



KRITI'S GYM SECRET

Actor Kriti Sanon showcases expectation versus reality when it comes to leg workouts, in her new Instagram post

LEISURE P2



HARDLINER AS FRONTRUNNER

Iran votes in presidential election tipped in favour of a hard-line protege of Supreme Leader Khamenei

INTERNATIONAL P10



NETHERLANDS SEAL WIN

Memphis Depay scores one as the Netherlands overcome Austria challenge 2-0 at Euro 2020

SPORTS P12



DAILY GRIND: Workers load sand on trucks from the banks of Musi river near Ravulapenta village in Nalgonda district of Telangana, Friday.

PTI PHOTO

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Abide by Indian laws: Twitter told

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 18: Amid a tussle between the Union government and Twitter over the new IT rules, members of a Parliamentary panel Friday strongly objected to Twitter India officials' observations that they abide by their policy and categorically told them that the rule of land is supreme. According to sources, members of the Parliamentary Panel on Information Technology also asked Twitter why it should not be fined as it has been found 'violating' rules of the country.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information and Technology, chaired by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, had last week summoned Twitter over issues related to misuse of the platform and protection of citizens' rights.

Twitter India's public policy manager Shagufta

Kamran and legal counsel Ayushi Kapoor deposed before the panel Friday.

Members of the panel asked some tough and searching questions to Twitter India officials but their answers lacked clarity and were ambiguous, sources said.

Twitter and the Centre have been at loggerheads over several issues for the last few months.

Meanwhile, the Ghaziabad Police has sent a notice to Twitter India Managing Director Manish Maheshwari, asking him to join a probe in connection with the case involving an assault on a Muslim man here earlier this month, officials said Friday.

He has been asked to appear at the Loni Border police station within seven days to get his statement recorded in the case in which an FIR was lodged against the social media giant also, a senior police official said.

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CM lays foundation stones for oxygen plants in 8 districts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday laid the foundation stones for the establishment of eight liquid medical oxygen (LMO) plants in different districts.

He laid the stones for the LMO plants of Pressure Awing Adsorption (PSA) technology in the districts of Jharsuguda, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Sonapur, Nayagarh, Sundargarh and Mayurbhanj through video-conferencing.

The state government has planned to set up 20 PSA oxygen plants in the state. So far, foundation stones have been laid for 15 plants in two phases. With the functioning of the 20 oxygen plants, the state can be able to produce up to 24,000 liter of medical oxygen per minute. Patnaik said the Covid-19 situation has improved significantly in the state.

"However, we have to be more careful," he said. As experts in some states have warned about the third wave of the pandemic, the CM directed the concerned officials to ensure full preparedness to tackle the possible third wave.

The Chief Minister appealed to the public to wear double masks and get vaccinated. "Fight against the virus is going on for more than a year. In the second wave, which began in April, a fall in the oxygen saturation among the patients was a major problem," he pointed out.

"Every life is precious - this is the motto of the state government for any disaster management. In this direction, the government is providing free medical facility including medicines to the people of the state," Patnaik said.

Online UG, PG exams

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Higher Education Minister Arun Sahoo Friday said that the UG and PG final year examinations in the state will be held in online mode either in July or August.

The minister said this after a virtual meeting with the vice-chancellors of universities. The concerned universities will decide the dates on which they will conduct the examinations, he said.

"The universities and autonomous colleges will fix their dates for online exams. Students can appear for their examinations from their homes. Those who don't have the required facility at their homes can appear for their examinations from nearby degree colleges," the minister 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 end, the minister said.

The minister appealed to all UG and

Plus II results in Aug 2nd week

BHUBANESWAR: The Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE), Odisha informed Friday that the results of the annual Plus II examinations, 2021 will be declared in the second week of August.

Informing the media, the controller of examination, CHSE, said that certain modalities have been formulated for awarding marks to Plus II students who were to appear in the finals in 2021.

The examinations of the Plus II Arts, Science and Commerce along with vocational courses were cancelled keeping in mind the health and safety issues of the students, teachers and parents.

Subsequently, an expert committee was constituted by the CHSE in accordance with the instructions of the government to suggest well defined objective criteria for alternative assessment of the examinees of annual higher secondary examination.

On the basis of the recommendations of the committee and in view of the cancellation of annual examinations, 2021, the CHSE will

follow the norms for processing of results of the examination.

Scores will be awarded to regular examinees in theory papers/theory components of papers on the basis of the performance of the examinee in the 10th Board examination. For this purpose a detailed subject mapping has been prepared.

The scores in theory papers for ex-regular examinees will be awarded on the basis of their performance in the previous CHSE examination in which they had appeared. Scores will be awarded in the practical/project component of a paper both for regular and ex-regular examinees at their higher secondary school level.

The scores awarded at the higher secondary school level will be scrutinised and moderated.

An examinee not satisfied with the result declared on the basis of Alternative Assessment Criteria, can opt to appear for the examination in the off-line mode which will be conducted when the situation will be conducive, the department said in a notification.

PG students to continue with their preparations for the examinations.

Notably, Sahoo had a virtual meeting with the vice-chancellors June 12. At that time, he had said that the examinations would definitely be held. "Online classes are going on and the courses will be completed by June end. My advice for students is that they should continue their studies for the exams," he had said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Is this a new fad? Everybody wants a grocery loan these days!

PETROL PRICE NEARS ₹100 ACROSS INDIA

NEW DELHI: Fuel prices increased again across the country Friday adding more misery to the common man's woes, as he already grapples with rising food prices amid shrinking income. Petrol prices have reached very close to hitting the century mark all across the country extending the scope of historic high prices.

CITY FUEL PRICES	
PETROL	₹97.75 (+0.27)
DIESEL	₹95.62(+0.31)

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	52344.45 ↑ 21.12
NIFTY	15683.40 ↓ 8.00
DOLLAR	74.27 ↓ ₹0.21
EURO	88.53 ↑ ₹0.21
GOLD	₹46,925 ↓ ₹33
SILVER	₹67,948 ↑ ₹349

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	30.4°C	29.8°C
TEMP MIN	26.6°C	25.6°C
Humidity	95%	95%
Rainfall	1.2mm	12mm
Forecast	Generally cloudy sky	

Brace for Covid third wave by Oct: Experts

AGENCIES

Bangalore, June 18: A third wave of coronavirus infections is likely to hit India by October, and although it will be better controlled than the latest outbreak the pandemic will remain a public health threat for at least another year, according to a Reuters poll of medical experts.

The June 3-17 snap survey of 40 healthcare specialists, doctors, scientists, virologists, epidemiologists and professors from around the world showed a significant pickup in vaccinations will likely provide some cover to a fresh outbreak.

Of those who ventured a prediction, over 85 per cent of respondents, or 21 of 24, said the next wave will hit by October, including three who forecast it as early as August and 12 in September. The remaining three said between November and February.

But over 70 per cent of experts, or 24 of 34, said any new outbreak would be better controlled compared with the

GOD HELP US IF ALL THAT HAPPENS: HC

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court Friday took cognisance of the violation of COVID-19 protocols in various markets in the national capital and observed that such breaches will only hasten the third wave of coronavirus which cannot be permitted at all. The high court said if this behaviour of flouting COVID-19 norms continues "we will be in a great trouble." "God help us if all that happens." A vacation bench of justices Navin Chawla and Asha Menon took note of certain photographs sent to one of the high court judges on WhatsApp by an AIIMS doctor showing scant regard for COVID-19 protocols by street vendors in markets. "We have paid a huge price in the second wave. We don't know if there is any household which has not suffered in the second wave, closely or remotely," the bench observed, adding that "we as a citizen of this city are worried when we see these images." Taking suo motu cognisance of the photographs, the HC initiated a PIL, directing the Centre, the Delhi government and the Delhi Police to file status reports.

current one, which has been far more devastating - with shortage of vaccines, medicines, oxygen and hospital beds - than the smaller first surge in infections last year. "It will be more controlled, as cases will be much less because more vaccinations would have been rolled out and there would be some degree of natural immunity

So far, India has fully vaccinated about only 5 per cent of its estimated 950 million eligible population, leaving many millions vulnerable to infections and deaths.

While a majority of healthcare experts predicted the vaccination drive would pick up significantly this year, they cautioned against an early removal of restrictions, as some states have done. When asked if children and those under 18 years would be most at risk in a po-

tential third wave, nearly two-thirds of experts, or 26 of 40, said yes.

"The reason being they are a completely virgin population in terms of vaccination because currently there is no vaccine available for them," said Dr Pradeep Banandur, head of epidemiology department at National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS).

Experts warn the situation could become severe. "If children get infected in large numbers and we are not prepared, there is nothing you can do at the last minute," said Dr Devi Shetty, a cardiologist at Narayana Health and an advisor to the Karnataka state government on pandemic response planning.

"COVID-19 is a solvable problem, as obviously it was easy to get a solvable vaccine. In two years, India likely will develop herd immunity through vaccine and exposure of the disease," said Robert Gallo, director of the Institute of Human Virology at the University of Maryland and international scientific advisor, Global Virus Network.

Vigilance director dies of Covid-19

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: In a shocking development, senior IPS officer and director of the state Vigilance Directorate Debasis Panigrahi reportedly succumbed to Covid-19 at a hospital in Kolkata, Friday.

Panigrahi was initially admitted to the Ashwini Covid Hospital in Cuttack May 29. He was airlifted to Kolkata from the private hospital June 8 as he required ECMO support after his health deteriorated.

Panigrahi joined the Indian Police Service in 1991 and was allotted the Odisha cadre. He served as the Superintendent of Police of major districts such as Keonjhar, Puri, Ganjam and Cuttack. He also served as



Debasis Panigrahi

the DIG of Police (Administration), Special Secretary, Home Department, Government of Odisha, IG of Police (Modernisation) and IG of Police (Personnel) and Additional DG of Police (Personnel) at the State Police Headquarters, Cuttack. Panigrahi was a recipient of the prestigious 'Odisha Sahitya Akademi Award' for short stories for the year 2002.

Rohidas, Lakra in for Tokyo



AGENCIES

Bangalore, June 18: Odisha stars Amit Rohidas and Birendra Lakra have been included in the Indian men's squad for Tokyo Olympics, Friday. With this, three state hockey players, including Deep Grace Ekka who was named in the Indian women's squad for the Games Thursday, will represent India at the quadrennial sports extravaganza.

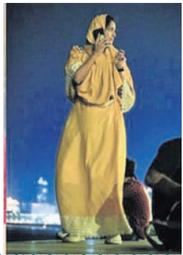
Rohidas and Lakra will be donning the Indian jersey for the first time at an Olympics. Veteran defender Lakra

missed the 2016 Games due to a knee injury.

India named eight more Olympic debutants in its 16-member men's hockey squad, which also features seasoned performers like PR Sreejesh and Manpreet Singh, for the mega event to be held from July 23 to August 8.

Hardik Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Nilakanta Sharma, Sumit, Shamsher Singh, Dilpreet Singh, Gurjant Singh and Lalit Kumar Upadhyay are the players who will make their Olympic debut in Tokyo.

leisure



NOT TODAY HONOURED AT UK ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL 2021

Indie filmmaker Aditya Kripalani's film *Not Today* has been honoured at the recent UK Asian Film Festival. The film talking about suicide prevention has been awarded the Ray Of Hope Igniting Flame Commendation 2021. The film has also been selected for the Indian Film Festival of Stuttgart 2021.

CHRIS REVEALS FATHER'S DAY GIFT FROM WIFE KATHERINE

Hollywood actor Chris Pratt appeared on the June 15 episode of *E! News Daily Pop* and there he revealed that wife Katherine Schwarzenegger has already given him the best Father's Day present: life as a dad of two.



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ARIES
Today ideas will flood your mind, but it is good that you will be able to carry them out efficiently. However, Ganesh warns you not to take rash decisions. Wise people will help you along the way. Pay heed to the advice of experienced people.

TAURUS
The stars are very auspiciously disposed towards you, announces Ganesh. You have an exceptionally bright and enjoyable day ahead of you. All events and situations will work in your favour. If you are pursuing higher studies you will perform brilliantly.

GEMINI
It is a day filled with joy and happiness on the home front. You will spend a lot of time with children. You will complete long pending household projects as well as take an interest in ironing out differences between family members, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Ganesh advises you to be careful before signing any document. A hard time for share brokers and traders. So be on the guard during deals and transactions. Average time for business. Ganesh tells you to be self-confidence.

LEO
You will pay serious attention to your work. You will feel that you have no option but to work hard. You will not be in the mood for socialising. This is only a temporary phase, hence there is no need to worry. You will be back to your usual gregarious self in no time at all, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
You will enchant people with your adaptability and your desire to get with your surroundings. For those who are in love, something unexpected may take place, but there is no need to panic as by and by things will turn out to be in your interest. You will spend quality time with your family.

LIBRA
Ganesh says your nature of spending wisely is highly appreciated as it is a good thing to save money for the future. This nature of yours will not allow you to spend money on useless things. You will be able to buy a home or a vehicle in the near future with these savings of yours.

SCORPIO
You wish to make an image makeover in your office. You are tough and determined, and your work knows no limit when it comes to achieving your targets. You will love to brainstorm and give innovative ideas to colleagues and bosses.

SAGITTARIUS
You are a social butterfly as you attend a series of parties and events today, says Ganesh. You may even bump into old pals and relive good old days. Also, you meet your extended family! It's time for soiree and merry-making.

CAPRICORN
Whatever field you are in, your career matters will top your priority list. You will put your personal life on the back burner for a while. This change of places will surely bring you great rewards as your performance will drastically improve and everyone will appreciate your efforts.

AQUARIUS
You will feel deeply inclined towards development and research, today. Actions speak louder than words, and your efforts and overall growth will speak plenty about your character. Your romantic side will come to the fore today. You will be willing to do anything and everything to bring a bright smile on the face of sweetheart, feels Ganesh. All of it will get noticed. Enjoy the good times!

PISCES
For those who are salaried, today should be a progressive day for you. Important meetings at the work-place will benefit from your presence and the suggestions you have to make. This should enhance your relationship with your superiors. Compliments galore will come your way throughout the day.



ARJUN FLAUNTS PLATINUM BLONDE HAIR

Mumbai: Actor Arjun Rampal flaunts platinum blonde hair in his new Instagram post Friday. The look is for the upcoming Kanagana Ranaut-starrer *Dhaakad* that casts Arjun as the antagonist Rudraveer.

Arjun credited hairstylist Aalim Hakim for creating his new look. The actor also left a message for Razneesh Ghai, director of *Dhaakad*.

"A challenging part in a film, needs me to push the envelope. Thank you my brother @aalimhakil for helping me create that and @razylivingtheblues to realise that dream. #Dhaakad #letsbeginagain," wrote Arjun.

Commenting on Arjun's post, fans expressed that the actor is looking 'hot' in his new avatar and suggested the look might even set a trend!

Apart from the spy thriller film *Dhaakad*, Arjun will also feature in the historical drama *The Battle Of Bhima Koregaon*. The Ramesh Thete directorial features Arjun as the warrior Sidhnak Mahar Inamdar. Sunny Leone makes an appearance in the film, too.

Kriti reveals gym secret: 'Instagram vs Reality'

Mumbai: Actress Kriti Sanon showcases expectation versus reality when it comes to leg workouts, in her new Instagram post Friday.

Kriti has posted two videos on Instagram. In the first clip, she is seen doing squats with weights effortlessly. The second video showcases what actually went on, and you realise the first video is a neatly edited clip that makes Kriti's exercise regime seem so easy.

"I hate squats," Kriti declares at one point in the second video. She seeks a minute's break but her trainer won't allow more than 30 seconds.

"Leg day and Me!! @yasminkarachiwala Expectation v/s Reality Or rather: Instagram v/s Reality. Don't forget to Swipe to see how much I love doing legs!" she wrote as caption.

On the professional front, Kriti has a long line-up of films ahead. She has wrapped up shooting for the upcoming supernatural film *Bhediya*, co-starring Varun Dhawan. The Amar Kaushik directorial is slated to release April 14 next year.

She will be seen in *Mimi*, which is based on surrogacy, and also star with Akshay Kumar in the action comedy *Bachchan Pandey*, and

with Tiger Shroff in the action drama *Ganapath*.

Her upcoming roster also includes *Hum Do Hamare Do* with Rajkummar Rao, and *Adipurush* with Prabhas and Saif Ali Khan.



Urvashi scores 38 mn followers on Insta

Mumbai: Actress Urvashi Rautela has garnered a fan following of 38 million on Instagram.

Urvashi posted a video on Instagram Friday. In the clip, she is seen riding in a luxury car.

"38 MILLION LOVE ON @instagram. THANK YOU. UUU. I LOVE YOU. EN-

JOYING MY BABY ROLLS," she wrote as caption.

With these latest figures, Urvashi is ahead of actress Kareena Kapoor, who has 6.7 million followers, as well as stars such as Shah Rukh Khan (25 million) and Amitabh Bachchan (26.9 million) followers respectively.

On the work front, Urvashi will next be seen in the web series *Inspector Avinash*. The series is based on the life of Inspector Mishra and has Randeep Hooda essaying the title role.



Raftaar first Indian artiste to accept cryptocurrency as fees

The virtual performance for which Raftaar accepted cryptocurrency is scheduled for the second week of July



Mumbai: Rapper Raftaar has become the first Indian artiste to accept cryptocurrency instead of actual currency as performance fee.

