



NEW HOBBY

Actor Karishma Kotak has started taking online psychology classes to make the most of lockdown

LEISURE

P2



G7 TO COUNTER CHINA

The G7 is slated to announce a global infrastructure plan in response to China's ambitious BRI

INTERNATIONAL

P10



KREJICKOVA TRIUMPHS

Barbora Krejickova wins her first Grand Slam title beating Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova in French Open final

SPORTS

P12

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Petrol, diesel prices cross ₹100/ltr mark

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 12: Sri Ganganagar, a small city in northernmost part of Rajasthan near the India-Pakistan border has become the first city in the country where retail prices of both auto fuels – petrol and diesel – have crossed the century mark.

The city already had the distinction of having the highest pump price of petrol across the country at ₹107.23 a litre. With diesel prices now increasing there by another 25 paise per litre Saturday it reached ₹100.06 a litre.

However, the record may not be held for long as elsewhere in Rajasthan

| CITY FUEL PRICES | |
|------------------|----------------|
| PETROL | ₹96.93 (+0.28) |
| DIESEL | ₹94.85 (+0.26) |

as well, especially towns near the border areas, diesel is expected to touch the ₹100-mark soon.

Similarly, a few places in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, where by virtue of higher VAT rates, fuel prices are always much higher than rest of the country. Premium fuels have already been above the ₹100-mark in several cities for past few months.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Had it been pre-Independence era, we could have shifted all these Lakshadweep people to Andaman!!

| WEATHER | |
|----------|----------------------|
| | BHUB |
| MAX | 32.3°C |
| MIN | 25.0°C |
| Humidity | 97% |
| Rainfall | Trace |
| | CTK |
| MAX | 34.2°C |
| MIN | 25.5°C |
| Humidity | 98% |
| Rainfall | 36mm |
| Forecast | Generally cloudy sky |

Indian-origin journalist wins Pulitzer Prize

MEGHA RAJAGOPALAN'S XINJIANG SERIES ON DETENTION CAMPS FOR MUSLIMS IN CHINA WON HER THE PRIZE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, June 12: Megha Rajagopalan, an Indian-origin journalist, along with two contributors has won the Pulitzer Prize for innovative investigative reports that exposed a vast infrastructure of prisons and mass internment camps secretly built by China for detaining hundreds of thousands of Muslims in its restive Xinjiang region.

Rajagopalan from BuzzFeed News is among two Indian-origin journalists who won the US' top journalism award Friday.

Tampa Bay Times' Neil Bedi won for local reporting. Neil Bedi along with Kathleen McGrory has been awarded the



prize for the series exposing a Sheriff's Office initiative that used computer modelling to identify people believed to be future crime suspects. About 1,000

people were monitored under the programme, including children.

"What Kathleen and Neil unearthed in Pasco County has had a profound impact on the community," said Mark Katches, Times executive editor. "This is what the best investigative journalism can do and why it is so essential." Rajagopalan's Xinjiang series won the Pulitzer Prize in the International Reporting category.

In 2017, not long after China began to detain thousands of Muslims in Xinjiang, Rajagopalan was the first to visit an internment camp - at a time when China denied that such places existed, BuzzFeed News said.

"In response, the government tried to silence her, revoking her visa and

ejecting her from the country," BuzzFeed News wrote in its entry for the prize. "It would go on to cut off access to the entire region for most Westerners and stymie journalists. The release of basic facts about detainees slowed to a trickle."

Working from London, and refusing to be silenced, Rajagopalan partnered with two contributors, Alison Killing, a licensed architect who specialises in forensic analysis of architecture and satellite images of buildings, and Christo Buschek, a programmer who builds tools tailored for data journalists.

The three of them set out to analyse thousands of satellite images of the Xinjiang region to bring out the series.

IN LORD'S SERVICE



Bhoi servitors fixing the wheels of the Lord's chariot with the axles after having constructed all the 42 wheels of the three chariots in Puri Rath Yard for the upcoming Car Festival

No GST on black fungus drug

Taxes slashed on several Covid items, no change in GST on vaccine

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 12: The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, at its "single-agenda" meeting, Saturday decided to retain the GST on Covid-19 vaccines at 5 per cent. However, it temporarily slashed the tax rates on most supplies and also exempted drugs for treating the black fungus.

The Council decisions are in line with the recommendations made by a Group of Ministers (GoM), which was mandated to examine tax exemption and concessions on various Covid items including vaccines, drugs, and equipment. The GoM which submitted its report early this week recommended keeping rates on Covid vaccines unchanged, owing to the issue of multiple rate structures for procurement.

"When Centre is purchasing and paying GST too on Covid vaccines and they are being given free of cost to the public, the GST rate will make no difference or impact on the people," said Finance Minister Nirmala

Sitharaman after the meeting.

She further added: "It was felt that the GoM's recommendations have brought substantial change. Tax rates on many Covid items have been reduced from 18 per cent to 5 per cent, from 12 per cent to 5 per cent. The GST council largely agreed to go with the recommendations, except for some slight tweaking," she added.

On sharing vaccine revenues with states, the Union minister said that the Centre will buy the 75 per cent vaccine as announced and will pay its GST too. But 70 per cent of income from GST will be shared with states.

"Some of the states pitched for zero tax on Covid relief items which were not taken for consideration," said Chhattisgarh Finance Minister TS Deo. Some states also raised issues with respect to the compensation period, but Council decided to have a separate meeting on it, Deo added. Sources said that some states pushed to raise states' borrowing ceiling to 5 per cent for the current financial year.

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THE GOODS AND SERVICES TAX COUNCIL, at its "single-agenda" meeting, Saturday decided to retain the GST on Covid-19 vaccines at 5 per cent

THE COUNCIL DECISIONS are in line with the recommendations made by a Group of Ministers, which was mandated to examine tax exemption and concessions on various Covid items

ON SHARING VACCINE REVENUES with states, the Union minister said that the Centre will buy the 75 per cent vaccine as announced and will pay its GST too

Covid essentials for which tax rates have been reduced include medicines, oxygen, concentrators, related medical devices, testing kits, related machines and other relief items. GoM had suggested temporarily reducing the rate to nil and 5 per cent on a majority of items including imports and domestic supplies of Covid-19 medicines and materials, including medical oxygen, oxygen concentrators, ventilators, pulse oximeters and testing kits and extend the same till August. But the Council decided to extend the move till September 30.

While GST on Tocilizumab and Amphotericin B (a medicine to treat black fungus) were slashed to nil from 5 per cent, the rate on Remdesivir and anticoagulants like Heparin is lowered from 12 per cent to 5 per cent. The Council stated that tax cuts are valid till September 30, and can be extended further upon nearing the deadline. Based on advice and states' inputs, whether to extend further will be further considered by the GST Implementation Committee.

Dists with low TPR to unlock soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: Districts reporting very low test positivity rates (TPR) are likely to go for unlock soon. This was indicated by the Director of Health Services, Bijay Mohapatra here Saturday.

Speaking to the media here, Mohapatra said that all districts in the state have been divided into three zones on the basis of their TPR – red, yellow and green. The lockdown restricts likely to be relaxed in the districts in green zone (TPR below 5 per cent), while the restrictions would continue in districts having 10 per cent or more TPR, the director

COVID CURBS

said. However, the final decision will be taken by the government, he said.

Asked about the increasing number of Covid fatalities in the state, he said that the number is going up as critically ill elderly patients are still under treatment in various hospitals. 62 per cent ICU and ventilator beds in the state are still occupied by them. Their health status would decide the future fatality graph, he said.

Public health experts suggested that government relax the curbs in a phased manner. "Shopping malls, cinema halls, parks, gyms, religious places, educational institutions etc should remain closed for some more

days. These places can be reopened gradually assessing the Covid-19 situation," said former AIIMS director, Ashok Mohapatra.

Senior doctor Niroj Mishra said the restrictions like weekend shutdowns and night curfew should be continued for some more weeks. Besides, the government should issue SOPs for opening of shops and commercial establishments, he opined.

As per data shared by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, nine districts – Ganjam, Sonepur, Kandhamal, Deogarh, Bargarh, Gajapati, Sambalpur and Balangir, reported TPR of less than five per cent during past one week (June 5 to June 11).

Daily wager beaten to death in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: In another horrific incident, a daily wager was beaten to death after a heated argument turned violent at Bapuji Nagar under Capital police station here Saturday evening. The accused was identified as Narayan Sahu, a resident of Laxmipur in Koraput.

Sahu has been detained by the cops at Capital police station for interrogation. The deceased, Trinath, and Sahu worked as labourers and they engaged in an argument over a petty issue related to their work, Saturday evening. During the argument, Trinath allegedly pushed Sahu and he fell on the ground. An enraged Sahu reacted by hitting Trinath on his head with a boulder injuring him severely.

On being informed, police reached the spot and arrested the accused. At the same time, Trinath was rushed to the Capital Hospital where the doctors declared him 'brought dead'. Three gruesome murders in the last ten days in the city have exposed the tall claims by the Commissionerate Police regarding the law order situation here. Miscreants have been active despite heavy deployment of police personnel across the city to enforce the Covid-induced lockdown.

Another daily wager was beaten to death by his friend over past enmity near Master Canteen area under Kharavela Nagar police station here June 5. Two days later a youth was brutally assaulted by miscreants and he succumbed to his injuries at the SCB Medical College.

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State to conduct UG, PG exams

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: The state government is mulling to conduct the annual under-graduate (UG) and post-graduate (PG) examinations this year. The final decision in this regard will be taken June 18.

Speaking to the media after a meeting with the vice-chancellors of the state universities, Higher Education Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo said, "It has been decided to hold the UG and PG examinations as everyone is in support of it. However, the final decision will be taken at another meeting with VCs to be held June 18."

The vice-chancellors have been asked to discuss the matter with the college principals, faculty members and students before taking the final call, he said.

"Last year, in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, many states had announced cancellation of the examinations but Odisha did not. Later, the Supreme Court too directed conducting the exams," he said.

While the lockdown was enforced in March last year, this year, the lockdown was enforced in May. Till now, online classes are being conducted in the state. The VCs have informed that despite the delay, all courses are likely to be completed by June, the minister said. He appealed all UG and PG students to continue with their preparations for the examinations.

The academic session has been badly affected due to the prevailing second wave of Covid-19 pandemic. If the examinations are held, it is most likely to be conducted in online mode, sources said.

SERO SURVEY PLANNED IN 3 ODISHA DISTS

This is the first time that children above six years old would be included in the survey

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) will conduct a national serological in 70 districts in the country, including three from Odisha, to ascertain the levels of penetration of Covid-19 in these areas.

The Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) in Bhubaneswar will jointly work on the project with the state Health department and the local administrations of the selected districts – Ganjam, Raygada and Koraput.

According to RMRC, preparations for the same have already started in the state. The sero survey is done at intervals to ascertain the levels of coronavirus infections in the community, especially the health workers, frontline workers, common people and others.

"We have already started the preparations and are coordinating with the state government to undertake the sero survey. This is the fourth national sero survey

wherein samples from 10 clusters would be collected from each district," Sanghamitra Pati, Director, RMRC, told Orissa POST.

She further said that during the survey the levels of exposure to the virus are tested among high risk communities, local communities and different sets of people. The survey also studies the presence of antibodies to find the exposure levels of people who might have been exposed to the virus in the period between the past two weeks and a month.

In the upcoming serological survey, the ICMR has planned to study the samples from children who are above the age of six years. "This year a peculiar element has been added where we will also be studying children above six years of age in the three districts of Odisha," she said.

During the serological survey the teams collect blood samples of the selected members of different communities randomly to study the presence of antibodies in the subjects.



leisure

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ARIES

The stars are up to some mischief – you may get into some kind of trouble. But matters may settle down, and by noon, you may have forgotten all about it. The evening will find you quieter and reflective, sober and wiser. Good thing, says Ganesh.

TAURUS

A good day for money and love (you need more?). A quality, professional approach will help you shine out in business today. Be it launching a product or marketing it, you will win yourself hearts, smiles and a bundle of green. Let the leader in you take over during the day and the lover in you return by night, says Ganesh.

GEMINI

The first half of the day should see you fresh and rosy with enthusiasm. You will be able to channel your energies in the right direction today. You will be able to pursue projects which really interest you. You will likely spend your lunch time in the company of friends and family.

CANCER

You will ponder over financial matters, says Ganesh. There is a chance of investing in new ventures. Events in the afternoon may enhance your social prestige. People form a high opinion about you and give you respect.

LEO

You will be in the mood to express your thoughts and opinions unabashedly today. You will try your utmost to make gains in your profession. You will be able to clear off your debts. You should make the most of this beneficial time to end your financial troubles, says Ganesh.

VIRGO

Your creative talents will flourish today. Ganesh says you will be pleased with your possessions which you have carefully safeguarded for a long time. In the evening you may want to refurbish your house by making the necessary additions and subtractions.

LIBRA

Ganesh says you will remain busy in some important research work and you will be able to take out time from work to spend with your family. There will be friends coming over on your invitation and you will have an enjoyable evening with them.

SCORPIO

Health may bag the 'numero uno' position in your list of priorities. You may even plan to hit the gym and pump up your muscles for better results. From now on, your list of daily activities would include exercise and meditation. Ganesh foresees a favourable day for people in the fields of marketing and advertising.

SAGITTARIUS

Today, you will don a spiritual avatar, predicts Ganesh. Meditation is on your mind. Keep a check on your coffers. Talking about professional matters, you may be given the charge of new, upcoming projects, with a pat on your back for previous performances. Romantic developments on one hand, and bad health on the other. But you don't mind, do you?

CAPRICORN

Occasionally, you will throw your weight around, and dominate others. After the first half of the day, may take some extra classes to brush up your skills and enhance your personality, feels Ganesh. Everything is not as good as it may sound. Be ready to receive some bad news today. If you aren't mentally prepared for it, you may find it difficult to accept the news, says Ganesh.

AQUARIUS

Today, you will have a mix bag of struggle and success both. Patience and performance may go through some testing times at work. But, be strong and don't get disheartened as this will not last for long, feels Ganesh. The busy day will have a perfect end with you spending some quality time with your sweetheart.

PISCES

Ganesh predicts this day to be fabulous for you on all counts. You will taste success at work and will receive accolades for your past efforts. The planets are perfectly aligned for those willing to take risks or start new ventures. You will spend quality time with your friends and loved ones in the evening, either to celebrate or to relax.



I HAVE NEVER BEEN A COOK: JASON DERULO

American singer-songwriter Jason Derulo has taken up a new hobby amid the pandemic. He has started trying different recipes in order to put his creativity to good use. "I've never been a cook. This is definitely something new that happened in the pandemic," Derulo said.

MARKLE'S DAD THREATENS TO EXPOSE 'DIRTY LAUNDRY'

Meghan Markle's estranged father Thomas Markle has threatened to expose "dirty laundry" in an upcoming interview scheduled to be aired today. Thomas' assertion came in a teaser clip of the interview to be aired on the US television news magazine show *60 Minutes*, June 13.



When Elli played a cupid

Mumbai: Evelyn Sharma met the love of her life Tushaan Bhandi on a blind date set up by their common friend Elli Avram.

Evelyn and Tushaan in fact lived just a street apart in Bandra for several years, but never really got to know each other. In late 2018 Tushaan completed his work assignments in Mumbai and was ready to relocate in Australia. That was when Elli insisted he go on a blind date with her best friend Evelyn, before he left India.

"I never believed in love at first sight until I met Tushaan. We knew that night that we would want to spend our life together," says Evelyn.

Commenting on their secret wedding, Elli said: "Since I know both Evelyn and Tushaan, I just had this strong feeling that they would be perfect for each other, a complete power couple! Today, I'm so happy seeing these two beautiful souls being happily married."

Tushaan shared everyone needs a friend like Elli.

IAN S



Scam 1992 in IMDb's Top 10 list

Other shows featuring above the Hansal Mehta directorial include 'The Wire', 'Avatar: The Last Airbender', 'Game Of Thrones', 'Chernobyl' and 'Rick And Morty'

Mumbai: The popular series *Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story* has made it to the Top 10 Highest Rated TV Shows Worldwide list of Internet Movie Database (IMDb). This makes the Pratik Gandhi-starrer directed by Hansal Mehta the highest rated Indian show in the list of 250 titles.

Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story has a rating of 9.6 out of 10 on IMDb. The show, directed by Hansal Mehta, has acquired the ninth spot in the list globally.

Ratings of a film or series on IMDb are based on user ratings, and done of a scale of 10. The top spot in the list is taken by *Band Of Brothers* followed by *Breaking Bad* and *Chernobyl*.

Other shows featuring above *Scam 1992* are *The Wire*, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, *Game Of Thrones*, *The Sopranos*, *Rick And Morty*. The tenth spot belongs to the Japanese anime series *The Fullmetal Alchemist*.

IAN S

Karishma making the most of lockdown

Mumbai: With shoots stopped owing to the pandemic, actress Karishma Kotak has started taking mandala sessions and online psychology classes.

"I took to mandala course online recently and I must say it's extremely refreshing and therapeutic. The work

from this form of art seems so intriguing and difficult but they break it down to simple steps and it's quite easy. I am loving the sketching and drawing. I am also taking psychology classes online. The human brain has always interested me. I always think why we do what we do. So, it was only eventual I decided to learn more on it," she says.

The actress encourages people to follow their hobbies.

"Let's take up our hobbies and start working on them if we haven't already. Let's get vaccinated whenever the opportunity comes and stay safe everyone," adds the actress.

Karishma is currently seen on her YouTube channel with the legendary fast bowler *Sir Curtly Ambrose in the Curtly And The Karishma show*.

IAN S

Award-winning Odia film *Kokoli* goes the OTT way

The film bagged six international film awards including two at Bacalar Mexico International Film Festival

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar: Climate change always affects the fisherman community of coastal regions. *Kokoli: Fish out of water*, an Odia film based on this theme had its world digital premiere on streaming platform AAO NXT, Friday.

