



MS PERFECTIONIST

Actor Tapsee Pannu says she wants to reaffirm the trust the audience has in her for choosing quality

LEISURE P2



AMARINDER MEETS SONIA

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh meets Sonia Gandhi amid infighting in the state unit

TWO STATES P8



ENGLAND FACE DENMARK

England to face a daunting task in the Euro semifinals when they take the field against Denmark tonight

SPORTS P12



FUELLING DISCONTENT: CPI workers stage a demonstration at Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday, condemning the skyrocketing fuel prices

Retrenched discom workers seek justice

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: Retrenchment of over 7,000 workers by Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL) has created a commotion in the state. According to sources, over 7,000 workers employed by the discom allegedly lost their jobs amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Many have posted their concerns on social media seeking justice.

In a press meet, the Odisha Youth Congress had claimed that workers, who were serving the company for 10 years, faced unjust sacking. The party said they raised the issue in the Assembly but the result was unfruitful. They stated that the company didn't care for the future of these retrenched workers.

Earlier, the Odisha Power Employees Union had opposed the eligibility criteria fixed by TPCODL for recruitment to various technical and non-technical posts.

In its recruitment advertisement, it was said that candidates securing 55 per cent marks in HSC, Plus II and degree exams will be eligible to apply for non-technical posts while the eligibility criteria for technical posts were minimum 50 pc marks.

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All Covid hubs to be shut as cases decline

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: The state government Tuesday decided to close all Covid-19 Care Centres (CCCs) given the decrease in the number of daily cases, officials said. However, treatment of the existing patients will continue in the CCCs till their discharge.

New patients of the locality will be referred to nearby government facilities, a letter sent to all the district collectors, municipal commissioners, chief district medical officers and public health officers said. At least 83 CCCs across the state are almost empty following a reduction in the number of Covid-19 patients who require hospitalisation.

Mild and asymptomatic Covid-19 cases are in home isolation. Currently, there are 28,730 active Covid-19 cases in the state. About 1,000 patients are still in ICUs or ventilators, they said.

As per the decision, all Dedicated Covid Health Centres (DCHCs), Dedicated Covid Hospitals (DCHs) run by the government and Covid facilities in Government Medical Colleges will continue to function, the letter said.

Govt seeks 15L Covishield doses

BHUBANESWAR: The state government Tuesday urged the Centre to allocate additional 15 lakh doses of Covishield vaccine to ensure seamless vaccination in the state. Additional Chief Secretary, Health, PK Mohapatra Tuesday wrote a letter to Union health secretary in this regard. As on today, the state government has received 6.14 lakh doses of Covishield which will be consumed within two days. The next tranche of Covishield is scheduled for July 15. Hence, the state will have stock-out of vaccines from July 9 to July 15, Mohapatra said in his letter.

This apart, all government Covid facilities run by private hospital partners will be closed, if no patient has been admitted. If some patients are still undergoing treatment at a facility, they shall continue the treatment till they are discharged.

All the COVID hospitals managed by private hospital partners and funded by corporate partners or District Mineral Foundation (DMF) shall continue to function till the end of the approval period.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Don't worry, you don't have to do much as a Governor. It is same as being a minister these days.

GST mop-up slips below ₹1 lakh cr

New Delhi: GST revenues for the month of June stood at ₹92,849 crore, a two per cent increase over the same month a year ago, the Finance Ministry said Tuesday. The gross GST revenues collected in June 2021 stand at ₹92,849 crore of which Central GST is ₹16,424 crore, State GST ₹20,397, Integrated GST ₹49,079 crore (including ₹5,762 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is ₹6,949 crore (including ₹809 crore collected on import of goods), the ministry said.

JEE-Mains from July 20-25, July 27-Aug 2

New Delhi: The pending editions of Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Mains will be conducted from July 20 to 25 and July 27 to August 2, Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' announced Tuesday. The results of the two editions, which were postponed in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, are likely to be announced in August. "The third edition of JEE-Mains will be conducted from July 20-25 while the fourth edition will be held from July 27 to August 2."