"I've always been an ardent admirer of blockchain technology. I've always wondered why artistes and managers alike haven't explored the potential of this

ruptive medium. Nevertheless, I've finally taken the baby steps in this direction and all the credit goes to my manager, Ankit Khanna for making this dream a reality for me," said Raftaar.

The virtual performance for which Raftaar accepted cryptocurrency is scheduled for the second week of July. The boutique 60-minute event will be hosted in Canada, Ottawa for a private gathering of 100 people.

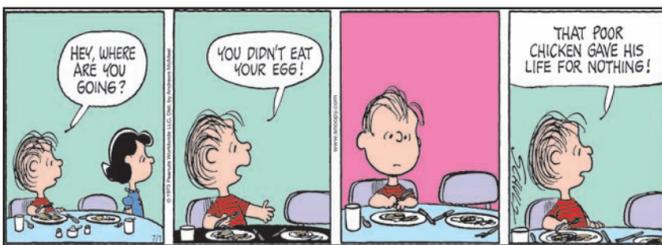
The rapper's longtime business partner and manager Ankit Khanna has been instrumental in the cryptocurrency transaction.

Ankit shared: "In my opinion, music will be one of the first industries to be completely and

thoroughly disrupted through the blockchain. The artiste can now go directly to the public in every single way without the need of middlemen. Blockchain has the potential to expedite a seamless experience for anyone involved with generating or interacting with music. I'm happy to welcome this new transactional paradigm with my longtime business associate Raftaar who truly is a pioneering voice of this new generation."

Meanwhile, cryptocurrency and blockchain technology has already won the approval of global artistes like 50 Cent, Mariah Carey, G-Eazy, Sia, Fall Out Boy, the Backstreet Boys and Lana Del Rey among others.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

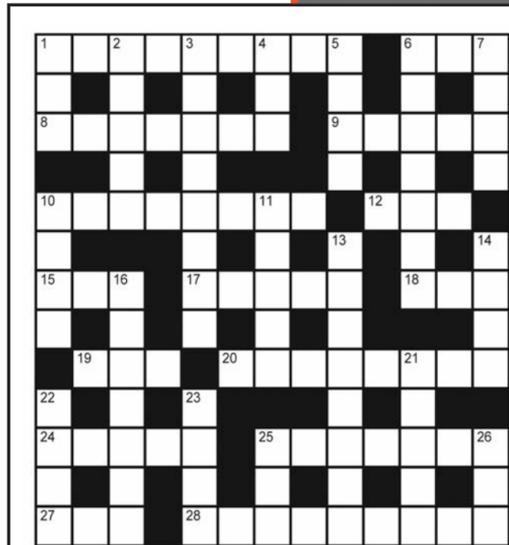


BREVITY



FUN post

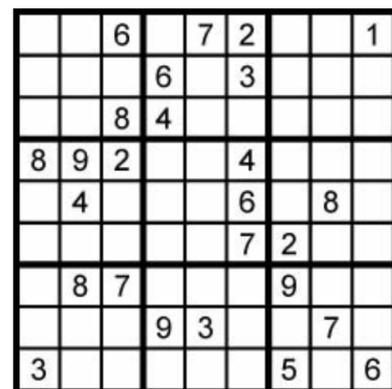
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Unhurried
 - 6 Faint
 - 8 Money gusher? (3,4)
 - 9 Stair part
 - 10 Heart attack
 - 12 Piña colada ingredient
 - 15 Maid's cloth
 - 17 Tropical Asian starling
 - 18 Tavern
 - 19 Wildebeest
 - 20 Sequoias
 - 24 Gallic goodbye
 - 25 Excavators
 - 27 Amazement
 - 28 Tried
 - Down**
 - 1 Sign before Virgo
 - 2 Lazybones
 - 3 Password's pal
 - 4 Aquatic shocker
 - 5 Tall story
 - 6 Interrupt
 - 7 Insignificant
 - 10 Medical breakthrough
 - 11 Dentist's order
 - 13 Car dealer's venue
 - 14 Treaty subject
 - 16 Authentic
 - 21 For all to see
 - 22 Spanish sparkling white wine
 - 23 Big brass
 - 25 Collector's goal
 - 26 Dejected

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



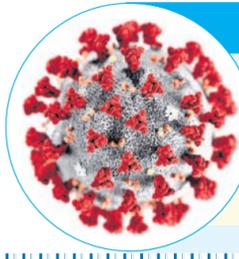
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



MONSOON BLUES

Khannagar area of Cuttack witnesses extensive waterlogging during the current spell of rains, Friday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	17,83,71,510	16,28,98,968	38,61,557
India	2,97,62,793	2,85,80,647	3,83,490
Odisha	8,70,498	8,29,851	3,508

Servitors, cops & officials to undergo RT-PCR tests 4 times



Carpenters shaping logs for chariot construction in Puri, Friday

RATH YATRA AMID PANDEMIC

The first test would be conducted before Snana Yatra (bathing festival) June 24, the second prior to Gundicha Yatra July 12, the third before Bahuda Yatra (return car festival) July 20

The fourth test will be carried out 15 days after Niladri Bije (the Lord's entry into temple after festival) July 23

SJTA will ensure that all servitors taking part in the preparations have received both the doses of Covid-19 vaccine

for the second year in a row due to the pandemic.

According to Kumar, the first test would be conducted before Snana Yatra (bathing festival) June 24, the second prior to Gundicha Yatra July 12, the third before Bahuda Yatra (return car festival) July 20.

The fourth test will be carried out 15 days after Niladri Bije (the Lord's entry into temple after festival) July 23, he explained.

Kumar further said that the SJTA will ensure that all servitors taking part in the preparations have received both the doses of Covid-19 vaccine.

"A detailed micro-plan will be in place for setting up special medical centres during Rath Yatra. A nodal officer will be appointed by the SJTA, Puri administration and the Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) for close coordination among them on a day-to-day basis," he explained.

This apart, adequate number of masks and sanitiser bottles will be distributed among the servitors and their families, the SJTA chief said.

A handout explaining the guidelines that need to be followed to maintain hygiene will be given to all servitors and officials concerned, he said.

"All will be requested to ensure complete compliance to directions of the Special Relief Commissioner in regard to Covid-19 management," Kumar added.

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 18: In a bid to minimise chances of Covid-19 spread during Rath Yatra in Puri, the Srimandir administration Friday decided to conduct RT-PCR tests on priests, police personnel and government officials at least four times during the festivities.

A meeting, chaired by Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief Krishan Kumar, was

held in Puri following which all stakeholders arrived at a consensus that frequent tests would ensure safety of everyone making arrangements for the July 12 Rath Yatra which involves preparations and rituals that last for over a month, an official said Friday.

Among others, Puri District Magistrate-cum-Collector Samarth Verma also attended the meeting.

Devotees have been barred from attending the religious carnival

SHIELD AGAINST VIRUS



A vendor sells face masks alongside the Ring Road near Jobra in Cuttack, Friday

Double dose vax must for govt employees

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: The state government has made double dose vaccination mandatory for its employees working in Bhubaneswar to attend office with effect from July 1.

Additional Chief Secretary, General Administration and Public Grievances, Sanjeev Chopra has issued this instruction to all departments and heads of departments at Bhubaneswar, Friday.

The government employees have been asked to get double dose of vac-

cines by June-end. Otherwise, they will not be allowed to join work from July 1. However, there is exception for employees who have medical and other genuine problems. The government has organised a special drive for vaccination of the employees of all the departments, sub-ordinate offices and PSUs from June 10 to 20. In the process, first dose of vaccine was administered to about 6,000 employees while second phase is in progress since June 17.

The nodal officers of all the departments have been directed to en-

sure full vaccination of all employees of offices located at Bhubaneswar.

In case any employee is unable to get vaccinated for medical or some other compelling reason, he/he must apply for an exemption to the head of the department/organisation. On receipt of such application(s), the matter can be considered on a case-to-case basis, he stated. Employees who are neither vaccinated nor exempted would not be permitted to attend office from July 1 and their absence will be treated as wilful, Chopra warned.

Govt plans to inoculate 3L per day by June-end

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: The Health department has planned to ramp up the vaccination drive by inoculating around 3 lakh persons per day by the end of this month.

The state government's move came after the Centre announced free vaccination for all adults in the country.

Health Minister Naba Kishore Das Friday said that the supply of vaccines from the Centre is likely to see an upward trend by the end of this month.

"We have also decided to vaccinate around 3 lakh people per day by the end of this month. Earlier,



we used to get some amount of vaccine doses from the manufacturers but now we will get the vaccines through the Centre," Das said. The minister claimed that the state is prepared for the third wave

of the pandemic and steps are being taken to ensure special care to the children.

"We have issued an SOP for special care for the infected kids as part of our preparation for the third wave. As per the new norms, we have allowed parents to stay with their Covid infected kids. Special instructions have been given to ensure adequate beds, oxygen and drugs for children. We have also formed a special committee to monitor the situation and suggest new ways," he said.

Director of Medical Education and Training, CBK Mohanty, said the state has been readying its health infrastructure to tackle the future waves of the pandemic. "We are prepared for the third wave but that does not mean that Odisha will witness the third wave for sure. Many countries have not seen the third wave. There is no need to get panicked. WE are fully prepared for any eventuality," he added.

He also said, "If more people get infected by the virus, we will upgrade our health system to meet the situation. Many experts have also refuted the claims that the third wave will hit the kids more."

1.13L Covishield doses to be administered in 9 ULBs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Even as the Centre has already announced that it would provide anti-Covid vaccines for free to the states from June 21, the state government Friday asked seven district Collectors to exhaust 1, 13, 800 doses of Covishield within 5 days.

Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Health, PK Mohapatra has directed the Collectors of Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Khurda, Koraput, Nuapada and Sundargarh districts to use the vaccines for inoculation of 18 to 44 year age group in nine urban local bodies (ULBs).

The government has supplied



1,13,800 doses of Covishield (from its own procurement) to the above seven districts.

The Ganjam Collector was asked to utilise 6,700 doses of Covishield

in Hinjlicut municipality and 6,300 doses in Polasara NAC.

Similarly, 17,200 doses of the vaccine have been supplied for vaccination of the 18-plus age group in Paradip municipality while 14,500 doses were given for Vyasagar municipality.

Moreover, 14,300 doses would be supplied to Jatni municipality, 22,400 doses to Jeyapore municipality, 12,700 to Sunabeda municipality, 5,400 to Khariar Road NAC and 14,300 to Rajgangpur municipality.

The Collectors have been directed to plan immediately to start vaccination from Monday in the above municipality/NAC and exhaust the stock within five days.

Plea in High Court wants Covid deaths audited

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, June 18: A public interest litigation (PIL) has been filed in the Orissa High Court seeking a special audit of all the deaths in the state due to Covid-19.

Petitioner Nishikanta Mishra urged the HC to direct the Chief Secretary and Health secretary to ramp up Covid tests and vaccination in rural areas of Odisha.

In his petition, Mishra alleged that the state government has failed to check the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic in Odisha. As a result, the rate of infection has gone up in the rural areas.

He also alleged that the state government has been trying to hide the real data with regard to the Covid deaths in Odisha.

Mishra claimed that he had visited Satichaura cremation ground in Cuttack April 25 and held discussions with the employees of Cuttack Municipal Corporation. On that particular day, at least 44 bodies were cremated at Satichaura. However, the official data said that only three

State govt has been trying to hide the real data with regard to Covid deaths in Odisha, said the petitioner

bodies were cremated at the ground April 25, Mishra alleged.

The petitioner further claimed that at least 40 bodies were cremated at Satyanagar cremation ground in Bhubaneswar April 26.

According to Mishra, the Covid positivity rate was 35 per cent in Nuapada district in April. As per reports, at least 82 people had succumbed to the virus in Nuapada in April. However, the official data claimed that only four people died due to the infection in the district.

Similarly, reports claimed that around 190 people had succumbed to the virus in Sambalpur in April. However, the official data revealed that only 82 people had died due to Covid, Mishra alleged.

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Revenue from minor minerals up by 41% 37 more succumb to Covid-19 in 24 hrs

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Odisha reported 3,806 new Covid-19 cases Friday, taking the tally to 8,70,498, while 37 more fatalities pushed the toll to 3,508, a Health department official said.

There are 43,338 active cases in the state at present, while 8,23,599 people have so far recovered from the viral infection.

Of the new infections, 2,172 were detected at quarantine centres,

while the rest 1,634 were local contact cases. Khurda district, where state capital Bhubaneswar is located, reported the highest 617 new cases, followed by Cuttack (393), Jajpur (346), Balasore (220) and Puri (200).

Khurda district reported the highest five deaths, followed by Cuttack, Jharsuguda and Kalahandi with four fatalities each. Three people each died in as many districts, two each in four districts and one each in three districts.

The state tested 64,850 samples in the last 24 hours. As per the data released by the Health and Family Welfare department, as many as 15 of the total 30 districts have active cases below 1,000-mark, while 11 districts have active cases between 1,001 and 2,500 and four districts—Khurda, Cuttack, Balasore and Jajpur—have more than 2,500 active cases.

Till date, Khurda district has the highest number of 6,756 active cases, while Nuapada in western

Odisha has the lowest number of 154 cases. As far as the test positivity rate (TPR) is concerned, 14 districts have less than 5 per cent and eight of them have even less than 2 per cent. On the other hand, eight districts have TPR between 5 and 7.5 per cent and another eight districts have TPR above 7.5 per cent.

Jajpur district in coastal Odisha has the highest TPR of 19.5, while the Jharsuguda district in western Odisha has the lowest TPR of 0.8 per cent.



The growth was achieved due to sustained endeavour for strengthening the minor mineral administration by the Revenue and Disaster Management dept ; Efforts are on for technological intervention to bring more sustainable and scientific solution in mining exercise

sources, he said.

During the 2020-21 fiscal, 506 new minor mineral sources, including 12 large river sand beds with an area of over 50 acres, have been identified and brought into the process of operation, he said.

According to the official, 2,772 mining plans have been approved by the officers under the Directorate of Geology.

The State Environment Impact Assessment Authority held 52 meetings in the year and granted 1,000 clearances, Sethi said Thursday.

In a bid to prevent illegal mining, which has been a major challenge to the minor mineral administration in the state, a process for demarcation of sites has been completed for 2,665 sources, he said.

The differential global positioning system (DGPS) survey has also been conducted for 1,112 sources.

All the district administrations have stepped up the enforcement activities to check illegal mining of minerals. During the year, 39,621 raids were conducted by various enforcement teams at the district level.

“As many as 31,758 cases of illegal mining have been registered and 19,806 vehicles and other equipment seized. The enforcement authorities earned Rs 68.52 crore as royalty and penalty,” the official added.



RDC (Central) Anil Kumar Samal reviews the status of SCB expansion project in presence of senior officials, including Cuttack Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayani and CMC commissioner Ananya Das, in the Silver City, Friday

Abhay Pathak walks out of Jharpada jail

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Tainted IFS officer Abhay Kant Pathak Friday walked out of Jharpada jail here after six months.

The Orissa High Court had Thursday granted him bail in a case registered at Baidyanathpur police station in Ganjam in connection with a job fraud.

He had been lodged in Jharpada special jail since November 2020.

Pathak, a 1987-batch IFS officer, was arrested by Vigilance sleuths on charges of amassing properties worth around Rs 9.45 crore disproportionate to his actual income November 27, 2020.

Later, several other cases were registered against Pathak and his son Akash for duping various job aspirants on the pretext of providing jobs in Tata Motors.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Despite a slowdown in the economy due to Covid-19, revenue collection from minor minerals in the state has grown by 41.47 per cent to Rs 962 crore in the 2020-21 fiscal, an official said.

The revenue from the minor mineral resources was at Rs 680 crore in the previous financial year.

The growth was achieved due to sustained endeavour for strengthening the minor mineral administration by the Revenue and Disaster Management department, said Principal Secretary Bishnupada Sethi.

A target of Rs 1,000 crore revenue from minor mineral production has been set, he said, adding the state government is optimistic about improving the efficiency of the sector.

Efforts are on for technological intervention to bring more sustainable and scientific solution in mining exercise. “Integrated Minor Minerals Mines Management System (i4MS) is in the pipeline, which will bring the entire administrative activities on one online platform,” Sethi said.

Since the minor mineral sector is a potential source of the state’s revenue, a thrust is being given on optimisation of scientific and sustainable production of such re-

Pradhan opposes warrior-horse statue relocation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Opposing the move of the state government to relocate the warrior-horse statue from Master Canteen Square to Raj Bhawan Square, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Friday urged state government to consider beautification of the area without shifting the statue.

He said people from various walks of life are expressing displeasure over the decision to relocate the statue, which is a landmark of Bhubaneswar. The statue is an identity of Odisha’s heritage.

Respecting the sentiments of the people of Odisha, the state government should protect it and consider beautifying the master canteen without relocating the warrior-horse replica, Pradhan said.

It is a replica of a warrior and a horse sculpture found at one of the gates of Konark Sun Temple which was adopted as a part of the

Instead of relocating the warrior-horse replica, the state govt should protect it and consider beautification of the Master Canteen Square

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN | UNION MINISTER

State Emblem in 1964, the Union minister said.

Later in 1988, he said, the statue sculpted by renowned sculptor Raghunath Mohapatra was installed at Master Canteen by the then Chief Minister JB Patnaik.

For the second consecutive day, Congress workers Friday staged demonstration here demanding rollback of the decision to shifting of warrior-horse statue from Master Canteen Square.

The Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) had proposed relocation of the sculpture for a multi-modal hub project at the Bhubaneswar Railway Station. The proposal was approved at a meeting chaired by Director of Culture Ranjan Das last June 8.

NCTE urged to restore recognition of teacher education institutions

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Higher Education (HE) department has written to National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) urging it for restoration of recognition to teacher education institutions in Odisha.

In a letter to the chairperson of NCTE, HE department principal secretary Saswat Mishra said that during academic session 2020-21, recognition of 15 teacher training institutions was withdrawn on the ground of having less than required number of faculty.

In the meantime, June 1, 2021 all the Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) of Odisha were

Probe into child sale

Bhubaneswar: Childline Foundation here Friday constituted a team to investigate the alleged sale of a 10-day-old child here a few days ago. The Childline officials came to know about the issue from the reports doing rounds on various social media platforms. As per the sources, a couple sold their infant to some middlemen for Rs 10,000 in Master Canteen area. Childline director Benudhar Senapati urged the Chairperson of OPCPR, Child Welfare Committee, DCPO and DCP to probe the matter.

Recognition of 15 TEIs was withdrawn on the ground of having less than required number of faculty in 2020-21 academic year

shifted to the administrative control of the higher education department from School and Mass Education (S&ME) department.

Before that March 9, 2021, the HE department had written to Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC) for recruitment of 385 assistant professors for TEIs. Though OPSC has already taken up the re-

ruitment process, it is getting delayed due to the pandemic.

Mishra said that Odisha is the only state which has only the government TEIs to cater to the needs of the trained teachers for elementary, secondary and higher secondary stages. Private TEIs are not allowed in Odisha. Due to withdrawal of recognition of these government TEIs by the NCTE, it has become impossible to meet the demand of the state trained teachers.

“NCTE is therefore sincerely requested to revoke the withdrawal of recognition of TEIs in order to enable the government of Odisha to start B.Ed and M.Ed programmes in the TEIs from the current academic session 2021-22,” the letter reads.

National Protest Day: AIIMS docs want execution of central law

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Resident Doctors’ Association (RDA) of AIIMS, Bhubaneswar Friday participated in a nationwide protest organised by various medical associations on the occasion of National Protest Day, condemning violence against doctors and demanding strict implementation of Central Protection Law for healthcare workers.

RDA president Debopam Chatterjee said that condition of the doctors in the country has become miserable amidst this pandemic. They have been fighting Covid on the frontline for more than a year. Amidst this, incidents of violence against the doctors have skyrocketed throughout the country.

The recent attacks in Assam, Karnataka and West Bengal revealed that irrespective of age, ex-

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Observing flagrant violation of Covid norms at Unit IV and Bapuji Nagar markets, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Friday ordered complete closure of the markets till June 25.

In an order issued by the civic authorities, the wholesale and retail meat market at Unit IV along with Bapuji Nagar market were closed down ‘in larger public interest and with a view to contain any possibility of spread of the virus.’ Exempting essential commodities and medicine shops, all restrictions were imposed on other shops until further orders.

“A thorough inspection had been carried out Friday at different markets by the BMC’s enforcement squad and Commissionerate Police. It was found that large gatherings were taking place without Covid-appropriate behaviour. While there was lack of social distancing, many were found not wearing masks properly. Hence, the closure order was issued,” said a BMC official.

“People need to understand that the city is still registering a large number of cases on a daily basis. Relaxation hours are meant for catering to basic needs. One should try to avoid large gatherings as much as possible. Denizens can also look to shop online,” the official added.

1,42,970 vaccinated

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: The state Health department Friday said that a total of 1,42,970 persons were vaccinated against Covid-19 during the drive Friday.

The inoculation drive was conducted at 1,001 vaccination sites planned for Friday. The department has planned a total of 996 more drives for Saturday.

DENOUNCING STATUE RELOCATION PLAN



Congress leaders, including Suresh Routray, protest the proposed relocation of the warrior-horse statue at Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar, Friday

Heavy rain may lash state from Monday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Friday said that heavy rains are likely to lash different parts of the state from Monday onwards for next few days.

The weatherman said that four districts could see heavy rainfall Monday. Issuing yellow warning, the IMD said, “Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places in Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts.”

The Met department also said, “Thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at one or two places of Bargarh, Bolangir, Sonapur, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Boudh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Nuapada and Balasore districts.”

Light to moderate rain may occur



in different parts of interior Odisha and at a few places of coastal districts.

Similarly, heavy rainfall could also lash one or two places in Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara Jagatsinghpur and Cuttack while light to moderate rain could be

seen across the state Tuesday.

Nevertheless, the department has not issued any warning for Saturday and Sunday while light to moderate rain could be seen across the state besides thunderstorms.

The highest rainfall of 48.6 mm was reported from Jharsuguda district while Malkangiri saw 28.2

Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places in Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts

mm rainfall during the last 24 hours. Phulbani recorded the lowest temperature of 18 degrees C Friday while the maximum temperature of 32.1 degrees C was recorded in Raygada.

Predicting weather for the Capital city for Saturday, the IMD said, “Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thunder-shower is likely to prevail. Maximum and minimum temperature are very likely to be around 33° C and 26° C respectively.”

The IMD has warned the fishermen not to venture into deep sea till June 19.

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OSPCB in dock over granting consent to mine excess sand

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, June 18: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has questioned the decision of the Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) of granting consent to sand mine operators to mine sand from the Subarnarekha river in excess of what was allowed in the environment clearance.

A bench of the NGT comprising judicial member B Amit Sthalekar and expert member Saibal Dasgupta observed that the consent to operate was granted for 20,000 CM3 by the PCB considering the principle of sustainable sand mining. However, the tribunal found that as per the environmental clearance granted by the SEIAA in December 2017, mineable reserved are 20,000 CM3 of sand against the environment clearance for only 5,000 CM3 annually with the specific condition that the annual extraction of sand shall not exceed 5,000 CM3 allowing for replenishment of 25 per cent of the mineable reserve over the lease period.

"The question is how the consent to operate was granted by the Odisha State Pollution Control Board for 20,000 CM3 when the environment clearance was only for 5,000 CM3 per annum," the tribunal observed.



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

Earlier, the state PCB had filed an affidavit stating that the sand miners had extracted 19,995 CM3 of sand in excess of the permissible quantity of 30,000 CM3 and penalty for the excess mining of sand for this period was realised by the tehsildar of Jaleswar from the sand miners.

Significantly, the tribunal also questioned the calculation of the PCB that only 19,995 cm3 of sand has illegally been mined and that recovery has been made by the Tehsildar only for this excess amount of 19,995 CM3 of sand.

"It appears from the affidavit filed by the state PCB that the actual amount of sand mined in the

past one-and-a-half year is 49,995 CM3. Then the excess amount of sand mined would be 42,495 CM3 as per the condition granted in the environmental clearance and not 19,995 CM3," the tribunal held.

The NGT asked SEIAA to file an affidavit within four weeks answering the queries of the tribunal and responding to the averments made in the additional affidavit of the state PCB.

It may be mentioned here that the tribunal's order came following an application filed by Laxmidhar Palai alleging irregularities and violations of pollution norms by the sand mining operators in Subarnarekha river in Jaleswar tehsil.

BDO, sarpanch perform last rites of Covid victims

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, June 18: Even as deaths due to Covid-19 are on the rise in the district, incidents of family members and relatives abandoning their loved ones for fear of being infected with coronavirus are also increasing on a daily basis. Amid this, a block development officer (BDO) and sarpanch in Bhadrak district have set an example by performing the last rites of a man succumbed to Covid.

Dhannagar BDO Durgacharan Murmu and local sarpanch Manoj Ray Mohapatra cremated the body of Basudev Mishra Thursday evening after he died of Covid-19. The deceased was a resident of Badatirana village of Nadigaon panchayat in the district.

According to sources, Basudev was put in home isolation after testing positive for Covid-19 a few days ago. However, the elderly man's family members refused to cremate his body after he died. When the matter came to the knowledge of the BDO and sarpanch, they rushed to Badatirana village and cremated the body.



Members of Cuttack chapter of IMA stage a demonstration at IMA House in the Silver City, Friday, protesting the alleged attacks on doctors in several parts of the country

OP PHOTO

Here's how Covid waves fail to touch this Koraput panchayat

AGENCIES

KHEMUNDUGUDA PANCHAYAT IN KORAPUT DISTRICT HAS NOT RECORDED A SINGLE INFECTION SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF THE PANDEMIC IN 2020

Koraput, June 18: When the world is struggling hard to keep away from Covid, Khemunduguda, a panchayat in tribal-dominated Nandapur block of the district, has remained untouched by the pandemic, thanks to the awareness among the villagers about the deadly virus.

The panchayat covering 12 villages with around 15,000 people has not reported a single case of Covid-19 since the pandemic began last year.

About eight per cent of the dwellers of Borgiput, Maligutha, Kurmaput, Salab, Bariapakhana, Kjudgipaar, Bhitara Rukba, Padarukba, Parjabada and many other villages depend on agriculture for their livelihood, while others do odd jobs.

The coronavirus is said to have failed to spread its tentacles into the villages due to the awareness among the villagers about the virus and strict adherence to Covid protocols.

Since the pandemic began last year, residents of the panchayat have strictly complied with safety

protocols such as social distancing, wearing facemasks and cleaning hands regularly.

Those who go out for work are required to follow all safety protocols. Interestingly, most of them produce vegetables. Instead of visiting wholesale markets, they approach the villages of the farmers to collect vegetables in order to ensure that social distancing is maintained.

"We are happy that we haven't recorded any Covid case yet or lost anyone to the deadly virus. With the second wave of Covid-19 striking the country, everyone be-

came serious about their safety. Some neighbouring villages have also started emulating us in enforcing Covid-19 protocols seriously," sarpanch Dambarudhar Guntha said.

Sources said that villagers from the neighbouring panchayats tested positive in both the waves, but people from this panchayat remained untouched by Covid-19.

Those who returned from other states and far-off places were kept in quarantine for at least 14 days in the panchayat itself, Guntha pointed out.

According to the sarpanch, it was possible with the coordinated effort by the villagers, youth and the healthcare workers of the panchayat.

"In accordance with state government policy, Asha and anganwadi workers conduct door-to-door surveys in the villages on a regular basis for health check-up of villagers. Asha workers have ensured that every eligible person is vaccinated against Covid. Almost all in the panchayat above the age of 45 have been inoculated with the first dose," the sarpanch said.

Nayagarh minor raped prior to murder, says SP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, June 18: The Superintendent of Police, Nayagarh, Sidharth Kataria said that the six-year-old girl from Dhundugadia under Banigochha police limits, who had gone missing a few days ago, was raped prior to being murdered.

The minor girl had gone missing June 12, 2021. Police found her mutilated body at an isolated location near Dhundugadia village in Nayagarh June 16, the SP said. He also stated that the victim was raped and murdered by a 22-year-old youth of the same village.

During preliminary investigation, it was ascertained that the accused took the girl to a banana plantation near the village on the pretext of showing her his mobile phone. The youth raped and then strangled her with a plastic rope, the police official stated.

"The accused had concealed the body of the girl victim after raping and murdering her. We nabbed him and during interrogation he confessed killing the girl. He also told us about the place where he hid the body. The body was recovered Wednesday. The accused has been forwarded to court," the SP said.

Pakidi hills sees boom in peacock population

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, June 18: As monsoon clouds loom over the lush-green Pakidi hills, a boom in the local peacock population has seen droves of peacocks and peahens descend on villages and highways in this picturesque area in Ganjam district.

The national bird has thrived and its population has increased over the past few years, partly because of the lockdown and partly as villagers in the area have helped protect and feed peacocks, believing they bring 'good luck'.

The population of the national bird in the area has grown manifold to around 2,000 over the last few years, Ghumusar South Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Satya Narayan Behura said.

The peacock population in the hill area has increased due to the involvement of local people in their protection, he added.

Aska Forest Range Officer PK Sahu explained that villagers around Pakidi hill help protect the birds even though they often eat standing crops, as they believe sighting peacocks brings good luck.

The villagers of Sobhachandrapur, Ambubadi, Kerikerijhola, Bharatapalli, Cheramaria, Sameiguda and Karnoli are credited with helping peacock flocks by allowing them to co-exist with humans.

Good forest cover in the hill area and lack of forest fires are also some of the reasons for an increase in their population in the area, officials added.

As the air and noise pollution levels came down because of the lockdown, many peacocks started coming out on the roads too, Behura added.

The villagers have also constituted a committee to protect them.



THE POPULATION OF THE NATIONAL BIRD IN THE AREA HAS GROWN MANIFOLD TO AROUND 2,000 OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS

The committee had received the prestigious Biju Patnaik Award for Wildlife Conservation, the highest award in the state for protecting the wildlife, for its effort to conserve the national bird habitat in 2006.

"We have created awareness among the people about the importance of the protection of the birds in the area regularly," Sameer Pradhan, the president of the peacock protection committee, said.

The villagers are not only protecting them from the poachers, but also feed them and set up water pots near the village during summer for their drink, Pradhan said.

"As their population increased manifold, some of the birds have now migrated to other areas like Bandhaguda and Baramundali," he said.

Farmers stage dharna over delay in paddy procurement

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, June 18: Hundreds of farmers from Salhepali area under Bheden block in Bargarh district Friday staged a sit-in before the district collectorate alleging delay in paddy procurement.

The farmers said that though they have been bringing their produce to the procurement centres their produce is not being procured under various pretexts.

The agitating farmers claimed that they had registered themselves and also been issued tokens for procurement. Even though the district is yet to meet its procurement target, paddy is not being procured intentionally many farmers rued. As a result, the farmers continue to wait for procurement with over 10,000 sacks of paddy kept in the open during the rainy season. Low pressure-induced rain has already partially spoiled some of their produce.

This multi-talented cop wears many hats

POST NEWS NETWORK

Deogarh, June 18: He is a police officer, a writer, an actor, anchor, director and a social activist - all rolled into one. Meet Tapan Kumar Nayak, the multi-talented personality who has donned all the hats successfully.

Born at Para village under Riamal block in Deogarh district, Tapan is presently posted at CID, Crime Branch office in Cuttack as a sub-inspector.

He says his acting skills were first noticed when he was a student of Shendha High School. Thereafter, he kept on honing his acting, dancing and mimicry skills.

The desire to do better in the entertainment field led him to join the

Biju Patnaik Film and Television Institute in Cuttack. He completed a diploma course in 'acting' from there. Before joining the police department, Tapan was a teacher at the Khirod Basini Kanyashram at Katada village in Angul district.

After completing his Diploma in Elementary Education (DE.Ed) from the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) in Angul, he started his career as a teacher. During this period, he did many stage programmes as a mimicry artist. For his extraordinary imitating skills of Odia and Hindi film actors, he became a 'go-to' person for guaranteed entertainment.

Besides performing in many operas, Tapan has also written plays and directed many of them.

Watching him playing 'Khanjani' (a traditional percussion instrument found in Odisha and West Bengal) is a delight indeed.

Tapan has also lent his name to many social activities. Besides being the president of Angul-based human rights organisation 'Think', he is associated with National Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Bureau, Help India, Anti-Corruption Foundation of India, Bhagat Singh Yuvasena, Odisha, and 'Dukhasukha Ra Sathi'. This apart, he has been appointed as an officer of National Crime Research Intelligence Bureau.

Tapan said he is happy for as he is able to divide his time between profession and passion, which proves to be a hard task for many.

RUSH AMID LOCKDOWN



Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar witnesses heavy traffic even during the lockdown, Friday

OP PHOTO

RSP pipes for mega lift irrigation projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 18: Rourkela Steel Plant, a unit of SAIL, supplied 3,100 metres of spiral welded pipes to mega lift irrigation projects in Odisha, a company statement said Thursday.

The state government had planned to take up 174 mega lift irrigation projects in the river basins of Vansadhara, Indravati, Mahanadi, Brahmani, Baitarani, Tej, Burhabalanga, and the periphery of Hirakud and Rengali reservoirs.

The spiral welded pipes manufactured by the RSP are used for irrigation, power plants, slurry transportation, water supply, sewage disposals, grain silos and other purposes.

THE STATE GOVT AIMS AT TAKING UP 174 MEGA LIFT IRRIGATION PROJECTS IN THE RIVER BASINS

OFFICE OF THE REGULATED MARKET COMMITTEE, BHANJANAGAR

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The Sub-Collector, Bhanjanagar-cum-Chairman, R.M.C., BHANJANAGAR - invites percentage rate bids in Single & Double cover system (TECHNICAL BID & PRICE BID) in online mode for the work in the table below from the eligible contractors as follows:

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Approximate value of work (Rs.)	EMD @ 1% Rs. (Approx.) Online	Cost of tender paper Rs. (Online)	Class of contractor	Period of completion	Cover System
i	Cluster-I: Construction of Model Mandi at Tanarada Market yard under RMC, Bhanjanagar	2,62,91,959.00	NA (Bid Security Declaration)	10,000.00	'A' & 'B'	10 (Ten) calendar months	Double cover
ii	Cluster-II: Construction of agri-market infrastructure at Buguda MY, RMC, Bhanjanagar	90,78,927.00	NA (Bid Security Declaration)	10,000.00	'A' & 'B'	10 (Ten) calendar months	Double cover
iii	Cluster-III: Construction of agri-market infrastructure at Sheragada MY, RMC, Bhanjanagar	48,84,014.00	NA (Bid Security Declaration)	10,000.00	'A' & 'B'	8 (Eight) calendar months	Single cover

- Date & time of availability of bid documents in the portal: From 05.00 P.M. of 22.06.2021 to 05.00 P.M. of 08.07.2021.
- Last date/time of receipt of bids in the portal: 05.00 P.M. of 08.07.2021.
- Date & time of opening of technical bids: 11.00 A.M. of 15.07.2021.
- Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tenderodisha.gov.in>.
- Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.