Though the film had bagged quite a few awards at film festival circuit, it couldn't reach out to its target viewers, said its maker and director Snehasish Das. He was hopeful of getting that audience after the film's digital debut.

One of the best films made on climate change and soil erosion, *Kokoli* stars an ensemble

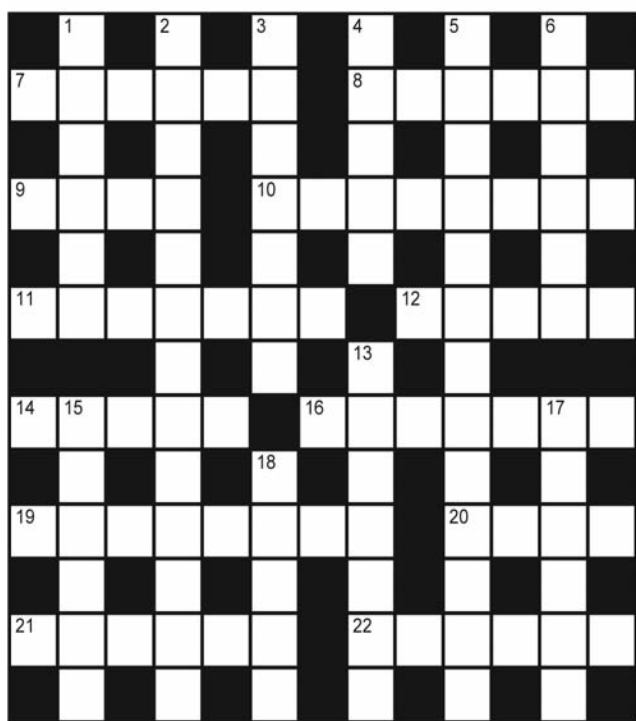


cast including Gargi Mohanty, Linkan Patnaik, Dharitri Khandual and Bhaswati Basu in lead roles. Apart from a couple of state and national awards, the film bagged six in-

ternational film awards including two at Bacalar Mexico International Film Festival. "*Kokoli* is about how rising sea level ruins lives, aspirations and destiny of inhabitants of a fishing settlement close to Puri beach. It was screened at several prestigious film festivals across the globe but couldn't reach the niche audience. The film, with its OTT release, can now be seen by film lovers across the world," said Das. The viewers can directly watch the movie by paying Rs 50 for single viewing without having to subscribe to the platform, he informed.

FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- 7 Manx, e.g.
- 8 Atone
- 9 Commuting option
- 10 Double-faced (3-5)
- 11 Come apart
- 12 Blue-pencils
- 14 African grassland

- 16 Bird with fanlike tail
- 19 Play venues
- 20 Old World duck
- 21 Utilise
- 22 Cigar

- 3 Luxury motor car
- 4 Hilda's transport?
- 5 Ring outcome, possibly (5,8)
- 6 Bug
- 13 Endure
- 15 Dig up
- 17 Lowlife
- 18 Hee-haws

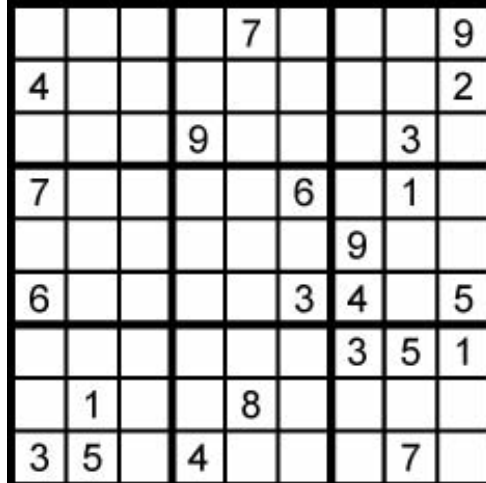
Down

- 1 Hold up
- 2 Snooker venue (8,5)

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

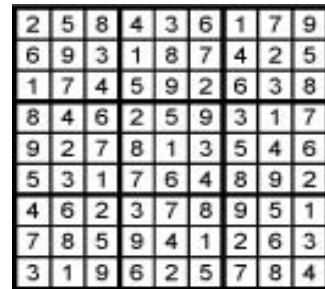


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



downtown

4 yrs on, Smart Janpath still a pipe dream

AVIRAL MISHRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 12: The proposed Smart Janpath project in the Capital city has missed several deadlines since its inception in 2017, causing much inconvenience to the denizens.

Initiated as one of the projects under Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL), the idea was to give a grandiose makeover to the 5.8-km stretch between Sishu Bhawan Square and Raj Mahal Square- also known as Janpath here.

The ambitious project envisages construction of public plazas (hangout zones), an 11-km long footpath and cycle track, smart vending zones, sensor-based on-street parking facility, underground cabling and active surveillance systems.

However, four years down the lane the project has been hanging fire even though construction activities continue every day. Moreover, the delay has caused cost overrun. Sources said that the BSCL has already spent ₹80.67 crore, which is more than the estimated cost of ₹79.56 crore.

“This is the consequence of poor planning and coordination among the departments. While the plan was initiated with much zest much thought hasn’t gone into management of traffic, congestions and other issues. Also, official rigmarole and slow inter-department communication has delayed the implementation of the project,” said Saroj Chandra Panigrahi, a city-based urban planner.

Speaking to **Orissa POST**, contractors and agencies involved in the construction activities blamed unexpected events for the delays. “We have to suspend work many times either due to cyclones, rains or official events. Most of the raw



LONG WAIT

The idea behind the BSCL project was to give a grandiose makeover to the 5.8-km stretch between Sishu Bhawan Square and Raj Mahal Square- also known as Janpath

However, four years down the lane the project has been hanging fire even though construction activities continue every day

The BSCL has already spent ₹80.67 crore, which is more than the estimated cost of ₹79.56 crore, indicating a cost overrun for the project

materials fail to reach the sites on time owing to Covid-induced lockdowns and shutdowns, and we have no option than to wait,” said a contractor.

However, the explanation doesn’t go well with the citizens and traders in the vicinity of the work sites.

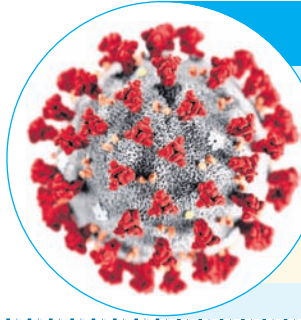
The prolonged construction activities have also affected the businesses of the local traders.

“Sometimes it is road widening, sometimes it’s underground ca-



PANDEMIC BLUES

Passengers at Cuttack railway station face inconvenience in reaching their destinations due to the weekend shutdown, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

| | INFECTED | RECOVERED | DEAD |
|--------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| World | 17,61,86,096 | 16,01,57,770 | 38,02,982 |
| India | 2,93,59,155 | 2,79,11,384 | 3,67,081 |
| Odisha | 8,47,313 | 7,89,066 | 3,257 |

In a first, Odisha Police opens door to 3rd gender

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 12: In a landmark decision, the Odisha Police Saturday opened its door to people from the transgender community, seeking their applications for the posts of constables and sub-inspectors.

The Odisha Police Recruitment Board sought online applications from men, women and transgender people for the appointment of 477 sub-inspectors and 244 constables (communication). The application portal will remain open from June 22 to July 15.

“I invite qualified women and men to join the Odisha Police as constables (communication) and SIs to serve the people of the state. Also, for the first time, people belonging to the transgender category can apply for both the posts,” Director General of Police (DGP) Abhay told reporters in Cuttack.

However, differently-abled people will not be eligible to apply. “Transgender candidates are eligible to apply, PWDs (Persons with Disabilities) are not eligible to apply,” the notification seeking the applications stated.

Abhay said the recruitment to the SI post will be done to the main police cadre, while the constable (Communications) is a technical cadre. The minimum qualification for the SI post is graduation, while that of the constable (Communication) post is Plus II with diploma in computer application.

Candidates are required to undergo a computer-based recruitment examination, besides physical and efficiency tests.



The Odisha Police Recruitment Board sought online applications from men, women and transgender people for the appointment of 477 sub-inspectors and 244 constables

However, differently-abled people will not be eligible to apply for the posts

The Odisha government had earlier decided to recruit transgender people as jail warders but a notification is yet to be issued.

The Odisha Kinner and Third Gender Mahasangh, a transgender body, welcomed the decision of the Odisha Police and thanked Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

“For the first time, a public advertisement has been issued seeking application from transgender people in government jobs in the state. Including the transgender people in the force will not only boost the confidence of the com-

munity, but also change the society’s perception towards transgender people,” Mahasangh founder president Pratap Kumar Sahu said.

The Mahasangh, however, requested the Chief Minister to give some relaxation to transgender applicants in physical tests as many of the candidates may not be able to compete with men and women in running and other physical activities.

Sahu pointed out that states like Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan have already set examples by recruiting transgender people in their police forces.

In 2014, the Supreme Court had recognised the transgender community as the third gender and ruled that they have equal privileges over the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution.

The Parliament has also enacted the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 to provide the community equal rights akin to other human beings.

Man held for using fake number plate on XUV



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: The Commissionerate Police Saturday arrested a man for using a fake number plate and an ‘Army’ sticker on his XUV. The accused has been identified as Ratikanta Satpathy, 43, a resident of Daruthenga area in Bhubaneswar.

According to a source, the registration number OD 02 Y-0023 has originally been allotted to Dhananjay Hota, a Bhubaneswar resident. A few days ago, Hota had received challans amounting to around ₹10,000 for violating traffic rules. A surprised Hota started enquiring into the matter. His vehicle is a

white colour Mahindra XUV.

Hota spotted a black colour Mahindra XUV with the same registration number while he was heading towards Jayadev Vihar Square. He gave it a chase and intercepted the vehicle near Jayadev Vihar. He then informed the police who reached the spot and took Ratikanta into custody. Initially, Ratikanta warned policemen of dire consequences for harassing an Army officer. However, during the investigation, he confessed to his misdeed and reintroduced himself as a manager of a company.

The accused used to roam around the city, including high-security zones, in the vehicle with ‘Army’ sticker affixed on its windshield. For his misdeeds, challans were also served on Hota.

During investigation, Ratikanta told police that he had bought the vehicle from a potato wholesaler and has not changed its ownership. A detailed investigation is underway, it was learnt.

Cong slams govt for ‘lack’ of affordable Covid treatment



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: The state unit of Congress party Saturday accused the state government of failing to provide affordable treatment at the state-run hospitals.

Congress leader Pradeep Majhi said that unable to bear Covid treatment costs in Odisha, many patients and their relatives are migrating to other states for better treatment at affordable costs.

“The state government has been earning more than ₹5,000 crore annually from the sale of domestic and foreign liquor but it does not have enough money to bear the treatment costs of Covid patients. Many people in Odisha were recently forced to seek crowdfunding on social media. The state government should answer as to why ECMO machines have not been installed in government hospitals for which many were forced to move to other states for the expensive treatment,” he said.

He also added, “The government has been boasting of several infrastructure facilities at state-run hospitals but many things still remain only on paper. Who is to be blamed for this? Every life is precious. Death of people in 18 to 45 years age group is a matter of serious concern. Is the government not for the poor?”

The leader also questioned the state and the Union governments for their alleged failure in covering more people under the vaccination programme. “The people of the state are struggling to get vaccines. There is no answer with the state government to the question as to how much time will it take to vaccinate the entire population and ensure their lives. The Union government on the other hand is not giving a clear idea as to when the people will be fully vaccinated,” he said.

The Supreme Court had earlier ordered that affordable treatment is the right of the citizens and that the states have to ensure that, but this is not happening, rued Majhi.

CONGRESS LEADER PRADEEP MAJHI SAID UNABLE TO BEAR COVID TREATMENT COSTS IN ODISHA, MANY PATIENTS ARE MIGRATING TO OTHER STATES

MANY PEOPLE WERE FORCED TO SEEK CROWDFUNDING ON SOCIAL MEDIA, SAID CONG LEADER MAJHI

FIXING TARGETS



Cranes searching for food in Mahanadi near Jobra anicut in Cuttack, Saturday

Dr. Bijaya Kumar Sahoo
01/06/1963 - 03/06/2021

॥ *You stand tall in majestic dignity* ॥
॥ *A stalwart with a heart of gold* ॥
॥ *Your inspiring words will forever echo, deep within our soul* ॥
॥ *You left too soon but shine on bright, with rays of purest white* ॥
॥ *The brightest star, the guiding light* ॥
॥ *Your vision leads the way* ॥
॥ *With precious memories treasured within us* ॥
॥ *Your legacy stays eternal* ॥

Most Covid patients in Cuttack youngsters: CMC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Saturday said the maximum number of Covid cases in the Silver city was reported among people in the age group of 18 to 44 years. "Maximum number of Covid cases in Cuttack city was reported among people in the age group of 18 to 44 years. Many people in this age group remained unvaccinated during the second wave of the pandemic. Secondly, these people are more exposed to the outside world," said CMC Commissioner Ananya Das.

She also said that the Covid cases in Cuttack have come down recently. "The total number of cases as well as the positivity rate in the city has been declining for last several days. The number of SOS calls to our control rooms has also come down recently," she added.

Das said the Silver city saw an upward trend in Covid cases around the middle of March this year. The city reported the highest of 680 cases during the second wave of the pandemic May 15. Subsequently, the number of cases started de-



clining in Cuttack. For the last one week, the city has been reporting less than 200 cases per day, she added.

The CMC Commissioner claimed that the demand for beds in Covid hospitals here has reduced during the last one week. "The availability of beds in Covid hospitals is an indication that the situation has improved a lot. New admissions to the ICUs and demand for

oxygen beds have come down significantly. Now, we have sufficient number of beds," she said.

The CMC Commissioner revealed that they are now upgrading infrastructure to deal with future threats with regard to the pandemic. A liquid oxygen plant will come up soon at SCB Medical College and Hospital.

Till now, more than 3.5 lakh persons have been vaccinated in the

INVISIBLE ENEMY

The Silver city saw an upward trend in Covid cases around the middle of March this year

The city reported the highest of 680 cases during the second wave of the pandemic May 15

Subsequently, the number of cases started declining in Cuttack. For the last one week, the city has been reporting less than 200 cases per day

city, she claimed.

"We have so far vaccinated 1.5 lakh people in the age group of 18 to 44 years and 85,000 in the age group of 45 to 59 years. This apart, 72,000 persons above 60 years have been inoculated against the deadly virus," Das said.

Das claimed that the CMC has recently started home delivery of oxygen concentrators for Covid patients. But around 90 per cent patients in Cuttack do not require oxygen support, she said.

68,633 persons vaccinated in 24 hrs



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: The state Health department Saturday said that it inoculated a total of 68,633 persons against Covid-19. With the inclusion of the new vaccinations, the total number of persons vaccinated till now touched 88,66,625.

The government has planned only 23 sessions of the vaccination. This included 11 sessions in Ganjam and 12 sessions in Puri district while vaccination in other districts will remain suspended Sunday.

nCoV CASES DECLINE BUT DEATHS CONTINUE TO RISE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 12: Odisha reported 4,852 new Covid-19 cases Saturday, the lowest daily rise in the last 50 days, a Health department official said.

However, the state recorded the highest single-day fatalities as 47 more people died.

Odisha has so far reported 3,257 deaths and 8,43,313 Covid-19 cases, the official said.

The latest deaths were reported from 17 districts with Khurda recording the highest six fatalities, while five patients lost their lives in Cuttack.

The state's daily rise in Covid-19 cases came down to 4,852 in the last 24 hours. On April 21, Odisha had reported 4,851 cases.



The deaths were reported from 17 districts with Khurda recording the highest 6 fatalities, while 5 patients died in Cuttack

Of the new infections, 2,765 were detected at quarantine centres, while the rest 2,087 were local contact cases.

Khurda district, where state capital Bhubaneswar is located, reported the highest 649 new cases, followed by Cuttack (505) and Jajpur (382).

There are 62,515 active cases in the state at present.

In all, 7,81,488 patients have re-

covered, including 8,516 Friday.

The state tested 67,122 samples in the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, sources said that Odisha has so far administered 87,97,992 doses of Covid-19 vaccines.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday announced an additional package of ₹25 crore for Covid-19 management in 11 districts of western Odisha.

Bank seeks police help in busting racket

THE ACCUSED POSSESSING THE ATM CARDS OF OTHER BANKS HAD WITHDRAWN THE AMOUNT FROM AN ATM INSTALLED AT BAPUJI NAGAR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: The authorities of a prominent Public Sector Bank (PSB) have sought the help of Commissionerate Police to bust an alleged racket involved in defrauding the bank with unique modus operandi. The bank officials have filed a complaint with the Capital police in this regard.

The public sector bank's Bapuji Nagar branch in its complaint alleged that the miscreants had fraudulently withdrawn around ₹2 lakh

through ATM cards of other banks during April 14 to 16. The accused comman had withdrawn the amount from the on-site ATM installed at Lane no 6 at Bapuji Nagar.

"At the time of withdrawal, they are using some techniques so that the withdrawals will not be clearly ascertained in the system and transactions will show unsuccessful but they receive money as per their withdrawal," alleged the Bank.

Subsequently, the accused persons again demanded the particular amount from the bank citing the



messages of unsuccessful transactions. Finding no other way, the authorities also paid the amount to

the alleged fraudsters despite the deduction of the same amount from their accounts.

The bank authorities informed the police officials that some racket is involved in the fraudulent withdrawal.

"On the basis of their complaint, the amount has been paid to them by our bank through proper channel. We presume a racket is working to defraud the banks," the bank added. The capital police have started investigation after registering a case in this regard.

