swar has been getting orders from various parts of the state as well as from Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Delhi and Bangalore

The Rakhi made by Ishwar is giving messages on coronavirus pandemic and has all the ingredients to strengthen the brother-sister bond

wagon with his innovative "Covid-Rakhi Kit". The Rakhi made by Ishwar is giving messages on coronavirus pandemic and has all the ingredients to strengthen the brother-sister bond. The Rakhi made by him consists of seven special materials.

The kits made of small wooden boxes come in three variants, he said. "The first variety comprises of a wooden Rakhi dial printed with

the photos of brothers and sisters. It costs Rs 60. The second variety comes along with a 3D-printed mask which sells for Rs 90" Ishwar said.

But it is the third variety that is the most popular. It comprise of a Rakhi having the pictures of brother and sisters, two-layered 3D-printed mask, a hand-sanitiser, a chocolate, a key-ring with a QR code generating a sweet Raksha Bandhan message and two vials of rice and sindoor. "The new designer Rakhi costs around Rs 270," he added.

Asked about his foray into online Rakhi business, Ishwar said that his graphics and photography business was closed in the wake of the pandemic. He then thought of selling masks and Rakhis online to make ends meet.

"With my knowledge of graphics, I began selling 3D-printed masks first and with Raksha Bandhan approaching, I thought of printing graphics on wood and sell them as Rakhis," he said.

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Maoists try to regroup in Swabhiman Anchal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, July 28: Left wing extremists have prepared to observe 'martyrs' week' from Tuesday. To make their presence felt in the Swabhiman Anchal (once their stronghold) they have reportedly set up 'Saheed Stupas' (structures in honour of martyrs) at Panasput, Jantri, Andapalli and other places, despite security arrangements in Chitrakonda.

What is surprising is that they have even set up permanent meeting rooms in the area to hold meetings.

The ultras have planned to sensitise the tribals through plays and dance about their anti-government movement, apart from encouraging locals to pay tribute to those who have laid down their lives to bullets of security forces.

After the Gurupriya Bridge was commissioned two years ago, anti-insurgency operations have been intensified in the area to flush out Maoists.

Given the scenario, the Maoists are likely to encourage the local



people to join them and support them in their work.

Swabhiman Anchal (earlier known as cut-off area) was a haven of the left wing ultras. Many stupas and meeting halls had been built in the area.

After the commissioning of the

Gurupriya Bridge, several BSF camps were set up in the area and the ultras had to beat the retreat.

In the last one week, police-Maoist encounters have taken place three times.

Meanwhile, the police have intensified combing operations while

entry points on the borders were sealed.

Apprehending possible offensives by the ultras during the 'martyrs' week' following the killing of five Maoists in Kandhamal district, July 24, security forces like the BSF, the SOG, the DVF and the CoBRA jawans have intensified combing operations in the Naxal-affected areas of the districts.

Top-level left-wing leaders like Benu gave a call to the cadres to observe the 'martyr's week' till August 3. However, the security



SECURITY TIGHTENED

►To make their presence felt in the Swabhiman Anchal (once their stronghold) they have set up permanent structures in the area to hold meetings

►After the Gurupriya Bridge was commissioned two years ago, anti-insurgency operations have been intensified in the area to flush out Maoists

►Apprehending possible offensives by ultras during the 'Martyrs' Week' following the killing of five Maoists in Kandhamal district, July 24, security forces including the BSF, the SOG, the DVF and the CoBRA jawans have intensified combing operations

How a century-old tree was saved from being felled



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, July 28: Sacrificing of trees on the altar of development has been going on everywhere for a long time. However, a century-old banyan tree in Berhampur has been saved from being cut down, thanks to the intervention of environmentalists.

The expansion of the Haridakhandi-Andhapasara road is presently underway. For this hundreds of trees, young and old alike, are being felled. Several century-old banyan trees have also been axed, triggering widespread resentment among environmentalists here.

However, they were up in arms when the electricity department set its eyes on a huge centenarian banyan tree located near the Haridakhandi State Bank of India here. They were to install a transformer in its place.

As the news spread, Sabuja Bahini, a Berhampur-based social organisation working on environment, environmentalists and local people stepped forward and opposed the move strongly.

The department stalled its activities making the protestors believe that it had given up on the idea of felling the tree. But one morning, the local people found the tree's branches severed to their utter shock and dismay.

This gave rise to resentment and the matter was taken up with the Berhampur divisional forest officer. He directed the ranger to investigate the matter.

A committee comprising Berhampur ranger Dillip Kumar Martha, Sabuja Bahini, president, Sibaram Panigrahi, legal adviser and member, Vedic Club, Satish Panigrahi and officials of the electricity department, works department, revenue department and Odisha Forest Development Corporation was formed.

After several brainstorming sessions on how to best tackle the issue, the committee reached a conclusion that no harm should be caused to the banyan tree.

The transformer will be installed at a place 12 feet away from the tree. The green activists observed this as a victory, not for them, but for the banyan tree.

3 women farmhands killed in lightning

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, July 28: Three women farmhands were killed and a girl suffered critical injuries after lightning struck them while they were working at a farmland at Badatelenpali village under Sadar police limits in this district, Tuesday.

The deceased were identified as Bilasini Rout, 29, Yashobanti Sabar, 28, and Purnima Dharua, 28. Seema Dharua, 16, has been admitted to a hospital.

The incident occurred when the four were working at the farmland of a farmer at Badatelenpali.

Bilasini was killed on the spot while the other three were rescued and rushed to the Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital in Bolangir. Doctors at the hospital declared the two women dead while admitting Seema for treatment. Family members of the deceased have demanded compensation for the loss of lives.



Ahead of Ganesh Chaturthi, artisans busy making idols with plaster of Paris at Bhawanipatana in Kalahandi

OP PHOTO

IN LORD'S SERVICE

Plasma therapy: 3 Ganjam patients recover



BATTLE AGAINST COVID



POST NEWS NETWORK

Ganjam, July 28: Battling a steady rise in COVID-19 cases, people of Ganjam district heaved a sigh of relief after three COVID-19 patients including two women recovered from the disease Tuesday after receiving convalescent plasma therapy.

They became the first patients of corona-prone Ganjam to recover from the disease, all thanks to newly introduced plasma therapy. The three patients from various blocks of the district underwent the therapy at TATA COVID Hospital at Sitalapalli in the district.

Informing about the recovery of the three patients, District Collector

Vijay Amruta Kulange appealed to the people, who have already recovered from the infection, to donate plasma.

"Glad to share that these are the first three patients who got Plasma & got cured in Tata Hospital. We appreciate the efforts of our doctors. We request all cured patients to come forward for plasma donation," (sic) tweeted Kulange.

Ganjam district administration launched convalescent plasma therapy to treat coronavirus infected patients, July 21.

Kulange said, "The district ad-

'Only corona can teach them a lesson'

CHHATRAPUR: "Mask or ventilator...choice is yours. Be corona warriors by following social distancing," Ganjam Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange Tuesday wrote this in a tweet. In another tweet, Kulange posted a picture of a roadside pushcart with people standing around it. Referring to this picture, he wrote, "Go through this pics @9.15am."

This guy is selling tiffins without maintaining proper social distance @ Gandhi Nagar Square. People also enjoying food without social distancing. Seems corona only teach them. When we learn?" These two tweets convey one meaning that people in this worst COVID-19 affected district are yet to realise the seriousness of the situation. Different police stations across Ganjam collected fines amounting to Rs 1.56 lakh from mask violators in the last 24 hours. Similarly, Rs1,500 was collected from night curfew violators.

This apart, a gambling den was busted. While five gamblers were arrested, Rs 7,200 was seized from them. At the same time, police seized 101.6 litres of liquor and arrested nine. Ganjam SP Brijesh Kumar Ray Tuesday informed this in a tweet.

SCB Medical College and Hospital in the first phase. The district administration will use the six units of blood plasma in treating the patients at four COVID-19 hospitals in the district including TATA COVID Hospital at Sitalapalli, a source in the administration said.

With 322 new positive cases reported Tuesday, the tally in the district rose to 9,501. Now, 3,414 patients are undergoing treatment in the COVID-19 hospitals.

ministration will bear all travel expenses of recently recovered COVID patients to take them to the SCB College and Hospital in Cuttack, should they come forward to donate their plasma.

"Total 400 patients in Ganjam district are now ready to donate their plasma for the treatment of other COVID patients in the district," he added.

Total six blood plasma units, so far, have reached the hospital from

Sweet corn farmers' dreams turn sour in Covid times

POST NEWS NETWORK

Buguda, July 28: Little did the sweet corn farmers in Takarada village in Buguda block of Ganjam district foresee that their sweet dreams would turn sour due to the trying times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These farmers with their sweet corns piled by the roadsides have a common complain; no customers for their harvest.

For over 100 farmers in Takarada village, growing sweet corn has been a source of earning their livelihood. Since it is their prime crop, they usually take loans from banks and other sources and invest in growing corns.

This season was no different. Now, they are a worried lot, thinking about how they will repay the loans.

"The coronavirus-induced lockdown and shutdown restrictions have dealt us a huge blow. Just at the time of harvest, these restrictions were imposed, throwing cold water on our dreams," the farmers



A WORRIED LOT

■ For over 100 farmers at Takarada in Buguda block of Ganjam district, growing sweet corn has been a source of earning livelihood

■ Since it is their primary crop, they usually take loans from banks and other sources and invest in growing corns

■ These farmers with their sweet corns piled by the roadsides have a common complain; no customers for their harvest

complained. "In past years, we used to send sweet corns to cities in Odisha including Cuttack and Bhubaneswar and even to Kolkata and Mumbai. We never expected this season would turn out to be a disaster. The restrictions have prohibited our regular traders from coming to us to procure the corns.

And we also find it difficult to transport the produce to nearby markets to sell them," they observed.

Mukund Nayak, a corn farmer, said, "What ails us most is the burden of loans. It will never be possible on our part to repay the loans. We request the government to waive off all our loans."

7-year-old raped, accused arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Lanjigarh, July 28: Kalahnadi police arrested a youth Tuesday for allegedly raping a seven-year-old girl. According to sources, the incident took place at Champadeipur under Lanjigarh police limits.

The accused has been identified as 22-year-old Nilambara Harijan, a resident of Champadeipur. He was produced in a court Tuesday. The accused allegedly lured the girl with mangoes and took her to his house where he allegedly raped her.

The victim later told the ordeal to her family and an FIR was lodged at Lanjigarh police station. The family alleged that the father of the accused threatened the mother of the victim and tried to prevent them from lodging the FIR. The accused was arrested.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, July 28: Sabai grass cultivated in many pockets of Mayurbhanj district has high demand for various household and decorative items.

Hundreds of woman of various self-help groups have become self-sufficient by making sabai grass items.

Women of Guhaldihi village in Badajoda panchayat under Baripada block are a case in point.

A group of women has been making various beautiful crafts and decorative items in the village since 2011. They make small flower baskets, bags, pachhia (a kind of sieve) and other household items. Now, their business has started given them financial benefits.

The group of 11 women started it in a small way in 2011 by taking



WEAVING SUCCESS STORY

A group of 11 women started it in a small way in 2011 by taking loan from a bank. Initially marking the item was a problem. In 2013, ORMAS extended a helping hand to them in selling their items

Women workers, mostly belonging to tribal communities, after special training, earn Rs 5,000 while others manage to earn Rs 20,000 every month, as the demand of the items is increasing

Deputy CEO of ORMAS (Mayurbhanj), Biman Malla, said: Loan was provided to them while they were given skill development training. These women are earning enough with their items in good demand. They have also created their own identity with this craft

loan from a bank. Initially marking the item was a problem. In 2013,

ORMAS extended a helping hand to them in selling their items.