Sd./- Sub Collector, Bhanjanagar cum Chairman
RMC, Bhanjanagar

“ Sit in meditation! But do not think! Look only at your mind! You will see thoughts coming into it! Before they can enter, throw these away from your mind till your mind is capable of entire silence. ”
SRI AUROBINDO



A twist in the AI tale

The Air India divestment has got stuck between a rock and a hard landing! The second wave of the Covid pandemic has now delayed it further. It is beginning to seem that the government may have been a trifle too ambitious and optimistic about closing this chapter. While there is no dearth of suitors of the beleaguered carrier, the Civil Aviation Ministry babus have come up against a new stumbling block – the potential seizure of Air India's assets by Cairn Energy, after India lost the tax dispute case against the company in an international arbitration tribunal.

Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola actually now has a new headache to deal with, even as the government is still to finalise the timeline for completion of the stake sale or the valuation of the airline and its assets. Too many loose ends!

The loss to Cairn is a major blow and loss of face for the Modi sarkar. Of course, the Centre says that it will defend any attempt by Cairn to take over the airline's assets and has in fact challenged the arbitration award, but until the case is resolved and the award overturned in India's favour, Kharola and his cohorts in the Civil Aviation Ministry cannot rest easy. In fact, as a result of this new threat, civil aviation babus are now scurrying between their ministry and the Law Ministry to deal with this legal threat. This saga may have a few more seasons left to go.

UP on BJP's mind

Senior about-to-retire babus of two BJP-ruled states are a miffed lot with the appointment of former Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary Anup Chandra Pandey as the new Election Commissioner of India having been done and dusted in a surprise move. But it was clearly in the works in Delhi, long before the skirmishes between UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the Big Two spilt out into the open. Thanks to the need for surprise, even babus in his home cadre were left gasping.

Many see the appointment of Pandey as the Centre's initial steps to focus on retaining Uttar Pradesh and remote central control on the coming Assembly polls.

But the incumbents will walk on eggs since the ghost of election commissioners past still lurks over Nirvachan Bhavan as an appropriate landing spot has not yet been found for former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora.

Pandey has joined Sushil Chandra and Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar at the poll panel. Not surprisingly, given Pandey's background questions are being raised about his appointment. Some point out the significance of the fact that all three election commissioners are from UP! Current CEC Sushil Chandra did a long stint in the state's Revenue Department and EC Rajiv Kumar is a former Finance Secretary of the state. Besides his tenure as the state Chief Secretary under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath until 2019, Pandey was also the state's industrial development commissioner.

Prepare for more babu surprises to emerge in and around UP as the polls draw near.

Babu crisis at the Centre

There is a crisis of babus in the Modi sarkar. The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) Secretary Deepak Khandekar has informed his multiple bosses that despite the government repeatedly requesting the states to depute more officers at the Centre nothing is moving, and nobody is willing. It has reportedly asked for more officers at the deputy secretary, director and joint secretary levels. Most states, however, say they are dealing with their own shortage of officers, leading to senior state officials holding several portfolios in many states. Though both Karnataka and Himachal have promised to help recently, this to-ing and fro-ing has been going on for several months now, with the states' response to the Centre being seen as decidedly poor.

Sources say that the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has made a fresh request to the states last week stating that their lack of appropriate response to the Centre's request is creating a cadre management problem for the Centre. But sources say there is a veiled new warning in the Modi sarkar's latest missive to the states on the issue. Apparently, the letter from DoPT says that the cadres who have not sent adequate nominations for the Central Staffing Scheme at various may find that they have to settle for fewer additional Senior Duty posts in the future. Will the states take note? Is this a babu pushback or due to political masters unwilling to allow their best to migrate to Delhi?

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian@twitter.com](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian). Let's multiply the effect.

WISDOM CORNER

- Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago. **WARREN BUFFETT**
- Two roads diverged in a wood and I - I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference. **ROBERT FROST**
- Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared. **BUDDHA**

WORDSWORTH

■ Cahoot

Every British Internet financial start-up trumps the last in the silly-names game. Maybe it's an attempt at off-beat individuality, or perhaps all the sensible names have been taken. We've had one e-bank called Egg (halfway sensible, suggesting nest-egg), another entitled Smile and a third delighting in the name of Marbles. And now the British bank Abbey National has announced an online service called Cahoot. Hang on a minute, you chaps. There's only one common expression in English which uses the word, and that's in cahoots with, meaning that a person is in some partnership or association with another. Presumably that's the idea the namers of the new enterprise have in mind – you and your bank looking after your money together. But there's a problem or two. The lesser one is that the word and the phrase, originally American, are still slightly foreign to British ears and eyes. The other is that, as Jessie Sheidlower put it in one of his Jesse's Word of the Day columns once, it almost always has “a suggestion of some questionable or nefarious purpose”, or as Jonathan Green says in his magisterial Cassell Dictionary of Slang, it usually implies “a slightly disreputable or surreptitious alliance”. Questionable, nefarious, disreputable, surreptitious – even when qualified, these are hardly the words to associate with an enterprise, especially one concerned with safeguarding your money and mine.

LOL

CHRISTIAN LION

Two guys are walking through a game park & they come across a lion that has not eaten for days. The lion starts chasing the two men. They run as fast as they can and the one guy starts getting tired and decides to say a prayer, “Please turn this lion into a Christian, Lord.” He looks to see



and he sees the lion is still chasing his knees. Happy to see his prayer answered, he turns around and heads towards the lion. As he comes closer to the lion, he hears the lion saying a prayer: “Thank you Lord for the food I am about to receive.”

100 YEARS OF DEVASTATION

FOCUS CPC CENTENARY

On July 1, the Communist Party of China (CPC) will stage a patriotic extravaganza to celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding. Among the achievements it will celebrate is the Baihetan Dam, located on the Jinsha River, on the southeastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau. The dam will start operations on the same day.

The CPC loves a superlative. It is the world's largest manufacturer and exporter, with the world's largest foreign reserves. It boasts the world's highest railway and the highest and longest bridges. It is also the world's most dammed country, with more large dams than the rest of the world combined, and prides itself on having the world's biggest water-transfer canal system.

The dams themselves are often superlative. The Three Gorges Dam is the world's largest power station, in terms of installed capacity, and the Baihetan Dam is billed as the world's biggest arch dam, as well as the world's first project to use a giant one-gigawatt (GW) hydro-turbine generator. With 16 such generators, Baihetan ranks as the world's second-largest hydroelectric dam (behind the Three Gorges Dam, at 22.5 GW).

All of this makes great fodder for CPC-fueled nationalism – essential to the party's legitimacy. China often flaunts its hydro-engineering prowess, including its execution of the most ambitious inter-river water transfers ever conceived, to highlight its military and economic might. (To be sure, there are also superlatives China will not be flaunting at its upcoming centenary – beginning with the world's largest network of concentration camps.)

But China's dams are not merely symbols of the country's greatness. Nor is their purpose simply to ensure China's water security, as the CPC claims. They are also intended as a source of leverage that China can use to exert control over downstream countries.

The CPC's 1951 annexation of the water-rich Tibetan Plateau – the starting point of Asia's ten major river systems – gave China tremendous power over Asia's water map.



The CPC loves a superlative. It is the world's largest manufacturer and exporter, with the world's largest foreign reserves. It boasts the world's highest railway and the highest and longest bridges. It is also the world's most dammed country, with more large dams than the rest of the world combined, and prides itself on having the world's biggest water-transfer canal system

In the ensuing decades, the country has made the most of this riparian advantage. For example, by building 11 giant dams on the Mekong, just before the river crosses Southeast Asia, China has secured the ability to turn off the region's water tap.

But the CPC is failing to consider the high costs of its strategy, which extend far beyond political friction with neighbors. The party's insatiable damming is wreaking environmental havoc on Asia's major river systems, including mainland China's dual lifelines: the Yellow and the Yangtze.

Giant dams damage ecosystems, drive freshwater species to extinction, cause deltas to retreat, and often emit more greenhouse gases than fossil-fuel power plants. More than 350 lakes in China have disappeared in recent decades, and, with few free-flowing rivers left, river fragmentation and depletion have become endemic.

The social costs are no less severe. For starters, given shoddy construction in the first three decades of communist rule, about 3,200 dams collapsed by 1981, with

the 1975 Banqiao Dam failure alone killing up to 230,000 people. Of course, China has raised its dam-building prowess dramatically since then, and Baihetan was completed in just four years. But as its early dams age, and weather becomes increasingly extreme, catastrophic failures remain a serious risk.

Moreover, dam projects have displaced an enormous number of Chinese. In 2007, just as China's mega-dam-building drive was gaining momentum, then-Prime Minister Wen Jiabao revealed that, since the CPC's rise to power, China had relocated 22.9 million people to make way for water projects – a figure larger than more than 100 countries' entire populations. The Three Gorges Dam alone displaced more than 1.4 million people.

This doesn't seem to bother the CPC much. Baihetan's inundation of vast stretches of a sparsely populated highland has forced local residents, mostly from the relatively poor Yi nationality, to farm more marginal tracts at higher elevations. As China shifts its

focus from the dam-saturated rivers in its heartland to rivers in the ethnic-minority homelands the CPC annexed, China's economically and culturally marginalized communities will suffer the most.

And there is little doubt that this will happen. The CPC has now set its sights on building the world's first super-dam, on the Yarlung Zangbo river – better known as the Brahmaputra – near Tibet's heavily militarised border with India.

The Brahmaputra curves around the Himalayas in a U-turn and forms the planet's longest and deepest canyon, as it plunges from an altitude of 2,800 meters toward the Indian floodplains. Damming it means building at an elevation of more than 1,500 meters – the highest at which a mega-dam has ever been built. And because the gorge holds the world's largest untapped concentration of river energy, the super-dam is supposed to have a hydropower generating capacity of 60 GW, nearly three times that of the Three Gorges Dam.

The fact that the gorge is one of the world's most biodiverse regions seems to be of little concern to the CPC, which is far more interested in being able to use water as a weapon against India, its Asian rival. China has already set the stage for construction, recently completing a highway through the canyon and announcing the start of high-speed train service to a military town near the gorge. This will enable the transport of heavy equipment, materials, and workers to the remote region, which was long thought inaccessible because of its treacherous terrain.

The CPC views its centenary as cause for celebration. But the rest of the world should see the party for what it is: repressive, genocidal, and environmentally rapacious. And it should prepare for what the CPC's second century may bring.

Brahma Chellaney is Professor of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.

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SPECTRUM CITYSCAPE

A monumental blunder!



Dr. Panchanan Dalai

IT IS IRONIC THAT SOON AFTER THE SAD DEMISE OF PADMA VIBHUSHAN RAGHUNATH MOHAPATRA, ODISHA HAS TO WITNESS AN IMMINENT THREAT TO THE MAESTRO'S SIGNATURE - THE 'WARRIOR-HORSE'

Bhubaneswar, besides being the capital city of Odisha and one of India's smart cities, has been a city of historical importance due to its temples, architectures and urban planning. The historically sacred geographies in its vicinity and the urbane architectures inside the city are sculptural and architectural wonders for every body's eyes – residents, migrants and daily foot fallers. Such beauties, historical and modern, justify the etymological significance of 'Bhubaneswar' – 'God of the universe'.

It is shocking, therefore, to notice how terrible beauties are born, almost on a daily basis, in such an abode of art and aesthetics – the latest one being the decision to shift the 'Warrior-Horse' monument to another corner of the city. For every Odia, this stony wonder is a no Trojan horse, but a magnificent repository that proudly harbours glorious history, racial magnificence and cultural distinctiveness of Odisha. It is a jewel on Bhubaneswar's neck, which is too precious to fiddle with. For the visitors, it is the guiding star to the city's topography; for the departing guests, it is a haunting host who is

difficult to be removed from their heart and mind; for the residents, it is of an insurmountable cultural pride and memory that every sunrise kindles in them. It is, therefore, repugnant to the nature and art of urban planning to think of shifting such a monumental wonder to a new and alien place. I wish the poor horse could protest against such decision of the metro-men!

Great writers like William Hazlitt said 'Art' is immortal, but human lives are not. However, life can be made immortal, if we model our lives as per the virtues of art and aesthetics. That is why Leonardo da Vinci is as immortal as his 'Monalisa'. City planners thinking of concrete-beautification of a city should learn that real beauty is born in the hands of artists, not of engineers. They should also learn that to shift the horse monument from its original place to another is like shifting a line on Monalisa's lips.

Similarly, a city can be immortal not because of able administration or bureaucracy, but because of its respect to the history, integrity and dignity of its people and culture enshrined in their marvels and monuments. City stories

of Athens and Sparta have imposed more prominence on Hellenism than Hebraism. English dramatist Oscar Wilde, a vehement critic of Karl Marx's egalitarianism, observed that millionaires cannot take care of culture. I think he would have reiterated this, had he heard that an over-bridge is being considered more valuable than a marvelous work of art. A bridge at the cost of a beauty is snobbery of city planning, which is no less deplorable than any other snobbery that has inflicted our metro mentality.

Read what Joseph Addison had to warn England against in eighteenth century, when England was gradually shaping into a planned city – “As a foreigner is very apt to conceive an idea of the ignorance or politeness of a nation from the turn of their public monuments and inscriptions, they should be submitted to the perusal of men of learning and genius.” I think the Warrior-Horse in the city of Bhubaneswar is one such monument of Odia antiquity and achievements. Let us not be ignoble, therefore, to shift and tamper with its original habitation. Many ideas, histories, memories and prides

would be lost with every shovel-full of soils you will dig out to uproot and shift it, irrespective of utmost engineering care. Five hundred years ago, Shakespeare, envisioning the mischief of grave robbers, pleaded in his epitaph not to tamper with his grave: “Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear, to dig the dust enclosed here. Blessed be the man that spares these stones, and cursed be he that moves my bones.” I think Fakir Mohan Senapati and Rabindranath Tagore too were wise enough to leave the city spaces and retreat to the idyllic places such as Santi Kanan (Balasore) and Santiniketan (Birbhum). Otherwise, they would have had to face the bulldozers to be uprooted and shifted like the Warrior-Horse.

It is ironic that before forgetting the sad demise of Padma Vibhushan Raghunath Mohapatra, Odisha has to witness an imminent threat to the maestro's signature art in the form of the 'Warrior-Horse' currently installed at the Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar.

The writer is Associate Professor, Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University.

Chirag in the soup

Sir, Blood is thicker than water is a well known saying. This aptly suits the country's political system. Earlier, politics wasn't a profession; it was a passion. The decline in political discourse of the country began with the onset of dynastic politics. Not that the political families always prospered in the process – affection and amicability often gave way to bad blood, betrayal and belligerence. Chirag Paswan will know better because he is “shell shocked” by the action of his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras who ‘rebelled’ against his nephew for ‘disrespecting’ him. The brother of the late Ram Vilas Paswan was made to eat his own words after Chirag ordered him to retract his statement praising Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. A humiliated Pashupati along with five members of the Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJP) ‘expelled’ Chirag from the party and the latter, in turn, removed the five MPs from the party. During Paswan's time, dissent or dissatisfaction with his leadership in the LJP was unheard of. Powerful, pragmatic and polite, his pristine traits gave no scope for unhappiness within the cadres. Chirag, of course, is youthful and, as some say, brash. Disgruntlement about Chirag's style of functioning had come to the forefront when a couple of LJP senior leaders switched sides some time ago. Instead of introspection, the young leader's detached look appeared to have surprised his supporters. LJP's poor show in the Assembly elections seems to have emboldened his rivals in the party.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Game of spinning money

Sir, How does one murder cricket in the name of cricket? The answer is the Indian Premier League, one of the world's biggest sports leagues, that is at the receiving end of critics for being the ugliest spectacle of the country at a time which is unprecedented and extraordinary by any standard. The decision of the Board of Control for Cricket in India to continue the IPL amid prevailing Covid-19 crisis in India is incongruent with the larger social reality the cricket-loving nation is currently facing. The country can't afford to run a cricket tournament which is providing cricketers lavishly-designed bio-bubbles and, thus, helping them to bypass the catastrophe that a common citizen is otherwise forced to face. Once postponed, the tournament ought to have been once for all for this season. Instead we are putting a cover and playing in the Emirates as in the last season. When people die we play the game in the name of making money.

MR Ananthambal Yayanthy, CHENNAI

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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B-15, Russagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

MAMATA VS SUVENDU

HC defers Nandigram poll result hearing

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, June 18: The Calcutta High Court Friday deferred to June 24 the hearing on the petition filed by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee challenging BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari's Nandigram win in the 2021 Assembly polls.

The Chief Minister had filed a petition against her one-time aide and now the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Leader of Opposition, Adhikari, in the Calcutta High Court challenging his win in the election from Nandigram and prayed to the court for declaring the election null and void. Banerjee had contested and lost the election from Nandigram against Adhikari.

In her petition, Banerjee alleged that Adhikari has committed corrupt practices as envisaged under Section 123 of the Act, including offences of corrupt practices of bribery, undue influence, spreading enmity, promotion of hatred and enmity amongst the citizens of India, seeking votes on the basis of religion, taking the assistance of the government officials for furtherance of the prospects of the respondent's election and booth capturing.