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIAION
SENSEX	52861.18 ↓ 18.82
NIFTY	15818.30 ↓ 16.10
DOLLAR	74.93 ↑ ₹0.19
EURO	88.95 ↑ ₹0.16
GOLD	₹47,867 ↑ ₹568
SILVER	₹69,984 ↓ ₹55

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	35.9°C	35.8°C
MIN	26.0°C	26.0°C
Humidity	100%	79%
Rainfall	10.8mm	Nil

Forecast: Light rain very likely

GI tags for 3 state handicrafts sought

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: The department of handloom, textile and handicraft has filed an application seeking Geographical Indication (GI) tags for famous state handicrafts such as Konark stone carving, Odisha pat-tachitra and Pipili chandua.

Earlier, an application seeking GI tag for Cuttack silver filigree (Chandi Tarakasi) has been filed by the Odisha State Co-operative Handicrafts Corporation Ltd. Stone carving is an excellent craftsmanship of Odisha which has been prevailing here over centuries. The crafts and the art form primarily consist of custom and carved works. Many temples' intricate sculptures and delicate carvings exemplify the practice.

Similarly, filigree has been traditionally associated with fine craftsmanship and luxurious design in classical jewellery. Silver bricks are transformed into thin fine wires or foils and used to create jewellery or show-pieces. "This is good news for the handicraft artists of the state. GI tag for the three crafts will act as a universal mark to establish the presence of the craft in national and international level," said Sanatan Nayak, director of handicrafts and cottage industries.



Rath only at Puri: SC

LORD JAGANNATH WILLING, THERE WILL BE PROPER RATH YATRA NEXT YEAR: CJI

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 6: Declining permission to a statewide celebration of Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath in Odisha, with only exception to the Puri Jagannath temple, the Chief Justice of India Tuesday revealed that he too has been waiting fervently to be part of the annual ritual, however, Covid-19 was still playing spoilsport. In June, the Odisha government had said the Rath Yatra will be held July 12 only in Puri following the guidelines issued by the top court, while banning it in all other places of the state. A counsel appearing for a petitioner seeking the Rath Yatra at other places argued that Covid-19 situation is different now (number of cases has decreased).

The Chief Justice responded, nobody knows how Covid situation will be (in the future). The Chief Justice told petitioners, seeking the Rath Yatra in other places alongside Puri: "You want to pray to the God. You can do it from home. I also wanted to go to Puri but I couldn't in the last one and half years. This isn't the time". Dismissing the petitions, Chief Justice NV Ramana observed: "Last year few people died, this year many people died (due to Covid). We hope God will allow us these rituals next year." A bench headed by the Chief Justice said the court agrees with the Odisha government's order in the backdrop of the ongoing pandemic.

The Naveen Patnaik government submitted before the top court that it would be impossible for it to ensure strict Covid protocol to be followed by



thousands of devotees at temples across the state if the annual ritual was given the go-ahead.

The bench also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy refused to allow the Rath Yatras in Baripada, Sasang and in other cities of Odisha. On June 23, the Orissa High Court declined to entertain five petitions seeking permission to hold the festival of Rath Yatra in Kendrapara and Bargarh districts. Last year, the top court had permitted the Rath Yatra on the condition that there would not be any public attendance and all entry points into Puri would remain closed.

The court had ordered that each of the three chariots would be pulled by not more than 500 people who were required to test negative for Covid-19.

The Odisha government submitted before the top court it was practically impossible to impose conditions throughout the state as the

second wave continues.

The counsel argued that this was the only yatra in the whole world where 149 countries participate.