ORMAS provided them skill development training too in making

sabai grass items.

Over the years, this group has expanded to 13 groups with 61 women as members in the panchayat.

Women workers, mostly belonging to tribal communities, had been given special training.

They said that some women earn Rs 5,000 while others manage to earn Rs 20,000 every month.

"Earning is growing as the demand of the items is increasing," they said.

Usharani Nayak, secretary of a group, said, "After finishing their household chores, women come to the centre at 10 am and make sabai grass products with machines. Some do it manually. These items are sold at fairs and festivals."

Many other groups in Udala, Betanoti, Kuliana, and Shuliapada

blocks are also into this business.

Deputy CEO of ORMAS (Mayurbhanj), Biman Malla, said that women of this cluster were given help in 2013.

"Loan was provided to them while they were given skill development training. These women are earning enough with their items in good demand. They have also created their own identity with this craft," Malla observed.

The Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS) has been promoting the sabai grass industry for several years in the district. Sabai grass, a natural fibre, is abundantly grown in the hilly areas like Jadunathpur, Kamalashol, Purnachandrapur, Beladunguri and Astajharan in tribal-dominated Badasahi and other blocks.

NJ Ravi Chander,
BANGALORE

T'gana has over 1K containment zones; 92 in Hyd

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19, HEALTH AUTHORITIES OFFICIALLY LIST THE CONTAINMENT ZONES IN THE STATE

Mahabubnagar dist has more containment zones than hotspot Greater Hyderabad

The district has 194 zones against 92 in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corp

GHMC ACCOUNTS FOR OVER 50 PC OF THE AVERAGE 1,500 CASES REPORTED DAILY IN THE STATE

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, July 28: Telangana has over 1,000 Covid-19 containment zones, a majority of them in Mahabubnagar and Rangareddy districts, officials said Tuesday.

For the first time since the outbreak of Covid-19, the state health authorities came out with a complete list of containment zones in the state.

The list forms part of a 59-page media bulletin released by the office of the director of public health, providing comprehensive information as per the direction of Telangana High Court.

The health department in coordination with municipal and police authorities has created containment zones in areas which reported positive cases to contain the virus spread. They have taken up door-to-door surveys in these zones and imposed restrictions on



the movement of people.

Surprisingly, Mahabubnagar district has more containment zones than hotspot Greater Hyderabad. The district has 194 zones against 92 in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), which accounts for over 50 per cent of the average 1,500 cases reported daily in the state.

Among the zones in GHMC, Charminar zone, which covers a large part of the old city of Hyderabad, has the maximum number of containment zones (33) followed by Secunderabad (23).

Khairatabad zone has 14, Serlingampally 10, Kukatpally nine and LB Nagar five zones.

GHMC had reported 4,568 infections during the last seven days and it accounts for over 60 per cent of 57,000 cases and 480 deaths reported as of Monday.

Expressing its unhappiness over lack of transparency in handling of Covid situation, the High Court had repeatedly directed the health authorities to provide information to people on a daily basis about the containment zones.

Mahabubnagar district, which reported 161 positive cases in the last seven days, has the highest number of containment zones. Majority of them are in Mahabubnagar town.

Rangareddy, which shares borders with GHMC, has the second largest number with 163 zones. The district, which reported 1,108 cases in the last one week, has a maximum number of zones in urban pockets like Shamshabad, Moinabad, Meerpet and Jalpally.

Medchal Malkajgiri, another district abutting GHMC and which has been witnessing a spike in cases for the last few weeks, has no containment zone, according to the bulletin. The district saw 554 new infections in the last seven days.

Sangareddy district, which also shares borders with GHMC, has 82 zones, most of them in urban areas. Statistics show 441 people tested positive in this district in the last one week.

Karimnagar and Nizamabad districts, which saw a spike in Covid cases in recent days, have 57 and 12 containment zones respectively.

Warangal Urban district, which is also witnessing virus spread, has 28 zones.

There are 16 zones in Adilabad districts, 52 in Jagtial, 46 in Jogulamba Gadwal, 15 in Kamareddy, 18 in Khammam and 36 in Mahabubabad.

RAM TEMPLE BHOOMI PUJAN

Owaisi reminds Modi of constitutional oath

VHP HAS CALLED FOR CELEBRATIONS AUGUST 5, THE DAY OF 'BHOOMI PUJAN'

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, July 28: All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi has said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's possible attendance at foundation stone laying ceremony of the Ayodhya Ram temple will amount to a "violation of the constitutional oath" taken when assuming office.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi should not attend the 'Bhoomi puja' ceremony of the Ram temple at Ayodhya August 5 in his official capacity, but can do so as an individual, AIMIM Chief Asaduddin Owaisi said Tuesday. Meanwhile, VHP has called for celebrations on that day.

"Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi should not attend this event as the Prime Minister of this country. He can definitely attend this function in his individual capacity. The Prime Minister also has freedom of religion. Every Indian citizen has freedom of religion," Owaisi said, speaking to reporters.

The Supreme Court had in a unanimous verdict last year cleared the way for the construction of a Ram Temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya, and directed the Centre to allot a 5-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board for building a mosque.

In one of the most important and anticipated judgements in India's history, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi put an end to the more than a century old dispute that has torn the social fabric of the nation. "But I want to know from the Prime Minister that does the government of India have a religion? No, because the Constitution clearly says that secularism is part of the basic structure of the Constitution," Owaisi said.

The government of India has no religion, the government of India celebrates all religions, he said.

He wondered why President Ram Nath Kovind had not been invited to the event.

According to him, Modi's attendance at the function would "open up wounds."

International Joint General Secretary of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Surendra Kumar Jain, in a Facebook live address, said that the 500-year-old struggle of Hindu society would soon fructify.

"Lakhs of people sacrificed for the Ram Temple construction. The whole country is determined to construct a temple at Ram Jannabhoomi. Bhoomi Pujan will be held on August 5. The Prime Minister will take part in that Bhoomi Pujan," he said.

Attending Bhoomi Pujan in official capacity will be a violation of @PMOIndia's constitutional oath. Secularism is part of the Basic Structure of Constitution

TWEETED AIMIM CHIEF ASADUDDIN OWAISI

Jain appealed to the people to face towards Ayodhya at 10.30 AM August 5 and chant Ram's name offering 'Aartis' with determination in mind for construction of the temple. The day should be celebrated as Diwali by lighting lamps in every house, he added.

He appealed to the Muslim community to respect the sentiments of Hindus.

Earlier in his twitter account Owaisi said Modi's possible attendance to the 'Bhoomi puja' ceremony of the Ram temple at Ayodhya would mean a violation of his constitutional oath. "Attending Bhoomi Pujan in official capacity will be a violation of @PMOIndia's constitutional oath. Secularism is part of the Basic Structure of Constitution," (sic) Owaisi tweeted.

According to members of the Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Ayodhya August 5 for the 'Bhoomi puja' (ground breaking ceremony) to begin the construction of the Ram temple.

Veteran BJP leaders LK Advani, MM Joshi and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat are among those who have been invited to the ceremony.

"We can't forget that for over 400 years Babri stood in Ayodhya & it was demolished by a criminal mob in 1992," the Hyderabad Lok Sabha member further said in the tweet.



Members of a voluntary organisation, during the launch of their fleet for performance of last rites of Covid and non-Covid patients, in Hyderabad, Tuesday

Last surviving offspring of Hyd Nizam dies

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, July 28: Sahebzadi Basheerunnisa Begum, the last surviving daughter of Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan, the last ruler of erstwhile Hyderabad State, passed away here Tuesday. She was 93.

She breathed her last at her residence in Purani Haveli Tuesday morning. She is survived by her only daughter Rasheedunnisa Begum. "It's a big loss to the family as Sahebzadi Basheerunnisa Begum Saheba was an epitome of Hyderabad culture, tradition and values," Nizam's grandson and president of Nizam Family Welfare Association Nawab Najaf Ali Khan said. She was buried at Dargah Hazrat Yahya Pasha in the old city of Hyderabad. Several members of the Nizam's family participated in the funeral. Basheerunnisa Begum was married to Nawab Kazim Yar Jung, better known as Ali Pasha, who passed away in 1998. Mir Osman Ali Khan, who was the world's richest man of his time, died in 1967.

The last Nizam had refused to accede to India after the country's independence August 15, 1947. He wanted to remain an independent state or join Pakistan.

SHE WAS A TECHIE BUT NOW SELLS VEGETABLES

A B.Tech in Computer Science, U Sharada did not lose heart after losing her job and started selling vegetables to support her family

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, July 28: Fired from her job in view of Covid-19 lockdown, a young woman techie here has taken to her family business of selling vegetables and received support from actor Sonu Sood, who offered her employment, and others.

A B.Tech in Computer Science, U Sharada did not lose heart after losing her job and started selling vegetables to support her family.

As her plight came to light, she started receiving support from several quarters, including start-ups, besides Sood, who has been reaching out to people hit hard by the lockdown and last week donated a tractor to a farmer's family in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh.

"My official met her. Interview done. Job letter already sent. Jai hind," the actor tweeted, in response to the request from a twitter user to help Sharada.

"They (the company where she worked) said there is no project and we cannot pay salary. I had to take care of myself. There are many in our coun-

try... who are working hard for their survival. I had to work hard for my survival. Would anyone feed me if I don't work," she told PTI Tuesday.

If I work hard, I can take care of myself and also help others, she said, recalling the tough times she faced after losing her job.

With the help of her elder brother, she got into the business of selling vegetables which her father had been carrying on for years.

Sood spoke to her Monday and told her that a job offer was ready, she said.

They (the company where she worked) said there is no project and we can't pay salary. I had to take care of myself. There are many in our country who are working hard for their survival. I had to work hard for my survival. Would anyone feed me if I don't work?

U SHARADA

My official met her. Interview done. Job letter already sent. Jai hind

TWEETED SONU SOOD

Former Cong min dies of Covid; 1st death of a politician in Karna

AGENCIES

Kalaburagi, July 28: Former Karnataka Congress minister Raja Madangopal Nayak died of Covid-19 in a designated hospital at Kalaburagi in the state's northern region, an official said Tuesday. He was 70.

"Nayak succumbed to coronavirus Monday at ESI Hospital where he was admitted July 23 after he was brought from his native place (Surpur) in the adjacent Yadgir district," Kalaburagi district health official KS Mallikarjun told IANS on phone.

Kalaburagi is about 630 km north of Bangalore in the southern state.

Nayak, who was a minister in the Veerappa Moily-led Congress government in 1992-94, was down with pneumonia and heart disease. He is also the first politician to become a victim of the Covid-19 pandemic in the state.

"On being admitted, Nayak's swab sample was taken for testing, which turned positive and had been under treatment for Covid symptoms," the official recalled.

Nayak leaves behind a widow and two sons.

A party hopper, Nayak joined the regional outfit Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S) when the Congress denied him ticket, and won from Surpur in the 1994 and 1999 state Assembly elections. Later, he joined the BJP and lost in the April 2013 Assembly elections to Raja Venkatappa of the Congress.