The plea said that there were several discrepancies and mal-



BANERJEE HAD FILED A PETITION AGAINST HER ONE-TIME AIDE ADHIKARI, IN THE CALCUTTA HIGH COURT CHALLENGING HIS WIN IN THE ELECTION FROM NANDIGRAM AND PRAYED TO THE COURT FOR DECLARING THE ELECTION NULL AND VOID

IN HER PETITION, BANERJEE ALLEGED THAT ADHIKARI HAS COMMITTED CORRUPT PRACTICES, INCLUDING OFFENCES OF CORRUPT PRACTICES OF BRIBERY, UNDUE INFLUENCE, SPREADING ENMITY, PROMOTION OF HATRED AND ENMITY AMONGST THE CITIZENS OF INDIA

practices in the counting process conducted by the Returning Officer on 2 May 2021. Accordingly, Banerjee and her party colleagues had sought a recount of votes. However, such requests were rejected without due cause and the Returning Officer signed the Form 21C, declaring the elections in favour of Adhikari, the petition read.

The petition also said that upon a review of the Form 17C (Account of votes recorded and Result of counting) Banerjee discovered glaring discrepancies and non-com-

pliances in the same.

"The election in Nandigram has been conducted in complete contravention to the constitution and the laws governing elections in India. Suwendu Adhikari has engaged in several corrupt practices that have enhanced his winning chances and materially altered Mamata Banerjee's chance of success in the election.

Therefore, there are substantial grounds for declaring the aforesaid election of Nandigram (AC-2010) null and void in accordance

with Section 100 of the Representations of People Act, 1951," the petition said. The election results for the West Bengal Assembly poll were declared May 2, more than a month ago. As per the Election Commission, Adhikari, who joined the BJP after quitting the Trinamool, defeated Mamata Banerjee by 1,956 votes. While Adhikari had polled 1,10,764 votes, Banerjee had got 1,08,808 votes. Adhikari's vote percentage stood at 48.49 while that of Banerjee was 47.64.

Justice Kausik Chanda, who was supposed to hear the case on Friday, deferred the case till June 24.

Over half crore in Maha fully vaccinated in five months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 18: More than half a crore people in Maharashtra have become fully vaccinated against coronavirus over the last five months as they have been administered both the doses of vaccines, a report by the state health department has revealed.

A total of 53,72,219 people have got both the doses till now, it said. As per the Election Commission of India's data shared ahead of 2019 Assembly polls, there are a total of nine crore people in Maharashtra who are above 18 years of age. Considering that, the state has been able to vaccinate slightly over five per cent population in the last five months. The nationwide vaccination drive began on January 16 this year.

Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope has several times claimed that the state has an installed capacity of inoculating eight lakh people on a daily basis. However, the data revealed that the state has managed to administer average two lakh doses daily.

Of the fully vaccinated people, 34,99,679 are from the above-45 age group category, followed by 8,47,938 frontline workers, 8,05,318 health care workers and 2,19,284 under-45



'People's laxity may bring about 3rd wave'

Mumbai: A possible third wave of the coronavirus infection could take place if people do not follow outbreak norms like maintaining hygiene and wearing masks, Maharashtra health minister Rajesh Tope said Friday. The minister also said there may be as many as 5,000 unreported Covid-19 deaths in the state, and these would be reconciled with the overall tally after all information about them is verified. He told a regional news channel that it was not the crowd on the street that could trigger off a Covid-19 third wave, but "people not wearing masks and not following hygiene". "Nobody can exactly predict a third wave. But by wearing masks and maintaining appropriate behavior, we can postpone its arrival and keep the impact to a minimum," Tope said. On the issue of Covid-19 deaths and the updating of unreported cases on later days, Tope said the Maharashtra government would never hide such figures, but, in some cases, private hospitals are delaying in informing local civic authorities about fatalities in their facilities.

age group, the report said.

A total of 1,55,11,585 people from above-45 age group have received

the first dose, while as many as 12,38,085 health care workers have got the first jab, the report said.

Bengal announces evaluation pattern for Class X, XII board exams



AGENCIES

Secondary Education gave 50 per cent weightage each to the marks obtained by the students in Class IX annual exams and the internal formative assessments in Class X.

The West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education decided to segregate the theoretical marks into two parts, giving 40 per cent weightage to the marks obtained in Madhyamik and another 60 per cent weightage to the subject marks of the Class XI annual exams.

In addition to this, the students will also get the marks scored in the practical exams or project works.

"We have two sets of marks for Class X students - first, the marks obtained in Class IX exams, and second, the marks obtained in internal formative assessments in Class X. We will give equal preference (50 per cent) to both the numbers and prepare the final marksheet," said Kalyanmoy Ganguly, the President of West Bengal Board of Secondary Examination. The results are expected to be out in July this year, Ganguly added.

Kolkata, June 18: After the West Bengal government decided not to conduct the Madhyamik (Secondary) and Ucha Madhyamik (Higher Secondary) board examinations this year in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, the respective boards Friday announced the evaluation pattern for Class X and Class XII students.

However, the boards announced that the students will have the chance to appear for the exams if they are not happy with the evaluation whenever they are conducted, and in that case the marks obtained in the exams will be considered as final.

The West Bengal Board of

Police nab 5 for Covid vax fraud at housing society

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, June 18: In a major breakthrough, the Mumbai Police have arrested five persons in connection with the allegedly fraudulent Covid-19 vaccination drive conducted at a posh housing society in Kandivali in May end, a top official said Friday.

The action follows a complaint lodged by the Hiranandani Residents Welfare Association of the posh Hiranandani Heritage Society in Kandivali west with the local police Wednesday.

The society management had organised a private vaccination camp for its residents and in-house staffers like security personnel, drivers or domestic helpers May 30.

Of the 435 flats in three residential towers, around 390 residents had been inoculated during the drive that day, but belatedly realised that they may have been cheated.

Additional Commissioner of

Police, Mumbai North Region, Dilip Sawant said that no permission of the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) had been taken for the private vaccination camp conducted at the society.

After the society's complaint, the police moved swiftly and managed to arrest five persons -- Mahendra Kuldeep Singh, 39, Sanjay Gupta, 25, Chandan Singh, 32, Karim Akber Ali, 21 and Nitin More, 32 within 72 hours.

"So far, we have picked up five persons, including four from Mumbai and one from a railway station at Madhya Pradesh, who is being brought here for the probe," Sawant said. The shaken residents said that a facilitator claiming to represent the reputed Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital (KDAH) had negotiated to provide 400 vaccine doses for ₹1,260 each and around ₹5 lakh was paid to him.



SHOT OF HOPE



A medical worker inoculates a beneficiary with a dose of the Covishield vaccine, at a theatre hall turned vaccination centre in Kolkata, Friday

PTI PHOTO

SC agrees to hear Mamata, Law Min on affidavits

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 18: The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear the appeals against the Calcutta High Court order denying West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Law Minister Moly Ghatk from filing affidavits on their role on the day of arrest of four Trinamool Congress leaders May 17 by the CBI in Narada case.

A bench comprising Justices Hemant Gupta and V Ramasubramanian, in its order, said, "Tushar Mehta, SG has put appearance on behalf of the re-

spondents. Let a copy of these petitions be served upon the office of the Solicitor General. At the joint request of the parties, list the matters on June 22. We hope that the High Court will not take up the matter June 21 and June 22."

The top court asked the High Court to consider the matter after the apex court considers the appeals of the state and Ghatk against the order.

A five-judge bench of the Calcutta High Court on June 9, hearing the CBI's application for transfer of the Narada sting tape case from the special CBI court to the High

NARADA CASE



Court, had said it will consider later the affidavits by Banerjee and Ghatk.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi,

appearing for Ghatk, had said that the minister was attending the cabinet meeting and was not on the court premises at the time of hearing. He emphasised the CBI had addressed the court virtually.

The allegations levelled are that Trinamool leaders played key role in stopping the CBI from performing its legal duty after arresting four party leaders May 17 in the case.

Solicitor General Mehta had contended before the court that the affidavits cannot be accepted on the ground of delay as they were filed after the completion of his arguments.



Patole to come clean on this link.

Shelar also claimed the Uddhav Thackeray government did not collect any sort of empirical data on OBC numbers in local bodies over a period of 15 months ahead of the court case.

After the court order on OBC quota, parties like the NCP and Congress were putting the blame on the BJP-led Centre, Shelar alleged.

Farmer faces 'social boycott' for damaging village deity

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gondia, June 18: In a bizarre development, a farmer has been slapped with a penalty of ₹21,000 for allegedly damaging a stone idol symbolising the village deity at his farm and also threatened with 'social boycott' if he failed to cough out the money, a Gondia police officials said here Friday.

The incident occurred June 9 when the peasant, Tikaram P Pardi was carrying out the ground levelling work in his farm where the stone idol got accidentally damaged, enraging the Sitepar village of around 2,600 people, said Amgaon Police Inspector Vilas Nale.

"Later, the Sitepar Village Panchayat met, ruled that the incident had hurt their religious sentiments and imposed a fine of ₹21,000 with a threat of 'social boycott' if Pardi refused to pay up.



Since this is illegal, we have initiated action against the concerned persons there following the victim's complaint," Nale told IANS.

The defiant Pardi rejected the punishment and countered the dik-

The incident occurred June 9 when the peasant was carrying out the ground levelling work in his farm where the stone idol got accidentally damaged, enraging the Sitepar village of around 2,600 people

lieve the stone deity is their 'Kul-Devta' and as per traditions, they kick-off the new annual crop season during monsoon by worshipping the deity which was allegedly damaged by Pardi in his field.

The village Sarpanch Gopal F Meshram claimed that the fine amount would be used to repair the stone idol, perform 'puja' and

sacrifice to appease the deity, and construct a small temple at the site to prevent any such accidents in future. Pardi said in his police complaint that he was not financially well-off and hence could not afford to pay the fine, after which the Panchayat warned him of a 'social boycott'.

Nale revealed that besides the Sarpanch Meshram, eight others, including the village Police Patil, have been booked under sections of Maharashtra Prohibition of People from Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2016 and served them notices.

The accused include: Police Patil Ulhasrao B Bisen, Tekchand D Madavi, Rajendra H Bisen, Pratap L Bisen, Yogesh H Bisen, Puran L Bisen, Yadavrao S Bisen and Sudhir H Bisen, and further investigations are underway, Nale added.

of the day quote

Punjab government had said that they had procured 4.29 lakh doses of Covishield at ₹13.25 crore, which on average costs ₹309 per dose. They had also procured 1,14,190 doses of Covaxin at ₹4.7 crore, which on average costs ₹412 per dose. They sold vaccines to private hospitals at a profit of ₹750 per dose

The DMK government is totally responsible for the rise in prices, within a month of the DMK under Stalin assuming office, the prices of essential commodities have shot up. The prices of construction material, especially cement, have gone up. The price of a bag of cement is now ₹520, which was ₹370 before the DMK came to power

Public worship will be allowed in temples as soon as the Covid-19 cases are under control and the state reports zero deaths due to Covid

SHORT TAKES

92% scribes receive tax

Agartala: In collaboration with the Agartala Press Club, the Tripura government has so far administered the first dose of Covid vaccine to around 92 per cent of the journalists in the state, with many of them receiving the second shot as well, officials said here Friday. The secretary of Agartala Press Club (APC), Pranab Sarkar, said that besides vaccinating the mediapersons, all the print and electronic media houses in Tripura are also being sanitised regularly.

Man held for chit fund fraud

New Delhi: A man has been arrested for allegedly cheating people by luring them to invest in his chit fund scheme after offering handsome returns, police said Friday. Mool Chand was nabbed by the Economic Offences Wing of the Delhi Police Thursday for fraud and cheating, and was tracked via surveillance and local intelligence, they said. Police said the accused lured people from his locality to invest in his chit fund scheme by offering handsome return and liquid funds.

Sonowal in Delhi

New Delhi: Former Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal is in the national capital to meet senior BJP leaders, sources said Friday. His arrival here this afternoon comes amid speculation of an impending reshuffle in the Union Cabinet and his possible induction into it. Sonowal was chief minister of the BJP-led Assam government from 2016 till last month. Even though the BJP-led alliance returned to power, Sonowal was not made chief minister and was replaced by Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Minor girl raped

Nagaon: A minor girl was allegedly raped by her maternal uncle in a village in Assam's Nagaon district, police said Friday. The 11-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her uncle when her parents were away from home. Initially, the alleged rapist had told the parents that the girl was molested by another person but the minor later told her mother that her uncle had committed the act. The girl's mother filed a complaint with the police and the accused was arrested Thursday, the police added.



With many corners of India gradually moving towards unlock from the second wave, we cannot afford the laxity and any further increase in cases again

HARSH VARDHAN | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

QUAKE SHAKES KUTCH

An earthquake, of 4.2 magnitude, was recorded in Gujarat's Kutch Friday afternoon, officials said. According to the Institute of Seismological Research (ISR), the quake, which occurred at 3.45 p.m., had its epicentre near Bandhal, 11 km north by northwest of Bhachau, and its depth was 26.7 km



'Vaccine reduces hospitalisation chances by 80%'

Currently, India is facing a vaccine shortage causing a delay in the nationwide vaccination programme



AGENCIES

62,480 fresh cases

With 62,480 new coronavirus infections being reported in a day, India's total tally of Covid-19 cases rose to 2,97,62,793, while the death toll climbed to 3,83,490 with 1,587 fresh fatalities, the lowest in 61 days, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Friday. The active cases have fallen below 8 lakh after 73 days and the national Covid-19 recovery rate has crossed 96 per cent. The active cases have declined to 7,98,656 comprising 2.68 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate has improved to 96.03 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed.

New Delhi, June 18: Studies have shown that following vaccination the chances of hospitalisation reduce by 75-80 per cent even after contracting Covid and oxygen requirement comes down to 8 per cent, the government said Friday. Almost 85 per cent decline has been noted in daily new cases since the highest reported peak May 7, it said. About 78.6 per cent decline has been recorded in total active Covid-19 cases since the peak reported May 10, it added.

A sharp decline of 81 per cent has been noted in weekly case positivity rate. It was the highest at 21.6 per cent between April 30-May 6, the government said. There are 513 districts with Covid-19 positivity rate less than 5 per cent, it said. The country's Covid curve can be flattened by July end if the government is able to vaccinate a whopping 90-lakh people a day, said healthcare expert at a webinar.

The webinar held Thursday was hosted by MeraDoc, a personalised healthcare platform that connects highly experienced health practitioners with people. "We invited the second wave and if we were to repeat the same, then God help us! With a near double mortality versus the first, the second was a shocker," Dr Naresh Trehan, Chairman and MD, Medanta Hospital. "If we were to beat the

virus, then we need to not only follow Covid appropriate behaviour, but also look at the way vaccines are rolled out. "If starting July 1, we are able to administer 50 lakh vaccines a day then we can reduce the virus impact by 25 per cent and by 50 per cent if this is scaled up to 70 lakh by mid-July. We may even flatten the curve if we are able to vaccinate about 90-lakh people in a day by the end of the month," Trehan said. Meanwhile, early this month, the government has said that there will be enough doses by mid-July or August to vaccinate one crore people per day. "We are confident of vaccinating the whole population by December," Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director General Bahram Bhargava had said. The Health Ministry Friday said that a total of 26,89,60,399 people have been vaccinated so far in the country, including 32,59,003 who were administered vaccines in the last 24 hours.



Children dive into the Arabian Sea during high tide in Mumbai

FUN TIME

Stalin meets Sonia, Rahul

This is the first meeting between Stalin and Sonia Gandhi after the DMK-Congress alliance swept the April 6 Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu, with the Dravidian party coming to power in the state after a decade



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Chennai, June 18: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president MK Stalin Friday met Congress chief Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi in the presence of Rahul Gandhi and described the meeting as "close to the heart." This is the first meeting between Stalin and Sonia Gandhi after the DMK-Congress alliance swept the April 6 Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu, with the Dravidian party coming to power in the state after a decade. The leaders are learnt to have discussed the new government's

schemes and policies in Tamil Nadu, where the Congress is a junior partner. Both Rahul Gandhi and Stalin took to Twitter to share about the meeting. "Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi and I had the pleasure of meeting Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Shri MK Stalin and Smt. Durgavathi Stalin earlier today," Rahul Gandhi said in the tweet. "We will keep working with the DMK to build a strong and prosperous state for the Tamil people," he added. Stalin, in his first visit to Delhi after being sworn in as

chief minister last month, also uploaded pictures of his meeting with the Congress chief and Rahul Gandhi along with his wife. Referring to the ties with the Congress' top leaders, Stalin said it was a "relationship continuing since the days" of his father and late DMK president M Karunanidhi. "It felt close to the heart," the chief minister said about the meeting. Earlier, Stalin had met Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday and presented a number of demands pertaining to Tamil Nadu.

Guj registers first case of 'Love Jihad'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gandhinagar, June 18: Within just three days of coming into effect in Gujarat, the state registered its first case of violation of the 'Gujarat Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Act 2021' in Vadodara Thursday, officials said Friday. The police in Vadodara have arrested a Muslim man for marrying a Hindu woman by introducing himself as Sam Martin - a Christian. One Samir Abdulbhai Qureshi, 25, residing in Tarsali area of Vadodara, has been arrested following a complaint registered on Thursday. A Hindu woman, 25, filed a complaint against Samir for marrying her under the false pretext of being a Christian. "The Hindu woman has complained that she was lured into a relationship through Instagram by Samir, who said that he was a Christian, Sam Martin. She has complained that the accused had forced her into physical relationship and had photographed the moments. And he threatened her with making them viral if she did not marry him. They married in 2019," SV Chaudhary, inspector at Vadodara's Gotri police station, said.