RAINY DAYS ARE HERE



People travelling amid heavy rain in Bhubaneswar, Saturday. (Bottom) Several areas of Cuttack witness waterlogging due to the monsoon rain

OP PHOTOS

Heavy rain to continue for another two days

HIGHEST 9 CM RAINFALL WAS RECORDED AT SORO IN BALASORE DISTRICT DURING THE PAST 24 HOURS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday said heavy rainfall will continue to lash several parts of the state for another two days.

The low pressure area formed Friday lies over northwest Bay of Bengal and adjoining coastal areas of West Bengal and North Odisha. It is likely to become more marked and move west-north-westwards across Odisha, Jharkhand and north Chhattisgarh during next 2-3 days, the IMD said.

Under its influence, heavy rainfall has occurred at many parts of the state during the past two days and such activity will continue for another two days. Highest 9 cm rainfall was recorded at Soro in Balasore district during the past 24 hours.

Many other places including Kashipur (Rayagada), Gobindpur

(Balasore), Tihidi (Bhadrak), Boden (Nuapada), Gop (Puri), Kalampur (Kalahandi), Kakatpur (Puri), Bhubaneswar, Koksara (Kalahandi), Kuchinda (Sambalpur), Joda (Keonjhar), Dharmagarh (Kalahandi), Nandapur (Koraput) have received heavy downpour in past 24 hours.

The Met department said heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely to occur at one or two places of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Angul, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Cuttack, Bhadrak, Balasore and Kendrapara, Sunday.

A few places of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Keonjhar, Sambalpur, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Boudh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Bargarh, Jajpur and Deogarh districts are likely to witness heavy rainfall the next day, it said.

Gopalpur MLA walks out of jail after 6 months

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: Gopalpur MLA Pardeep Panigrahi was Saturday released from Jharpada jail here after six months. The High Court had Friday granted bail in the alleged job fraud case.

Panigrahi was arrested by Crime Branch (CB) sleuths in connection with a job fraud case (26/2020) December 3, 2020. The SDJM court here had sent Panigrahi to 14-day judicial custody after rejecting his bail plea. Later, five other cases (four at Golanthara and one at Baidyanathpur police station) were registered against him.

The High Court granted him bail in the last case registered with Golanthara police station in which the complainant accused Panigrahi of taking ₹2 lakh on the pretext of providing him a job in Tata. He reportedly deposited an amount to the tune of ₹69.45 lakh to get out of the jail as per the directions of HC.

The court had granted him bail in several other cases registered with the Golanthara police June 1. The HC granted him conditional bail in the case registered with the CB February 24. Panigrahi was accused of collecting money from several job aspirants in Gopalpur on behalf of Akash Pathak, main accused in the Tata Motors job fraud. The officials of Tata Motors had lodged a case with CB's cyber cell alleging Akash of defrauding around 69 job seekers by impersonating Managing Director of the said company.

Minor hangs self

BHUBANESWAR: A 14-year-old boy Saturday ended his life after he was reportedly scolded by his mother for roaming with other slum children Friday night. The boy along with his mother and four-year-old sister was residing at Haladipadia slum under Laxmisagar police limits. His father works as a daily wage outside Bhubaneswar. According to sources, the deceased's mother, a housemaid, had scolded him for roaming outside with some other slum children throughout the day Friday. The woman, on her return, Saturday, found her son hanging from ceiling by a saree. Police reached the spot and recovered the body.

SHUTDOWN EFFECT



Madhupatna overbridge in Cuttack is bereft of traffic due to the weekend shutdown, Saturday

OP PHOTO

Cuttack medicine wholesaler under lens for 9 other drugs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: The office of the State Drug Controller Saturday said that the erring drug wholesaler from Cuttack who was under lens for dealing with spurious Favipiravir tablets was also found indulged in procurement of other drugs from the same tainted supplier.

The department said that around nine more drugs of different categories were also found to be supplied from the manufacturer based at Solang in Himachal Pradesh to the Cuttack-based dealer. The Himachal Pradesh government in its communication has clarified that the manufacturer, whose name has been given in the labels of the medicines, does not exist as per their printed address, raising sus-

Around 9 more drugs of different categories were also found to be supplied from the manufacturer based at Solang in Himachal Pradesh to the Cuttack-based dealer

Seizures have been made in Bolangir, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Rourkela and Bhubaneswar

Other state government agencies where their supplies went through the wholesaler have also been alerted

picion of spurious drug racket. This comes after more raids and scrutiny on the drug deals by the department.

"Since these nine drugs were found to have been supplied to dif-

ferent Districts, all the Drugs Inspectors have been alerted in the matter. As per available information, seizures have been made in Bolangir, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Rourkela and Bhubaneswar. The raids are continuing," the department said in a media statement.

The department has also alerted other state government agencies where their supplies went through the wholesaler. The information about the suspected dealing of spurious drugs in Cuttack was passed to the state government from the Food and Drugs Administration department of Maharashtra.

The dealer had also sent the alleged spurious drugs to Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh besides some local areas in the state. It was also ready to distribute it to other parts of the state and country.

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Malkangiri earns UNDP praise for Covid mgmt



POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, June 12: A report released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), India, has lauded the Malkangiri district for its Covid-19 management, both during the first and second waves.

Malkangiri district, which is located in close proximity to both Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh, became an entry point for several migrant workers returning back to the state during the initial phase of the lockdown.

The district officials used their new infrastructure to serve as institutional quarantine centres for migrants, the report said. The number of infected persons and the death toll continues to be less for which the district is in the green zone. Rajya Sabha MP Amar Patnaik has also praised the district administration and its people for taking proper steps in containing the spread of the disease.

Notably, over 70,000 migrants

The district officials used their new infrastructure to serve as institutional quarantine centres for migrants, the report said. The number of infected persons and the death toll continues to be less for which the district is in the green zone

Over 70,000 migrants entered Motu which is on the fringes of the district to reach their homes in the same district as well as in other districts and states during the first wave of the pandemic

The district administration still continues with its programme in Swabhiman Anchal, Bondaghat, areas bordering Chhattisgarh and in remote areas for which the district has been able to remain in the green zone

entered Motu which is on the fringes of the district to reach their homes in the same district as well as in other districts and states during the first wave of the pandemic.

Among them many were infected with Covid for which the district administration conducted their health examination, provided them with food and kept them in quarantine after their arrival in Motu.

Later, the district administration made arrangements to send them back to their homes in various districts in Odisha and other states. The district administration involved the media and civil soci-

ety and conducted awareness programmes about the disease in the remote areas apart from distributing masks and food packets among the people.

Over 30,000 migrants entered the district through Motu during the second wave of the pandemic for which the district administration adopted similar methods to contain the spread of the disease. The district administration still continues with its programme in Swabhiman Anchal, Bondaghat, areas bordering Chhattisgarh and

PREPARATORY WORKS



Fishermen at the jetty in Paradip prepare to venture into deep sea as the two-month restriction on fishing is set to be lifted from June 14, night

Villagers oppose red mud pond construction

POST NEWS NETWORK

Damanjodi, June 12: Tension prevailed in Dengajaniguda village under Dasamantpur block of Koraput district as residents prevented revenue officials from identifying land for construction of a red mud pond of Nalco.

The tribal villagers are up in arms since Friday after they came to know that the aluminum major was planning for construction of a second red mud pond in the village.

Red mud is an industrial waste generated during the processing of bauxite into alumina using the Bayer process and is composed of various oxide compounds, including iron oxides which give it a red colour.

It contains toxic heavy metals and its high alkalinity makes it extremely corrosive and damaging to



soil and life forms, presenting a massive problem for disposal.

According to reports, tehsildar Ajay Tirkey, accompanied by revenue inspectors, supervisors and a platoon of police force reached the spot to identify land for the purpose.

The villagers on seeing the revenue officials opposed them asking them to go back. The officials tried to placate them but they refused to listen.

before constructing the red mud pond. The villagers have alleged that the water seeping from the first red mud pond, which is two kilometres away from the village, has destroyed their farmland, natural streams, nullahs in the area and has affected many people with skin diseases.

People have been suffering from drinking water problems. Villagers like Pinky Bisoyi, Malati Bisoyi, Kundu Bhoi, Chitra Mudli, Tuni Muduli, have been suffering skin diseases while another villager Rama Jani has lost his eyes.

The villagers have apprised Laxmipur MLA Prabhu Jani, former MP Jayaram Pangi and BJP leader Bhruhu Buxipatra about their problems and have warned of continuing their fight till their demands are met.

Bear sneaks into village, caught after 8 hours



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharigaon, June 12: Residents of Ranichachara village under Ratakhandiguda panchayat under Jharigaon block in Nabarangpur district heaved a sigh of relief after a bear which entered their village was caught by forest department personnel in an eight-hour-long rescue operation Friday night.

According to a source, the villagers got terrified after spotting a wild bear roaming in the village. At about 10pm, some villagers gathered courage and tried to chase

away the wild animal from the village. The bear, to save its life, ran into a thatched house of a villager named Yogendra Santa instead of going out of the village.

With the situation getting more serious, the entire village had to remain awake as they feared the wild animal might injure them.

With no option left, the terrified villagers contacted the forest department. Later, Medana forester Govind Nayak and a special team reached the village and launched a rescue operation.

They managed to catch the bear after an eight-hour long operation. The bear is said to be five years old.

The villagers thanked the forest department officials for their prompt response and quick action. "After a thorough health check-up, we will release the bear in its natural habitat," a forest official said.

Covid +ve man kills daughter, self & injures 4 others of family



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, June 12: A man who was in home isolation after testing Covid positive hacked his 3-year-old daughter to death while rendering his wife and three other daughters critical at Joutakbahal village under Govindpur police limits in Sambalpur district late Friday night.

Out of remorse, the accused Sukhu Oram alias Kujur later slit his throat. Police rushed him to a Sundargarh hospital first and later to the VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) in Burla after his condition deteriorated. He succumbed during treatment in the wee hours of Saturday.

His injured wife Etabari Oram, four daughters Birasi Oram (13),

Gangi Oram (7) and Phula Oram (1) are undergoing treatment at the district headquarters hospital in Sundargarh. They are now out of danger, police said.

Sukhu's son Tushar Oram (12) managed to save himself by running out of their house. Police seized the weapon used in the crime and started an investigation.

SP Batula Gangadhar visited the spot and took stock of the situation. He said an investigation is underway while the actual reason behind the crime is yet to be ascertained.

It is alleged Sukhu was in mental distress as he was out of work due to the Covid-induced lockdown. He was finding it difficult to manage his family when he tested positive for the disease, June 5. This pushed him to further distress.

ACCUSED ATTACKED HIS WIFE AND FOUR CHILDREN WITH A SHARP-EDGED WEAPON. WHILE HIS THREE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER DIED ON THE SPOT, HIS WIFE AND OTHER THREE CHILDREN SUFFERED GRIEVOUS INJURIES

According to a source, the family members went to sleep after dinner which they had managed to get after much effort.

The accused attacked his wife and four children with a sharp-edged weapon. While his three-year-old daughter died on the spot, his wife and other three children suffered grievous injuries.

In an attempt to end his life, he then slit his throat with the same weapon. Hearing their screams, neighbours rushed to the spot only to find the entire family in a pool of blood. They immediately informed the police.

The police sent the body for post-mortem and rushed the injured to the Gorposh community health centre first and later to the district headquarters hospital in Sundargarh.

Man dies shortly after taking first dose of Covid vaccine



POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhendipada, June 12: A man from Khamar village under Chhendipada police limits in Angul district Friday died shortly after taking his first Covid vaccine shot, his family alleged.

According to the family members of the deceased, Sarat Chandra Senapati (58) and his wife received their first vaccine doses at Barasahi panchayat at 10:00 am Friday. After spending 30 minutes under observation at the vaccination centre, Sarat returned home on his bicycle.

About 15 minutes later, he complained of uneasiness and his body started to tremble. Subsequently, he succumbed. The family members immediately informed Dr Rajalaxmi Sahu and ANM Geli Pradhan of Bagadia Primary Health Centre (PHC) about the incident. A team from Bagadia PHC immediately reached the spot and declared Sarat dead.

Chhendipada CHC's medical officer Dr Ashis Pani, block project manager Sanjay Behera, magistrate Prakash Chandra Nayak and Chhendipada IIC Sushant Singh

reached the spot. Later the body was shifted to the CHC for postmortem.

"Though initially the body was sent to the CHC for postmortem, it was later taken to SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) for the same due to the complexities involved," Bagadia police outpost officer Ashis Dash informed. CHC medical officer Pani said the deceased's family alleged that he died after receiving a vaccine dose. As per the government rule, in such a case the postmortem must be performed at a nearby medical college. So the body has been sent to SCBMCH. The report will reveal the cause of death.

Angul Collector Siddharth Shankar Swain said Sarat was made to take rest for half an hour at the observation room. His family members alleged that he breathed his last a few moments after reaching home. As per rule, the experts will perform postmortem at SCBMCH. The report will clarify what caused the death, Swain added. While a kind of fear has gripped the people who are yet to be vaccinated, the incident has been a matter of discussion here.

Ganja worth ₹1.1cr seized from O2 carrier

AGENCIES

Koraput, June 12: At least 1,277 kg of ganja was seized in Koraput district Saturday from a truck transporting oxygen cylinders to Delhi, the police said.

Two persons hailing from Ludhiana district of Punjab were arrested after the seizure of cannabis worth Rs 1.1 crore from the vehicle, an officer said. "Oxygen cylinders were loaded

at Visakhapatnam Port in Andhra Pradesh. On its way to Delhi, ganja was loaded onto the vehicle in Koraput district for scheduled delivery in Lucknow," Aditya Mahakur, officer-in-charge of Jeypore Sadar police station, said.

The truck was intercepted on Jeypore Ghat Road and the contraband was seized, he said. Further investigation is underway to trace the local suppliers and others involved in the racket, Mahakur added.

TRAFFIC WOES



Traffic on the Naranpur-Brahmanipal road in Keonjhar district was disrupted after a diversion road near Khadibahal village was washed away due to heavy rain, Saturday

Ganjam tops in person-days creation under MGNREGA

AGENCIES

Berhampur, June 12: Ganjam district has generated one crore person-days of work, the highest in Odisha, under the rural job scheme MGNREGA in the first two months of the current financial year, officials said.

The rise indicates the demand for work under the MGNREGA from especially the migrant workers who lost jobs during the second coronavirus wave.

The district has also topped in the state under the expenditure by spending around Rs 220.8 crore so far. It, however, ranked 12 in the state with an 80 per cent rate of the completion of the work, according to official sources.

The number of families completing 100 days of work stands at 4,656, according to official sources. "Ganjam crossed 1 CRORE MAN-DAYS generation under MGNREGA scheme," District Collector



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

Vijay Kulange had tweeted Thursday.

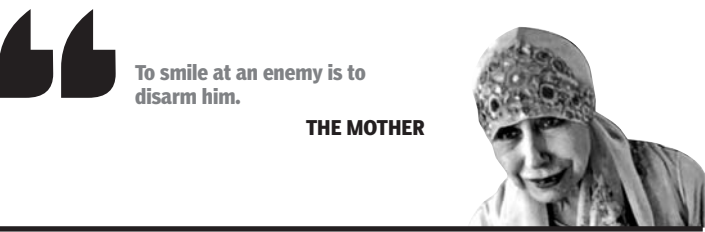
Kulange congratulated the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and block development officers for ensuring sustainable employment generation under the Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and empowering people.

"Achievement of 1 crore person days within 60 days is a milestone in the history of Odisha in terms

of implementation of MGNREGS," the Ganjam DRDA tweeted Friday. The district has an annual target of 3.29 crore person days in the 2021-22 fiscal, sources said.

Around 54 per cent of the total expenditure was made in the agriculture and allied sectors, DRDA Project Director Shinde Bhausaheb said.

The official claimed that almost all payments of wages had been made in a timely manner.



To smile at an enemy is to disarm him.
THE MOTHER

Civil Society Action

We have entered the third year of this government and in the months to come the discussion will turn to the election of 2024. Some of the recent political activity around Uttar Pradesh is being seen in this light. In India what the government does is left generally to the political parties, especially by the middle class which, once it has voted, does not engage with the state. But there is a part of our country which does engage and does not remain aloof.

The term civil society refers, according to the World Health Organisation, to a wide array of organisations: community groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, and foundations.”

In India we usually use the term civil society almost exclusively for NGOs and activists, because professional associations are quite afraid of confronting the government. There are exceptions but these are few. It is the NGOs, activists and indigenous groups who represent the people and their interests outside the framework of politics. In India when we say indigenous groups we mean Adivasis. The model of development India has adopted is to extract from Adivasi lands the resources that are used for the rest of the country. You and I do not get displaced by the government from our homes. It is the Adivasi who must leave her place her ancestors have lived on for thousands of years because we need to build a dam or because we have found coal underneath.

Adivasis have protested against India’s government for over a century. The rebellion of Birsa Munda, the man whose statue Amit Shah once wanted to garland (but he wrongly garlanded someone else’s) forced the British to introduce the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, which banned the transfer of Adivasi land to non-Adivasis. The BJP wanted to garland Munda but it also passed a law to undo the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act in 2016. This produced such a backlash from the Adivasis that the BJP retreated from the law and was defeated in the next state election. This is why Shah was garlanding what he thought was Munda’s statue in 2020.

Adivasi resistance to the Indian state is not understood and it is not widely covered in the media. This month has seen at least two places where Adivasis have been on protest. In Gujarat 11 Adivasis were arrested for protesting against a proposed parking lot near the Statue of Unity. They said the land acquired by the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam for the development project belonged to them and had been taken illegally. The strength of the emotion can be understood by knowing that the women among them removed their clothes in public. An FIR was filed against 20 of them under sections including 143 (unlawful assembly) and 294 (singing obscene song, ballad or words near a public place). In Chhattisgarh, which has a Congress government, thousands of Adivasis have been on protest against a Central Reserve Police Force camp erected on their lands without their permission. The government opened fire on them, killing three, but the Adivasis are still there in the open in Bastar, demanding their rights and insisting that the camp be removed.