Over 2,000 have lost their lives due to Covid in Karna

RECORD SINGLE-DAY SPIKE OF 5,536 NEW CASES

AGENCIES

Bangalore, July 28: The Covid-19 death toll in Karnataka breached the 2,000 mark Tuesday while the state reported its biggest single-day spike of 5,536 new cases, taking the total infection count to 1,07,001.

The day also saw a record 2,819 patients getting discharged after recovery, the health department said.

As many as 102 people succumbed to the disease, taking the toll to 2,055.

Of the fresh cases, marginally higher than the previous biggest daily spike of 5,324 Monday, a total of 1,898 cases were from Bangalore Urban district.

This is the fifth consecutive day that the state is reporting over 5,000 fresh cases.

As of Tuesday evening, cumulatively 1,07,001 Covid-19 positive cases have been confirmed in the state, which includes 2,055 deaths and 40,504 discharges, the health department said in a bulletin.

It said 63,822 patients had been admitted to isolation wards at designated hospitals, while 612 were in intensive care units (ICUs).

Mortality rate in the state stands at 1.92 per cent, while the recovery rate is at 37.85 per cent.

Karna 'drops' Class VII chapter on Tipu

OPPN CONG ACCUSES YEDI GOVT OF "PLAYING COMMUNAL POLITICS" IN EDUCATION TOO

AGENCIES

Bangalore, July 28: Karnataka has dropped a chapter on Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan from the history textbook of Class VII students to reduce their syllabus as reopening of schools has been delayed due to Covid crisis this academic year, an official said Tuesday.

"The chapter on Tipu Sultan for Class VII has been dropped to reduce the syllabus by 30 per cent for this academic year due to delay in reopening of schools due to no let-up in coronavirus spread," Karnataka Text Book Society Director Madde Gowda told reporters here.

The society, however, retained the chapter on the 'Tiger of Mysore' for Classes VI and X. "As Class VII students would have read Tipu in Class VI and will read more on him again in Class X, dropping it for them in this academic year will not be a loss to them," asserted Gowda.

The society has uploaded the reduced syllabus for the state board schools on the Department of State Education Research and Training (DSERT) website for online classes and teaching.

"The chapter on Tipu will, however be taught to Class VII students as part of the assignment and not as a separate lesson," said Gowda.

The eldest son of Sultan Hyder Ali, Tipu (1750-1799) was the king of then Mysore kingdom in southern India and died in the fourth Anglo-Mysore war in 1799 at Srirangapatna, about 20km from Mysore, after a series of battle victories against the British.

Meanwhile, the opposition Congress protested against the dropping of Tipu's lesson for Class VII students and accused the BJP government of "playing communal politics" in education too.

As Class VII students would have read Tipu in Class VI and will read more on him again in Class X, dropping it for them in this academic year will not be a loss to them

MADDE GOWDA | DIRECTOR, KARNATAKA TEXTBOOK SOCIETY

of the day quote

Everything will be shut in the lockdown but essential items will be sold, like - alcohol, MLAs, trains, airports, banks and government assets

SANJAY SINGH | AAP LEADER

Modiji really wanted to ban PuB but realized that if the youth do not have the distractions of the fantasy world, they will ask for real world things like jobs and that will be an issue

ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI | CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON

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

GVL NARASIMHA RAO | BJP SPOKESPERSON

SHORT TAKES

Delhi cop shoots himself dead

New Delhi: A Delhi Police head constable allegedly shot himself dead with his service pistol Tuesday in south Delhi's Lado Sarai area, officials said. Head constable Sanjay (34) was posted at the Saket Police Station. He shot himself with his service pistol. No suicide note was found from the spot, police said.

Two beaten to death in Bihar

Jamui (Bihar): Two people were beaten to death by villagers for allegedly stealing cattle in Simultala police station area of Jamui district of Bihar. A police official said Tuesday that two people had stolen a bull tied outside a house in Tilona village late on Monday night. In order to carry the bull, the villagers caught the thief red-handed and there was commotion in the village.

Doctor 'molests' COVID patient

Noida (UP): A 20-year-old woman here alleged that she was molested by a doctor in the isolation ward of a private hospital where both were undergoing treatment for COVID-19, police said. The woman, in her complaint to the police. An investigation was underway and there appeared to be lapses on part of the hospital.

Train cancelled

Kolkata: The Howrah-Mumbai CSMT special train, which was earlier rescheduled to leave Howrah July 29, will short originate from Rourkela July 30, a South Eastern Railway official said. Service of the 02810 Howrah-Mumbai CSMT special will remain suspended between Howrah and Rourkela July 29.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's possible attendance to the 'Bhoomi puja' ceremony of the Ram temple at Ayodhya

ASADUDDIN OWAIISI | AIMIM CHIEF

SHEIKHPURA COUNCILLOR THREATENS TO KILL PASWAN IN VIDEO

A video in which a councillor is seen threatening to shoot Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan with an AK-47 has gone viral on various social media platforms, prompting police to launch an investigation into the incident



Assam floods put residents, vulnerable wildlife at risk

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, July 28: While the annual monsoon floods in Assam claim hundreds of lives, damage crops, infrastructure and assets, the animals too are not spared. These include the endangered rhinos in the world famous Kaziranga National Park, home to more than 2,200 one-horned Indian rhinos.

Kaziranga National Park Director Karmashree P Sivakumar said Tuesday that this year at least 137 wild animals have died so far due to the floods while 163 have been rescued, even as over 95 per cent of the 884 sq km Kaziranga Park was inundated

last week. Even with the overall improvement in the flood situation in the state by Tuesday, 75 per cent of the park area remained flooded.

"Last year 263 animals including many endangered rhinos were killed due to the floods while 169 animals were rescued. Currently, we are in the middle of the four-month (June to September) long monsoon. I do not know what would be the final situation. However, all-out efforts are being made to take care of the animals in the entire Kaziranga National Park," Sivakumar said over phone.

The animals that have perished in the monsoon floods this year include 14 rhinos, 101 hog deer, ten wild



boars, five wild buffaloes, three porcupines and two swamp deer.

Amidst the natural catastrophe, forest officials and conservation activists had some reason for cheer after photos of a tigress and her two cubs

were captured recently on a camera trap inside the Laokhowa Burhachapori wildlife sanctuary a buffer zone of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR). "The first ever camera trap evi-

dence of successful breeding of tigers in the Laokhowa Burhachapori wildlife sanctuary has boosted the confidence of everyone. This is the result of more than 15 years of hard work and efforts," said Sivakumar who hails from Tamil Nadu.

Located on the south bank of the Brahmaputra river and spread over 114 sq km, Laokhowa Burhachapori lies within KNPTR and the Orang National Park and is part of the Kaziranga Orang Riverine Landscape (KORL), a major gateway for straying animals within protected areas of central Assam.

The famous tiger reserve is 1055

sq km in area of which the national park area is 884 sq km, which is a significant habitat for the endangered rhinos. Sivakumar said that to protect the animals from the monsoon floods more than 33 highlands had been developed where the animals took shelter after their habitats were inundated.

"Besides, thousands of trained volunteers were engaged during the monsoon period and a Special Protection Force was created for the protection of the rhinos." Over a thousand country boats and speed boats were deployed while additional staff including doctors was mobilised to deal with the flood.

GEHLOT INSISTS ON JULY 31 FOR SESSION, 'NOT TRUST VOTE'



RAJSATHAN CRISIS

The Rajasthan government Tuesday sent a revised proposal for an Assembly session to Governor Kalraj Mishra saying that the sitting should begin July 31 and refusing to mention if it would seek a trust vote

The Cabinet took the stand after discussing the suggestions made by Mishra when he returned a proposal from the state government to summon a Vidhan Sabha session

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, July 28: The Rajasthan government Tuesday sent a revised proposal for an Assembly session to Governor Kalraj Mishra, sticking to its demand that the sitting should begin July 31 and refusing to mention if it would seek a trust vote. Sources said the Cabinet took the stand after discussing the suggestions made by Mishra when he returned a proposal from the state government to summon a Vidhan Sabha session.

Amid nationwide protests by Congress workers over the Governor's apparent reluctance to call a session, Mishra had Monday said he had no such intention.

But he sought a redrafted proposal, the second time in the past few days, including three points - a 21-day notice for calling a session, live broadcast of the proceedings if there is a trust vote, and social distancing.

In addition, the Governor had written that a session can be called at a short notice if the government says in its new proposal that it planned to seek a vote of confidence.

But sources said the Ashok Gehlot government has not mentioned in its new proposal whether it is seeking a vote of confidence in the assembly session, which it is still insisting should begin July 31, the date it gave in its last recommendation.

Asked about the agenda of the proposed session, Transport Minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas said it was for the Business Advisory Committee of the assembly to decide.

On social distancing in the Vidhan Sabha to fight coronavirus, the minister said it was for the Speaker to make the arrangements.

"The BJP stands exposed. They are changing their statements," he said, in an apparent reference to the

Speaker's last note. The minister was also dismissive of the 21-day notice requirement.

He said "10 days" have already passed since the government proposed a session and asked why the Governor hadn't given a date himself.

"We want permission to call the Assembly session, which is our right. We don't want any confrontation with the Governor and we hope that he will give his approval this time," Khachariyawas told reporters after the Cabinet meeting.

"He has no right to be raising queries. Yet we are giving a reply," the minister said.

He said there was no rivalry with the Governor. "He is the head of our family."

In his note, Governor Mishra had said media statements by the state government indicated that it wanted to prove its majority through a vote of confidence, but this has not been mentioned in its proposal.

"If the government wants to win a vote of confidence, then it can become a reasonable ground for calling the assembly session on a short notice," a press note said Monday, quoting the Governor.

This is the third time Ashok Gehlot government has sent a proposal to the Governor for an Assembly session, amid the crisis the Congress faces in the state after a rebellion by Sachin Pilot and 18 other dissident MLAs.

The minister alleged that after Rajasthan, the BJP wants to target West Bengal, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh.

The Congress has alleged that the Mishra is acting "under pressure" from the BJP government at the Centre.

Have not demanded restoration of statehood: Omar



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, July 28: Former J&K Chief Minister and National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah Tuesday took to Twitter to say that he has not demanded statehood to be restored for Jammu and Kashmir, but said that having been the Chief Minister of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, he will not contest an Assembly election in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Omar dared journalists and commentators to show him where he had demanded restoration of statehood for J&K.

In a series of tweets Omar said: "I have no problem being disagreed with for what I say or do but when you invent things and put words in my mouth to attack me, then that's more about you than about me. All you

Omar Abdullah dared journalists and commentators to show him where he had demanded restoration of statehood for J&K

lazy journalists and commentators please show me where I have demanded statehood be restored."

"I have simply said that having been CM of the state of J&K, I will not fight an assembly election to the assembly of the UT of J&K. That's it. No more no less! That's a far cry from saying I'm demanding statehood be restored," he said.

In another tweet, Omar Abdullah said,

"Haters will hate and nothing will change that. There are few people I expected better but disappointment is part of politics and one has learnt to live with it. Life goes on."

The tweets came a day after Omar Abdullah broke his silence for the first time after the abrogation of Article 370 last year, by reportedly saying that he won't contest Assembly elections till statehood is restored and that there was no Constitutional, legal or economic justification for what was done to J&K August 5, 2019.

Meanwhile, National Conference leader Ruhullah Mehdi has resigned from the post of chief spokesperson of the party. Mehdi said in a tweet: "I have sent across my resignation from the post of chief spokesperson of JKNC. From here on my statements should be considered as such."

and sanitiser before sitting in eight groups divided by age.