"I don't want to say more," the Chief Justice said, adding, "What can we do? I myself wanted to go...I cannot entertain. I also feel bad. I can't help. I also want to see." Earlier, the Orissa High Court had declined permission for holding Rath Yatras at other places saying that Puri "constitutes a class apart". "These are extraordinary times in which not just Odisha but the entire country is barely recovering from the second wave of the deadly Covid pandemic. The measures and precautions taken by Odisha have to be viewed in the said context. Consequently, this court is not inclined to entertain any of the prayers in any of the above writ petitions, praying for permission to hold their Rath Yatras/festivals on parity with the temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri," the HC had said.

Union Cabinet reshuffle likely today

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to effect the first reshuffle in his Council of Ministers on Wednesday since he assumed the charge for a second term, in what is tipped to be a "major shake-up" of the government as he looks to make it more representative with an eye on political and governance challenges.

BJP leaders Sarbananda Sonowal, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Narayan Rane, all of whom are being seen as probable for induction as ministers in the Modi government, arrived in the national capital Tuesday.

In another pointer to the imminent Cabinet reshuffle, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thaawarchand Gehlot was appointed as Karnataka governor, causing yet another ministerial vacancy. JD(U) leader RCP Singh and LJP's



Pashupati Kumar Paras, both of whom are expected to represent the BJP's allies in the government, also reached here from Bihar. All of them remained tight-lipped to queries about their possibility of joining the government. Rane told reporters that he had not received any call about his joining the government. Leaders of the LJP faction headed by Paras said he had received a call

from Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday but claimed that it was related to the birth anniversary of party founder Ram Vilas Paswan.

Multiple sources said the reshuffle is likely to take place Wednesday evening. There has been no official word on the Cabinet reshuffle. The exercise comes against the backdrop of a massive review, which has stretched for weeks, undertaken by the BJP.

New Governors in eight states

NEW DELHI: In a major reshuffle, President Ram Nath Kovind Tuesday appointed eight new Governors giving them charge of administration of new states. While many were transferred, others were new appointments. PS Sreedharan Pillai, Governor of Mizoram, was transferred and appointed as Governor of Tripura; Ramesh Bais, Governor of Tripura was transferred and appointed as Governor of Jharkhand; Bandaru Dattatraya, Governor of HP was transferred and appointed as Governor of Haryana. However, Thaawarchand Gehlot, who currently serves as a cabinet minister, was appointed as Governor of Karnataka. Besides, LS MP from Visakhapatnam Hari Babu Kambhampati has been appointed as Governor of Mizoram.

Proposals worth ₹1.46L cr get nod

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: The state government Tuesday approved five major industrial projects worth ₹1.46 lakh crore in metal and metal downstream sectors. These proposals will create employment for 26,959 persons in the state.

A meeting of the 26th High-Level Clearance Authority (HLCA) held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik approved the projects. In spite of the pandemic, Odisha has been able to attract investments worth ₹2.96 lakh crore during the financial year 2020-21.

The HLCA has okayed the expansion of Bhuban Power and Steel Limited's integrated steel plant at Rengali in Sambalpur district. The company has decided to enhance its capacity from 5 million MT per annum (MMTPA) to 15 MMTPA with an investment of ₹55,000 crore. This project will generate employment for over 10,000 persons.

The panel also approved the expansion of Tata Steel's crude steel production from 3 MTPA to 8 MTPA, hot rolled coil from 3 MTPA to 7 MTPA, 2.2 MTPA cold-rolled products and 2 MTPA long products. The com-

FUNDS LINED UP

Bhuban P&S	₹55,000 cr
Tata Steel	₹47,599 cr
Jindal S&P	₹24,652 cr
Rungta Mines	₹18,921 cr
TOTAL	₹1,46,172 cr

pany will invest ₹47,599 crore to set up these projects at its plant at Kalinga Nagar in Jajpur district. These projects can generate jobs for over 4,625 persons.