On the outskirts of Delhi, tens of thousands of farmers remain on protest, having gathered in November and spent the entire winter and now the summer in the open along the highway. The laws that they are protesting against were passed without a division vote in the Rajya Sabha. The laws have been suspended indefinitely by the Supreme Court and the Modi government itself has offered to suspend them for 18 months. There is extreme disaffection against the laws including by groups supporting the BJP in Uttar Pradesh and it is unlikely that the laws will ever be implemented. The Modi government itself has lost interest in them and does not speak about their implementation. But it has allowed the protests to continue because it does not want to be seen as retreating, though it appears to have already retreated. Similarly, though the CAA law was passed by the Parliament more than a year and a half ago, it has not been implemented. One reason is the protests against it in India, the other is the widespread condemnation against it globally including in the European Parliament.

Civil society action in Gujarat has resulted in the setting up of fast track courts to hear atrocities against Dalits and Adivasis. This came after the protest against the assault on Dalits in Una over a cow’s carcass. The civil society action was led by a former journalist, Jignesh Mewani, who was then elected into the Gujarat Assembly.

A lot of action has taken place in civil society since 2014. A weakening of the government, meaning a Centre with no party in a single majority, or a change in government will give civil society additional leverage. Laws that are unacceptable to civil society groups will not be easy to pass and implement. And laws that are in outright violation of international human rights standards will come under pressure to be repealed. It is a most interesting time leading up to 2024.

WISDOM CORNER

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

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
- “Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.”

TS ELIOT
- “However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at.”

STEPHEN HAWKING

WORDSWORTH

Nincompoop

It’s a silly-sounding word for a foolish or stupid person. Many writers have tried hard to find an origin for it, though most dictionaries play safe and list it as “origin unknown”. The good Dr Johnson, in his famous Dictionary of 1755, said it was from Latin non compos, as in the medical and legal phrase non compos mentis, not mentally competent. But as the Oxford English Dictionary commented 150 years later, this supposed origin doesn’t explain versions of the word that were around in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, such as nocompoop and nickumpoop. The first edition of the OED concluded that the word was simply a fanciful formation. The late John Ciardi, in A Browser’s Dictionary, dismissively calls the OED’s idea “a clerk’s guess” and asserts that it comes instead from the Dutch phrase nicht om poep, meaning “the female relative of a fool”. He added, “And if that does not work out ... I will be a monkey’s uncle”. Such a stretched derivation from a foreign language is typical of a verb of folk etymology that turns up a lot. Though there was once an English verb poep, to fool or cheat, and it did come from Dutch poep, the original Dutch word meant a shit or a fart – the English slang poep for faeces comes from this. The association with a fool came through a slang use of the word by the Dutch in the seventeenth century for a migrant worker from northern Germany. Modern Dutch speakers use nicht specifically for a niece, not just any female relative, but it is also slang for an effeminate homosexual. So nicht om poep might be construed with quite a different meaning. A more intriguing idea, one with a fair level of acceptance that is given with some caution in the current revision of the OED, links it with the given name Nicodemus, especially the Pharisee of that name who questioned Christ so naively in the Gospel of St John. This word still exists in French as nicodème, a simpleton.

A MIRACLE ON THE MEGHNA

FOCUS BANGLADESH



Arvind Subramanian

AMONG THE COUNTRY’S ACHIEVEMENTS IS A DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT IN ITS CITIZENS’ AVERAGE STANDARD OF LIVING

Ravaged periodically by natural calamities, long dependent on foreign aid and remittances, and a perennial source of refugees and emigrants, Bangladesh was once “a basket case of misery,” as Zia Haider Rahman put it in his great debut novel, In the Light of What We Know. But on the 50th anniversary of its independence, Bangladesh is fast becoming a development paragon – a Miracle on the Meghna.

Among the country’s achievements is a dramatic improvement in its citizens’ average standard of living. According to the most recent data from the International Monetary Fund, Bangladesh’s per capita GDP (measured in purchasing-power-parity terms) was about half of Pakistan’s in 1987 and two-thirds of India’s as recently as 2007. But in 2020, Bangladesh has surpassed the former and is catching up with the latter, owing partly to its success in becoming a leading textiles and clothing exporter, trailing just behind China and Vietnam.

Even more noteworthy are the improvements in social indicators such as life expectancy, infant and maternal mortality, fertility, and female labour-force participation. And, equally important, Bangladesh has managed to sustain a modicum of democratic stability – keeping the army in the barracks.

But beyond such metrics, Bangladesh’s experience is distinctive in two ways that have yet to be fully appreciated from a broader development perspective. The first relates to state formation and capacity. The defining characteristic of the modern state is that it holds a monopoly on legitimate violence, legitimate extortion (namely, taxation), and the provision of essential services. The second monopoly serves the objective of the third, and even when the state does not provide services directly, it dictates the terms.

In Bangladesh, however, the



Now a shining model of development, this twice-dismembered country offers lessons for the struggling countries from which it was born

state has voluntarily ceded the service-provision monopoly to the nongovernmental sector. BRAC and a number of other now-famous NGOs have played a major role in providing health care, schools, and financial services, and in leading public-health campaigns to deliver oral rehydration therapy and immunisation. Despite the NGO sector’s outsize presence, Bangladeshi leaders have not perceived its activities as a usurpation of the state’s authority.

As such, Bangladesh offers a fascinating study in political economy. Normally, democratic states aim to ensure popular support by providing the services that citizens need. Most are loath to cede that function lest they lose power and legitimacy (not to mention opportunities for rent-seeking and corruption). The more effective that non-state actors become in delivering services, the more threatened most states feel. But Bangladesh has escaped this dynamic.

A partial explanation is that Bangladesh was so poor and lacking in state capacity in its early years that public service delivery suffered, creating a vacuum for other actors to fill. Those who seized the opportunity then enjoyed access to vast inflows of foreign aid, which

averaged (in net terms) 5 per cent of GDP for 25 years until the turn of the century.

But deeper factors could also be at play. Given that Bangladesh has a relatively low tax-to-GDP ratio of less than 10 per cent, one can infer that the state implicitly chose to cede its monopoly on service provision to avoid exercising the politically costlier monopoly of taxation. So, while Pakistan is seen as a failing state, and India as a “flailing state,” Bangladesh is a fledgling state, though more effective than its South Asian neighbours.

The other distinctive feature in Bangladesh’s development is its export performance. The fact that its success in manufacturing contributed in turn to greater education and agency for Bangladeshi women has been well documented by the economists Rachel Heath and A. Mushfiq Mobarak. Less appreciated is the paradox that lies at the heart of this export success.

As my research with Raghuram G. Rajan of the University of Chicago has shown, export sectors historically have fared relatively poorly in developing countries that received a lot of aid, suggesting the work of an ‘aid curse’ – a variant of the natural-resource curse. Foreign aid, no less

than an abundance of oil and gas, tends to make the real exchange rate too strong, rendering export sectors uncompetitive. But Bangladesh has bucked the trend again.

Beyond luck and chance, additional factors that may have contributed to Bangladesh’s export success include plentiful labour; which kept dollar wages low enough to offset an exchange rate kept too strong by foreign aid and remittances; and preferential trade access to foreign markets, first under the Multi-Fiber Agreement (until it was abolished), and then under programmes established by the United States and the European Union.

Looking ahead, low-lying Bangladesh, of course, faces a serious climate change challenge, but its ability to sustain its economic transformation will depend on how these two distinctive features evolve. If non-state actors enter politics, they could upset the current equilibrium, prompting the state to reappropriate its monopoly on service provision. Were that to happen, the state would almost certainly have to increase taxes to show that it can be as effective as the NGOs.

Similarly, Bangladesh’s export competitiveness could be undermined by rising wages, the enforcement of cost-increasing labour standards and regulations, and the loss of preferential export access in rich markets.

Bangladesh was carved out of India in 1947 on religious grounds and then broke away from Pakistan in 1971 on linguistic and cultural grounds. For decades, it was an object of condescension for India and Pakistan alike. Not anymore. Now a shining model of development, this twice-dismembered country offers lessons for the struggling countries from which it was born.

The writer is a former Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India.
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SPECTRUM SOCIETY

What is the point of the Olympics?



Ian Buruma

THE GAMES ARE A GIGANTIC BUSINESS FOR THE IOC, FOR SPONSORS, FOR PROPERTY DEVELOPERS, AND SOMETIMES FOR CORRUPT POLITICIANS

Kaori Yamaguchi, an Olympic medalist in judo and an executive member of the Japanese Olympic Committee, made an astonishing statement – astonishing, that is, for an Olympic official. She said that Japan had been ‘cornered’ into holding this year’s Games during a pandemic: “What will these Olympics be for, and for whom? The Games have already lost meaning and are being held just for the sake of them. I believe we have already missed the opportunity to cancel.”

She is not alone. A top Japanese medical expert warned that the Games could trigger fresh COVID-19 outbreaks, and that going ahead under present conditions would ‘not be normal.’ Over 80 per cent of the Japanese population wants the Games to be either postponed or cancelled. The Asahi Shimbun newspaper, an official sponsor of the Games, has urged the government to abandon the enterprise. If the Games do go ahead, which seems most likely, the events will take place in mostly empty stadiums built at huge expense.

Yamaguchi’s question is a valid one. For whom are the Olympics? The athletes already have ample opportunity to compete in all kinds of international championships. And the Japanese should not pay the price for entertaining television viewers. Perhaps the Games

are for Japanese politicians who hoped the spectacle would burnish their prestige, or for the fat cats of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), those blazered worthies who believe their juggernaut’s interests should trump those of everyone else?

The question of what the Olympics are really for has haunted the Games ever since Baron Pierre de Coubertin ‘revived’ them in Athens in 1896. The Baron, like other French conservatives at the time, was worried about national virility, especially after losing the war against Prussia in 1871. He thought competitive sports would be the answer to the shortcomings of French manhood.

Apart from restoring French masculinity, Coubertin also hoped that an international sporting event would promote peace by bringing the world’s peoples together. Like World Fairs and Boy Scout Jamborees, the Games would encourage international friendship as well as patriotism. After clean and fair competition, the healthiest specimens from many nations would march together to a better future.

Charles Maurras, the far-right ideologue who joined the ultra-nationalist Action française, ridiculed Coubertin’s idealism at first. He despised the idea of international friendship. But then he changed his mind. Competing on track and

field would make people from different nations hate one another even more. And that, in his view, would be a very good thing.

In the end, neither Coubertin’s idealism nor Maurras’ cynicism prevailed. World peace did not come about, but wars were hardly the result of national partisanship in sports stadiums.

One cannot deny that the Games have had some positive purposes since the end of World War II. The Tokyo Olympics in 1964 were immensely important to the Japanese, symbolising not only economic revival but also political respectability.

Something similar might be claimed for the 1988 Seoul Olympics. After decades of harsh imperial Japanese rule, the devastating Korean war, and more decades of military dictatorship, South Korea had emerged as a relatively open society with competitive elections, a rambunctiously free press, and a young population brimming with pride and optimism. The Koreans richly deserved the international limelight.

Apart from these rare occasions, however, the Olympics are hard to justify. The marching, flag-waving, uniformed jamborees are a nineteenth-century anachronism, still cherished in countries whose people have no right to elect their leaders but only the obligation to praise them. North Korea is the past-mas-

ter at this kind of thing, but Vladimir Putin’s Winter Olympics in 2014, held in a subtropical resort filled with artificial snow, was clearly meant as an homage to his authoritarian rule. And the brand of Chinese nationalism on display at the Beijing Games in 2008 would have been closer to Maurras’ heart than to Coubertin’s.

Tokyo in 2021 surely doesn’t need the Olympics. And yet the Olympic army marches on, making enormous amounts of money even as some countries are almost bankrupted. The IOC made a tidy 985 million from the Athens Olympics. I remember watching the Olympic officials strutting around in Seoul. The poorer the country they represented, the bigger their platinum watches seemed to be.

The Games are a gigantic business for the IOC, for sponsors, for property developers, and sometimes for corrupt politicians. That is what they are for. Thousands of Olympic officials will be crowding the lobbies of expensive hotels in Tokyo this year. And after they leave for the next place, the big stadiums built for nothing will remain as largely abandoned sites of an event that should never have taken place.

The writer is an editor and author of several books.
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Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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Another Congress crisis

Sir, With young leader Jitin Prasada’s exit from the Congress and entry into the BJP, the grand old party is faced with another crisis. It must be noted that this happens a little over a year after another Rahul Gandhi associate Jyotiraditya Scindia defected to the BJP with 22 party legislators. This brings into sharp focus the rot in the Congress party. Despite Congress leaders’ justifications for Prasada’s exit from the party, the fact remains that the timing of his exit a year ahead of elections in UP may prove to be worse for Congress. Although the BJP becomes advantageous with such defections, the voters now know the unscrupulous strategies adopted by the saffron party to get political advantage. Voters have seen the ugly side of politics when a large number of TMC leaders defected from the party and joined the BJP. However, such a strategy did not help the BJP much in the West Bengal Assembly elections. It is a fact that the BJP is not at its confident best right now. Many wrong policies adopted by the party such as the wrong vaccination policy, wrong economic policy, job losses, frequent fuel price hikes have put the party in trouble. However, the failure of the Opposition to protest against the policies of the government has created an impression that there is no challenger to the BJP in sight. The slide in the Congress continues and the party is faced with leadership crisis. Further, there is no unity among Opposition parties. Unless the Congress takes some corrective steps, the party will not be able to establish its relevance at the national and state levels.

Venu GS, KOLLAM (KERALA)

Stop privatising PSBs

Sir, Privatising the Public Sector Banks (PSBs) is like killing the proverbial goose that lays the golden eggs. The PSBs have all along served the nation and the aspirations of the people and businesses. Various governments have successfully implemented their policies and schemes with the help of the PSBs. The PSBs give a human touch to banking. These banks have stood resilient in times of the South East Asian financial crisis in 1997 and the global financial crisis in 2008. The socio-economic uplift of the people is directly related with the PSBs. It will be wise for the Union government to rethink and revisit the proposal of privatising the PSBs. The engine of the Indian economy should be lubricated and we should not throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Sandipt Mishra, VISAKHAPATNAM

J&K preparing action plan to tackle possible 3rd Covid wave

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, June 12: Jammu and Kashmir is preparing a capacity expansion plan to tackle a possible third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

J&K Chief Secretary, Arun Kumar Mehta, Saturday chaired a meeting to oversee the preparation of the action plan for tackling a possible third wave of Covid in the Union Territory based on the recommendations of an expert advisory committee.

The Chief Secretary emphasised the need for strict enforcement of Covid appropriate behavior in addition to vigorous vaccination drives for the successful containment of the disease.

It was informed that in comparison to the first wave, which was slow, gradual and mostly affected the elderly/comorbid population, the second wave was abrupt, steep and severely infected the young and middle-aged population.

It was stressed that the trajectory of the disease must be put under meticulous surveillance for early detection of new trends towards a probable third wave.

The Health and Medical Education Department has been asked to constitute a medical advisory team consisting of field ex-



Covid centre by Army comes up in Kashmir

To combat the rapid surge of Covid-19 in Jammu and Kashmir and also to prepare for the anticipated third wave of the pandemic, Army's Chinara Corps Saturday dedicated a 50 bed facility to the people of Kashmir. The facility adds to UT government's capacity to handle coronavirus patients. The facility has been established at army's 216 Transit Camp at Batwara and was inaugurated by Mohammed Aijaz Asad, DC Srinagar. The facility has 10 ICU beds with ventilator support, 20 High Dependency Unit beds with oxygen support and 20 oxygen beds. It also has facilities such as a laboratory, radiology department and Blood Gas Analyzer for efficient management of patients. The Indian Army will provide round the clock dedicated doctors, military nurses and paramedical staff from 92 Base Hospital.

perts in virology, epidemiology and microbiology to provide multi-dimensional scientific recommendations for evidence-based scientific management of Covid-19.

The Chief Secretary directed the department to conduct strati-

fied serological surveys in Jammu and Kashmir to ascertain natural vaccine induced seropositivity in the population and identify the susceptible groups and areas in the UT to be taken up under targeted vaccination drives.

Largest vax drive for IT professionals

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, June 12: Kerala IT Parks and the Technopark Employees Cooperative (TEC) Hospital here, in collaboration with various IT Companies, launched the largest Covid-19 vaccination drive for the state's software professionals and their family members.

The vaccination programme was inaugurated Saturday by MLA Kadakampally Surendran at a facility set up by the H&R Block in Technopark here.

The first phase of inoculation for employees of more than 450 companies in the Technopark and their family members began today, a statement said here.

This would be extended to the entire IT workforce at the Infopark in Kochi and Cyberpark in Kozhikode and separate inoculation camps would be set up in both places in the coming weeks, it said.

TEC Hospital has procured two lakh Covishield jabs exclusively for the IT community in the southern state. It is the first cooperative sector establishment in Kerala to procure vaccines directly from manufacturers for the massive inoculation drive, it said.

The hospital has received 25,000 jabs in the first batch.

It is a significant step to ensure the safety of IT professionals and their family members.

The vaccination drive will help bring the workforce and normalcy back to the IT campuses across



the state, said John M Thomas, Chief Executive Officer, Kerala State IT parks.

He also expressed hope that the effort would bring much-needed relief to the IT fraternity, their families and IT companies in the challenging times.

Few of the major companies in Technopark and Infopark have started vaccinating their employees with limited jabs.

The inoculation drive is open for all IT workforce in both government-run and private IT parks in the state, Binu R Kurup, president, TEC Hospital, said.

Shashi Tharoor MP, who played a key role in the procurement of the jabs from the manufacturer, facilitated the event through a video message.