Teachers carried whiteboards to the meadow to use during the three-to-four-hour classes.

"It felt wrong to receive my salary sitting at home," said teachers Manzoor Ahmad.

Shabnam, 12, who walks over a mile to the makeshift classroom, said she initially felt suffocated by wearing a face mask during lessons.

"But now I feel good and enjoy it here very much," she said.

"I had thought my school was over for good and I would never meet my school friends again."

with almost 1.5 million infections - it is not yet clear when classes will restart. Unable to afford smartphones, and with limited internet access in remote villages, many students were unable to attend online lessons. So parents turned to the education department, pleading for help.

FACE MASKS AND SANITISER

"We decided to organise classes for these children in the open air, where we observe social distancing," local education department official Mohammad Ramzan told this news agency.

In this meadow, pupils from 15 villages are supplied with face masks



Students attend an open-air school in a highland meadow in Doodhpathri, Kashmir

had been severely disrupted by a strict curfew imposed almost a year ago when New Delhi stripped the

Muslim-majority region of its semi-autonomy. With India now the third-most infected nation in the world -

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Security tightened ahead of arrival of Rafale jets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ambala (Haryana), July 28: Authorities tightened security and imposed prohibitory orders near the Ambala Air Force Station in Haryana Tuesday ahead of the arrival of five Rafale jets from France, banning shooting of videos and photography.

The Ambala district administration also prohibited people from flying private drones within the three-km radius of the air base, an official said.

Deputy Commissioner Ashok Sharma said in an order that Section 144, which prohibits assembly of four or more people, has been imposed in the villages adjoining the air base, including Dhulkot, Baldev Nagar, Garnala and Panjkhora.

The jets took off from France on Monday and will arrive at the Air Force station Wednesday after covering a distance of 7,000 km with air-to-air refuelling and a single stop in the United Arab Emirates. The fleet comprises three single-seater and two twin-seater aircraft, according to an IAF official. The Ambala Deputy Commissioner said shooting of videos or taking photographs of the boundary wall of the air base and its adjoining areas will remain strictly prohibited during the imposition of the prohibitory orders.

Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij said Ambala police have taken the necessary measures.

In Kashmir, the hills are alive with the sound of schooling

BEING BACK AT SCHOOL, CHILDREN WHO EXPRIENCED A PROLONGED LOCKDOWN SINCE AUGUST 5, 2020, CAN HARDLY CONTAIN THEIR JOY

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Doodhpathri (Kashmir), July 28: Sitting cross-legged and hunched over her textbooks in a lush meadow surrounded by mountains and pine trees, Tasleem Bashir can hardly contain her joy at being back at school.

The 14-year-old is among hundreds of students attending open-air classes in Doodhpathri, high above Srinagar in Kashmir, as the coronavirus continues to cripple life in the country.

"It feels so good to have school in this fresh air. At home I didn't study much because there were many

house chores to do," Bashir said.

"After classes, I sit around with friends and we also play together before walking back home," she told this news agency.

The relief is obvious for everyone involved in the classes in the clouds held at an altitude of 2,730 metres.

Parents and grandparents walk or carry their children up a slope to the flat patch of grass ahead of the daily classes. Children run to a glacier-fed stream to dip their feet in the cool water during breaks, while others jump in after classes for a bath before heading home.

Even before the coronavirus epidemic, schooling in restive Kashmir



Students attend an open-air school in a highland meadow in Doodhpathri, Kashmir

had been severely disrupted by a strict curfew imposed almost a year ago when New Delhi stripped the

Muslim-majority region of its semi-autonomy. With India now the third-most infected nation in the world -

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of the day quote

There is a need to teach children to navigate through misinformation and fake news infesting the media landscape



M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

BJP under the cover of a pandemic is strengthening the drive for centralisation of all authority and power, negating the principles of federalism. Decisions are taken unilaterally by the Centre and the states are burdened with bearing the consequences of such unilateral decisions



SITARAM YECHURY | CPI-M GENERAL SECY

New records of gunda raj are being set in UP. There has been a kidnapping incident in the CM's hometown and a massacre in Kasganj



PRIYANKA GANDHI | CONGRESS GENERAL SECY

SHORT TAKES

Man jumps to death from 22nd floor

Ghaziabad: A 21-year-old man died after allegedly jumping from the 22nd floor of a residential condominium in Indirapuram locality here, police said. According to police, the victim was under depression. However, no suicide note was recovered from the spot. Police said that the incident happened at one of the residential towers of Saya Zenith, a high-rise society in Ahima Khand II of Indirapuram.

9 child labourers rescued in Delhi

New Delhi: The Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR), along with the North-East District Task Force, Monday rescued nine child labourers from the Mustafabad area, who were working at several scrap shops with no masks, and in unhealthy and unhygienic condition. During the pandemic, this was the fourth operation undertaken by the Commission to rescue child labourers, because of which it is concerned about the increasing number of cases. The children were rescued and provided masks, sanitisers, food and water.

UP MLA fears threat to life

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh BJP MLA Yogesh Dhama has written to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the Director-General of state police claiming he has been facing a threat to his life from notorious gangster Sunil Rathi, who is lodged in Delhi's Tihar jail in connection with the murder of another gangster Munna Bajrangji. Dhama said the gangster openly threatened him when he came for a hearing of the Munna Bajrangji case at a Baghpat court. The MLA claimed that Rathi was much more notorious than slain gangster Vikas.

Teen kidnapped, killed in Gorakhpur

Gorakhpur: A teenage boy, who had been kidnapped for ransom on Sunday in Gorakhpur district, was found dead in a forest area near a canal. The 14-year-old son of a grocery and 'paan' shop owner was kidnapped from Pipraich area Sunday and was killed by the kidnappers a few hours later. The police said that five persons have been arrested for their alleged role in the kidnapping-cum-murder of the boy and two of the accused are still absconding.



Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot will be taught a lesson for theft of (BSP) MLAs

MAYAWATI | BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY CHIEF

ED raids multiple premises in MIAL money laundering case

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 28: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Tuesday started searches at some nine places in connection with a money laundering probe against the GVK group, Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) and others for alleged irregularities to the tune of ₹705 crore in the running of the airport.

Top ED sources said that the financial probe agency was carrying out searches at several locations in Mumbai and Hyderabad and other locations. However, it remained tight-lipped when asked about whose premises it raided.

The source said that the ED team has filed the case of money laundering on the basis of the CBI FIR registered against Gunupati Venkata Krishna Reddy, the chairman of the GVK Group of companies and his son GV Sanjay Reddy, managing director of MIAL among others.

The source said ED has received the documents from the CBI after it carried out searches at several locations in Hyderabad and Mumbai



earlier this month. The source also claimed that the ED has recovered several documents during the searches.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in its FIR claimed that the Airport Authority of India (AAI) had formed a joint venture with the GVK Airports Holdings Limited, promoted by the GVK group under public private partnership firm MIAL for upgradation and maintenance of the Mumbai Airport. The CBI FIR also said that April 4, 2006 the AAI entered into an agreement with MIAL

The raids were conducted in connection with a money laundering probe against the GVK group, MIAL and others for alleged irregularities to the tune of ₹705 crore in the running of the airport

Sources said the offices of the GVK group, MIAL and the premises of GVK group promoters are being covered as part of the action

The ED team has filed the case of money laundering on the basis of the CBI FIR registered against Gunupati Venkata Krishna Reddy, GVK Group of companies chairman, and his son GV Sanjay Reddy, MD of MIAL among others

for modernisation, upkeep, operation and maintenance of the Mumbai airport with MIAL.

"It is alleged that the promoters of the GVK group in MIAL in connivance with their executives and unidentified officials of the AAI resorted to siphoning of funds using different means," officials said. The MIAL is a joint venture of the GVK Group, Airport Authority of India and a few foreign entities.

NO 'RAKHI' CELEBRATION IN UP JAILS THIS YEAR

For those lodged in prisons in Uttar Pradesh, it will be a lonely 'Raksha Bandhan' this year. The jail administration has decided not to permit relatives, mainly sisters, from visiting prisoners and tying *rakhi*



CJI says UP is suffering as man with 64 cases gets bail

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 28: Chief Justice SA Bobde Tuesday came down heavily on the Uttar Pradesh administration saying the state has been suffering as someone with 64 cases was released on bail.

A bench comprising the Chief Justice, Justice AS Bopanna and Justice V Ramasubramanian made this sharp observation refusing bail to man with 8 criminal cases.

The Chief Justice, citing the Vikas Dubey case, told the petitioner's counsel: "Your client is a dangerous man. We cannot release him on bail. See what happened in the other case."

The petitioner sought bail on medical ground, as he was suffering from several diseases.

The prosecution pointed out there were 8 criminal cases against him at one police station, and contended before the bench that how a person with such a criminal background could be released from jail.

In the Vikas Dubey encounter case, the apex court had also asked the former apex court judge headed committee to examine how Dubey with so many cases



was released on bail.

The UP government had informed the apex court that Dubey brutally massacred 8 policemen using 90 criminals of his gang and then mutilated their bodies. Dubey was serving a life sentence and he was out on parole when this massacre happened July 2.

On July 20, the apex court had told the Uttar Pradesh government that it is appalled that Vikas Dubey was released on bail despite so many cases against him and this shows the failure of the institution to keep someone like him behind bars.

CITING VIKAS YADAV, THE CJI, TOLD THE PETITIONER'S COUNSEL: "YOUR CLIENT IS A DANGEROUS MAN. WE CANNOT RELEASE HIM ON BAIL"

"If they have made certain statements and then something has followed, you should look into this," said the Chief Justice.

The bench said it is appalled at the fact that a person like Dubey was let out on bail, and this shows failure of an institution. "We want an accurate report of all the orders," added the Chief Justice.

The Chief Justice also added "What is at stake is not that one incident in UP. What is at stake is the whole system. Remember that."

Senior advocate Harish Salve, representing UP police, had contended before the bench that "we can't demoralise the police force". Chief Justice Bobde said: "Strengthen the rule of law and police force won't ever be demoralised."

RUSH HOUR



Traffic jam on Vashi Creek Bridge during Unlock 2 in Navi Mumbai, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

Pune hospital claims India's 1st mother-baby Covid transmission

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, July 28: The Sassoon General Hospital in Maharashtra's Pune has claimed to have reported the country's first case of "vertical transmission" of the coronavirus infection from a mother to her child through the placenta.

Vertical transmission takes place when the baby is in the uterus. If the mother is infected, the transmission of the virus takes place through the placenta - an organ that develops in the uterus



during pregnancy and provides oxygen and nutrients to your growing baby.

Explaining the phenomena, Sassoon General Hospital's paediatrics department head Dr Aarti Kinikar told this news agency Tuesday that when a person contracts the infection, it is mainly because of some contact with fomites.

If the mother is infected, the baby can be infected post-natally because of breastfeeding or any other contacts. So, in layman's language, the baby does not have an infection at birth, but acquires it after three to four days, she said.

"Whereas vertical transmission means when the baby is in the uterus itself and the mother has an infection, (she may be) either symptomatic or asymptomatic, and she can transfer the infection through the placenta to the baby," she said.

Corbett has 231 tigers in country; 3 reserves have none

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 28: A year after tiger estimation was done a detailed report released Tuesday has shown that the Corbett Tiger Reserve in Uttarakhand has the highest number of 231 big cats in the country while three reserves in Mizoram, West Bengal and Jharkhand have none.