Stray firing by forest guards kills Royal Bengal Tiger in Assam

Set up in 1908, the KNP & TR, is one of India's seven UNESCO world heritage sites and extends across Assam's Golaghat, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Biswanath and Karbi Anglong districts along the Arunachal Pradesh border

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Golaghat (Assam), June 18: A Royal Bengal Tiger has died due to "accidental firing" by forest personnel Friday in the fringe areas of the world famous Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNP & TR) in eastern Assam, officials said.



A detailed inquiry into the incident," Sivakumar said. "The tiger had killed a buffalo two days back and reappeared Thursday evening. Forest guards were immediately sent to the area after the local people had informed about the presence of the tiger. On Friday morning, the tiger and the forest guards came very close to each other and the tiger tried to attack them. After finding no other option, the forest guards fired in self-defence," the senior IFS officer said. Sivakumar said that since the tiger was old, it possibly could not hunt in the forest and strayed out looking for livestock. This is the third instance in the recent past in which a tiger carcass was recovered from KNP & TR.

RLYS APPROVES 660 MORE TRAINS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 18: With the flattening of the coronavirus curve, the Indian Railways has added 660 more trains in June to facilitate the movement of migrant labourers and clear the waiting list in various origin-destination clusters, it said in a statement. During the pre-Covid times, about 1,768 mail and express trains were operating daily on an average. As Friday, about 983 mail and express trains are being operated daily, which is about 56 per cent of the pre-Covid level. The number of trains is being enhanced gradually in accordance with the demand and commercial justification, the railways said. As June 1, about 800 mail and express trains were in operation. "During the period from June 1 to June 18, approval for operating 660 additional mail/express trains has been given to the zonal rail-



ways," it said. These include 552 mail and express trains and 108 holiday special trains. The zonal railways have been advised to restore trains in a graded manner, keeping in view the local conditions, the demand for tickets and the Covid situation in the region.

Covid-19 third wave: J'khand on high alert

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ranchi, June 18: Taking lessons from the second wave of Covid-19, the Jharkhand government is preparing to tackle the expected third wave of the pandemic. To understand the nature, impact and preparations needed to fight against the anticipated third wave, Chief Minister Hemant Soren is having regular interactions with experts and doctors from across the nation. Experts anticipate that in the third wave children will be at greater risk but this does not give any guarantee of adults being unaffected. Experts suggest that the coronavirus is mutating at a fast pace and any kind of lethargy may lead to serious complications. With the inputs received from the experts, the state government is on high alert. Efforts are being made to enhance and upgrade the existing medical infrastructure. The government is also working on generating awareness among people. Along with the government, parents are also expected to discharge their responsibilities. Hemant Soren has also unveiled a book which has detailed information on Preparation, Prevention and Planning for Covid-19 in the third wave. Most children infected with Covid-19 may not show any symptoms or may exhibit very mild symptoms. Common symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, body ache, running nose, sore throat, diarrhoea, loss of taste or smell.

Southwest monsoon advances further into Guj, Raj, MP

DELHI WILL HAVE TO WAIT LONGER FOR MONSOONAL SHOWERS. THE WIND SYSTEM IS EXPECTED TO REACH THE CAPITAL AROUND THE USUAL DATE OF JUNE 27, OFFICIALS SAID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 18: The southwest monsoon has further advanced into some more parts of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, the India Meteorological Department said Friday.

Uttar Pradesh and remaining parts of Madhya Pradesh during next the next 24 hours, the IMD said. The Northern Limit of Monsoon (NLM) passes through Junagarh, Deesa, Guna, Kanpur, Meerut, Ambala and Amritsar, the weather department said. "The impact of mid-latitude westerly on the monsoon is likely to continue till June 23, and hence the advance of the monsoon into Rajasthan, remaining parts Punjab, Haryana and Delhi is not likely during the same period," the IMD had said Thursday.



Representative image

Delhi will have to wait longer for monsoonal showers. The wind system is expected to reach the capital around the usual date of June 27, officials said. However, conditions are favourable for further advance of the monsoon into some more parts of Gujarat, south Rajasthan, west

strengthen gradually between June 26 and June 30, and the further advance to most parts of northwest India is likely during the same period. The MeT office had earlier predicted that the wind system may

reach Delhi by June 15, 12 days early. Normally, the monsoon reaches Delhi by June 27 and covers the entire country by July 8. Last year, the wind system had reached Delhi June 25 and covered the entire country by June 29, according to Skymet Weather, a private forecasting agency. Mahesh Palawat from Skymet Weather said westerly winds have been blocking the advance of the monsoon in northwest India for the last three to four days. "These winds will persist for another week. Hence, chances are that Delhi will get monsoonal showers only around the usual date of June 27," he said.



of the day quote

Where is the crisis in our party? The same leaders who have been levelling allegations for the last couple of months are still making the noise, and these leaders have not even been able to secure an appointment with Arun Singh, the BJP in-charge for Karnataka

BS YEDIYURAPPA | KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER

Rajasthan will soon become self-reliant in medical oxygen generation as manufacturing plants are being set up by various institutions

RAGHU SHARMA | RAJ HEALTH MINISTER

The BJP is upset over its defeat in the panchayat elections. Not having the numbers, the distraught BJP leadership is misusing the government machinery to ensure that their party nominees win the posts of zila panchayat chairpersons

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

UP ATS arrests four Rohingyas

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh police on Friday arrested four Rohingyas, saying they were living illegally in India and part of an organised gang involved in human trafficking. The gang members were arrested from Meerut, Aligarh and Bulandshahr districts, the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) of the Uttar Pradesh Police said in a statement. According to the police, the gang was involved in preparing forged voter cards, Aadhaar cards and passports besides human trafficking.

Naxal killed in encounter

Raipur: A woman Naxal was killed in a gun-battle with security forces inside a forest in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh Friday, a senior police officer said. Three weapons and a huge cache of Maoist camping material were recovered from the encounter site, he said. The gunfight took place around 8 am in the forest of Chandameta-Pyrbhat villages when joint teams of security forces were out on an anti-Naxal operation, Inspector General of Police (Bastar range) Sundarraj P said.

Tiger killed

Umaria: A tiger was killed after being mowed down by a vehicle while crossing a national highway in Gunghutti range of Umaria forest division in Madhya Pradesh early Friday, an official said. The incident occurred on NH-43, around 35 kms away from Umaria district headquarters, he said. "It appears that some light vehicle hit the big cat around 3 am. The body parts of the tiger were intact." Umaria Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Mohit Sood told PTI over phone.

Standalone buildings soon

Chandigarh: The Punjab Cabinet led by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Friday gave the go-ahead for regularisation of standalone buildings constructed outside the municipal limits, without approval of the Housing and Urban Development Department but with strict adherence to the building by-laws. The on-time settlement policy, for which applications will be accepted till March 31 next year would enable such buildings to be regularised with payment of a nominal fee and statutory government dues, besides bringing them within the ambit of planning and ensure safety of public.



There has been a talk of a third wave and experts points out that it could affect our children. We have made elaborate arrangements in all hospitals to ensure that proper paediatric care facilities are there, but there need be no fear about it

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CHIEF MINISTER

OWNER OF 'BABA KA DHABA' ATTEMPTS SUICIDE

The owner of south Delhi's 'Baba ka Dhaba', Kanta Prasad, allegedly attempted suicide and has been admitted to the Safdarjung Hospital, police said Friday



Top court refuses to stay Pinjra Tod activists' bail

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 18: The Supreme Court Friday expressed its displeasure over the Delhi High Court discussing the entire anti-terror law UAPA in a bail matter, and made it clear the high court's verdicts granting bail to three student activists in a north-east Delhi riots case will not be used as a precedent in any court in the country.

The top court, however, refused to stay the verdicts early this week on an appeal by the Delhi police. "It is surprising that in a bail application, there is 100-page judgement discussing the entire law. That is what is troubling us."

"There are many questions which arise as legality of the UAPA was not challenged before the high court. These were bail applications," it observed.

The issue of reading down of UAPA (Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act) is "important" and can have "pan-India ramifications", said a vacation bench of Justices Hemant Gupta and V Ramasubramanian, adding this law will require interpretation by the apex court.

The apex court agreed to hear the appeals filed by the Delhi Police challenging the verdicts of the high court and issued notices to JNU students Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita and Jamia student Asif Iqbal Tanha seeking their responses. While refusing to stay the high court verdicts granting bail to the three accused, the bench said these judgements will not be treated as a precedent by any party before any court. "In the meantime, the impugned judgment shall not be treated as a precedent and may not be relied upon by any of the parties in any of the proceedings. It is clarified that the release of the respondents (Narwal, Kalita and Tanha) on bail is not being interfered at this stage," the bench said in its order. "Issue notice," it said, adding, "Let the counter affidavits be filed within four weeks. List in the week commencing July 19, 2021 on a non-miscellaneous day".

Taking note of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's submission that the entire UAPA has been "turned upside down" by the high court in granting bail in the case, the bench said, "The issue is im-



portant and can have pan-India ramifications".

"We would like to issue notice and hear the other side," it added. Mehta urged the apex court to stay the high court verdicts, saying the findings arrived at in these judgements "virtually record acquittal for these accused" and other accused would also seek bail relying on them. "The way the Act has been interpreted, probably it will require interpretation by the Supreme Court. That is why we are issuing notice," the bench said.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the student activists, said there is no doubt that the apex court should consider the ramifications and interpretation of the UAPA so that there is a judgement on the issue from the top court. At the outset, Mehta referred to the judgements of the high court and said, "the entire UAPA has been turned upside down on its head".

Chirag approaches EC

Chirag was removed as leader of the LJP in the Lok Sabha Monday after five out of six MPs, including his uncle Paras, staged a coup against him

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 18: Amid the crisis in the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), a five member delegation led by Chirag Paswan, son of party founder and former Union Minister late Ram Vilas Paswan, approached the Election Commission claiming that he was elected as party chief in 2019 for a period of five years.

The Lok Janshakti Party delegation met the Election Commission Friday. Speaking to the media after meeting the Election Commission, Chirag said, "A five member delegation met the Commission and kept the matter before it."

He said that they apprised the Election Commission that in 2019 he was elected the national president of the LJP and the national executive has passed the resolution for the same. Chirag said, "I was elected as LJP President for a period of five years and after every five years election for the party chief is held."

Before me, the party founder Ram Vilas Paswan was the party President and his tenure was till 2020, but due to his health issues he stepped down from the post as he was also having responsibilities as an Union Minister, he said. "Thus he resigned from the post and the national executive gave me the charge of party chief," Chirag said, adding that he apprised the poll panel about the same.

Chirag said that we have ap-



prised the Commission that 10 people, including five MPs have been suspended from the party. He said that we also informed the poll panel that these people are trying to claim to be the LJP and are using the symbol of the party. "And as Pashupati Kumar Paras is claiming to be the President of the party, thus it was necessary for us to present out side with the poll panel and apprise them of the entire situation."

Chirag said, "We have told the Commission that few people can claim to be the LJP leaders, and as per the Constitution of the party I am the president of the LJP till 2024 and the entire national executive is working with me. And I have requested the Commission if anyone claims that he is the President of the LJP, we should be given a chance to provide evidence." He said that the poll panel has assured him of informing him if someone claims to be from the LJP.

AGUSTAWESTLAND SCAM

Court dismisses Michel's bail pleas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 18: A Delhi Court Friday dismissed the bail pleas of alleged middleman Christian Michel in connection with alleged AgustaWestland scam related corruption case filed by the CBI, and the money laundering case by the Enforcement Directorate.

Special CBI Judge Arvind Kumar refused to grant relief to the British national, who was extradited from Dubai in 2018. The court noted that the stage was not fit to grant him bail. In his bail applications moved on both the cases, the accused had said he was not required for the purpose of investigation, and expressed willingness to cooperate with the investigation.

The applications said that the accused never sought to evade the process of law, and that no purpose will be served by keeping him in further custody.

They said Michel made no attempt to suborn witnesses, tamper with documentary evidence, or in any other manner to obstruct the judicial process.

The ₹3,600-crore alleged scam relates to the purchase of 12 VVIP helicopters from AgustaWestland.

Fragments of nCoV genes found in Sabarmati river

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, June 18: A recent study by researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Gandhinagar in Gujarat has established the presence of coronavirus in water samples from the Sabarmati river and two lakes in Ahmedabad.

While the study, funded by the UNICEF, did not reveal if the genes of coronavirus found in the water samples were dead or alive, Professor Manish Kumar, who led the research, has emphasised the need for further probe on the subject to avert any future tragedy.

Following the revelation, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) has decided to send samples from these water bodies to the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC). "We have been sending samples to them since the last one year and they submit their report to the state government. We have no idea about the IIT's research. However, we will now send samples of these water bodies to the GBRC for a similar analysis," said Harpalsinh Zala, the AMC's city engineer for Water Resources.

Decision on pending entrance exams of JEE, NEET soon: Edu Min

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 18: The Ministry of Education is expected to soon decide on conducting the two remaining editions of the engineering entrance examination JEE-Mains and the medical entrance test NEET in August, according to officials.

"The situation is being reviewed to decide on the schedule of the pending editions of JEE-Mains and whether NEET-UG can be conducted August 1," a senior official said.

From the current academic session, JEE-Mains is being conducted four times a year to offer flexibility to students and a chance to improve their scores. The first phase in February was followed by the second phase in March, while the next phases were scheduled for April and May. But those were postponed after an exponential rise in the number of Covid-19 cases during the second wave of the pandemic in the country. The JEE-Advanced exam, which is conducted for admission to the prestigious Indian

Institutes of Technology and the National Institutes of Technology, was also postponed. The exam was scheduled July 3.

While no further decision was taken on NEET-UG, the registration for the exam, which was supposed to commence from May 1, was kept in abeyance. The ministry is also yet to decide on the fate of the Central University Common Entrance Test (CUCET).

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Thursday announced the marks tabulation policy for the Class 12 exams, which were cancelled on June 1 in view of the Covid situation. The schedule for the subsequent entrance examinations is expected to be decided soon. According to the policy decided by a 13-member panel set up by the board, the theory paper evaluation formula is that a 30-per cent weightage will be given to the marks obtained in Class 10, another 30-per cent weightage to the Class 11 marks and a 40-per cent weightage to the Class 12 marks obtained in the unit test, mid-term and pre-board exams.



Representative image

BRAVING THE ODDS



Commuters wade through a waterlogged road during heavy rain in Prayagraj

PTI PHOTO

IMA seeks protection for healthcare workers

Cases of violence against doctors and other healthcare workers have been reported lately from some parts of the country, including Jammu and Kashmir and Assam among other places

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gurugram, June 18: Amid a spike in the number of attacks on doctors in various parts of the country, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Friday staged a protest here, demanding implementation of central protection act for the healthcare workers.

Vandana Narula, president of IMA, Gurugram, said: "We de-

mand a zero tolerance on violence against health workers."

"Around 1,500 doctors have died during Covid pandemic and it is now time for a central protection act for the health workers so that anyone who attacks a doctor or damages hospital property will be arrested under non bailable charges," she said.

During the protest, doctors from IMA Gurugram wore black masks

and created awareness about the situation of doctors in India.

Sarika Verma, secretary of IMA, Gurugram, said: "88 per cent doctors are afraid of violence at their workplace and every death becomes a cause of stress in the hospital."

No one can ensure whether the patient will remain alive or not and it is important to understand that doctors are on a very difficult task. There is no role of a violence in a civilised society."

Doctor Karan Juneja said: "We as junior doctors have spent 15 months wearing PPE kits and performed our Covid duty, when patients' kin would not look after

them. Nurses, cleaners, technicians, ambulance workers and junior doctors looked after patients till their last breath. Whenever a doctor died, it impacts the mental health of doctors from all over the country."

"Several doctors are hesitant to make their children doctors because of the fear of assault inside hospitals. This violence has gone on too long and has to end now," said a doctor.

IMA members also submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi through Gurugram's Deputy Commissioner, seeking implementation of central protection act.

Climate change to increase sea level in Lakshadweep: Study

SEA LEVEL WILL RISE AROUND THE LAKSHADWEEP ISLANDS IN THE RANGE BETWEEN 0.4 MM PER YEAR TO 0.9 MM PER YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 18: Sea levels will rise around the Lakshadweep Islands between 0.4 mm per year to 0.9 mm per year and will affect airport and residential areas, according to a study projecting different greenhouse gas scenarios.

The study highlights that the worst possible inundation scenarios projected for Lakshadweep Islands are almost similar under different emission scenarios and all the islands in the archipelago would be vulnerable to impact from the rise in sea levels.

A team of scientists studied the climate projections of sea level rise and associated coastal inundation in atoll islands, a ring-shaped coral reef or island.

The team included Aysha Jennath, Athira Krishnan, Saikat Kumar Paul, Prasad K Bhaskaran, jointly from the Department of Architecture and Regional Planning and Department of Ocean Engineering and Naval Architecture, IIT Kharagpur, with support from the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India under the Climate Change Programme (CCP).