The authority also approved the expansion of Jindal Steel and Power Limited's 6 MTPA existing integrated steel plant in Angul from the proposed capacity of 18.6 MTPA to 25.2 MTPA against an investment of ₹24,652 crore. The expansion of JSPL is likely to create employment for over 1,000 persons. This will take JSPL's total investment to ₹1,00,670 crore, making it the largest single location steel plant capacity in the world.

Rungta Mines' proposal to enhance its capacity at the integrated steel plant from 2.85 MMTPA to 7.55 MMTPA by adding a capacity of 4.7 MMTPA also got the government's approval. The company has promised to invest ₹11,001 crore at Jharbandh in Dhenkanal district.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will desire absolute freedom in whatever you do today. A lot of entertainment is on the cards for teenagers, like window shopping or going for a movie. Kids may demand a treat from you. Generally, family affairs dominate today.

TAURUS
Your unflinching punctuality, your insistence on following time schedules is due to be noticed and appreciated today. Your colleagues and superiors will be singing praises as soon as you arrive for work. If you are in an artistic or a creative profession, such as designing, journalism, multi media, you have a remarkably eventful and gratifying day ahead. Creative people and professionals having the same sun sign as yours are also in for a great day, assures Ganesha.

GEMINI
You will make a reputation for yourself as a leader in your social circle. You yearn for something in your heart, and need to concentrate your energies upon attaining it. Your creative mind will come up with solutions today, to certain questions that have been perplexing you for quite some, says Ganesha.

CANCER
With Ganesha's grace, whatever you think or persevere will be successful. Students will excel and finish pending work. You can display your imagination excellently. In short, a day of happiness and variety.

LEO
You will relentlessly try to find means to progress at the workplace today. You will remain steadfast in your resolutions. You will not allow those working under you to slack. You will need to let go of your inhibitions and fears to be happy in life. You will receive the benediction of highly placed superiors, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Emotions that have been locked in the inner recesses of your heart might just surface today. You may develop an emotional attachment with your material possessions. However, Ganesha says, if you don't find your surroundings conducive, you will feel extremely restless.

LIBRA
Ganesha says today will be an auspicious day for starting any new work. In the office you will be assigned new positions and you shall excel in the same. Whatever work is undertaken by you will see you attain success in it. Today is a lucky day for you Ganesha says.

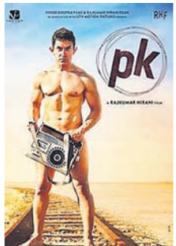
SCORPIO
You are a visionary and today you work towards building a successful future. But, expecting an instant result would be unfair. You need to have patience to bring in those dynamic changes in your life. Wait and watch, the patience would reap sweet fruits!

SAGITTARIUS
It's time for invitations and grooving all night long. And even eat like a glutton. But, for a change you are not on a mood to party, though it is unlike you. You reject the idea of socialising and hitting the dance floor. And your friends do not like your changed avatar, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
You'll kick start the day in high spirit which will take everyone by surprise. You will shift gears at work so that you can perform more efficiently and productively. Such a change will boost your confidence as you will see the positive results for yourself. Most of the day, you will work like a busy bee, but at the end you will listen to music or be with your friends to relax your mind, foretells Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
Meeting people from the different walks of life, having a good conversation with them and widening the horizon of your knowledge - this will be the highlight of today for you. At work, you will have a busy day with plenty of meetings, discussions, planning and execution, feels Ganesha. You will fully utilize your energies, but it may also leave you exhausted.

PISCES
Today you will get attention from the opposite sex and this will play an important role in your success in the near future. Due to the favourable alignment of the planets you will receive more than your expectations. Ganesha feels that even though you are a calculative and cautious person, you will tend to be aggressive, outgoing and willing to take risks today. This could also translate in you trying your luck in uncertain fields like gambling, stocks or betting.



HIRANI'S PK ENTERS NFAI COLLECTION

National award winning filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani's blockbuster PK (2014) - one of the last few films to be shot on celluloid in Indian cinema - has entered the National Film Archives of India (NFAI) collection, officials said at Delhi, Tuesday.