Covid TPR falls, but deaths remain high

For the first time in the last few weeks, the Covid test positivity rate (TPR) in Kerala fell to 12.72 per cent, but the death tally continues to be high, said Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in a statement Saturday. Vijayan's statement said that 13,832 people turned Covid positive after 1,08,734 samples was tested in the past 24 hours, while there were 1,29,488 active cases across the state. The TPR last month rose as high as 30 per cent following which Vijayan announced a statewide lockdown, which will be in force till Wednesday. Saturday also saw 18,172 people turn negative taking the total recoveries to 25,75,769. Among the 14 districts, Thiruvananthapuram Saturday recorded the highest tally of 2,234 cases. The day saw 171 Covid deaths taking the total death tally to 10,975. Across the state there were 5,45,000 people under observation at various places which includes 31,103 at hospitals. There were 880 hot spots in the state. Saturday and Sunday are being observed as a triple lockdown with the police increasing their checking and those who are out without a valid reason are being fined and vehicles confiscated.

Mother of jailed IS supporter awaits her return from Kabul



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, June 12: A housewife Bindhu, Saturday reposed faith in her country and hoped that India will do the needful to bring back her daughter Nimisha, presently in jail in Kabul for allegedly being an Islamic State supporter.

Bindhu who lives in the state capital was reacting to a news report in a leading national English daily Saturday that the Indian government is unlikely to make efforts to bring back four women including Nimisha.

"How can my country say like that? They can bring the women and let them conduct the trial as per the law of our country. I am hopeful and I have trust in my country. All the four women are widows and they have children. What wrong have the kids done I want my granddaughter-

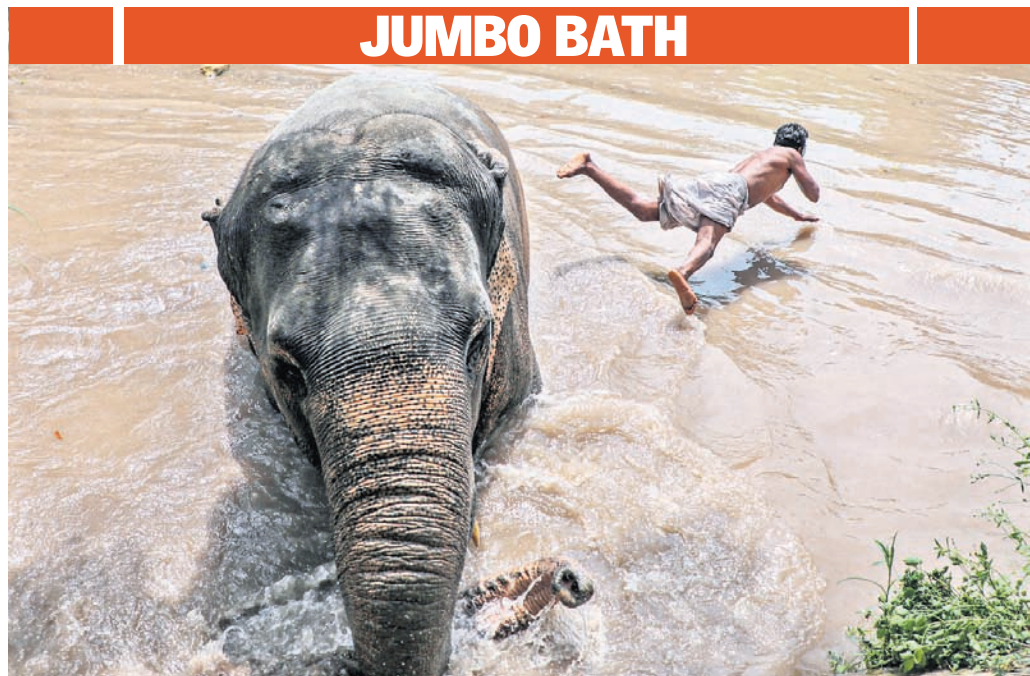
ter who is four years now," said Bindhu. The four women presently lodged in a jail in Kabul include Soniya, Merin, Nimisha and Raheela, all Keralites.

The news of Keralites joining the IS surfaced after the Kerala government contacted various central agencies - IB, NIA, RAW in 2016 about the veracity of reports about 19 missing people from the state. According to some of the relatives they are believed to have joined the IS.

These 19 included 10 men, six women and three children and of these, most of them hail from Kasargode and a few from Palakkad districts and include Christian and Hindu converts.

In the past three years, a few of those who had joined the IS were reportedly killed, according to their relatives who got information about it. The husbands of these Kerala women were among those who have been killed.

It was in 2016 that Bindhu, who is settled near Manacadu in the state capital, approached Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan seeking his help to locate her daughter who had gone missing.



A man along with a domesticated elephant cools off in a canal on a hot summer day in Jammu

PTI PHOTO

SIT probe ordered into Rosewood tree felling

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, June 12: In view of raging controversy over the alleged illegal felling and smuggling of centuries-old rosewood trees from Wayanad by timber mafia, the Kerala government has constituted a special investigation team (SIT) to probe into the scandal and similar such cases.

Crime Branch ADGP S Sreejith has been entrusted with the task of coordinating the high level investigation, an order issued by Chief Secretary V P Joy said here.

The team would comprise officers from forest and wildlife de-



partments, vigilance and anti-corruption bureau and crime branch.

According to a report of the state police chief, invaluable natural resources and properties like rosewood trees had been felled and stolen by some people at some

places in the state, the Chief Secretary mentioned in the order.

It is suspected to be an outcome of a conspiracy by some people and suggested a detailed investigation to find out the truth of the alleged incidents, he said.

The special investigation team was constituted considering the seriousness, impact and dimensions of the offences, the top official added.

He also directed the heads of departments concerned to nominate officers with efficiency and excellent track record to the special investigation team and complete the probe in a time bound manner.

Unseasonal hailstorms leave Jammu farmers distraught

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Udhampur (J&K), June 12: Every time we go out for hoeing the maize saplings, the rain and hailstorms start. Till now, our net sown area of around 5 kanals of land has been devastated by unseasonal hailstorms four times, said an anxious-looking Guddo Devi.

The 26-year-old was preparing the firewood to make dinner for her three children while speaking about the calamity. She lives in the remote Pounsa hamlet in the Chenani tehsil of Jammu's Udhampur district and like her, many farmers in the surrounding areas of Udhampur have lost their crops to hailstorms.

In these winter zones, farmers often cultivate only one crop a year in the autumn and this loss has left them anxious about surviving the cold months ahead.

Usually, it does not hail in Jammu in June, but this year unseasonal rainfall and hailstorms have wreaked havoc by damaging standing crops in over hundreds of kanals (1 kanal is equal to 0.125 acres) in the winter areas of Udhampur district.

According to Sonam Lotus, director, Meteorological Department, Jammu and Kashmir, the hailstorms in Jammu and Kashmir are not unseasonal. Rather their frequency has increased due to more local developments this year, he told 101Reporters. Explaining the local developments, he said, "The months of April and May have been categorised as 'hot weather months' by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD). In this period, India's northern region, including



J&K, experiences thunderstorms, hailstorms accompanied by gusty winds due to western disturbances and local developments, particularly convection."

This year, the frequency of these western disturbances and local convection was very high, resulting in more hailstorms and hence more damage to the crops in the higher reaches of Jammu, explained the weather scientist. When asked if the frequency of windstorms and hailstorms will increase with the advent of monsoon in July in Jammu and Kashmir, he said, "This phenomenon cannot be predicted."

Yash Pal, the sarpanch (village head) of Satyalta Panchayat, which has a population of around 3,000, said that the panchayat has 17,000 kanals of total agricultural land. Of this, he said that maize, rajma, amaranthus, pumpkin, beans and other hilly crops are grown on about 10,000 kanals of land.

Around 90 per cent of these 10,000 kanals of agricultural land has suffered damages due to the hailstorms and incessant rainfall this year.

While the farmers wait for compensation, many believe it may not be able to make up for their losses.

Lashkar behind attack on security forces: DGP



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, June 12: The Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) was behind Saturday's attack on security forces in Sopore in which two cops and as many civilians were killed, Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh said here.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a wreath-laying ceremony for the two slain police constables, Singh asserted that the perpetrators had been identified and would be brought to justice very soon.

He said it was a Sopore police station team on Covid-19 duty that came under attack.

Even as they mounted retaliation, four police personnel and three civilians were injured, the DGP said.

Constables Waseem and Showkat succumbed to injuries later, while Sub-Inspector Mukesh Kumar and SPO Danish are undergoing treatment, and their condition is stated

to be stable, he said.

Two of the three civilians injured in the attack died too, the police chief said.

He said initial indicators have led to the identification of the outfit, and a follow-up on that is on.

"The forces have launched an operation in the area, and we are hopeful that we will soon bring to justice the perpetrators of the crime... As per our information, LeT is involved in it, and we have almost identified the militants in the attack, but we will not share their details yet, the DGP said.

He said police and other security force personnel work in dangerous circumstances and sometimes such attacks take place.

Unfortunately, our responsibilities are such that we have to work in danger and sometimes, such incidents take place. But, our endeavour is to bring to justice all those involved in such attacks, the police chief said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhaderwah (J&K), June 12: Despite Covid-19 induced lockdown, around 1,000 families associated with exotic lavender farming here have not only made themselves self-reliant but also emerged as job provider during the pandemic time.

Lavender farmers have also become a source of inspiration for those still practising traditional farming, according to a grower.

The families from different villages of Jammu and Kashmir's additional district Bhaderwah under Union Government's Aroma Mission switched from maize cultivation to growing of aromatic plants and they are happy over their decision in the backdrop of ever increasing demand of lavender oil in the international market, which earned them good fortunes.

At the time of the pandemic and prolonged lockdowns, the farmers

were providing jobs to hundreds of labourers, thus becoming a true symbol of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', officials said.

"I worked with a multinational company in Delhi for four years before losing my job due to the pandemic last year... I packed my bags and returned to my native village dejected after finding it difficult to get another job," 28-year-old Anish, a resident of Tipri village, told PTI. However, he said his decision to return and join his family in growing Lavender revolutionised his life as he became a job provider from a job seeker a year ago.

"I am more confident today than ever before as not only my savings have increased but it gave me immense satisfaction that I am giving jobs to others," he said, thanking the scientists of IIIM Jammu for mobilising farmers of this far flung area. Farmers from Tipri, Lehrote, Khellani, Manwa, Chinta, Trabbi, Koundla, Sharora, Chattrra,



Dandi, Bhalla and some parts of Athkhar, who have started harvesting their produce of lavender flowers, are expecting a bumper crop this year and opined that switching to lavender farming has come as a major relief for them during these testing times of corona pandemic. When we switched from growing traditional maize crops to aromatic lavender farming 10 years ago, we were discouraged even by our relatives and friends

but today all of them look at us as an inspiration.

During current crisis of pandemic when everybody is worried about losing jobs and businesses, lavender farmers are not only making good fortunes for themselves but also providing jobs to at least 3,000 others during these testing times, Toufeeq Bagban, a young entrepreneur, said.

Growing of lavender not only helped us survive during the hard

times of pandemic but it's strong aroma also kept Corona at a bay and it's proof is that not a single positive case was reported from any of the villages where there are lavender fields, Sarpanch, Neota-Karyan, Om Raj, believes.

The progressive farmers of Tipri village, where all the residents have switched to lavender farming and have become the leading producer of lavender flowers, demand road connectivity to transport their produce to the distillation units.

No doubt lavender farming has changed our fortunes but we have to carry our produce on our back to the distillation centre at Dradhu which is 7 km away from the village for extraction of oil, Anjali Devi, a local resident, said.

She said it is not only very cumbersome to transport the produce on backs in sweltering heat, but the non-availability of a motorable road is a major disadvantage for the residents.

There is a decrease in Coronavirus cases in the state and the positivity rate has fallen to 4.7 per cent; another round of Palle and Pattana Pragathi (village and town progress) programmes would be launched in the state

K CHANDRASEKHAR RAO | CM, TELANGANA

Nearly 800 government schools in Punjab have been shut down in the last five years and many schools have been handed over to private entities but Punjab have been ranked on the top

MANISH SISODIA | AAP LEADER

Conventional warfare has transformed under the influence of disruptive technologies. Modern warfare is not just simple clash between military powers but it is fluid, amorphous, non-contact and asymmetric

R P SINGH | LT GENERAL

SHORT TAKES

‘CoWIN hack, data leak is baseless’

New Delhi: The central government Saturday once again made it clear that there were baseless claims about alleged hacking of India's vaccine registration portal CoWIN, and data leak. Chairman of the Empowered Group on Vaccine Administration (EGVAC) RS Sharma has clarified that “the claims of so-called hackers on the dark web, relating to alleged hacking of the CoWIN system and data leak, is baseless”. “We continue to take appropriate steps as are necessary, from time to time, to ensure that the data of the people is safe with CoWIN,” Sharma said.

MLA resigns, attacks CM Rao

Hyderabad: Former Telangana Health Minister and Huzurabad MLA Etela Rajender tendered his resignation Saturday and immediately after this he started attacking Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao. “I thought of tendering my resignation after brainstorming all aspects but I did not get that opportunity. I thought of talking to the Speaker and then directly submitting the resignation to him but could not do it as the Speaker used Covid as a ruse,” said Rajender addressing the press.

IIT prof honorary member of WHO

Kanpur: A professor at IIT-Kanpur has been appointed as an honorary member of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Air Pollution and Health-Technical Advisory Group (GAPH-TAG), a communiqué issued by premier institute said. Mukesh Sharma, an air quality expert associated with the civil engineering department at IIT-Kanpur, has melded rigorous research with policy engagement, it said.

HCL provides 17 O₂ plants in Delhi

New Delhi: HCL Saturday announced that it has provided 17 ready-to-use oxygen plants to the Delhi government. These plants have been imported from France and are now deployed across seven hospitals in the city. The total combined capacity of the 17 plants is 7,300 liters per minute (LPM). The plants were inaugurated Saturday, in a virtual ceremony, in the presence of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.



India's Aspirational Districts Programme aims to ensure inclusive & all-round development in areas across our nation. Under this programme, many districts have witnessed holistic transformation. Glad to see the @UNDP report highlight its salient features

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

‘No exemption to mainstream media from new IT Rules’

The ministry dismissed the concerns that the oversight mechanism stipulated under the digital media rules would lead to excessive government control over the functioning of the digital news publishers and the OTT platforms



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 12: All mainstream media, including print and electronic, will have to comply the provisions of IT Rules, 2021 with immediate effect without exemption as the government has refused to exempt them from the ambit of the new digital media rules. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) has said that the rationale for bringing the websites of the organisations under the ambit of the law is “well-reasoned”. “Making any exception of the nature proposed will be discriminatory to the digital news publishers who do not have a traditional TV/print platform,” the ministry said in a clarification to digital news publishers, publishers of on-line curated content or OTT platforms and associations of digital media publishers.

The government's clarification came as the National Broadcasters Association (NBA) had recently

written to the I&B ministry urging it to “exempt and exclude” the traditional television news media and its extended presence on digital news platforms from the ambit of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021, saying they are already “sufficiently regulated” by various statutes, laws, guidelines, codes and regulations.

Accordingly, it said, the request for exempting the digital news content of such organisations from the ambit of digital media rules 2021 cannot be acceded to.

“It does recognise that entities having traditional TV and print media are already registered with the government either under the Press and Registration Books Act or the Uplinking and Downlinking Guidelines of 2011.”

“The digital version/digital publication of the organisations having traditional news platforms (TV and print) may be following in-

ternal guidelines of the self-regulatory bodies. Accordingly, if the organisations so desire, they can request the same self-regulatory bodies to serve as the Level II of the self-regulatory mechanism, after ensuring consistency with the Digital Media Rules, 2021,” said the Ministry. The Ministry also clarified that when any news and current affairs content of a digital news publisher is transmitted on an OTT platform, such content would be outside the regulatory responsibility of that platform.

“Further, Level III is visualised as a residual level, in so far as the grievances which do not get addressed at the first and second levels would go to the IDC. Accordingly, the apprehension of excessive government control through these mechanisms is misplaced,” said the Ministry.

In the overall context, the Digital Media Rules, 2021 may be complied with by the digital news publishers and the OTT platforms without any misapprehensions, it added.

The Ministry further said that the publishers may furnish the requisite information in the prescribed format immediately, take urgent steps for appointing a grievance officer, if not done, and place all relevant details in the public domain, constitute self-regulatory bodies through mutual consultation so that the grievances are addressed at the level of publishers or the self-regulating bodies themselves.

It further added that over 500 publishers have already submitted their details in the requisite format.

CSIR TO START CLINICAL TRIALS OF COLCHICINE

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research will undertake a two-arm phase-II clinical trial to assess the safety and efficacy of the drug Colchicine for the treatment of Covid-19 patients. The drug is expected to be an important therapeutic intervention for Covid patients with cardiac co-morbidities



EUPHORIA



Cadets celebrate after their Passing Out Parade at Indian Military Academy in Dehradun, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

India logs 84K new cases in 24 hrs

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 4.39 per cent. It has been less than 10 per cent for the 19th consecutive day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 12: The daily Covid-19 count in India remained below the one-lakh mark for the fifth consecutive day with the country reporting 84,332 fresh cases, its lowest in 70 days, according to data updated by the Union Health Ministry Saturday.

With the fresh cases, the infection tally has climbed to 2,93,59,155. The Covid-19 death toll climbed to 3,67,081 with 4,002 daily deaths, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The number of active cases further declined to 10,80,690, accounting for 3.68 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19



recovery rate has improved to 95.07 per cent.

India's active caseload declined to less than 11 lakh after 63 days while 84,332 new cases reported in 24 hours are the lowest in 70 days, the ministry said.

Also, 20,44,131 coronavirus tests were conducted Friday taking the total number to 37,42,42,384.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 4.39 per cent. It has been less than 10 per cent for the 19th consecutive day, the ministry said, adding the weekly positivity rate has also declined to 4.94 per cent.