Representative image

One of the major threats in the coming years is the rising sea level and its significant impact on small islands. This is for the first time that

climate model projections have been used to assess the potential areas of inundation over the archipelago of Lakshadweep Islands

in the Arabian Sea, the Science and Technology Ministry said. "Sea level will rise around the Lakshadweep Islands in the range between 0.4 mm per year to 0.9 mm per year," the study said.

It estimated that smaller islands Chetlat and Amini are expected to have major land loss. Projection mapping indicated that about 60-70 per cent of existing shoreline would experience land loss in Amini and about 70-80 per cent in Chetlat.

The present work highlights that larger islands Minicoy and the capital Kavaratti are also vul-

nerable to sea level rise, and expected to experience land loss along 60 per cent of the existing shoreline. Sea level rise effects are seen to have the least impact on Androth Island under all emission scenarios. The research that was published in the journal 'Regional Studies in Marine Science, Elsevier recently showed that the coastal inundation could have wide socio-economic impact.

According to the team, projected inundation due to sea level rise can impact the islanders as residential areas are quite close to the present coastline.

international

of the day quote

Any action carried out by the President as per Article 76 of the Constitution cannot become a subject of any petition and this cannot be an issue for a judicial review

BIDYA DEVI BHANDARI | PRESIDENT, NEPAL

On the S-400, they discussed it. There was not a resolution of the issue. There was a commitment to continue the dialogue on the S-400, and the two teams will be following up on that coming out of the meeting

JAKE SULLIVAN | NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, US

Innovative instruments to allow debt restructuring and meaningful debt reduction can help middle-income countries expand their fiscal space to boost investment and steer a resilient and sustainable recovery from the crisis

ANTONIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY-GENERAL, UN

SHORT TAKES

Indian-origin judge elected to Canada SC

Toronto: Indian-origin Justice Mahmud Jamal has become the first non-white person to be nominated to the Supreme Court of Canada. He has been elevated from the Court of Appeal for Ontario where he has served since 2019. "I am pleased to announce the nomination of Justice Mahmud Jamal to the Supreme Court of Canada. Respected around the world, Canada's Supreme Court is known for its strength, independence, and judicial excellence," PM Trudeau said while nominating Justice Jamal to the apex court.

UK to jab all adults amid Delta surge

London: The UK's health officials Friday opened up the country's Covid-19 vaccination programme to all adults, in what has been dubbed as the "final push" to offer protection against the deadly virus. The National Health Service (NHS) said everyone aged 18 and over is being urged to arrange a jab if they have not had one as it begins sending around 1.5 million texts to people aged 18-20. According to the latest figures, around eight in 10 adults have had their first dose while more than half have had their second dose.

HK paper executives charged with collusion

Hong Kong: Hong Kong police charged the chief editor and chief executive of pro-democracy tabloid Apple Daily Friday with collusion with a foreign country, a national security case that has sent chills through the city's media. The raid on the paper's offices followed by the arrests Thursday marked the first time the sweeping national security law, which Beijing imposed on Hong Kong last year, was used against the media, one of the symbols of civil liberties in the semi-autonomous city that don't exist elsewhere in China.

Fighting in 200 Afghan areas

Kabul: Fighting between the Afghan National Security and Defence Forces (ANDSF) and the Taliban were reported across 200 areas in 24 hours amid escalating violence in the war-torn country, official data revealed. The Defence Ministry Thursday claimed that 148 Taliban fighters were killed in the fighting with Afghan security forces, and more than 160 others were wounded. Meanwhile, the Taliban claimed to have killed over 50 security force members.

Iran votes for next Prez with hardliner Raisi as frontrunner



If elected, Raisi would be the first serving Iranian president sanctioned by the US government even before entering office over his involvement in the mass execution of political prisoners in 1988

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, June 18: Iran voted Friday in a presidential election tipped in the favour of a hard-line protégé of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, fuelling public apathy and sparking calls for a boycott in the Islamic Republic.

State-linked opinion polling and analysts put hard-line judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi as the dominant front-runner in a field of just four candidates. Former Central Bank chief, Abdolnasser Hemmati, is running as the race's moderate candidate but hasn't inspired the same support as outgoing President Hassan Rouhani, who is term limited from seeking the office again. If elected, Raisi would be the first serving Iranian president sanctioned by the US government even before entering office over his involvement in the mass execution of political prisoners in

1988, as well as his time as the head of Iran's internationally criticized judiciary — one of the world's top executioners.

It also would firmly put hard-liners in control across the Iranian government as negotiations in Vienna continue over trying to save Tehran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers, as it enriches uranium to the closest point yet to weapons-grade levels.

Tensions remain high with both the US and Israel, which is believed to have carried out a series of attacks targeting Iranian nuclear sites and assassinating the scientist who created its military atomic program decades earlier.

Raisi, wearing a black turban that identifies him in Shiite tradition as a direct descendant of Islam's Prophet Muhammad, voted from a mosque in southern Tehran, waving to those gathered to cast ballots. "I beg everyone, the lovely youths, and all Iranian men and women speaking any accent or language from any region and with any political views, to go and vote and cast their ballots," Raisi said.

There are more than 59 million eligible voters in Iran, a nation home to over 80 million people. However, the state-linked Iranian Student Polling Agency has estimated a turnout of just 42 per cent, which would be the lowest ever since the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Delta variant becoming globally dominant: WHO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Geneva, June 18: The Delta variant of Covid-19, first identified in India, is becoming the globally dominant variant of the disease, the World Health Organization's chief scientist said Friday.

Soumya Swaminathan also voiced disappointment in the failure of CureVac's (5CVDE) vaccine candidate in a trial to meet the WHO's efficacy standard, in particular as highly transmissible variants boost the need for new, effective shots.

Britain has reported a steep rise in infections with the Delta variant, while Germany's top public health official predicted it would rapidly become the dominant variant there despite rising vaccination rates.

The Kremlin blamed a surge in Covid-19 cases on reluctance to have vaccinations after record new infections in Moscow, mostly with the new Delta variant, fanned fears of a third wave.

NUCLEAR TUSSLE

Kim ready for confrontation with US

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Seoul, June 18: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered his government to be prepared for both dialogue and confrontation with the Biden administration — but more for confrontation, state media reported Friday days after the United States and others urged the North to abandon its nuclear programme and return to talks.

Kim's statement indicates he'll likely push to strengthen his nuclear arsenal and increase pressure on Washington to give up what North Korea considers a hostile US policy, though he'll also prepare for talks to resume, some experts say.

During an ongoing ruling party meeting Thursday, Kim analysed in detail the policy tendencies of the US under President Joe Biden and clarified unspecified steps to be taken in relations with Washington,

HEAT WAVE BAKES WEST



An aerial view shows houseboats anchored in low water levels at Lake Oroville, which is the second-largest reservoir in California and according to daily reports of the state's Department of Water Resources is near 35% capacity, near Oroville, California

NEPAL SC interim order against export of sand, pebbles, stones to India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, June 18: Nepal's Supreme Court Friday issued an interim order against the government's decision to export sand, stones and pebbles to India in a bid to bridge the widening trade deficit, after environmentalists and Opposition leaders raised concerns that the move will have serious environmental implications for the Himalayan nation.

A joint bench of Chief Justice Cholendra SJB Rana, justices Mira Khadka, Hari Krishna Karki and Bishwambhar Prasad Shrestha asked the government of beleaguered Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli not to implement its policy to extract sand, pebbles and stones for export until there is a final decision on the case.

The need to get prepared for both dialogue and confrontation, especially to get fully prepared for confrontation in order to protect the dignity of our state and its interests for independent development

KIM JONG UN | NORTH KOREA LEADER

ISRAELI FORCES ATTACK AL-AQSA PROTESTERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jerusalem, June 18: Palestinians protested after Friday prayers at the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem and briefly clashed with Israeli police, leaving three demonstrators wounded.

A series of far more violent clashes at the site in April and May helped ignite last month's 11-day Gaza war. The site is the third holiest in Islam and the holiest for Jews, who refer to it as the Temple Mount because it was the location of the biblical temples.

It has frequently been the scene of Israeli-Palestinian violence. The Red Crescent emergency service said two Palestinians were wounded by rubber bullets and a third by a stone that was thrown.

Young Palestinians could be seen throwing stones at police stationed at an entrance to the compound, who fired stun grenades and

Biden's administration has worked to formulate a new approach on North Korea's nuclear program that it describes as "calibrated and practical."

Details of his North Korea policy haven't been publicized, but US officials have suggested Biden would seek a middle ground between Trump's direct meetings with Kim and former President Barack Obama's "strategic patience" to curb Kim's nuclear program.

ISRAELI FORCES ATTACK AL-AQSA PROTESTERS

This time, the police refrained from entering the compound and appeared to act with more restraint, possibly on the orders of Israel's newly sworn-in government

rubber-coated bullets. Hundreds demonstrated after Friday prayers in response to a rally held by Jewish ultranationalists Tuesday in which dozens had chanted "Death to Arabs" and "May your village burn."

The Palestinians protested against insulting Islam's Prophet Muhammad, after online video showed some of the participants in the Tuesday march denigrating him.

UK's Conservatives suffer defeat in 'Blue Wall' seat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, June 18: In a surprising result, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative Party has been easily defeated in a special election for a seat that it has held for decades.

The Liberal Democrats, which was in a coalition government with the Conservatives between 2010 and 2015 before seeing its electoral fortunes wane dramatically, won Thursday's election in Chesham and Amersham, 35 miles (57 kilometers) northwest of London.

Sarah Green, the Liberal Democrat candidate, picked up around 57 per cent of the vote and won a seat the Conservatives have held since it was created in 1974. She added around 30 percentage points to the party's result from the 2019 general election.

"This Conservative Party has taken people across the country for granted for far too long," Green



said Friday. Her party leader, Ed Davey, said the result sent a "shock-wave through British politics" by showing that the "Blue Wall" of Conservative seats in southern England could be vulnerable.

The Conservatives have made big inroads into Labour's "Red Wall" in recent years, winning a swathe of seats on a combination

of factors, notably Johnson's insistence that he would ensure that Britain leaves the European Union after years of parliamentary haggling. Having secured that, Johnson has managed to capture more support in Labour's heartland by promising to "level up" Britain through big infrastructure spending and other initiatives.

Scientists teaching drones to hunt down human screams

THE ENGINEERS FROM THE INSTITUTE HAVE ALREADY BUILT A DRONE PROTOTYPE DESIGNED TO FIND PEOPLE BY DETECTING HUMAN SCREAMS AND LISTENING FOR OTHER SIGNS OF DISTRESS

AGENCIES

Berlin, June 18: A team of German researchers is teaching drones to hunt for human screams and while that sounds quite grim, a bit terrifying, the technology is being developed for an extremely good cause.

The researchers from Germany's Fraunhofer FKIE institute have developed a drone-carried acoustics system to find people stuck in distressed situations. The idea will come in handy if a person is stuck under a pile of rubble after a natural disaster and first responders couldn't locate him.

The engineers from the institute have already built a drone pro-

totype designed to find people by detecting human screams and listening for other signs of distress.

Macarena Varela, one of the lead engineers demonstrated the development of their project last week at an annual conference hosted by the Acoustic Society of America. The engineer added that the gadget would be ideal for post-disaster scenarios linked with natural calamities like earthquakes, hurricanes and wildfires. The drones could hover over an area where the rescue crews are facing difficulty reaching and it can pinpoint the exact location where the affected people may be trapped.

"[Drones] can cover a larger area in a shorter period of time than



rescuers or trained dogs on the ground," Varela said. "If there's a collapsed building, it can alert and assist rescuers. It can go places

they can't fly to or get to themselves."

Unmanned aerial vehicles and drones are a better alternative to

assess the damage when disasters strike. Some drones have thermal imaging capabilities to scan the heat signature from body, while larger drones are helpful in carrying out the medical supplies and other goods to people in need.

The Aerospace Corporation is working on drones which can visually identify dogs and share their location with rescue teams. The University of Zurich developed a drone to change shape midflight to fit into oddly shaped crevices.

The German start-up to make drones is looking to convey three separate packages: To locate people using aerial acoustics which presents its own fair share of obstacles. An auditory system that can

recognise the difference between human cries, animal calls and sound of nature. It might also need to identify patterns associated with other human activities like kicking and clapping which people create to get the attention of the rescue teams.

While all these challenges are already prevailing, engineers at FKIE are preparing a database of "impulsive" human noises to train the drone. They have recorded themselves screaming, tapping and creating other noises that might be a sign of people in trouble. After this, they analysed each sound frequency to find common "signatures" and used those to train artificial intelligence software.

business



Closing the global skills gap is one of the most pressing issues of our time. That is why I'm proud of these partnerships, which will help people of all backgrounds acquire the skills they need to thrive in a fast-changing global economy
ARVIND KRISHNA | CEO, IBM

GOOGLE'S ADTECH BIZ TO FACE EU PROBE

Alphabet unit Google could face its biggest regulatory threat, with EU antitrust regulators set to open a formal investigation into its lucrative digital advertising business before the end of the year, said people familiar with the matter



of the day quote

I am happy to inform that the banking sector was in strong position when Covid hit. The preliminary data suggest that in terms of CRAR that has been improved upon, the profitability has been improved upon, provision coverage ratio that has also been improved over the previous year



MK JAIN | DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RBI

India needs all kinds of technology to serve its digital ambitions, and the technology-neutral stance will serve as a prime catalyst for the required growth



PD VAGHELA | CHAIRMAN, TRAI

The second wave of Covid may worsen stressed assets in the banking system, adding pressure on the financial stability



RAKESH MOHAN | FORMER DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RBI

SHORT TAKES

AAI staff warn of 'industrial action'

Mumbai: A joint forum of AAI's employees and officers has warned the management of "industrial action" if it goes ahead with a recent proposal of reduction or deferrals in salary perks, as part of the national airport operator's economic revival plan amid the pandemic. The Joint Forum of Unions and Associations of AAI dubbed the proposal discussed at various video conferences (VCs) with the management with a recognised union and other associations as "unscientific".

Ampere Vehicles cuts scooter prices

Mumbai: Greaves Cotton's e-mobility arm Ampere Vehicles Friday cut the prices of its scooters by up to ₹9,000 following the government increasing subsidy for electric two-wheelers by 50 per cent under the FAME-II scheme. Following this downward revision in the prices, Ampere's Zeal will carry a price tag of ₹59,990 as against ₹68,990 earlier, the company said. Similarly, Magnus Pro model is now priced at ₹65,990 from ₹74,990 earlier, it said.

India's mineral production up 37%

New Delhi: India's mineral production rose by 37.1% in April 2021 over the same month a year ago, according to the mines ministry. The index of mineral production of mining and quarrying sector for the month stood at 108, which was 37.1% higher from the level in April 2020, the ministry said. The production level of important minerals this year includes coal 516L tonnes, natural gas (utilised) 2,583 million cubic metre, petroleum (crude) 25L tonnes, bauxite 16.61L tonnes, chromite 6.36L tonnes and gold 120 kg.

Aster partners with Dr Reddy's

New Delhi: Aster DM Healthcare Friday said it has tied up with Dr Reddy's Laboratories to administer the Covid-19 vaccine Sputnik V as part of a limited pilot soft launch. The Kochi-based healthcare provider would initially inoculate beneficiaries in (Kochi) Kerala and Kolhapur (Maharashtra) as part of the initiative. "We look forward to building a strong partnership with Dr Reddy's across our network of hospitals to further strengthen our efforts in providing easy access and vaccinating the community," Aster DM Healthcare CEO Harish Pillai said.

'Support from all sides needed to nurture economic recovery'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 18: Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das has pitched for policy support from all sides: fiscal, monetary and sectoral, to nurture recovery of the economy hit by the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

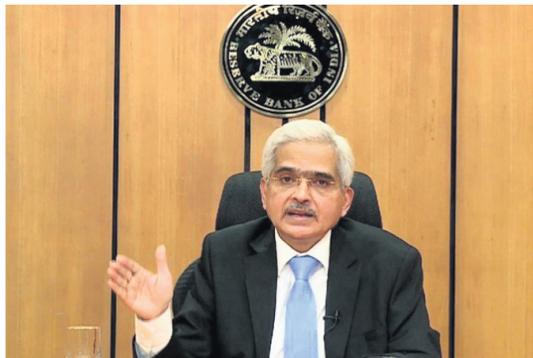
The dent on economic activity due to the second wave of the pandemic during April-May necessitated continuation of monetary measures to support the process of economic recovery to make it durable, Das had said while participating in the meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) earlier in the month.

"Overall, the second wave of Covid-19 has altered the near-term outlook, and policy support from all sides - fiscal, monetary and sectoral - is required to nurture recovery and expedite return to normalcy," Das said, as per the minutes of the meeting released Friday.

Going forward, the governor said the pace of vaccination and the speed with which the second wave can be brought under control will have considerable bearing on the evolving growth as well the inflation trajectory.

The Reserve Bank remains committed to undertake pro-active conventional and unconventional measures and to effectively channelling the systemic liquidity to alleviate stress of critical sectors which have borne the brunt of the second wave, he said.

Das, and the other five members of the MPC: Shashanka Bhide, Ashima Goyal, Jayanth R Varma, Mridul K Sagar and Michael



Overall, the second wave of Covid-19 has altered the near-term outlook, and policy support from all sides, fiscal, monetary and sectoral, is required to nurture recovery and expedite return to normalcy

SHAKTIKANTA DAS | GOVERNOR, RBI

Debabrata Patra - had voted for keeping the policy repo rate unchanged at 4 per cent.