HINDUSTANI WAY TO CHEER INDIAN OLYMPIC SQUAD

Composer AR Rahman and singer Ananya Birla have collaborated on a new single titled *Hindustani Way* to cheer the Indian Olympic contingent at Tokyo this year. The predominantly Hindi track mixes English vocals and sends out a message of unity and optimism.



Rhea takes to yoga for 'healing'

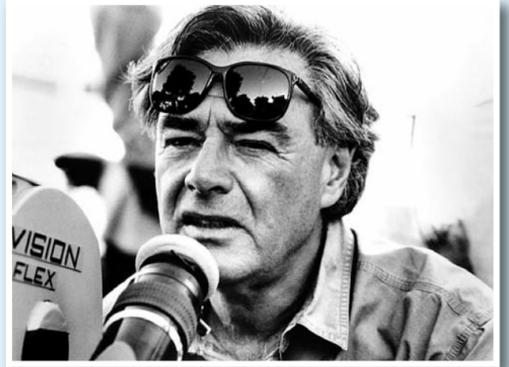


MUMBAI: Rhea Chakraborty's Tuesday post on Instagram shows the actress has chosen yoga for her healing process. In the Instagram picture she posted, Rhea is seen doing a chakrasana with the aid of a trainer: "HEALING. #yogaforlife #chakrasana PS - I'm lucky to have my best friend as my Yoga Guru @samikshashetty..." Rhea wrote as caption. Rhea was in the news last year after the death of her boyfriend, actor Sushant Singh Rajput. She was accused by Sushant's family for abetment to suicide and also si-



Superman director Donner passes away at 91

LOS ANGELES: Veteran filmmaker Richard Donner, known for directing blockbuster and classic films such as *Superman*, *The Goonies* and *Lethal Weapon* franchise, has died. He was 91. Donner passed away Monday, his producer-wife Lauren Schuler Donner told *Deadline*. However, she did not reveal the cause of his death. Donner, whose real name was Richard Donald Schwartzberg, was born in New York to Jewish parents in 1931. Early in his career, Donner had aspired to be an actor but found his calling in direction. His early works included directing episodes of television shows such as *The Rifleman*, *The Twilight Zone*, *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *Gilligan's Island*, and *Perry Mason*. IANS



cently seen in the digitally-released film *Shaadisthan*. She says the OTT space has emerged a safer option for everyone. "Theatres are very less of an option right now. People are not considering (visiting theatres). Producers

OTT a safer option now: Kirti

MUMBAI: Actress Kirti Kulhari has wowed the audience with her work on the digital platform including *Criminal Justice: Behind Closed Doors*, *Bard Of Blood* and *Four More Shots Please!* She was re-



WWF India ropes in Shruti Haasan as brand ambassador

CHENNAI: Actress Shruti Haasan has been roped in as Indian Brand Ambassador of World Wide Fund for Nature - India (WWF India). On World Zoonoses Day Tuesday, the actress emphasised on the importance of the well-being of the planet. "Environment conservation is the single most important thing that should be in our minds. Our well-being is connected intrinsically to the well-being of our planet. I am honoured and privileged to be able to use my voice in a positive way for a cause that is so important. "I am glad to be associated with WWF India as Brand Ambassador and the remarkable work that has been done diligently and persistently in raising awareness on conservation over the decades," said Shruti. Sharing his thoughts, Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO, WWF India, said: "On behalf of the entire team at WWF India, I welcome Shruti Haasan on board as Brand Ambassador and thank her for lending her support to the organisation's efforts to encourage people to participate and contribute towards conservation, restoration and protection of nature. We look forward to a fruitful association," he added. IANS



Taapsee wants to reaffirm trust of audience

MUMBAI: Actress Taapsee Pannu says she wants to reaffirm the trust the audience has in her for choosing quality. "In last seven years I have always been on a lookout to be part of the stories I want to see myself as an audience, movies that I will spend my time and money on. And Telugu film *Mishan Impossible* is one of them," Taapsee said.