Recoveries continue to outnumber daily new cases for the 30th consecutive day. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 2,79,11,384, while the case fatality rate has increased to 1.25 per cent, the data stated.

Cumulatively 24,96,00,304 Covid-19 vaccine doses have been administered so far under the nationwide vaccination drive.

Twitter sends notices to cartoonist Manjul, other prominent users

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 12: Unnamed law enforcement agencies have asked Twitter to take down certain tweets of popular cartoonist Manjul, fact-checking website Alt News co-founder Mohammed Zubair and others, over alleged violation of law. Manjul, Zubair and retired IAS officer Surya Pratap Singh have shared screenshots of the notice sent by the microblogging platform on their Twitter handles over the last few days.

Sources said the Ministry of Electronics and IT was not involved in sending these legal requests to Twitter. It wasn't clear which agencies have flagged these tweets by these users and for what violations. Meanwhile, the screenshot shared by Manjul showed Twitter as saying: “In the interest of transparency, we are writing to inform you that Twitter has received a request from Indian law enforcement regarding your Twitter account @MANJULtoons, that claims the ... Content violates the law(s) of India”. It further stated that Twitter has “not taken any action on the reported content at this time as a result of this request”.

Twitter, in its notice, said it is the company's policy to notify users if it receives a legal request from an authorised entity (such as law enforcement or a government agency) to remove content from their account.

ARTICLE 370 REVOCATION

Digvijaya's chat leaked, BJP says script directed from Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 12: A row erupted Saturday over Congress leader Digvijaya Singh's purported comments in an audio chat on social media that his party will have a “relook” at Article 370 revocation and Jammu and Kashmir's lost statehood if it returns to power, with the BJP accusing him of speaking “the language of Pakistan” and spewing venom against India.

Singh's remarks to a person, who the BJP said was a journalist of Pakistani origin, were seized by its leaders to unleash a torrent of criticism against the opposition party and demand statements from Congress president Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul



Gandhi on the issue. “The decision of revoking Article 370 and reducing the statehood of J&K is extremely, I would say, sad

The decision of revoking Article 370 and reducing the statehood of J&K is extremely, I would say, sad decision, and the Congress party would certainly have a relook on the issue

DIGVIJAYA SINGH | CONGRESS LEADER

The Congress should change its name from INC (Indian National Congress) to ANC, Anti-national Clubhouse. This is such a clubhouse whose members have begun hating India while hating Modi

SAMBIT PATRA | BJP SPOKESPERSON

HIGH ALERT

Heavy rains lash Mumbai, suburbs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 12: Heavy rains lashed Mumbai in 24 hours till Saturday morning, although no major water logging was reported and local trains as well as city buses largely ran as per their normal schedule, officials said.



Mumbai had got some respite from rains Friday morning after a downpour on two previous days brought the city to a halt. However, after a brief break, the city continued to get heavy rains throughout the day.

A Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) official said that the island city recorded an average rainfall of 79.66 mm, while the western and eastern suburbs received 92.68 mm and 89.30 mm rainfall, respectively, in the last 24-hours ending 8 am Saturday.

The IMD has issued an orange

The IMD has issued an orange alert for Mumbai for Saturday and a red alert for Sunday. Mumbai and Thane districts would very likely receive heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places

alert for Mumbai for Saturday and a red alert for Sunday. Mumbai and Thane districts would “very likely receive heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places (Saturday),” it has earlier said.

All civic control rooms as well as those operated by other agencies have been issued the “high alert” directive, including power utility firms like BEST and Adani, while the Coast Guard, the Navy and NDRF have been asked to remain on standby to render help if required, another official said.

Saturday morning, rains took a break in most parts of the city and suburbs. No major water logging was reported in the low-lying areas. The flow of traffic on the city roads is smooth, he added.

Govt approves policy on archiving, declassification of war histories

The History Division will be responsible for coordination with various departments while compiling, seeking approval and publishing of war and operations histories

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 12: India has for the first time formed a policy to compile, archive, declassify, and publish military operations and war histories.

Earlier there was no such provision. Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Saturday approved the policy on archiving, declassification and compilation, publication of war, operations histories by the Ministry of Defence.

“The policy envisages that each organisation under the Ministry of Defence such as Services,

Integrated Defence Staff, Assam Rifles and Indian Coast Guard, will transfer the records, including war diaries, letters of proceedings and operational record books, etc., to the History Division of Ministry of Defence (MoD) for proper upkeep, archival and writing the histories,” the Ministry of Defence stated.

The responsibility for declassification of records rests with the respective organisations as specified in the Public Record Act 1993 and Public Record Rules 1997, as amended from time to time.

According to the policy, records



should ordinarily be declassified in 25 years. “Records older than 25 years should be appraised by archival experts and transferred to the National Archives of India

once the war/operations histories have been compiled,” said the ministry.

The policy mandates constitution of a committee headed by Joint

Secretary, MoD and comprising of representatives of the Services, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs and other organisations and prominent military historians, if required, for compilation of war and operations histories.

The policy also set clear timelines with regard to compilation and publication of war, operations histories. “The Committee should be formed within two years of completion of war/operations,” the ministry said.

Thereafter, collection of records and compilation should be com-

pleted in three years and disseminated to all concerned.

The requirement of having war histories written with clear cut policy on declassification of war records was recommended by Kargil Review Committee headed by K Subrahmanyam as well as NN Vohra Committee in order to analyse lessons learnt and prevent future mistakes.

“Timely publication of war histories would give people accurate account of the events, provide authentic material for academic research and counter the unfounded rumours,” the ministry stated.

of the day quote

Delhi does not even have oxygen supplying tankers. We have learned from our mistakes in the last wave and have decided to prepare for a third wave at every step

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | CM, DELHI

On World Day Against Child Labour, let us reaffirm our commitment towards combatting child labour. It is with people's participation that we can ensure our children get a childhood they deserve

SMRITI IRANI | UNION MINISTER

Utmost importance will be given to poverty alleviation, elimination of economic and social inequalities, implementation of eco-friendly development perspective and adoption of modern solid waste management practices conducive to a healthy urban life

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | CM, KERALA

SHORT TAKES

Massive fire in Lajpat Nagar

New Delhi: A massive fire broke out in a showroom in Lajpat Nagar market in Delhi Saturday, a fire official said. More than 15 fire tenders have been rushed to the spot to douse the blaze. Officials said they received an alert from Lajpat Nagar market regarding a massive fire that broke out at Block-1, Central Market, Lajpat Nagar. "Fire is in a showroom. Thirty fire brigades have been rushed to the spot. Details are awaited," said a fire official.

K'taka police nab 38 SL immigrants

Mangaluru: In a major crackdown on human trafficking, the city crime branch police have arrested 38 Sri Lankans who had migrated illegally to India. The arrests were made Friday, following raids on several locations in Mangaluru and its surrounding localities. According to Mangaluru police commissioner N Shashi Kumar, the illegal immigrants had allegedly been promised jobs in Canada, before being trafficked to India.

IMA to protest assault on docs

New Delhi: The Indian Medical Association will hold a protest June 18 against assault on doctors, with the slogan of 'save the saviours'. In a statement, the apex medical body asked all its state and local branches across the country to observe the protest by wearing black badges, masks, ribbons, shirts and running awareness campaign against violence targeting healthcare professionals. The IMA said press conferences will also be organised and they will also meet local NGOs and voluntary service leaders.

5 Myanmar ultras held with arms

Aizawl: Five militants from Myanmar were apprehended with arms and ammunition in a joint operation carried out by the Assam Rifles and Mizoram Police from a bordering village in Lawngtlai district, the police said Saturday. Additional Superintendent of Police, C Lalruatkima, said that the intruders, suspected to be cadres of armed outfit Arakan Liberation Army (ALA) in Myanmar, were nabbed Friday night from the Kakichhuah village in Lawngtlai district in southern Mizoram bordering India and Myanmar. He said the security personnel recovered a 9 mm pistol, a .38 revolver, 55 rounds of bullets and four live grenades from the possession of the ALA cadres.



The Prime Minister of India has behaved like a coward. His vast capacity for vanity has been exposed. Indians do not come first for him. Politics does. Truth does not concern him, propaganda does

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | GENERAL SECRETARY, CONGRESS

PVT HOSPS USED ONLY 17.05% OF TOTAL COVID VAX IN MAY

In a shocking revelation at a time when there is vaccine shortage in the country, only 17.05 per cent of the total vaccines received from the Centre were used by the private hospitals in May, says government data



SAD, BSP stitch alliance for Pb polls

THE LEADERS OF THE TWO PARTIES CLAIMED THAT THE ALLIANCE WILL 'SWEEP' THE 2022 POLLS AND OUST THE 'NON-PERFORMING' CONGRESS FROM POWER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, June 12: The Shiromani Akali Dal and the Bahujan Samaj Party formed an alliance Saturday for the 2022 Punjab Assembly elections, coming together after a gap of 25 years.

Under the tie-up, the BSP will fight 20 of the 117 Assembly seats while the rest will be contested by the SAD, said Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal while announcing the alliance here.

The SAD-BSP alliance had contested the 1996 Lok Sabha polls together and won 11 out of 13 seats in Punjab. While three seats were won by the BSP and the rest were won by the SAD.

BSP chief Mayawati dubbed the alliance between the SAD and her party as a "new political and social initiative" which will usher in progress and prosperity in Punjab.

SAD stalwart and former CM Parkash Singh Badal described the formation of the SAD-BSP alliance as "the beginning of a secular, federal democratic revolution in the state and the country for a total socio-economic and political revamp of polity".

Punjab has 31.94 per cent Dalit population, mainly concentration in Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Nawanshahr and Kapurthala districts.

The border state has the highest



Under the tie-up, the BSP will fight 20 of the 117 Assembly seats while the rest will be contested by the SAD, said Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal while announcing the alliance here

percentage of Scheduled Castes population in the country.

At a joint press conference with BSP's general secretary Satish Chandra Mishra, Sukhbir Badal said, "Today is a new day in Punjab's politics, a historic day..A day of big turn in Punjab's politics."

The BSP will contest seven seats in Malwa, five in Majha and eight in Doaba regions of Punjab, said Badal, adding that the two parties will soon form a coordination committee to jointly chalk out various programmes ahead of the polls.

The seats which the BSP will contest are Kartarpur Sahib,

Jalandhar-West, Jalandhar-North, Phagwara, Hoshiarpur, Tanda, Dasuya, Chamkaur Sahib, Bassi Pathana, Mehal Kalan, Nawanshahr, Ludhiana North, Sujanpur, Bhola, Pathankot, Mohali, Amritsar North, Amritsar Central, Payal and Anandpur Sahib.

About the new alliance, Mishra said, "Today is a historic day. The BSP, which is a national party, has entered into an alliance with Punjab's strongest party SAD. This alliance will continue forever now."

This tie-up has been revived after two parties were together 25 years ago, said Badal and Mishra.

"Each BSP worker supports and welcomes this alliance. The SAD and the BSP are pro-farmer parties, who have worked for uplift of the Dalits, labourers and weaker sections," Mishra said. Sukhbir Badal said he wants to thank Mayawati for playing "an instrumental role in stitching this alliance".

"The two parties share similar ideologies as both have always fought to uphold the rights of poor, Dalits and weaker sections," Badal said who was sitting in front of a banner that read "Soch Vikas Di, Nawen Punjab Di".

Later, during an interaction with the media, the former Punjab deputy CM said the BJP will not be able to open its account in the Assembly elections.

AFTER PAWAR-KISHOR MEET

Wider alliance of anti-BJP parties necessary: NCP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 12: A day after election strategist Prashant Kishor met NCP chief Sharad Pawar, a spokesperson of the party Saturday said there is a need to have a "wider alliance" of political parties against the ruling BJP ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Kishor met Pawar at the latter's residence in Mumbai Friday. The meeting, which lasted around three hours, sparked speculation in political circles. However, what transpired during the meeting could not be known.

Talking to PTI, NCP leader and Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik



said, "There is a need to form a wider alliance of political parties against the BJP ahead of the next general elections. NCP president Sharad Pawar had himself spoken about the need to have a national alliance of all parties to take on the BJP, and had said he would try to bring together all such forces."

"Political strategist Prashant Kishor is well-versed with the data and statistics...During their three-hour long deliberations, this surely has come up for consideration," he said.

Last month, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut had stressed the need to have an alliance of opposition parties at the national level and said that he had discussed the issue with Sharad Pawar.

Prior to that, he had also said that there is a need to restructure the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) so that it emerges as a strong alternative to the BJP, and the new front should be led by a senior leader like Pawar.

BJP LEADER RAJIB BANERJEE MEETS WB TMC GEN SECY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, June 12: Former West Bengal minister Rajib Banerjee, who had switched over to the BJP and contested assembly polls from that party, met TMC state general secretary Kunal Ghosh Saturday amid speculation of return to his old party.

Banerjee, who unsuccessfully contested the polls on a BJP ticket from Domjur seat, went to Ghosh's residence in the northern part of the city where the two had a prolonged discussion, party sources said.

The development comes a day after BJP national vice president Mukul Roy came back to Trinamool

Congress in the presence of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Ghosh later told reporters that it was a courtesy meeting.

Rajib Banerjee had recently skipped a meeting of the Bengal BJP and warned members of the saffron party over a social media post that "people will not take kindly to threats of Presidents rule against a government elected with a huge mandate".

After quitting the TMC in January, Banerjee had claimed that he was forced to do so as a section of party leaders "humiliated him for airing his grievances over their style of functioning".

India approaches Dominica HC in Choksi case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 12: India has approached the Dominica High Court seeking to be impleaded as a party in the case filed by lawyers of absconding businessman Mehul Choksi whose bail was rejected by the High Court after a five hour long hearing, sources said here.

The central agency is likely to focus on establishing criminal culpability of Choksi, his fugitive status, pending warrants against him, Red Notice and charge sheets while the External Affairs Ministry will argue that Choksi continues to be an Indian citizen, they said.

The affidavits, if admitted by the



High Court, will pave way for noted lawyer Harish Salve to plead India's case in Dominica, they said.

Friday, Dominica High Court, in a separate matter, had denied bail

The CBI and External Affairs Ministry have sought to implead in the Habeas Corpus matter, which seeks return of Choksi to Antigua and Barbuda, by filing two affidavits in Dominica High Court

to Choksi calling him a flight risk after a five-hour-long court proceeding through video conferencing.

Justice Wynante Adrien-Roberts ruled that "the court cannot impose any condition that will assure

Choksi will not abscond," Dominica News online reported from the island country.

Choksi's lawyers vehemently sought bail arguing that allegations of "illegal entry" should be discarded because as "a Caribbean Community (CARICOM) citizen, he is entitled to such benefits since his allege offense is not of a serious nature", the report said.

The team was ready for stringent bail conditions to be imposed by the High Court besides offering "any amount" for bail set by the Court, it said.

The counsels also cited poor health condition to argue that he was not a flight risk.



Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Mk-III indigenously designed and manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) inducted into Indian Coast Guard

PTI PHOTO

Indian SIM cards used in China for frauds under lens

The move comes after the agencies learnt that 1,300 SIM cards were used to hack accounts and to commit other financial frauds. The revelation comes after Han Junwe, a Chinese intruder arrested Thursday, told the agencies about it during his interrogation

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 12: Indian agencies are engaged in getting details of 1,300 SIM cards as they were being used by a gang of Chinese to hack accounts and commit financial frauds, a suspected activity of a Chinese intelligence agency.

All the telecom operators are learnt to have been directed to report to the agencies concerned soon after they find any suspicious link related to any SIM cards being operated from outside India, said a source.

As per the information, the agencies have sought from these telecom



operators to make a list of all Indian SIM cards being operated from China since 2010. Revealing the shocking fact, Han, a 36-year-old Chinese national who has been a wanted criminal in India, informed the agencies that he has so far taken around 1,300 Indian SIM cards to China using fake documents from India since 2010.

Han, through his associates, used to hide the SIM cards in undergarments and send these to China. "These SIM cards were used to hack accounts and to do other financial frauds," said the Border Security Force (BSF) who arrested the suspected Chinese

spy who allegedly sneaked into Indian territory crossing India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal's Malda district.

"The purpose was to cheat people using SIM cards to get their money out of money transaction machines," said the BSF, which is responsible to guard 4,096 km India-Bangladesh border. The agencies have also raided the hotel of the Chinese national which he has been running from Gurgaon named "Star Spring" where some of his colleagues from China were working.

Han, who is now under West Bengal Police custody for further legal proceedings along with seized

items, was held under Border Outpost Malik Sultanpur when he was trying to illegally cross India-Bangladesh International Boundary (IB).

A resident of Chinese city of Hubei, Han entered Bangladesh June 2. From interrogation and his recovered passport, it was learnt that Han reached Dhaka June 2 on a business visa and stayed there with a Chinese friend.

June 8, he came to Sona Masjid in Chapainawabganj district (Bangladesh) and stayed in a hotel there, the statement said, adding he was trying to enter Indian territory today (Thursday) when he was caught by the BSF troopers.

of the day quote

To me, this (Queen's Birthday Honours) is recognising not just me, but everyone involved in the success of UK vaccine research, the half-a-million people who signed up to the vaccine research registry and the tens of thousands who took part in the vital COVID-19 vaccine trials here

DIVYA CHADHA MANEK | INDIAN-ORIGIN HEALTHCARE EXPERT, UK

Some people in the United States have fabricated and peddled absurd stories claiming Wuhan lab leak, which China is gravely concerned about

YANG JIECHI | FOREIGN POLICY ADVISER, CHINA

India desires normal neighbourly relations with all countries, including Pakistan. Our consistent position is that issues, if any, between India and Pakistan should be resolved bilaterally and peacefully, in an atmosphere free of terror, hostility and violence

R MADHU SUDAN | COUNSELLOR, INDIA'S PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UN

SHORT TAKES

Afghanistan: Twin blasts kill seven

Kabul: Separate bombs hit two minivans in a mostly Shiite neighbourhood in the Afghan capital Saturday, killing at least seven people and wounding six others, the Interior Ministry said. The attacks targeted minivans on the same road about 2 kilometres apart in a neighbourhood in western Kabul, Interior Ministry deputy spokesman Ahmad Zia Zia, said. It wasn't immediately clear what type of bombs were used and no one immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Covid cases spike 47% in a week

Moscow: Russia's national coronavirus taskforce Saturday reported that the country's tally of daily new infections has risen by nearly 50% over the past week and more than doubled in Moscow. It said there were 13,510 infections recorded in the previous day, sharply higher than the 9,163 reported June 6. Nearly half the new cases were in Moscow — 6,701 compared with 2,936 a week ago.