The over 600-page report of the fourth All India Tiger Estimation 2018 was released by Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar on the eve of Global Tiger Day, celebrated July 29 every year, shows reserve-wise and state-wise tiger population distribution.

The 'Status of Tigers, Co-predators and Prey in India report for 2018' showed that out of the 50 tiger reserves in the country, three reserves - Mizoram's Dampa reserve, West Bengal's Buxa reserve and Jharkhand's Palamau reserve - have no tigers left. Currently, the tiger population within the reserves is 1,923 (65 per cent of the total tiger population of India), the report said.

According to the population estimation of tigers in reserves for 2018-19, Corbett has 231 tigers followed by Nagarhole and Bandipore reserves in Karnataka with 127 and 126 tigers respectively.

Assam's Kaziranga and Madhya Pradesh's Bandhavgarh recorded 104

GLOBAL TIGER DAY



tigers each, the report said.

It said some reserves like Similipal (Odisha), Amrabad and Kawal in Telangana, Nagarjunsagar Sri Sailam (Andhra Pradesh), Palamau

(Jharkhand), Sanjay-Dubri (MP), Nameri and Manas in Assam, Buxa (West Bengal), Dampa (Mizoram), Anshi Dandeli (Karnataka) and Pakke (Arunachal Pradesh) are below their potential and require resources and targeted management.

"In areas where tigers have not been recorded or the population has declined, restoration needs to proceed by improving protection, augmentation of prey, and reintroduction of tigers from an appropriate source," the report said.

"For reintroduction of tigers into Palamau, prey augmentation needs to be coupled with restoration of law and order. For tiger reintroduction or supplementation in

Palamau and Similipal, tigers need to be sourced from the closest source in the same genetic cluster: Buxa and Dampa can be repopulated through reintroductions from Kaziranga, after prey restoration in Buxa and strengthening protection in Dampa which has a good prey base," it said.

According to the report, in the state-wise distribution of tigers, Madhya Pradesh was found with maximum tigers at 526 followed by Karnataka at 524 and 442 in Uttarakhand. Last year Prime Minister Narendra Modi had released the four-yearly tiger census report, according to which the tiger population in the country had grown from 1,400 in 2014 to 2,967 in 2019.

INDIAN GIRLS DISCOVER EARTH-BOUND ASTEROID

REUTERS

Ahmedabad, July 28: Two teenage girls from India have discovered an Earth-bound asteroid by poring through images from a University of Hawaii telescope, an Indian space education institute said.

The asteroid is presently near Mars and its orbit is expected to cross that of Earth in about one million years' time, said SPACE India, a private institute where the two 14-year-old girls received training. "I look forward to... when we will get a chance to name the asteroid," said Vaidehi Vekariya, who added that she wants to become an astronaut when she is older.

The asteroid, currently called HLV2514, may be officially christened only after NASA confirms its orbit, a SPACE India spokeswoman said. Radhika Lakhani, the other student, said she was working hard on her education. "I don't even have a TV at home, so that I can concentrate on my studies."

Asteroids and comets pose a potential threat to Earth, and scientists discover thousands of them each year. In 2013, an asteroid heavier than the Eiffel Tower exploded over central Russia, leaving more than 1,000 people injured from its shockwave. The two girls, who hail from Surat, discovered the object as part of an asteroid search campaign conducted by SPACE India along with the IASC.

of the day quote

We must keep on alert over the possibility of the second wave and anticipating it

JOKO WIDODO |
INDONESIAN PRESIDENT

I'm afraid if we do see signs of a second wave in other countries, it is really our job, our duty, to act swiftly and decisively to stop travellers coming back from those places seeding the disease here in the UK

BORIS JOHNSON | UK PRIME MINISTER

Israel had violated our country's sovereignty with a dangerous military escalation

HASSAN DIAB | LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Ban on PUBG to remain in Pak

Islamabad: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has said that the ban on PlayerUnknown's Battle Ground (PUBG) will remain in the country in interest of public order, it was reported Tuesday. Last week, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) had declared PTA's move to temporarily suspend the online game void and directed the authority to immediately lift the ban, Dawn news reported.

Egypt jails several lady Tiktokers

Cairo: An Egyptian court sentenced several young women to two years in prison Monday for posting "indecent" dance videos on TikTok in a fraught case that critics describe as a further crackdown on self-expression in the conservative society. The women were also fined 300,000 Egyptian pounds (nearly \$19,000) each for "violating the values and principles of the Egyptian family," inciting debauchery and promoting human trafficking, according to a statement from the public prosecutor.

7 killed in Nepal landslides

Kathmandu: At least seven people were killed and nine others are missing in landslides triggered by heavy rains in various districts of Nepal, police said Tuesday. Four people died in a landslide in Baglung district while three others died in separate similar incidents in Rukum West and Palpa district. "Seven people have been killed so far in the rain related incidents. Those killed included a five-year-old boy," the police said.

Flash floods in Yemen

Sanaa: Flash floods have ravaged swaths of war-torn Yemen, leaving dozens dead and destroying thousands of homes, security officials and an aid group said Monday. At a time when Yemen is already mired in escalated fighting, widespread hunger and a major coronavirus outbreak, the spate of torrential rains is exacerbating the world's worst humanitarian disaster.

Hanna weakens

Corpus Christi: A downgraded Hanna continued weakening Monday but its remnants still threatened to bring rainfall and flash flooding to waterlogged parts of South Texas and Northern Mexico that have been dealing with a surge in coronavirus cases.



This is the sixth time a global health emergency has been declared under the International Health Regulations

TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO) DIRECTOR-GENERAL

COVID-19 NOT SEASONAL: WHO

The World Health Organisation Tuesday warned against complacency about new coronavirus transmission in the northern hemisphere summer, saying that this virus did not behave like influenza that tended to follow seasonal trends



Nepal's ruling party leaders fail to negotiate power-sharing deal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, July 28: Nepal's ruling communist party leaders Tuesday once again failed to negotiate a power-sharing deal between Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and executive chairperson Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', who convened a meeting of the powerful Standing Committee despite the former's decision to postpone it.

Prachanda and some senior leaders reached the Prime Minister's official residence at Baluwatar at around 11 am for the scheduled meeting of the 45-member Standing Committee of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) to iron out the differences between the two warring factions.

However, Prime Minister's press advisor Surya Thapa said the meeting was postponed. But Matrika Yadav, a Standing Committee member, said the meeting would be held at any cost, even if Prime Minister Oli refused to attend, the Kathmandu Post reported. Prachanda and senior party leader Jhalanath Khanal then went to meet Oli only to return to the meeting hall after the latter told them to do whatever they wished to, the paper said.

At the meeting hall, Prachanda briefed the Standing Committee members about his talks with Oli. The Standing Committee members close to Oli did not attend the unilateral meeting convened by Prachanda.

However, 29 Standing Committee members and two invitees were present at the meeting, which started at around 3:00 pm and lasted for one hour, party sources said.

Standing Committee member Ganesh Shah said the meeting was postponed as the two leaders need more time for informal consultations to sort out their differences. The Standing Committee meetings have been postponed for nine times since June 24.

Najib given 12 years in jail in 1MDB scandal

The ruling came five months after a new government took power with Najib's Malay party the biggest bloc in the alliance. His party's shocking election ouster in 2018 was driven by public anger over the 1MDB scandal

REUTERS

Kuala Lumpur, July 28: Malaysia's former leader, Najib Razak, was found guilty of corruption and sentenced to 12 years in jail Tuesday in the first trial over a multi-billion-dollar scandal at state fund 1MDB that stretched to the Gulf states and Hollywood.

In a case widely seen as a test of the nation's resolve to stamp out corruption and which could have big political implications, high court judge Mohamad Nazlan Mohamad Ghazali sentenced Najib to 12 years and a fine of 210 million ringgit (\$49 million) on a charge of abuse of power. Najib, 67, also received 10 years in jail on each of three charges

of criminal breach of trust and three charges of money laundering for illegally receiving nearly \$10 million from SRC International, a former unit of the state fund.

"After considering all evidence in this trial, I find that the prosecution has successfully proven its case beyond a reasonable doubt," Mohamad Nazlan said. He ordered the jail terms to run concurrently.

The judge allowed a request by Najib's lawyers to delay the jail sentence and the financial penalty, but asked Najib to post additional bail and report to a police station twice a month. Najib had pleaded not guilty, and said he would appeal the verdict in Malaysia's Federal Court if convicted. The verdict



could potentially be partially or fully overturned by the higher court

VISUAL TREAT



Fireworks illuminate the sky to mark the 67th anniversary of the Korean War armistice in Pyongyang, North Korea

'Troops disengaged on most of Indo-China border'

AGENCIES

Beijing, July 28: Chinese and Indian troops have "completed disengagement" on most parts of the disputed border between their two countries, China's foreign ministry said Tuesday, after violent clashes broke out earlier this year.

Tensions soared between the world's two most populous nations in June after the deadliest fighting in decades erupted between Indian and Chinese troops on the Himalayan border. "The situation on the ground continues to cool down and de-escalate," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said



at a regular press briefing. "The frontline border troops of the two countries have already completed disengagement at most places," he told reporters in Beijing. Wang said

the two sides were preparing for a fifth round of talks between military commanders at an unspecified date. After the clash on June 15, Chinese and Indian officials met

and agreed to take steps to ease the situation. But the nuclear-armed neighbours have continued to re-inforce the border between Ladakh and Tibet. India has deployed thousands more troops and is conducting extra military flights over the mountainous region. Meanwhile, anti-China sentiment has soared in India since the fight, which sparked street protests and calls for Chinese products to be banned in the nation of 1.3 billion people. The Indian government has now banned dozens of Chinese apps including the highly popular video-sharing platform TikTok over national security and privacy concerns.

INDIA ABROAD

Avni Doshi in Booker Prize longlist

London: Dubai-based Indian-origin author Avni Doshi is among the 13 authors longlisted for the prestigious 2020 Booker Prize for her debut novel 'Burnt Sugar', alongside double Booker winner Hilary Mantel for 'The Mirror and the Light'. The so-called 'Booker Dozen' was unveiled Tuesday after judges evaluated 162 novels published in the UK or Ireland between October 2019 and September 2020, with a shortlist of six to be whittled down by September in time for the 50,000-pound literary prize in November. "This utterly compelling read examines a complex and unusual mother-daughter relationship with honest, unflinching realism - sometimes emotionally wrenching but also cathartic, written with poignancy and memorability," the judges said of Doshi's longlisted entry. Doshi has previously spoken about the long journey to her first novel, which was released in India last year as 'Girl in White Cotton' and gets a UK release this Thursday as 'Burnt Sugar'.



PIO appointed as leader of Oppn in S'pore

Singapore: Indian-origin politician Pritam Singh was Tuesday designated as the Leader of the Opposition in Singapore, the first such appointment in the history of the city-state. The 43-year old Singh's Workers' Party won 10 parliamentary seats out of the 93 contested in the July 10 general elections held, making it the biggest opposition presence in Singapore's Parliament. Singh is the Secretary-General of Workers' Party. "Singapore's legislatures have never had formally designated Leaders of the Opposition, and such a position is not provided for in the Constitution or the Standing Orders of Parliament," the parliamentary offices said in its statement Tuesday.