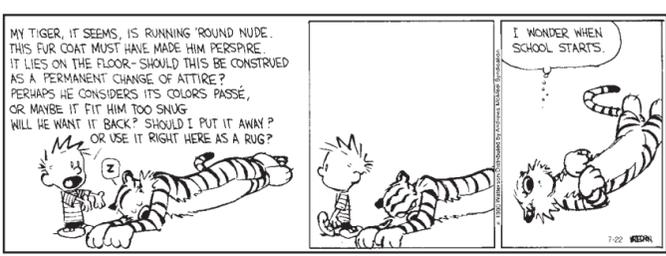
She added: "I want to reaffirm the trust the audience has in me for choosing quality films and I'm doing exactly that by becoming a part of a movie like this." Taapsee joined the team of the film Tuesday. Welcoming the actress on to the sets, the makers released a working still where the actress can be seen with a broken hand. She looks anxious, as she watches some-

thing on the laptop. Niranjan Reddy and Anvesh Reddy produce the film, while NM Pasha is the associate producer. The film has cinematography handled by Deepak Yeragara and music scored by Mark K Robin. Ravi Teja Girijala is the editor. IANS

PEANUTS



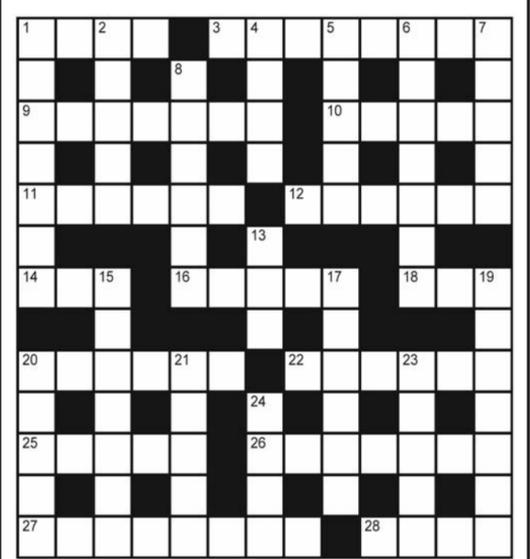
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



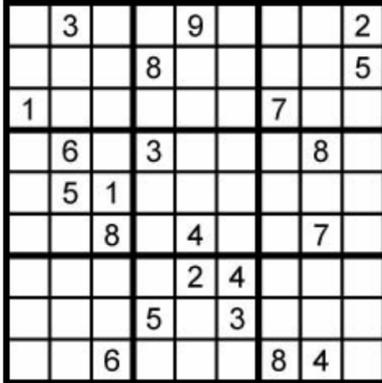
FUN post CROSSWORD



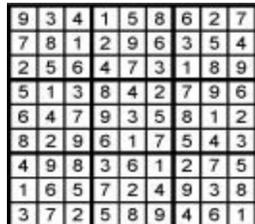
- Across**
1 Cheese nibblers
3 Branch
9 Neanderthal (4,3)
10 Covered in dirt
11 Codfish
12 Aftermath
14 Unit of energy
16 Any port in a storm
18 Airport posting (Abbr.)
- Down**
20 Tune
22 Turkish port city
25 Heiress, perhaps (4,3)
26 Mezzanine
27 Decoration
28 Capri, for one
- Down**
6 Vague
7 Rendezvous
8 Polished
13 Common vine
15 Sailing vessel
17 Light-footed
19 Examine
20 Chutney fruit
21 Chimera
23 Movable castles
24 Black, to poets

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



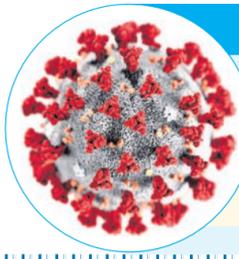
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



RAIN PAIN

People travel on a waterlogged road in Cuttack soon after a deluge in the city, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	18,51,27,741	16,94,29,144	40,03,721
India	3,06,19,932	2,97,52,294	4,03,281
Odisha	9,27,186	8,97,362	4,299

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



AP's plea to publish tribunal ruling on Vansadhara trashed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: The state government has rejected the request of Andhra Pradesh (AP) government to grant consent for publication of the Vansadhara Water Disputes Tribunal's verdict in official gazette.