Algeria votes for new Parl

Algiers: Algerians vote Saturday for a new parliament in an election with a majority of novice independent candidates running under new rules meant to satisfy demands of pro-democracy protesters and open the way to a "new Algeria". Tension surrounded the voting in the gas-rich North African nation, with activists and opposition parties boycotting. Authorities have tightened the screws on the Hirak protest movement in recent weeks, with police stopping weekly marches and arresting dozens.

UK to set up new vax centre

London: Britain will set up a new animal vaccine development centre that will aim to stop viruses jumping into the human population as part of a landmark global health declaration to be agreed by G7 world leaders at Carbis Bay in Cornwall Saturday. The so-called "Carbis Bay Declaration" will see the world's leading democracies commit to a series of measures that are designed to quash future pandemics within the crucial period of the first 100 days.



Our RL (reinforcement learning) agent generates chip layouts in just a few hours, whereas human experts can take months. These superhuman AI-generated layouts were used in Google's latest AI accelerator!

ANNA GOLDIE | RESEARCH SCIENTIST, GOOGLE BRAIN

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY OBSERVED

A scaled back Trooping the Colour ceremony was held at Windsor Castle Saturday to mark Queen Elizabeth II's official birthday. The monarch, who turned 95 this April 21, was accompanied on stage by her cousin Duke of Kent, 85



'G7 to counter BRI with mega infra project'

REUTERS

Carbis Bay (England), June 12: The Group of Seven rich nations will announce Saturday a new global infrastructure plan as a response to China's belt and road initiative, a senior official in US President Joe Biden's administration said. The official, who spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity, said the United States would also push the other G7 leaders for "concrete action on forced labour" in China, and to include criticism of Beijing in their final communiqué.

"This is not just about confronting or taking on China," the official said. "But until now we haven't offered a positive alternative that reflects our values, our standards and our way of doing business."

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a multi-trillion-dollar infrastructure scheme launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping involving development and investment initiatives that would stretch from Asia to Europe and beyond. More than 100 countries have signed agreements with China to



TAMING THE DRAGON

BRI is a multi-trillion-dollar infrastructure scheme launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping involving development and investment initiatives

cooperate in BRI projects like railways, ports, highways and other infrastructure.

According to a Refinitiv database, as of mid-last year, more than 2,600 projects at a cost of \$3.7 trillion were linked to the initiative, although the Chinese foreign min-

G7 plans to involve raising hundreds of billions in public and private money to help close a \$40 trillion infrastructure gap in needy countries by 2035

istry said last June that about 20% of projects had been seriously affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In March, Biden said he had suggested to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who is hosting the three-day G7 leaders' summit in southwest England, that demo-

cratic countries should develop their own rival scheme.

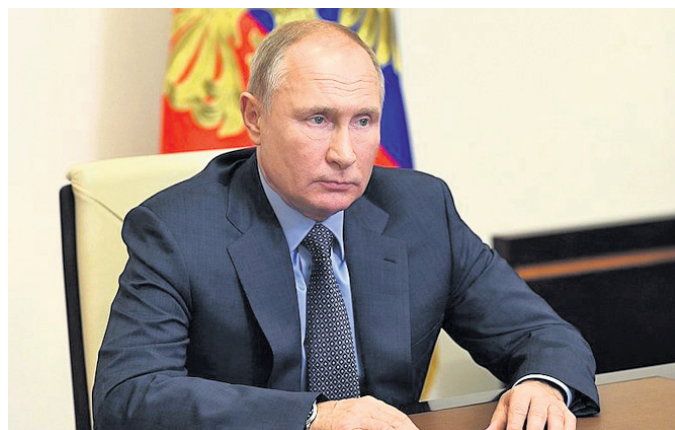
The US official said until now, the West had failed to offer a positive alternative to the "lack of transparency, poor environmental and labour standards, and coercive approach" of the Chinese government that had left many countries worse off.

"So tomorrow we'll be announcing 'build back better for the world,' an ambitious new global infrastructure initiative with our G7 partners that won't just be an alternative to the B and I (Belt and Road)," the official said.

In talks, Biden will also press the other leaders to make clear that they believe forced labour practices were an affront to human dignity and "an egregious example of China's unfair economic competition" to show that they were serious about defending human rights.

"We're pushing on being specific on areas like Xinjiang where forced labour is taking place and where we have to express our values as a G7," the official said of the final communiqué to be issued at the end of the summit Sunday.

Russia-US ties at lowest point in years, says Putin



Relations between Washington and Moscow have been adversarial in recent years. The two sides have obvious differences on issues related to Ukraine, cybersecurity, human rights, and US election interference

AGENCIES

Moscow, June 12: Just days ahead of the much-awaited summit with his American counterpart Joe Biden, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russia-US relations were at their lowest point in years. "We have a bilateral relationship that has deteriorated to its lowest point in recent years," Putin told NBC News in an interview on Friday which will be aired June 14.

But he said that Biden is a career politician and there is hope that there will not be any impulse-based movements, TASS News Agency reported.

He "is radically different from (former US President Donald) Trump because President Biden is a career man. He has spent virtually his entire adulthood in politics".

"That's a different kind of person, and it is my great hope that yes,

there are some advantages, some disadvantages, but there will not be any impulse-based movements, on behalf of the sitting US president," Putin said.

Meanwhile, he also denied a Washington Post story saying that Russia is preparing to supply Iran with an advanced satellite that would enable Tehran to track military targets in the region, Xinhua news agency reported citing the NBC News interview. "It's just fake news," Putin told NBC News.

"At the very least, I don't know anything about this kind of thing. Those who are speaking about it probably know more about it. It's just nonsense, garbage."

Biden, who is on the first foreign trip of his presidency to Europe, will meet Putin June 16 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Relations between Washington and Moscow have been adversarial in recent years. The two sides have obvious differences on issues related to Ukraine, cybersecurity, human rights, and US election interference.

In his Wednesday remarks to US troops and their families at Royal Air Force Mildenhall base in the UK, Biden said that Washington wants a stable and predictable relationship with Russia.

"But I've been clear: The US will respond in a robust and meaningful way if the Russian government engages in harmful activities," he warned.

Real enemies want HK to be 'pawn in geopolitics': China

REUTERS

Beijing, June 12: The main representative of the Chinese government in Hong Kong said Saturday people trying to turn the city into a "pawn in geopolitics" were the "real enemies" and Beijing was the true defender of the city's special status.

Luo Huining, director of China's Hong Kong Liaison Office, told a forum that the financial hub, a former British colony handed over to China in 1997, remained one of the world's most competitive economies. "Those trying to turn Hong Kong into a pawn in geopolitics, a tool in curbing China, are destroying the foundation of one country, two systems," Luo said,



A three-year-old boy sits and eats his lunch in front of a piece of artwork entitled "In The End Is The Beginning" by Nadav Kander during the Estuary 2021 Festival in Shoeburyness, Britain

INTERIM DAMAGE CLAIM

SL seeks \$40mn from cargo ship's operator

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, June 12: Sri Lanka on Saturday made an interim damage claim of USD 40 million from the owners of the Singapore-flagged cargo ship that caught fire near the outer area Colombo port May 20 and caused the country's worst-ever marine ecological disaster.

Sri Lanka has lodged the claim of \$40 million through the Attorney General following a directive by PM Mahinda Rajapaksa.

"We are still assessing the scale of damage, environmental and economic and decided to make this interim claim of," Rohitha Abeysunwardena, the minister of ports, said.

The cargo vessel - MV X-PRESS PEARL - was carrying a consignment of chemicals and raw materials for cosmetics from Hazira in Gujarat to Colombo Port when it caught fire some 9.5 nautical miles away from the port of Colombo.

All 25 crew members of the ship



- of Indian, Chinese, Filipino and Russian nationality -- were rescued May 21.

The recovered Voyage Data Recorder, which is an instrument installed on a ship to continuously record vital information related to the operation of a vessel, has now been handed over to the local law enforcement agencies to assist ongoing investigations.

Though the fire on the ship was doused by a joint effort of the Sri Lanka Navy and the Indian Coast Guard, the efforts to drag the ship away from the port's outer harbour area into deep seas has failed as the rear end of the ship came to be stuck after being submerged.

Haj to be limited to 60,000: Saudi

AGENCIES

Riyadh, June 12: Saudi Arabia announced Saturday it will allow 60,000 vaccinated residents of the kingdom to perform the annual hajj, state media reported. The hajj ministry said this year's pilgrimage would be "open for nationals and residents of the kingdom, limited to 60,000 pilgrims", according to the official Saudi Press Agency.

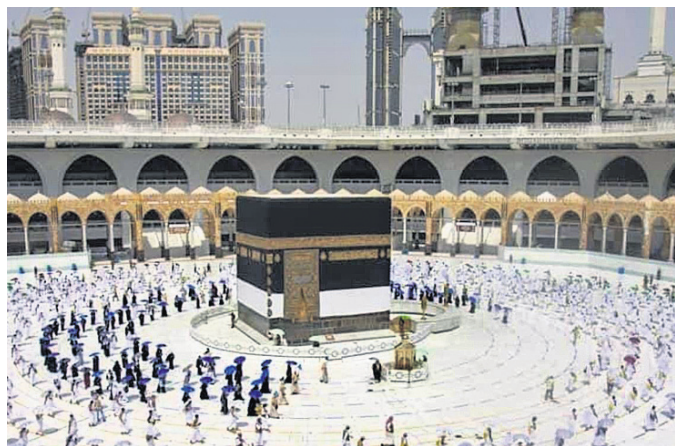
The pilgrimage, scheduled to be held at the end of July, would be limited to those who have been vaccinated and are below 65 years of age with no chronic illnesses, it said.

It will be the second year in a row that the kingdom hosts a down-scaled hajj amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The hajj, a must for able-bodied Muslims at least once in their lifetime -- typically packs millions of pilgrims into congested religious sites and could be a major source of contagion.

Only up to 10,000 Muslims took part in last year, a far cry from the 2.5 million who participated in the five-day annual pilgrimage in 2019.

In a relaxation of coronavirus curbs last October, Saudi Arabia



The pilgrimage, scheduled to be held at the end of July, would be limited to those who have been vaccinated and are below 65 years of age with no chronic illnesses

opened the Grand Mosque for prayers for the first time in seven

months and partially resumed the all-year-round umrah pilgrimage.

The limit on umrah pilgrims is 20,000 a day, with a total of 60,000 worshippers allowed to perform daily prayers at the mosque.

The umrah usually attracts millions of Muslims from across the globe each year. Authorities said the umrah would be allowed to return to full capacity once the threat of the pandemic has abated.

The revered Black Stone in the Kaaba, which is customary but not mandatory to touch during the pilgrimage, remains out of reach.

Continued war, poverty force Afghan kids to work on streets

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kabul, June 12: The continued brutal war, insurgency and extreme poverty in Afghanistan have forced countless number of children to resort to child labour and work on streets to earn livelihood for their families, instead of going to school.

Civilians including children are bearing the brunt of war in Afghanistan. A UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) report released in April documented 1,783 civilian casualties (573 killed and 1,210 injured) in the first quarter of 2021 which indicates a 29 per cent increase against the same period of last year, reports Xinhua news agency.

The report also indicated a 37 per cent increase in the number of



women casualties while a 23 per cent spike in child casualties compared to last year.

Although there is no official statistics on the number of child labour, the number of vulnerable

children in Afghanistan, according to local media reports, has increased from 3 million to 5 million. Omar, 11, is one of the thousands of Afghan children who lost their parents in the endemic war

Although there is no official statistics on the number of child labour, the number of vulnerable children in Afghanistan, according to local media reports, has increased from 3 million to 5 million

and has been forced to work on Kabul streets to earn a livelihood for his five-member family.

Washing cars in Omid Sabz locality, Omar said the ongoing war has deprived him of going to school. "I am busy in car washing from

dawn to dusk and roughly earn some 150 afghani (\$1.9) daily to support my family," he told Xinhua.

Another boy Abdul Azim, 13, who scavenges garbage buckets on the outskirts of Kabul city told Xinhua that he was "the only bread earner of the family and have no choice but work and earn something". "On average I can earn around 180 Afghani (\$2.3) every-day and support my family."

Ghulam Haider Jilani, the deputy for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, said recently that the government would do its best to solve the problems of child labour in the country.

Jilani said the budget for children protection had increased from 20 million afghani last year to 52 million Afghani this year.



business

of the day quote

The year 2020 has presented a great responsibility and opportunity to fast track the development of electrification and electric vehicles (EV) by utilising the strengths available globally through a collaborative and integrated effort

SAKET MEHRA | PARTNER, GRANT THORNTON

We should be completely REIT-ready in four quarters from now. The timing of the launch of REIT will be decided by the two shareholders (DLF and GIC)

ASHOK TVAGI | CEO, DLF

Vedanta Group has been very efficient and aggressive and has set up two Covid Field Hospitals in the record time in Karnataka. Even during the first wave, Vedanta had been very prompt to provide medical equipment infrastructure support, medicines etc

PRALHAD JOSHI | UNION COAL AND MINES MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

DLF's sale bookings up 24%

New Delhi: Realty major DLF sold residential properties worth ₹3,084 crore in the last fiscal year, registering a growth of 24% from 2019-20, as it saw better demand for completed and new inventories despite the pandemic. The company's sale bookings stood at ₹2,485 crore in 2019-20, according to an investors' presentation. "New sales at ₹3,084 crore for the fiscal despite Q1 FY21 being muted," DLF said.

PhonePe alleges unethical actions

New Delhi: PhonePe Saturday said it has filed a formal complaint with market regulator SEBI against Ventureast, alleging that the latter's "side dealings" with Affle are a "deliberate bad faith attempt" to scuttle PhonePe's majority acquisition in OSLabs. Walmart-owned digital payments platform PhonePe was in advanced stages of discussions to acquire majority stake in Indus OS, a homegrown content and app discovery platform, in an all-cash deal worth \$60 million.

AEL incorporates new subsidiary

New Delhi: Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) Saturday said it has incorporated a wholly-owned subsidiary, Adani Cement Industries Limited (ACIL), to manufacture all types of cements. In a filing to BSE, the company said it incorporated the wholly-owned subsidiary June 11 and it is yet to commence its business operations. ACIL will carry business viz. manufacturing, production, process all types of cements..

Goyal urged to initiate probe

New Delhi: A day after the Karnataka High Court dismissed the plea by Amazon and Flipkart on the investigation ordered by CCI against them for alleged violation of provisions of competition laws, traders body CAIT Saturday urged Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal to direct CCI to immediately initiate the proceedings. In a communication to the minister, the CAIT also asked for immediate issuance of a fresh press note for the FDI policy for e-commerce sector with a monitoring mechanism to ensure that law of the land prevails.



We are making progress, but the (US) economy is not completely on fire and a runaway train where the Fed has to take action

CHRIS GALIPEAU | SENIOR MARKET STRATEGIST, PUTNAM INVESTMENTS

ONGC TO SUPPORT ART, HANDICRAFT PROJECTS

ONGC will take up 75 projects to support various art and crafts in the country in an attempt to encourage local artisans. Petroleum Secretary Tarun Kapoor inaugurated an initiative by oil PSUs to support various art and craft projects



Govt asks ministries to target 20% reduction in controllable expenditure

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 12: The government has asked all ministries and government departments to target 20% reduction in expenditures like domestic and foreign travel, overtime allowance, rent and office expenses, in the current fiscal year as it tightens its purse strings amid the second wave of the pandemic.

The Department of Expenditure under the Finance Ministry issued an office memorandum in this regard June 10.

"All the ministries/ departments are requested to take steps to curtail all avoidable non-scheme expenditure and aim for 20% reduction in controllable expenditure....Expenditure in 2019-20 may be taken as the baseline for this purpose," the memorandum said. However, expenditure related to containment of the pandemic is excluded from the scope of this order. The memorandum said, ministries should aim to control expenditures like overtime allowance, rewards, domestic and foreign travel, office expenses, rents, rates and taxes, royalty.

Besides, expenditures related to publications, other administrative expenses, supplies and materials, cost of ration, clothing and tentage, advertising and publicity, minor works and maintenance, service or commitment charges, grants-



in-aid general, contribution and other charges, should also be cut.

The savings that would accrue to the government due to this move cannot be exactly ascertained. This is the second year in a row that the government has come out with measures to rationalise expenditure.

Last year, the expenditure department had asked all ministries /departments to review appointments of consultants, curtail functions and ban use of imported paper for printing as part of measures to rationalise non-priority expenditure.

As per estimates, the government is staring at an additional expenditure of up to ₹1.45 lakh crore to provide free vaccines and foodgrains to people devastated by the deadly second wave of covid infections.

Reversing a policy where states competed for vaccine supplies for certain age categories, the government earlier this week announced that it will procure vaccines for all adults.

'Higher subsidy under FAME II to be game changer in adoption of EVs'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 12: Electric two-wheeler makers Saturday termed as "a phenomenal move" by the government to increase subsidy for such vehicles by 50 per cent under the FAME II scheme saying it would be a game changer in the adoption of eco-friendly vehicles.