RBI Deputy Governor Patra observed that unlike in the first wave, supply conditions have remained relatively resilient in the second wave, but aggregate demand barring net exports has been dented and needs counter-pandemic policy support.

Even the turnaround in net exports is fragile and heavily dependent on the strength of the vaccination propelled revival in

external demand, which may be partially offset by the terms of trade loss on account of the rise in international commodity prices, particularly crude oil, he noted.

Patra further said the MPC has created the necessary conditions for supporting growth by maintaining the policy rate at its lowest level ever.

"The onus is on the Reserve Bank to operationalise the MPC's guidance on an ongoing basis by ensuring congenial financial conditions across the system as well as for specific sectors, instruments and institutions," he said.

RBI Executive Director Mridul K Sagar said the solace is that economic growth has not fallen off the cliff in Q1 as it did a year ago.

It is possible that that initial GDP estimates do not provide full visibility and the impact on informal and unorganised economy may be deeper, he said.

Ferrari, Amazon's AWS enter agreement on data

REUTERS

Milan, June 18: Ferrari and Amazon Web Services (AWS) have entered an agreement to make Amazon's cloud computing unit the luxury carmaker's cloud storage, machine learning, and artificial intelligence provider, AWS said Friday.

The deal will help Ferrari streamline design and testing of its cars, and allow its Scuderia Ferrari Formula One racing team to launch a digital fan engagement platform, AWS said in a statement.

"Together, the companies will accelerate the pace of innovation across the entire Ferrari organization", including their road cars department, GT Competitions, the Ferrari Challenge, and the Formula One team, it added.

Ferrari will rely on AWS's advanced analytics, machine learning, compute, storage, and database capabilities "to rapidly achieve insights into car design and performance on the road and track," AWS said.



Ferrari said in a separate statement that the engagement platform it will with AWS was aimed to increasingly connect Formula One fans with the daily life of its racing team and its drivers, "through personalisation tools, exclusive content and interactive applications". Financial details of the deal were not disclosed.

PMC BANK RESOLUTION

RBI clears way for Centrum to set up SFB

AGENCIES

Mumbai, June 18: Clearing the decks for the takeover of crisis-ridden Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank by Centrum Financial Services, the Reserve Bank of India has granted its "in principle" approval to it for setting up a small finance bank (SFB).

The "in-principle" approval has been accorded in specific pursuance to Centrum Financial Services Ltd's offer dated February 1, 2021, in response to the Expression of Interest notification dated November 3, 2020, published by the PMC Bank, the RBI said in a statement Friday.

"The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has today decided to grant 'in-principle' approval to Centrum Financial Services Ltd (the applicant) to set up a small finance bank under general Guidelines for on tap Licensing of Small Finance Banks in the Private Sector' dated December 5, 2019," it said.

The central bank will consider granting a licence for commencement of banking business under Section 22 (1) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, on being satisfied that the applicant has complied with the requisite conditions laid down by the RBI as part of "in principle" approval.

In March, the RBI had further extended the restrictions on the bank till June 30. The central bank had then said that the process of re-organisation will be commenced as soon as the aforesaid objectives are achieved to the best possible extent. The PMC Bank had received



The central bank will consider granting a licence for commencement of banking business under Section 22 (1) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, on being satisfied that the applicant has complied with the requisite conditions laid down by the RBI as part of "in principle" approval

binding offers from certain investors for its reconstruction, in response to the EOI dated November 3, 2020 floated by the bank.

The RBI and the PMC Bank are presently engaging with prospective investors in order to secure best possible terms for the depositors and other stakeholders while ensuring long term viability of the reconstructed entity, the RBI had said in March, adding that given the financial condition of the PMC Bank, the process is complex and is likely to take some more time.

RETAIL INFLATION FOR FARM, RURAL WORKERS UP IN MAY



AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 18: Retail inflation for farm and rural workers rose to 2.94 per cent and 3.12 per cent, respectively, in May as certain food items turned costlier. The inflation rates in April had stood at 2.66 per cent and 2.94 per cent, respectively.

"Point-to-point rate of inflation based on the CPI-AL (Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers) and CPI-RL (Consumer Price Index for Rural Labourers) stood at 2.94 per cent and 3.12 per cent in May 2021," the labour ministry said in a statement.

It added that the inflation rates based on CPI-AL and CPI-RL in April 2021 had stood at 2.66 per cent and 2.94 per cent, respectively, and 8.40 per cent and 8.12 per cent

during May 2020.

Food inflation based on CPI-AL and CPI-RL stood at 1.54 per cent and 1.73 per cent, respectively, during May 2021. They had stood at 1.24 per cent and 1.54 per cent, respectively, in April 2021, and 10.40 per cent and 10.21 per cent in May last year.

All-India CPI-AL and CPI-RL for May this year rose eight notch each to 1,049 and 1,057 points, respectively.

The major contribution towards the rise in general index of agricultural labourers and rural workers came from food, with (+) 6.67 points and (+) 6.16 points, respectively. This was mainly due to a rise in prices of wheat atta, meat goat, fish fresh, mustard oil, groundnut oil, pulses, and vegetables and fruits.

BOJ to boost funding to help fight climate change

REUTERS

Tokyo, June 18: The Bank of Japan surprised markets Friday by unveiling a plan to boost funding for fighting climate change, joining a growing number of central banks stepping up efforts to address its economic and financial fallout.

The central bank also maintained its massive stimulus to support the economy and extended a September deadline for its pandemic-relief programme, suggesting that Japan will lag well behind the United States in ending crisis-mode policies.

"In Japan, inflation had not reached 2% even before the pandemic. As such, we must continue with our ultra-loose monetary policy even after the pandemic subsides, in order to achieve our 2% inflation target," BOJ Governor Haruhiko Kuroda told a briefing after the policy decision.

The BOJ said it will launch the climate change scheme by the end of this year, and will release a preliminary outline of its plan at its next policy-setting meeting in July.

Under the scheme, the BOJ will provide funds to financial institu-



tions that increase loans and investment for activities aimed at combating climate change. While details have yet to be announced, the BOJ said it will be modeled after a similar programme that offers cheap loans to financial institutions that boost lending in areas considered to be growth industries. "The BOJ probably wanted to move in tandem with the govern-

ment, which recently flagged steps to promote green in its policy blueprint," said Naomi Muguruma, senior market economist at Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities.

"It is also jumping on the bandwagon of the rising tide among central banks towards linking monetary policy to climate change," she said.

Air India to sell real estate assets; may garner up to ₹300Cr

AGENCIES

Mumbai, June 18: Disinvestment-bound Air India is looking to raise ₹200 to 300 crore by selling commercial and residential real estate assets in different parts of the country. Air India Friday sought bids for a slew of properties, including flats and plots.

"Air India through MSTC invites e-auction bids for sale of the properties located across India," according to a public notice.

A residential plot and a flat in Mumbai, five flats in New Delhi, a residential plot in Bangalore, and four flats in Kolkata, are among the properties that have been put on sale. Besides, a booking office and staff quarter in Aurangabad, a residential plot along with Airline House in Bhuj, six flats in Nashik, booking office in Nagpur and a residential plot in Thiruvananthapuram and two flats in Mangaluru are for sale, as per the notice.



EXPLAINED

Mystery behind near ₹2tn slump in Adani Group shares

REUTERS

Chennai, June 18: Shares of companies controlled by Indian billionaire Gautam Adani recorded their biggest weekly losses ever. The six stocks cumulatively lost 1.91 trillion Indian rupees (\$25.83 billion) of value over five days through Friday.

THE FUNDS

According to an Indian newspaper that reported Monday the accounts of three Mauritius-based funds, which are among the top foreign investors in Adani group companies, had been frozen by the National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL).

The NSDL website showed accounts held by the three funds frozen as of May 31, among thousands of others, without citing a reason, according to a review by

Reuters. The exact date of the freeze is unknown and the accounts remained frozen Friday, according to the website.

DENIALS, CONTRADICTIONS

The Adani Group firms, in identical statements issued to stock exchanges, rejected media reports, including in the Economic Times, as "blatantly erroneous."

The companies, which are in the businesses of operating airports and ports, power generation and transmission, coal and gas trading, said the accounts in which the funds hold Adani shares were not frozen. NSDL and India's securities regulator SEBI did not respond to requests for comment from Reuters.

But a senior NSDL official, who declined to be identified, told Reuters on Monday the funds have multiple accounts and that the



Adani shares were held in other accounts that were not frozen, adding that freeze was "not new". The shares of the Adani companies however have continued to fall.

THE FUNDS

The three foreign funds - Albul

Investment Fund, Cresta Fund and APMS Investment Fund - are all registered at the same address, according to the Mauritius financial regulators.

The funds cumulatively control 2.7% of all shares in the Adani

Group companies as on June 11, calculations based on an e-mail sent by Adani executive to NSDL and reviewed by Reuters showed.

Two other Mauritius-based funds that are also investors in Adani companies - LTS Investment Fund and Asia Investment Corp - are also registered at the same address.

Reuters was unable to find a website for all five funds, and calls to the phone numbers provided to Mauritius regulators went unanswered.

The five funds deployed 94.4%-97.9% of their total capital in Adani companies' shares, data by Indian stocks analysis firm Trendlyne showed. Reuters could not independently verify Trendlyne data.

Four of the six Adani stocks have a public shareholding of about 25% - the minimum level mandated by regulators for companies

listed on Indian exchanges.

Indian stock exchange data shows most shares of Adani Group companies are held by trusts controlled by Adani. Foreign portfolio investors are the next largest shareholders, while retail and domestic investors typically control about 5%.

THE IMPACT

After falling 0.4-8.5% Monday, the day of the Economic Times report, Adani group stocks fell between 7.1%-22.6% over the week compared with last Friday's close, wiping out nearly 22% of the gains in the year preceding this week.

The decline saw the firms' cumulative market capitalisation decline by over a sixth. Flagship Adani Enterprises rose 8.76% and Adani Ports rose 7.33% on Friday, but the four other Adani stocks each closed 5% lower.

Depay, Dumfries lift Dutch

Copa America: Brazil overpower Peru 4-0



RIGHT ON THE MONEY: Memphis Depay reacts after scoring from the spot for the Netherlands' first goal against Austria as Frenkie de Jong rushes on with another teammate for celebration, Thursday night

Amsterdam, June 18: This time, the Netherlands never looked like throwing away their two-goal lead. Memphis Depay and Denzel Dumfries scored a goal in each half as the Dutch comfortably beat Austria 2-0 Thursday to advance to the round of 16 at the Euro 2020. Depay sent a penalty kick low into the corner in the 11th minute

for his 27th goal in 66 international matches. Dumfries then scored his second goal of the tournament — following his late winner against Ukraine — in the 67th after an unselfish pass from PSV Eindhoven teammate Donyell Malen. A foul by Austria captain David Alaba on Dumfries earned the Dutch penalty at the Johan Cruyff Arena, although only after referee Orel Grinfeld had a second look

at the incident on a screen. Dumfries, a wing back who has played a role in all five Netherlands goals at the tournament, was asked after the match if his tournament was beginning to resemble a boy-hood dream. The Netherlands is playing at a major international football tournament for the first time in seven years and qualified for the knockout stage with a game to spare. The

De Bruyne helps Belgium seal win

COPENHAGEN: Substitute Kevin de Bruyne set up one goal and scored the winner himself to give Belgium a 2-1 victory over Denmark in a Euro 2020 game marked by an emotional tribute to Christian Eriksen in the first half. De Bruyne came on after halftime for his first appearance since sustaining a facial fracture in the Champions League final and squared the ball for Thorgan Hazard to equalise in the 55th minute. He then scored in the 71st with a low shot from outside the area. It was Denmark's first game since Eriksen's collapse, and the hosts started at a furious pace at a raucous Parken Stadium. Yussuf Poulsen scored with a low shot inside the far post in only the second minute. Players from both teams then halted play after 10 minutes as the 25,000 fans rose for a minute of thunderous applause in tribute to Eriksen, who wears the No.10 shirt for Denmark's national team. The players joined the applause as well, as did referee Bjorn Kuipers. Eriksen remains in a nearby hospital after suffering cardiac arrest in the team's opening game against Finland. The victory gave Belgium a spot in the round of 16. Denmark can still advance with a win over Russia Monday if the Belgians beat Finland.



Dutch, whose only major tournament victory came at the 1988 European Championship, finished third at the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. Austria rarely threatened to equalize against a well-ordered Dutch defense led by Matthijs De Ligt on his return from a groin injury.

The closest Austria came was a long-range shot by Alaba in the 82nd minute. The team had slightly more possession than the Netherlands but only managed one shot on target in the entire game. Dumfries' goal and overall performance again vindicated De Boer's decision to ditch the traditional Dutch system of four de-

TODAY'S MATCHES

HUN		v		FRA
Time: 06:30 pm				
POR		v		GER
Time: 09:30 pm				
ESP		v		POL
Time: 12:30 am (June 20)				
Telecast: Sony TEN Network				

The Netherlands will play their final Group C match against North Macedonia Monday.



Neymar celebrates his goal against Peru as Richarlison, one of the other scorers, joins the party

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sao Paulo, June 18: Brazil changed half of their starting line-up to face Peru in their second Copa America match and still cruised to a 4-0 victory. It was the Selecao's ninth consecutive victory, and another display that suggests the tournament hosts are the favorites to defend their South American title. Defender Alex Sandro, Neymar, midfielder Everton Ribeiro and striker Richarlison scored the goals at the Nilton Santos stadium in Rio de Janeiro. The result puts Brazil atop the Group B standings with six points. Colombia are two points behind after their goalless draw with Venezuela. As coach Tite promised, Brazil are using the Copa America to prepare for next year's World Cup in

Qatar. Six players who missed the 3-0 win against Venezuela were in the starting line-up against Peru. Brazil opened the scoring in the 12th minute after Gabriel Jesus crossed and Sandro hit it home from close range. But the new players didn't adapt as well as the coach expected. Everton Ribeiro and Richarlison stepped in, and Brazil appeared more assured in the second half. In the 68th, Neymar received the ball at the edge of the Peruvian box and beat goalkeeper Pedro Gallese with a low crossed shot. Peru stepped up the pressure, but Brazil moved further ahead in the 89th when Ribeiro scored from close range, his first for the national team. Richarlison, who went on at halftime, scored the last goal of the match in added time after two saves by Gallese.



WTC final: Rain plays spoilsport on Day 1

An Indian fan with the Tricolour on his back looks on as rain played spoilsport on the opening day of World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand in Southampton, Friday. As a result, the reserve day is all set to be brought into equation. As per ICC playing conditions guidelines for the WTC final, if required the reserve sixth day can now come into effect with six hours of play lost on Day 1 itself. There was forecast of rain and thundershowers and the heavens opened up last evening with relentless downpour continuing till afternoon. With puddles forming throughout the outfield, even the best drainage system couldn't have possibly forced some action on the opening day. Umpires Michael Gough and Richard Illingworth, after multiple inspections, called off the game at 7:30 pm IST (3 pm local time).

Peerless Shafali leads India fightback

Bristol, June 18: Shafali Verma (55 n o, 68b, 11x4) became only the fourth player in the history of women's Tests to smash two half centuries on debut, taking India to 83/1 at stumps on the third day of one-off Test against England. The day's play ended after the third session was washed out by rains. Another debutant Deepti Sharma, who was promoted to No.3 after her resolute 29 not out in the first innings, was giving Verma company on unbeaten 18 after India were forced to follow-on in the one-off Test. Before Verma, Lesley Cooke (England), Jessica Louise Jonassen (Australia) and



Vanessa Bowen (Sri Lanka) were the other players who have scored two 50-plus scores in their debut matches.

India trail by 82 runs overall with nine second innings wickets in hand and they still need to do a lot of work to save the match on the final day Saturday. Only 45.5 overs were possible on the day with three rain delays or interruptions. The Verma-Deepti duo defied the England bowlers for 20 overs and added 54 runs in the post-lunch session after losing Smriti Mandhana in the morning session for 8. Earlier, India Women were left with a mountain to climb after being shot out for 231 in their first innings, half an hour before lunch. **BRIEF SCORES:** England 396/9d; India 231 & 83/1 (f/o) (Shafali Verma 55 n o). Match to continue.

Ministry extends deadline to submit applications

New Delhi, June 18: The Sports Ministry Friday extended the deadline to submit applications for this year's National Sports Awards by a week, enabling the online process to continue till June 28. Earlier the last date of submission of nominations and applications was fixed at June 21. "It has been decided to extend the last date for submission of applications from

NAT'L SPORTS AWARDS

21st June, 2021 to 28th June, 2021," read a circular issued by Under Secretary to the Government of India, Sudershan Garlapati. The Sports Ministry had invited applications for the national sports awards May 20, allowing eligible athletes, coaches, universities and other entities to self-nominate and apply online for a second year running because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Till 2019, applicants needed recommendations to be able to apply but the condition was waived off last year as the COVID-19 lockdown prevented smooth movement of people. Last year, 74 recipients were bestowed with the awards. The prize money was also increased significantly with the Khel Ratna awardees receiving Rs 25 lakh, Arjuna awardees Rs 15 lakh, Dhyanacharya (Lifetime) Rs 15 lakh, and Dhyanchand winners Rs 10 lakh.

Jald se jald apne PAN aur Aadhaar Card ko link karna zaroori hai.

Link karne ki aakhari taareekh hai, June 30, 2021.

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