North Korean officials abused repatriated women: UN

THE WOMEN SPOKE TO UN HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICIALS AFTER EVENTUALLY FLEEING NORTH KOREA FOLLOWING THEIR DETENTION

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Geneva, July 28: The UN human rights office reported Tuesday that scores of North Korean women who had travelled abroad in a desperate search for work were abused by security officials and police through beatings, detention in unsanitary conditions, undernourishment and invasive body searches after being sent back home.

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights presented the findings in a new report that alleges "multiple and serious human rights viola-

tions by state security and police officials" in North Korea, based on 100 accounts from women who were detained in the secretive country from 2009 to 2019 after being forcibly returned home. The women spoke to UN human rights officials after eventually fleeing North Korea following their detention.

Testimonies suggest the women, who often fell into the custody of human traffickers, faced bonded labour or sexual exploitation in other countries — then were deemed traitors or punished for contacting Christian groups abroad after their return. "It is heart-

breaking to read these stories of women who fled their country looking to make ends meet, but who ended up being punished," High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet said in a statement accompanying the report.

She said the women "should be taken care of, not detained and subjected to further human rights violations." "These women have a right to justice, truth and reparation," she added. North Korea's diplomatic mission in Geneva did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The UN rights office also called on foreign coun-



tries where the women fled — at times including neighbouring

China — to respect the principle of "non-refoulement," or not returning

people to countries where they could face a real risk of human rights violations. "These accounts show once again the systemic nature of human rights violations in the DPRK, and the need to keep seeking pathways to proper accountability for such crimes," Bachelet said, using the acronym for North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The report only focused on women who had fled abroad, not the many people held in political prisons in North Korea which are believed to also be a site of human rights violations.

NZ suspends extradition treaty with HK



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Wellington, July 28: New Zealand has suspended its extradition treaty with Hong Kong, as the new national security law imposed by China in the city was not consistent with the country's "principles", Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced Tuesday.

Addressing the media here, Ardern said those principals are "basic freedom of association and the right to take a political view", reports *The New Zealand Herald* newspaper.

When asked if New Zealand should expect repercussions from China, Ardern said the two countries have a "mature" relationship.

"There have been occasions where we have taken different positions (with China) - this obviously will be one of them."

"We have been very consistent, we will be open where there are areas we have to adjust our position," she added.

Earlier in the day, Foreign Minister Winston Peters said New Zealand could no longer trust that Hong Kong's criminal justice system was independent from China.

New Zealand's decision follows similar moves by Australia, Canada and the UK against Hong Kong due to the law, that targets acts of secession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces, with punishments of up to life in prison for the most serious offences, which came into effect July 2.

Oz bushfires killed or harmed 3bn animals

Mammals, reptiles, birds and frogs died in the flames or from loss of habitat

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Canberra, July 28: Nearly three billion animals were killed or displaced during the devastating 2019-20 Australian bushfires, according to a new report issued Tuesday.

The findings meant it was one of "worst wildlife disasters in modern history", according to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which commissioned the report, the *BBC* reported. The mega blazes, which swept across every Australian state, also killing at least 33 people. Mammals, reptiles, birds and frogs died in the flames or from loss of habitat.

During the peak of the crisis in January, scientists had estimated that 1.25 billion animals had been killed in New South Wales and Victoria alone. But the new estimate takes in a larger area. About 11.46 million hectares - an area comparable to England - was scorched from last September to this February. "When you think about nearly



three billion native animals being in the path of the fires, it is absolutely huge - it's a difficult number to comprehend," the *BBC* quoted Professor Chris Dickman, who oversaw the project by 10 scientists from Australian universities, as saying. He said they could not yet state an exact death toll, but noted the chances of animals escaping the blazes and surviving were "probably not that great" due to a lack of food and shelter. In February, the Australian government identified 113 animal species which needed "urgent help" after the bushfires. Almost all on the list had lost at least 30 per cent of their habitat in temperate forests and grasslands of Australia's south and east.

of the day quote

We have launched 600 new Studio Stores to take the brand retail experience all the way to Tier II and Tier III towns across the country

LALIT MALIK | CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER, ROYAL ENFIELD

The government must look at rationalising levies on the telecom sector and close long standing legal disputes that are a big drag on the performance

SUNIL MITTAL | CHAIRMAN, BHARTI AIRTEL

Yatra.com is looking at becoming a digital services platform from being just a travel services firm, and is working in that direction

DHRUV SHRINGI | CO-FOUNDER & CEO, YATRA.COM



The government is making efforts to attract FDI in infrastructure sector to address liquidity crunch faced by the COVID-19-hit economy

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER, ROAD TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS & MSME

APPLE TOPS VALUABLE BRANDS IN FORBES' LIST

With a brand value of \$241.2 billion, Apple has topped the Forbes' annual list of the World's Most Valuable Brands, which looked at the top 100 companies from the fiscal year 2019.



PM to discuss economic roadmap with banks, NBFCs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 28: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday will discuss and deliberate the economic vision and roadmap for the future, in a brainstorming session with stakeholders from banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).

The topics on the agenda include credit products and efficient models for delivery, financial empowerment through technology, and prudential practices for stability and sustainability of the financial sector, the Prime Minister's Office said Tuesday. The session comes in view of bank-

THE TOPICS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE CREDIT PRODUCTS AND EFFICIENT MODELS FOR DELIVERY, FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY, AND PRUDENTIAL PRACTICES FOR STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FINANCIAL SECTOR



THE SESSION COMES IN VIEW OF BANKING SECTOR'S ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH FINANCING INFRASTRUCTURE, AGRICULTURE, AND LOCAL MANUFACTURING, INCLUDING MSMEs

ing sector's role in contributing to India's economic growth through financing infrastructure, agriculture, and local manufacturing, including Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

As per the PMO, financial inclusion can play a big role in financial empowerment through technology. Senior officers from the government will also be a part of the interaction that will most likely be held through video conferencing in view of the novel coronavirus pandemic which has badly hit the country.

May 12, Modi announced a ₹20

lakh crore economic package, equivalent to 10 per cent of India's gross domestic product or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to boost the economy.

The Central government has also pushed several key reforms in the "factor markets", which roughly denote five economic determinants: land, labour, capital, technology and infrastructure. The Prime Minister's meeting with banks and NBFCs assumes significance in efforts to boost the economy which was already tumbling before Covid-19 struck on January 30. The GDP grew just 4.71 per cent the slowest pace in six years.

FREQ INDICATORS SHOW V-SHAPED RECOVERY: CII



AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 28: Industry body CII Tuesday said high frequency indicators are showing a material improvement as compared to multi-year low seen in April, and pointing towards a V-shaped recovery after the economy suffered on account of lockdown amid the coronavirus pandemic.

A clutch of indicators including GST collections, railway freight traffic, petrol consumption, peak power demand, electronic toll collections, among others, have all mirrored the incipient signs of recovery, it said.

Though still early, these are indeed promising signs, pointing towards a V-shaped recovery in the immediate aftermath of the lockdown, the chamber said.

CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee said that in order to nurture the nascent signs of recovery, it is important to mitigate the uncertainties that are currently prevailing regarding the restrictions.

Corporates are unable to plan beyond a horizon of a few weeks, affecting all operations, he said.

Even though the early signs of recovery are encouraging, it is critical to build on these, by deploying all the policy levers, he said and added the business activities must be allowed to function, by removing the uncertainties associated with imposing 'mini lockdowns', he said.

The CII official further said although it is not possible to predict the course of the pandemic, a dashboard approach, triggering predictable responses based on the progression of infections, can reduce uncertainty and boost both consumer and industry confidence.

Also, in order to ensure that the supply chains function seamlessly across state and district boundaries, including the containment zones, the latter should be limited to micro areas.

India's oil bill may dip 40% on COVID

A \$1 fall in crude oil prices helps India reduce import bill by almost ₹2,900 crore

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 28: At least in the oil sector, the global health emergency caused by coronavirus is coming to India's advantage. While the severe demand squeeze due to the pandemic helped India save on oil imports, low global crude prices could help it further in reducing sharply the import bill.

Declining consistently since April, India's oil imports fell about 29 per cent (YoY) to around 13.44 million tonnes in June, the lowest since October 2011. In value terms, the June oil imports stood at \$4.93 billion (Rs 37,341.70 crore), down 55.29 per cent in the dollar terms from \$11.03 billion (Rs 76,586.73 crore) in June 2019.

In April, it fell to 16.55 million tonnes, a 16 per cent YoY decline, from 17.28 million tonnes reported earlier. In May, crude oil imports fell 22.6 per cent, the biggest drop since at least 2005, to 14.61 million tonnes against the year-ago month.

If the trend continues, crude oil imports in FY21 may fall to 180 million tonnes, 50 million tonnes lower than 227 million tonnes imported in FY20. At current prices, the value of this 50 million tonnes will be around \$20 billion.

Moreover, India may further reduce its oil import bill with crude



oil prices remaining low or range-bound around \$35-45 a barrel in FY21.

Assuming \$40 a barrel average crude oil price and the rupee-dollar rate holding closer to current levels, and monthly imports remaining low at 15 million tonnes (average), for FY21, the import bill could slip to 60 per cent of the last year's \$60-65 billion. Similar level of import bill was witnessed in FY16 when crude had fallen to \$26 a barrel for some time.

India has already reduced oil import bill by over 60 per cent in the first quarter (April-June) of FY21. In Q1FY21, oil imports were worth \$13.08 billion (Rs 99,259.42 crore), which was 62.47 per cent lower in the dollar terms from \$34.85 bil-

lion (Rs 2,42,398.55 crore) for Q1FY20.

According to the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) of the oil ministry, imports stood at around 227 million tonnes in FY20 against 226.5 mt in FY19. The import bill last year was \$101.4 billion against \$111.9 billion in FY19.

A \$1 fall in crude oil prices helps India reduce import bill by almost ₹2,900 crore, while one rupee fall in value of the currency against dollar raises spending by around ₹2,700 crore.

"The oil import bill may fall below \$100 billion this year as coronavirus and its continuity may have further dented the oil market. It could bring down the country's oil purchase bill sharply," said an oil sector expert.

RELIANCE TO PAY ₹27k CR FOR FUTURE GROUP CHAINS

AGENCIES

Mumbai, July 28: Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd will pay between ₹24,000 crore and ₹27,000 crore (\$3.2-\$3.6 billion) to buy the Indian retail chains owned by Future Group, mint newspaper reported Tuesday, citing two sources familiar with details of the deal.

Asia's richest man, Ambani has been buoyed by investments close to \$20 billion from backers including Google and Facebook in his oil-to-telecoms conglomerate, and is seeking to strengthen his hand in India's huge retail sector.

Reliance's existing retail operation already runs close to 12,000 stores, including a cash-and-carry wholesale business, in over 6,700 Indian towns and cities.

Owned by India's "father of mod-

ern retailing", Kishore Biyani, Future Group is home to supermarket chain Big Bazaar, upmarket food stores Foodhall, and bargain clothing chain Brand Factory.

A series of media reports have said the two were nearing agreement on the deal.

Ratings agency ICRA estimates total debt at Future Group's listed companies had risen to ₹12,770 crore by September last year and the company has since faced widespread closures under India's coronavirus lockdowns. The sale value included Future Group's liabilities.

Five listed entities, including Future Retail Ltd, will be merged into Future Enterprises Ltd (FEL) before the sale to one of the retail subsidiaries of Reliance, the paper added.