The government Friday made a partial modification of the scheme for Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India Phase II (FAME India Phase II), including increasing the demand incentive for electric two-wheelers to ₹15,000 per KWh from the earlier uniform subsidy of ₹10,000 per KWh for all EVs, including plug in hybrids and strong hybrids except buses.

In the latest modification, the department of heavy industries also capped incentives for electric two-wheelers at 40 per cent of the cost of vehicles, up from 20 per cent earlier. "The revision in the FAME (II) policy, increasing the subsidy by 50 per cent per KWh is a phenomenal move. Sales of electric two-wheelers have grown despite the pandemic and with this additional subsidy, we expect electric two wheeler sales to disrupt the market, and clock 6 million-plus units by 2025," Ather Energy CEO and Co-founder Tarun Mehta said in a statement.

The government's continued support to drive adoption of EVs,



with a keen focus on locally built electric two-wheelers will make India the manufacturing hub of EVs, he added.

Welcoming the "government's continued support to EVs", TVS Motor Company Joint Managing Director Sudarshan Venu said, "Sustainable mobility solutions are very important for the future and TVS is investing significantly behind this. The improved incentives for electric two wheelers will increase penetration."

He further said, "Such policy direction should lead to indigenously developed of future technology." Expressing similar views, Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles Director General Sohinder Gill said, "It's an important and an admirable decision taken by the government, a move that will bring down the prices of electric two wheelers nearer to

It's an important and an admirable decision taken by the government, a move that will bring down the prices of electric 2Ws nearer to the IC vehicles and remove one of the biggest blockade of the high sticker price of electric 2Ws

SOHINDER GILL | DIRECTOR GENERAL, SOCIETY OF MANUFACTURERS OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES

the IC vehicles and remove one of the biggest blockade of the high sticker price of electric two-wheelers."

Elaborating further, he said a city speed electric scooter' with a range of 100km/charge will now cost less than ₹60,000 and a high-speed scooter with a range of 80 km will come nearer to the price tag of ₹1 lakh.

JSW Steel rolls out staff inoculation drive in state



POST NEWS NETWORK

Barbil, June 12: JSW Steel (mines division) in Odisha has intensified its precautionary measures against Covid as per the guidelines of the government and the health authorities.

JSW Steel has strengthened the enforcement of its protocols for

safeguarding employees and associate partners against Covid. All employees and workers are strictly mandated to wear relevant PPE kits and individual masks as and when required.

There is a mandatory cleaning of all workplace surfaces and areas of office operations. Social distancing protocols are implemented and followed with heightened rigour. In order to ensure the safety of employees and workforce, first dose of vaccines have been ordered by the company and is being presently administered.

Ranjan Nayak, Chief Operating Officer, JSW Steel Limited (Mines division), Odisha said, "For JSW,

the safety and well-being of its employees and workers of its associate partners are of utmost importance. The company is undertaking safe operations through these extensive preventive measures against Covid across the operational facility, residential areas and adjacent areas." The mines have readied self-isolation facilities in case there are any positive cases. For employees, Covid centers have been developed with utmost precautions and good facilities.

Currently, the mines are being operated with reduced manpower as per government guidelines and most of the employees have been asked to operate from home.

State to provide ₹1,600cr loan to MSMEs by Sept

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: The Odisha government would provide loan of ₹1,600 crore to state Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by September, 2021 to boost the sector. During a review meeting of General Managers of District Industries Centres and Regional Industrial Centres, MSME department Principal Secretary Satyabrata Sahoo announced the matter.

The state is committed to improve the MSME sector, Sahoo said. State MSME Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra was also present during the virtual meet. He praised the efforts of the entrepreneurs



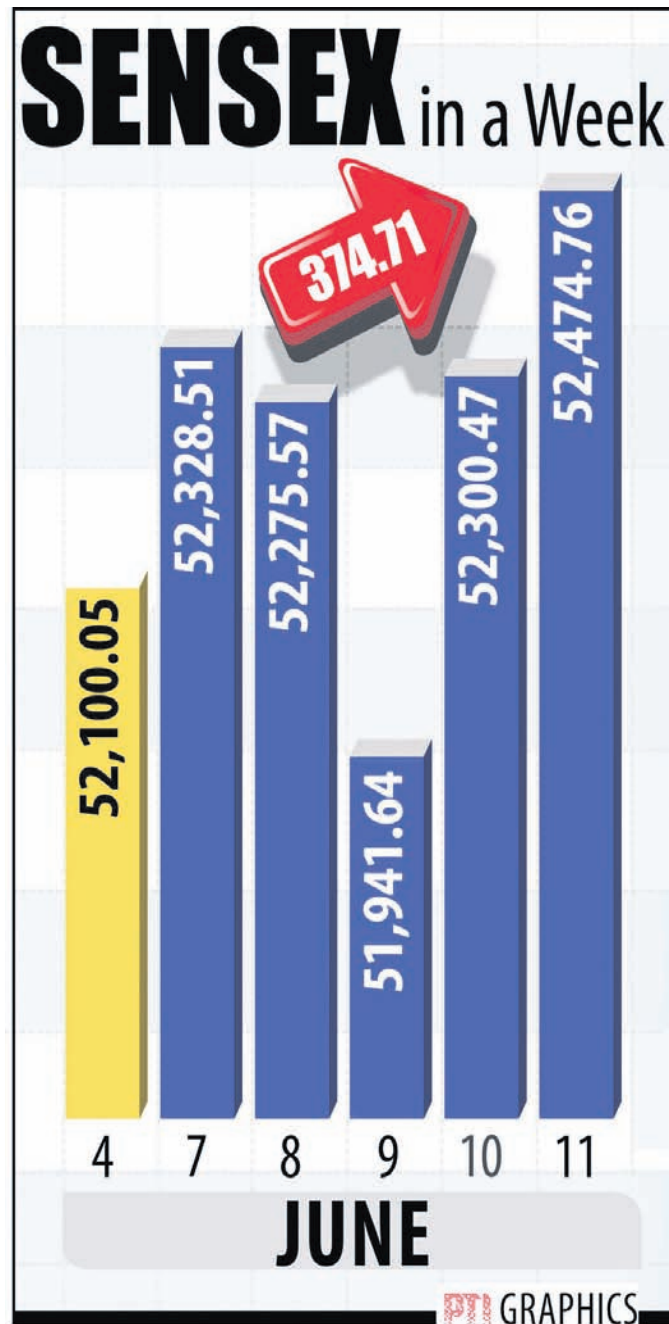
of the Magic Millet Unit based at Mohanpur in Mayurbhanj district and the Phiringia Turmeric Cluster in Kandhamal. The minister asked the participated officials to add value to their products.

Mishra appreciated the GMs role in ensuring oxygen supply during pandemic. He also directed to boost the rice brand industry

units located in Kalahandi district.

The minister also asked to arrange ways to trade date palms in national and international markets. He suggested offering skillful training to youth and craftsman. Around 1,047 enterprises have been promoted across the state under the Odisha Startup Ecosystem Scheme (OSEC), said, MD Sadique Alam, Director of Industries department. Alam also said that ₹3,121 crore has been provided to 1.71 lakh entrepreneurs under the ECLGS project.

The director also mentioned that the department is working to create industrial clusters collecting products from different districts under SFRUTI scheme.



Malabar Gold & Diamonds donates grocery kits

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the world's leading jewellery retailers, started providing essential grocery kits to needy at various locations of Bhubaneswar store under the corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative.

The event has been organised in the presence of Anshuman Rath (Zonal Deputy Commissioner, BMC), Ashnaf, Store Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds & Management team members.



Ashnaf, informed that 500 grocery kits were distributed to poor and needy in Ramakrishna leprosy colony, Gopabandhu leprosy colony (Buddha Nagar), Lingaraj leprosy colony (Palaspally), Gokhibaba leprosy colony (Lingaraj station area) during the programme and also assured that the team will continue doing these activities on a continuous basis to support the poor and needy.

Malabar Group has been carrying relief activities across various states by supporting grocery kits to the needy. The social wing of Malabar Group focuses on conceptualising and implementing the CSR initiatives.

Over the last two decades, the group has contributed substantially to the welfare of society through its CSR activities like supply of free life saving medicines and financial aid for the construction of homes for the homeless.

Amazon India vaccinates 1 lakh frontline workers



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 12: Amazon India vaccinated over 1,00,000 people including frontline associates, employees, and their dependents. The on-site vaccination events are currently being hosted in 26 cities in conjunction with licensed healthcare partners.

The on-site vaccination drive strengthens Amazon India's commitment to make vaccination a ready choice for 10 lakh people including employee, partner and SMB sellers, and their dependents.

The company is offering up to ₹750 as a special pay to frontline employees who choose to get vaccinated.

Additionally, they have put together Covid-specific benefits and support system to help the frontline workers and their eligible dependents. These include: salary in advance, Covid special leave, and isolation facility support, to name a few. The company has invested \$11.5 billion in Covid-related measures in all.

Biden sells G7 on global tax, but US Cong is a hurdle

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, June 12: President Joe Biden might have persuaded some of the world's largest economies to hike taxes on corporations, but the US Congress could be a far tougher sell. White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Friday that leaders of the Group of Seven, which also includes the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Germany, Italy and Japan, agreed with Biden on placing a global minimum tax of at least 15% on large companies.

The G7 leaders, participating in a three-day summit in England, affirmed their finance ministers who earlier this month endorsed the global tax minimum.

"America is rallying the world to

make big multinational corporations pay their fair share so we can invest in our middle class at home," Jake Sullivan, the president's national security adviser, said Friday on Twitter.

A minimum tax is supposed to halt an international race to the bottom for corporate taxation that has led multinational businesses to book their profits in countries with low tax rates.

This enables them to avoid taxes and encourages countries to slash rates. The minimum rate would make it tougher for companies to avoid taxes, and could possibly supplant a digital services tax that many European nations are imposing on US Tech firms that pay at low rates.



Biden administration officials believe the use of overseas tax havens has discouraged companies from investing domestically, at a cost to the middle class.

The president hopes a G7 en-

dorsement can serve as a springboard for getting buy-in from the larger Group of 20 complement of nations.

The agreement is not a finished deal, as the terms would need to

be agreed upon by countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and implemented by each of them.

The president needs other countries to back a global minimum tax to ensure that his own plans for an enhanced one in the US don't hurt American businesses.

"It has the potential to stop the race to the bottom," said Thornton Matheson, a senior fellow at the Tax Policy Center.

"It would be a huge sea change

in the way things have been going in corporate taxes for the last three decades."

The idea of an enhanced global minimum tax is also an integral part of Biden's domestic agenda, but it faces resistance in Congress.

The president has proposed using a global minimum tax to help fund his sweeping infrastructure plan.

His budget proposal estimates it could raise nearly \$534 billion over 10 years, but Republicans say the tax code changes would make the United States less competitive in a global economy.

America is rallying the world to make big multinational corporations pay their fair share so we can invest in our middle class at home

JAKE SULLIVAN | NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER TO US PRESIDENT

HORROR IN COPENHAGEN

Italy seal historic win at UEFA Euro



Denmark players are visibly upset as Christian Eriksen receives CPR; Eriksen is sitting up on the stretcher with his eyes open while being carried away from the ground, Saturday

Eriksen collapsed and received CPR treatment on the field before being hospitalised, only to be later announced as ‘in stable condition’

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Copenhagen, June 12: Denmark midfielder Christian Eriksen was taken to a hospital Saturday after collapsing on the field during their match against Finland in the Euro 2020. The UEFA said Eriksen has been stabilised and the Danish football federation said he was awake. “Christian Eriksen is awake and is undergoing further examinations at Rigshospitalet,” the Danish federation wrote on Twitter. The match was suspended after Eriksen was given urgent medical attention on the field near the end of the first half. Later UEFA announced the restart of the match on Twitter: “Following the request made by players of both teams, UEFA has agreed to restart the match between Denmark and Finland tonight at 20:30 CET (12:00 am IST). The last

four minutes of the first half will be played, there will then be a 5-minute half-time break followed by the second half,” the tweet reads. Eriksen was treated for about 10 minutes after collapsing. He was then carried off on a stretcher: UEFA then announced the game had been suspended ‘due to a medical emergency’. Eriksen had just played a short pass when he fell face-forward onto the ground. His teammates immediately gestured for help and medics rushed onto the field. Eriksen was given chest compressions as his Denmark teammates stood around him in a shielding wall for privacy. Finland players huddled by their bench and eventually walked off the field while Eriksen was still getting treatment. Eriksen was eventually carried off to a loud ovation, with his teammates walking next to the stretcher.

Wales draw with Switzerland

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Baku (Azerbaijan): With his head wrapped in bandages the same colour as his red shirt, Keiffer Moore nodded in an equaliser to give Wales a 1-1 draw with Switzerland Saturday at the European Championship. The goal off a cross from Joe Morrell in the 74th minute hinted that Wales could again be a surprise contender at Euro 2020, like it was five years ago when the team reached the Euro 2016 semi-finals. For Moore, it was the biggest step so far in a long journey to football’s elite after starting in the non-league system in southwest England. He nearly gave Wales a lead with a looping header which



Keiffer Moore scored for Wales

Switzerland goalkeeper Yann Sommer stretched to push over the bar, but he was hurt in a clash on the resulting corner. Moore left the field bleeding

and returned in bandages, but was largely cut out of the game as Wales defended deeper in the first half. Switzerland dominated possession but wasted numerous chances before Breel Embolo scored the opening goal in the 49th minute. First he won a corner when his shot was pushed wide after a solo run, then rose above his marker to head in a cross from Xherdan Shaqiri. The Swiss pushed for a winning goal after Moore’s header and thought they had one when Mario Gavranovic put the ball in the net, but it was ruled offside on video review. Italy leads Group A with three points after their 3-0 win over Turkey Friday. Wales and Switzerland have one point each.

Djokovic hands Nadal third loss in Spaniard’s 108 French Open matches

JOKER TURNS ACE FOR KING

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, June 12: Sprinting, sliding and stretching, anticipating each other’s moves for four sets and more than four hours, Novak Djokovic and Rafa Nadal produced a masterpiece in the French Open semifinals. Djokovic, as it happens, is one of only two men in tennis history who knows what it takes to beat Nadal at Roland Garros. And now Djokovic has done it twice — this time ending Nadal’s bid for a 14th championship there and record-

entire career — considering quality of tennis, playing my biggest rival on the court where he has had so much success and has been the dominant force in the last 15-plus years,” Djokovic said. It was Nadal’s third loss in 108 matches at a tournament he won each of the last four years, in-



breaking 21st Grand Slam title overall by coming back to win their 58th career matchup 3-6, 6-3, 7-6(7-4), 6-2 Friday night. “Just one of these nights and matches that you will remember forever,” said the top-seeded Djokovic, who trailed 2-0 in the closing set before reeling off the last half-dozen games to reach his sixth final at the clay-court major tournament. “Definitely the best match that I was part of ever in Roland Garros, for me, and (one of the) top-three matches that I ever played in my



cluding by beating Djokovic in the 2020 final. Nadal’s first defeat at the French Open came against Robin Soderling in 2009; the next against Djokovic in 2015. “Each time you step on the court with him,” Djokovic said, “you know that you have to kind

of climb Mt. Everest to win against this guy here.” And to think: There wasn’t even a trophy at stake in this one. That will happen Sunday, when Djokovic, a 34-year-old from Serbia, faces Stefanos Tsitsipas, a 22-year-old from Greece. No two men in the professional era, which dates to 1968, have played each other more than this duo (Djokovic now leads 30-28). They know each other, and each other’s strengths and weaknesses and patterns, so well. It’s Djokovic’s 29th as he seeks a second title at the French Open and 19th major championship overall to pull within one of the men’s Slam mark shared by Nadal and Roger Federer.

WOMEN’S FRENCH OPEN

Krejcikova beats all odds to clinch title

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, June 12: Unseeded Barbora Krejcikova won her first Grand Slam title by beating Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 in the French Open final Saturday. This was only the fifth major tournament in singles for Krejcikova, a 25-year-old from the Czech Republic. She is the third unseeded women’s champion in the last five years at Roland Garros. Krejcikova now will try to become the first woman since Mary Pierce in 2000 to win the French Open singles and doubles titles in the same year. Krejcikova and partner Katerina Siniakova already own two Grand Slam doubles titles and are scheduled to play in the final of that event in Paris Sunday.

The 31st-seeded Pavlyuchenkova was playing in her first Grand Slam final in the 52nd major tournament of her career. She was treated for a left leg injury late in the second set Saturday. This was only the second WTA singles title for Krejcikova, but they have come in her past two tournaments. She won the trophy on clay at Strasbourg, France, last month and is now on a 12-match winning streak. She is the sixth consecutive first-time Grand Slam champion to collect the trophy at Roland Garros, where the red clay can diminish the effectiveness of speedy serves and the sometimes odd bounces produced by, and particular footwork required on, the surface can frustrate players.



Mirabai Chanu’s Tokyo Olympics berth confirmed



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 12: The International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) Saturday confirmed that star Indian lifter Mirabai Chanu has qualified for the upcoming Tokyo Olympics in the women’s 49kg category. Chanu, the 2017 World Champion in weightlifting, had secured her place in Tokyo by winning a bronze medal in the Asian Championship in Tashkent in April with a world record in clean and jerk. The 26-year-old from Manipur has qualified on the basis of her standings on IWF’s Absolute Ranking list. The Indian lifter is ranked second in the 49kg category with 4133, 6172 points in her kitty. Chanu was earlier ranked fourth but North Korea’s withdrawal from the Olympics lifted the Indian to the second place. This will be Chanu’s second appearance in the Olympics, five years after a disappointing outing in Rio, where she failed to lift any of the weights in clean and jerk to bow out of the showpiece. In the men’s 67 kg category, India’s Jeremy Lalrinnunga is ranked 12th and lost the continental quota to Korea’s Hak Myeongmok, but the 18-year-old still has a chance to qualify. The final list will be released June 25.