BIZ BUZZ

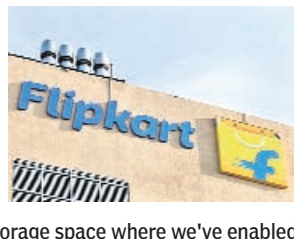
Jewellers seek extension of deadline for hallmarking

Mumbai: Even as the gems and jewellery industry welcomed the government's decision to extend the compulsory hallmarking, jewellers feel it's not enough to liquidate the current stock and they need a minimum one-year time. In view of the coronavirus pandemic, the government on Monday announced the extension of a deadline for mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts by over four months till June 1, 2021. "We welcome this decision to give extension on mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts. However, we have been requesting for a one-year extension. Practically, there are no sales taking place and unless we sell, we cannot replace our stock with hallmark gold," All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council Chairman Anantha Padmanabhan said.



Flipkart starts hyperlocal service 'Flipkart Quick'

New Delhi: Walmart-owned Flipkart Tuesday announced the launch of its hyperlocal delivery service 'Flipkart Quick' that will enable customers to receive grocery, fresh vegetables, meat and mobile phones in 90 minutes. The service will be available in select locations in Bengaluru initially and gradually scaled up and expanded to six large cities by the end of the year, Flipkart Vice-President Sandeep Karwa told PTI. "Everything which we expect our neighbourhood departmental store to carry is all what we made live. Along with this, we've also announced the launch of our fruits and vegetables, and meats category...we've created a storage space where we've enabled a lot of our sellers to store their inventory," he added.



Commerce Min rejects MEIS applications from exporters

New Delhi: The commerce ministry has blocked the online system for exporters to apply for availing tax incentives under the MEIS scheme from July 23 as the department of revenue (DoR) decided to limit the benefits under the scheme at ₹9,000 crore for April-December 2020. According to an office memorandum of the DGFT, the Department of Revenue in May had conveyed that it may not be feasible to exceed MEIS allocation beyond ₹9,000 crore for 2020-21 (up to December 2020). It has also been suggested to review MEIS and coverage so that the benefit outgo remains within the allocation of ₹9,000 crore in this period. The commerce department has requested its revenue counterpart to reconsider its decision, and a communication has also been sent by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman July 21. In the meanwhile, according to the office memorandum, the database for MEIS scrip issuance has been checked.



Global 5G network infra spending to nearly double in 2020

GREATER CHINA LEADS THE WORLD IN 5G DEVELOPMENT, WITH 49.4 PER CENT OF WORLDWIDE INVESTMENT IN 2020 ATTRIBUTED TO THE REGION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

San Francisco, July 28: The worldwide spending on 5G network infrastructure will almost double in 2020 to reach \$8.1 billion, according to a forecast by Gartner Tuesday.

Investment by communications service providers (CSPs) in 5G network infrastructure accounted for 10.4 per cent of total wireless infrastructure revenue in 2019.

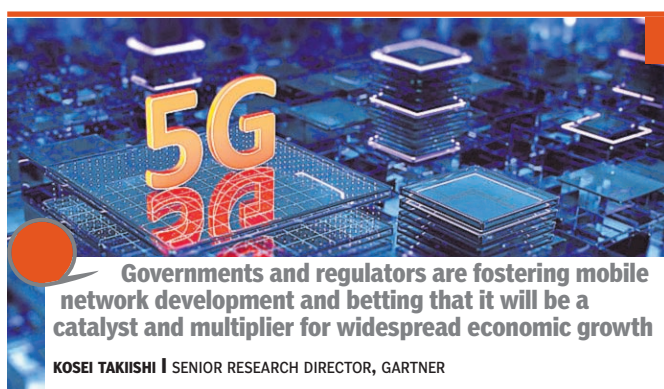
This figure will reach 21.3 per cent in 2020, said the report.

"Early 5G adopters are driving greater competition among communications service providers," Kosei Takiishi, Senior Research Director at Gartner, said in a statement. "In addition, governments

and regulators are fostering mobile network development and betting that it will be a catalyst and multiplier for widespread economic growth across many industries."

Gartner predicts that communications service providers in Greater China, mature Asia/Pacific, North America and Japan will reach 5G coverage across 95 per cent of national populations by 2023.

"Despite investment growth rates in 5G being slightly lower in 2020 due to the Covid-19 crisis (excluding Greater China and Japan), communications service providers in all regions are quickly pivoting new and discretionary spend to build out the 5G network and 5G as a platform," said Takiishi.



Over the short-term, Greater China leads the world in 5G development, with 49.4 per cent of worldwide investment in 2020 attributed

to the region, said the report

The cost-effective infrastructure manufactured in China coupled with state sponsorship and reduced

NEXT-GEN NETWORK

THE COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL GRADUALLY ADD STAND-ALONE (SA) CAPABILITIES TO THEIR NON-STAND-ALONE (NSA) 5G NETWORKS

BY 2023, 15 PER CENT OF COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE PROVIDERS WORLDWIDE WILL OPERATE STAND-ALONE 5G NETWORKS THAT DO NOT RELY ON 4G

regulatory barriers is paving the way for major communications service providers in China to quickly build 5G coverage.

"However, other early adopting and technologically adept nations

are not far behind," said Takiishi. 5G investment will rebound modestly in 2021 as communications service providers seek to capitalise on changed behaviours sparked by populations' elevated reliance on communications networks, said Gartner, adding that 5G investment will exceed LTE/4G in 2022.

The communications service providers will gradually add stand-alone (SA) capabilities to their non-stand-alone (NSA) 5G networks.

By 2023, 15 per cent of communications service providers worldwide will operate stand-alone 5G networks that do not rely on 4G network infrastructure, according to the prediction by Gartner.

RECONSIDERING FUTURE

WARNER DOUBTFUL OVER CONTINUING AS INTERNATIONAL CRICKETER OWING TO THE COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS THAT WILL REQUIRE HIM TO TRAVEL WITHOUT FAMILY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Melbourne, July 28: Prolific Australia opener David Warner says he may have to reconsider his future as an international cricketer owing to the global COVID-19 restrictions that will require him to travel without family to fulfil stringent quarantine conditions.

Warner, who made a successful return to international cricket after serving a one-year ban for ball tampering, has three daughters with wife Candice. The 33-year-old said staying away from family will not be an easy task.

“Obviously three daughters and my wife, who I owe a lot to, has been a big part of my playing career. You’ve always got to look out for your family first, and with cricket and these unprecedented times, you’ve got to weigh up these decisions,” Warner was quoted as saying by ‘ESPNcricinfo’.

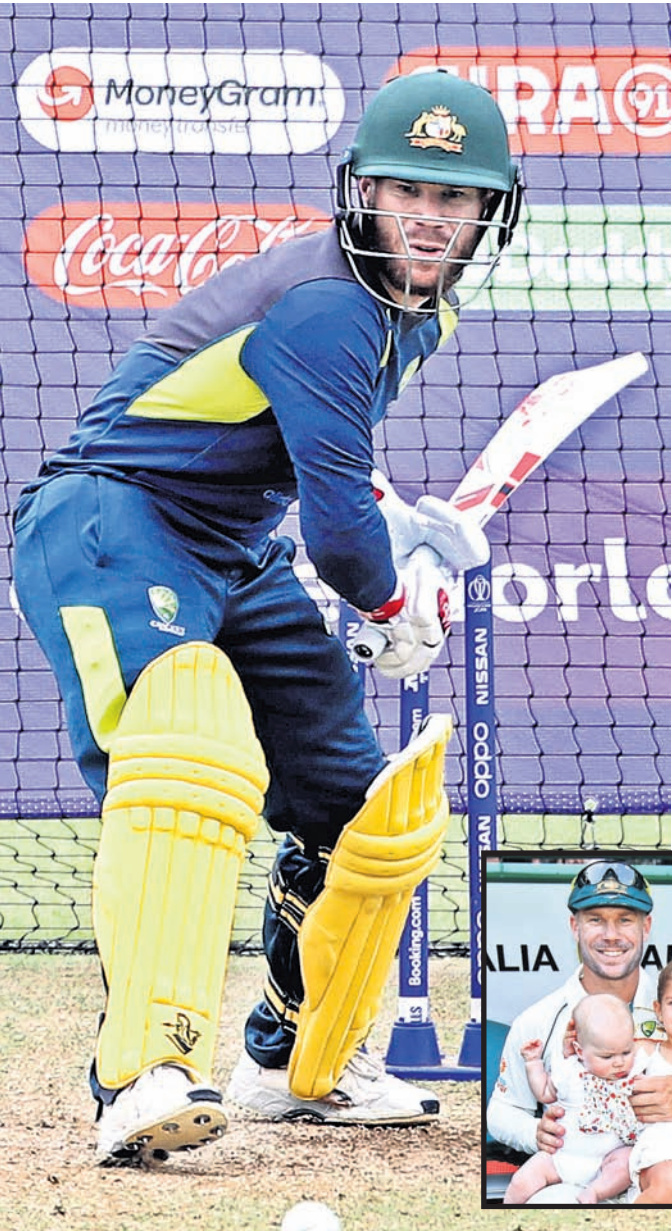
“Look, at the moment, I’ll keep continuing to aim for that. Obviously the T20 (World Cup) is not here at home, which would have been ideal to play that and win that here. Now that gets pushed back. I will have to have a rethink about that when it comes to India.

“I’ll see where I am and where the girls are as with school as well. A lot of that is a big part of my decision. It’s not just when the games are being played and how much cricket’s being played. It’s a big family decision for myself.”

Cricket is taking small steps towards resumption amid the raging pandemic, putting in place tough quarantine rules and creating bio bubbles to negate the threat of infection.

In Australia, Warner said cricketers do not have many options apart from training in their home states as of now.

“We’re obviously unsure and unclear given states are in lockdown



ready for the season.”

With cases rising in Victoria, Warner feels the state may miss out on hosting international fixtures, including the Boxing Day Test.

“It’s going to be challenging for everyone. I think we spoke about state cricket. That’s the perfect example. How is Victoria going to be able to start (Sheffield) Shield cricket down there. At the moment, it seems like it’ll be impossible.”

Warner is also worried about lack of red-ball preparation ahead of the Test series against Afghanistan and India since they will be playing too many limited-overs matches in lead of up to the Test series.

Australia are scheduled to travel to England in September. Some players, including Warner, will then head to the UAE for the delayed IPL before hosting Afghanistan and India.

“Usually you have a couple of Shield games leading into a Test series, especially at home,” he said. “So I think the unique thing about it is the Indian team and ourselves are going to be in the same boat really.

“We’re going to have a lack of red-ball cricket preparation and



Warner with his wife and kids

or not letting people from other states go interstate. We have to sit back and wait for the government and states to see what the regulations

are behind that,” he said.

“All we can do really is train with our states and prepare as well as we can on the wickets provided to get

end of the day we have to make the most of that time training in the lead up to the Test series.”

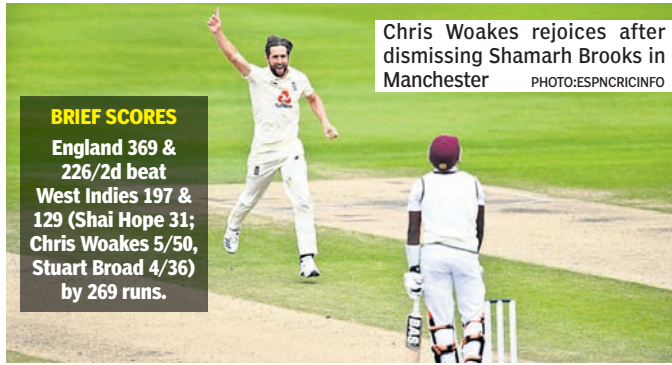
Woakes, Broad hand England the series

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, July 28: England won the first cricket series in four months when it defeated the West Indies in the deciding third Test by 269 runs on the last day Tuesday at Old Trafford. England snatched the bio-secure series 2-1 after losing the first Test by 113 runs in Southampton.

The West Indies, resuming the fifth and last day on 10/2, had a tall order to bat out the day to force a series-saving draw, any hope of making 399 to win long gone. The weather wasn’t going to save the tourists, either; though they stopped for showers three times.

The visitors lost three wickets in the morning session, and the rest within 90 minutes after lunch to be all out for 129.



Chris Woakes rejoices after dismissing Shamir Brooks in Manchester

BRIEF SCORES
England 369 & 226/2d beat West Indies 197 & 129 (Shai Hope 31; Chris Woakes 5/50, Stuart Broad 4/36) by 269 runs.

The series-winning last wicket gave Broad 4/36 in the innings and 10 for the match, his first 10-for since 2013. In between the milestones, Chris Woakes bowled for 11 straight overs and took 5/50. A run out bagged the other West Indies wicket.

It was a bad end for the West

Indies, but the team deserved kudos for agreeing to travel to one of the world’s worst hotspots in the pandemic, following the health protocols, and contributing to a gripping contest. It was the first time since 1912 that England pacers took 50 wickets in a three-match series.

Losing run ends for Anand after beating Gelfand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 28: Viswanathan Anand finally snapped the string of defeats at the Legends of Chess online tournament, beating Boris Gelfand of Israel 2.5-0.5 in the seventh round.

Playing against long-time rival after six straight losses, Anand won his first game of the tournament despite conceding early advantage Monday night.

The Indian ace won in 45 moves with black pieces and continued the good work by claiming the second game in 49 moves. Anand then settled for a 46-move draw in the third game against his 2012 world championship challenger.

It’s not been as disastrous the last three days as the first three, but it’s nice to get a win,” Anand, making his debut on the Magnus Carlsen Tour.

The victory moved the former world champion to eighth spot with six points ahead of Hungarian Peter Leko (5 points) and Chinese World No.3 Ding Liren (3).

Anand, ranked 15th in the world, faces Liren in the eighth round later. World No.1 Magnus Carlsen extended his lead at the top by defeating Peter Svidler 2.5-1.5 to reach 20 points while Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi needed an Armageddon to overcome Leko 3-2 and is close on the heels of the Norwegian with 18.

Legends of Chess is a unique event where Carlsen, 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.

The winner of the event will qualify for the USD 300,000 Grand Final scheduled from August 9 to 20.

RESULTS (ROUND 7): Viswanathan Anand (India) beat Boris Gelfand (Israel) 2.5-0.5; Ian Nepomniachtchi (Russia) beat Peter Leko (Hungary) 3-2; Magnus Carlsen (Norway) beat Peter Svidler (Russia) 2.5-1.5; Anish Giri (the Netherlands) beat Ding Liren (China) 2.5-1.5; Vasyi Ivanchuk (Ukraine) beat Vladimir Kramnik (Russia) 3-1.

Final call on schedule as well as other arrangements set to be taken

IPL GC meeting August 2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 28: The IPL’s Governing Council (GC) will meet August 2 to give a final shape to the schedule and other arrangements for the eagerly-awaited T20 showpiece to be played in the UAE this year.

The tournament, forced out of India due to the raging COVID-19 pandemic, will be played from September 19 to November 8 in the UAE. “The IPL governing council will meet August 2,” IPL Chairman Brijesh Patel told PTI.

Another top official of the BCCI said that the eight franchises will get a clear picture of the tournament’s modalities during the meeting.

“It is expected that franchises will be handed the SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) after the meeting,” the senior official said on condition of anonymity.

The meeting, expected to be attended by top BCCI brass, including President Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah, would address



concerns of various stakeholders.

The tenures of both Ganguly and Shah are over but the two have sought a relaxation in the Lodha Committee-recommended cooling off norms from the Supreme Court, which will hear the matter August 17.

Also, most likely, this edition of the IPL would have less number of double-headers which would be beneficial for broadcasters.

Ways to negate the loss of gate money for the franchises, since the matches will be played before empty stadiums in a bio-secure environment, will also be a major topic of discussion.

Kohli, Rohit lead batsmen ranking

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, July 28: India captain Virat Kohli and his deputy Rohit Sharma continue to occupy the top two batting spots in the ICC ODI rankings while pacer Jasprit Bumrah stayed put in second place among bowlers in the latest list issued Tuesday. Pakistan’s Babar Azam is third.

In the bowlers list, Bumrah (719 points) is behind New Zealand pacer Trent Boult (722), while Afghanistan’s Mujeeb Ur Rahman (701) occupies the third spot.

Ravindra Jadeja is the lone Indian to feature in the top 10 all-rounders rankings at the eight spot. Afghanistan’s Mohammad Nabi is leading pack in this category.

Ashwin wants change in rule for non-strikers



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 28: India’s premier spinner Ravichandran Ashwin wants technology to be used to track the batsman at the non-striker’s end who is backing up too far, which he believes is an unfair advantage for the batting side.

He has always been consistent about his stand and suggested that the technology used to check front foot no balls can be also used to keep a tab on non-strikers backing up even before the bowler reaches the popping crease.

“Just hope that technology will see if a batsman is backing up before the bowler bowls a ball and disallow the runs of that ball every time the batter does so! Thus, parity will be restored as far as the front line is concerned,” Ashwin put forth his view point on a series of tweets.

Ashwin has been one of the big advocates of ‘Mankading’ and his dismissal of Jos Buttler during Kings XI Punjab’s IPL encounter against Rajasthan Royals grabbed headlines last year.

“Many of you will not be able to see the grave disparity here, so let me take some time out to clarify to the best of my abilities. If the non-striker backs up 2 feet and manages to come back for a 2, he will put the same batsmen on strike for the next ball,” he said.

“Putting the same batsmen on strike might cost me a 4 or a 6 from the next ball and eventually cost me 7 more runs instead of may be a 1 and a dot ball possibility at a different batsman. The same will mean massively for a batter wanting to get off strike even in a Test match,” he explained elaborately.

For Ashwin, it’s all about restoring the balance between bat and ball in a game that is loaded heavily in favour of willow wielders. “It is time to restore the balance in what is an increasingly tough environment for the bowlers,” he said.

Technology won’t be a hindrance, feels Ashwin. “We can use the same tech that we are proposing for a no ball check 120 balls in a T20 game,” said Ashwin.

SPINNER SEEKS BALANCE BETWEEN BAT & BALL

Planning for Olympics in pandemic has echoes of 1920 Games

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dusseldorf, July 28: Olympic athletes competing for gold medals in a world reeling from a pandemic? It won’t be the first time.

A century before the Tokyo Games were postponed because of coronavirus, the Olympics were held in the Belgian city of Antwerp following the Spanish flu pandemic.

The 1920 Games were meant to symbolize a recovery from World War I, not a health crisis. Belgium, a battleground for the opposing powers, was the host country and the five rings of the Olympic flag flew at an opening ceremony for the first time.

“They released doves, although these were not necessarily doves of peace, because these were doves which had served in the war and they were released by military men,” Roland Renson, a Belgian sports historian, told this agency.

Both the pandemic and the war were epitomized by Aileen Rignin, a 14-year-old American diver who won a gold medal.

Rignin first took up competitive swimming after becoming sick with the Spanish flu, and she went on a tour of a World War I battlefield after winning gold in the 3-meter springboard.

She took a German helmet and some bullets as souvenirs, but got a shock when she examined one of the many boots lying in the churned-up mud. “I picked up one that had



a foot in it, so I dropped it in a hurry,” she recalled later.

The coronavirus has blocked Antwerp’s attempt to mark the centenary. A ceremony in March due to feature the King of Belgium and the president of the International Olympic Committee was canceled.

Despite taking place in the wake of a major war, reconciliation at the Antwerp Olympics had its limits. Germany and its wartime allies didn’t compete, nor did Bolshevik-controlled Russia. They weren’t officially banned, simply not invited.

One Swedish figure skater (then in the Summer Olympics before the Winter Games started in 1924) was reportedly forbidden from performing to German music.

There were financial problems, too. Ingenious shortcuts like making a pool from a ditch in the city fortifi-

cations—Riggin and other athletes hated the cold, dark water—helped keep costs down, but the Belgian organizing committee still lost money and left behind unpaid debt.

“Antwerp has never cherished its Olympic heritage because of the debacle,” Renson said. The postponement of the Tokyo Olympics to 2021 is estimated to cost Japan at least USD 2 billion.

The Spanish flu swept around the world from 1918 until early 1920, killing an estimated 50 million people, though war and poverty made a precise count impossible.

Older people make up a large share of the coronavirus death toll, but the Spanish flu was a particular threat to younger people. That included the soldiers gathered in often squalid conditions as WWI ended.

The flu-infected troops in France and Belgium and then hitched a ride when they were demobilized.



Nurses attending Spanish Flu patients

Parties to welcome soldiers home became infection hot spots.

Seven Olympic athletes are believed to have died from the Spanish flu, according to records provided by Olympic historian and physician Bill Mallon.

They include three WWI veterans as well as Martin Sheridan, a New York policeman who was born in Ireland and won gold medals for the United States in the discus and shot put over multiple early Olympics.

“This flag dips to no earthly king,” Sheridan reportedly said at the 1908 London Olympics when the US team refused to lower its flag in a sign of respect to the British royal family.

The comment was first published decades later and its veracity is disputed, but the United States continues the tradition of not dipping the flag at Olympic ceremonies.

Mallon and other researchers



ROLAND RENSON

have identified 48 cases of COVID-19 among Olympians, with 19 deaths attributed to the disease.

For Belgium, the Spanish flu was another setback to rebuilding after the devastation of WWI. However, Renson said he has not found any direct impact from the pandemic on Olympic preparations.

The Antwerp Olympics were meant to mark new beginnings, but many traditions from before the war remained.

Athletes had to be amateurs, but that rule often meant mediocre competitions between wealthy gentlemen. Working-class people were alienated and many events were poorly attended, with the exception of soccer.

“Belgians loved cycling but snubbed the Olympic races for more exciting professional events,” Renson

said. Some sailing classes had only one entry, meaning the crew simply had to finish to earn a gold medal.

Times were changing, though. It was the Olympic debut for Finnish distance runner Paavo Nurmi, whose scientific approach to training and race strategy helped him to nine gold medals in his career, including three in Antwerp.

Sports were increasingly a full-time occupation, even if that meant bending the rules on amateurism. “The American rowing team, these were all Navy men and they trained every day. So you can ask questions whether they were amateurs or not,” Renson said.

“Amateurism was a means to exclude working-class people, simple as that. Paavo Nurmi was not a saint. He was a pure professional.”

The 1920 Olympics excluded many women, too. Two years later, female athletes staged their own break-away Women’s Olympic Games. That eventually forced the International Olympic Committee to move closer to gender equality.

Many Olympic champions from 1920 are little remembered today, but the games were a symbolic resurrection of sports in adversity. “In a minimum of time, they organized the games, but they were relatively improvised games,” Renson said.

“They had to do it with the means they had at their disposal, and they were at that time far from abundant in a city so heavily hit by war.”