Since the matter is sub judice in the Supreme Court (SC), the State Water Resources department has declined to agree to the request of Andhra Pradesh to publish the decision of the tribunal in the gazette.

The tribunal had pronounced its final order September 13, 2017, wherein it had allowed the AP government to construct Neradi bar-

Since the matter is sub judice in SC, Water Resources dept has declined to publish the tribunal's decision in official gazette

rage on river Vansadhara. However, Odisha had immediately filed a special leave petition (SLP No. 8030/2018) before the SC December 12, 2017 against the final order of the tribunal.

The state has also filed another SLP in the SC against the tribunal's order (23.09.2019) issued for joint sur-

vey in the territory of Odisha. This case is also sub judice in the SC.

With the two pending SLPs in the Supreme Court, the order of the tribunal cannot be published in the official gazette under Section 6(1) of the Inter-State River Water Dispute Act, 1956, which is essential for operationalisation of the order of the tribunal.

Earlier, the state had also filed an application for clarification before the Vansadhara tribunal against its final order. The tribunal pronounced its further report June 21 this year wherein it has kept its final order (dated 13.09.2017) intact, but subject to the finalisation of SLP in the Supreme Court.

Illegal quarries destroy Khurda hills

COST OF ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE DUE TO RAMPANT QUARRYING PEGGED AT AROUND ₹1.80 CRORE

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 6: The lush green hills of Khurda are slowly getting stripped of their virtues owing to rampant illegal stone quarries operating right under the nose of the district administration.

Of late, the pace of illegal quarrying has gained momentum leading to denudation of several hills covered with green vegetation, thereby posing grave threat to the environment.

The hills are fast losing their existence owing to construction and expansion of highways. Barring a few quarries, several others are operating without environmental clearance and consent to operate.

This comes around a year after the National Green Tribunal (NGT), while hearing the case of illegal stone quarry in villages like Jhinkijhari, Tapang and Anda under Nijigarh Tapang gram panchayat, had lambasted the district administration for illegal stone quarries and its gross negligence in complying with the NGT order.

A joint committee comprising members from Forest and Environment Ministry, Central Pollution Control Board and State Pollution Control Board among others, had brought the illegalities to NGT's notice. The committee said that the quarries were operating in violation of mining laws and standard operating procedure, posing threat to the local community and the environment as well. The panel had also pegged the cost of environmental damage at around ₹1.80 crore.

As per Khurda District Survey Report of 2021, there are around 110 potential laterite reserves in the dis-



A hill in Khurda is about to lose its existence due to illegal quarrying in the region

OP PHOTO

ENVIRONMENTAL MAYHEM

The hills are fast losing their existence owing to construction and expansion of highways. Barring a few quarries, several others are operating without environmental clearance and consent to operate

A joint committee comprising members from Forest and Environment Ministry, CPCB and SPCB had brought it to the NGT's notice that the quarries were operating in violation of mining laws and standard operating procedure, posing threat to the local community and the environment

The number of tuberculosis patients has jumped from 1,025 in 2015-16 to 1,530 in 2018-19 and is heading northward, as per district administration's survey

trict. The report says the district has one specified minor mineral lease for decorative stone at Tutumberpalli village which was given for 20 years but was stopped due to lack of consent to operate. There are two prospective licences – one at Narangarh in favour of Shree Jagannath Temple Administration and another at Santasinghpur.

However, a ground visit by this correspondent revealed that machines have been installed in several areas of the district to break the hills and grind the laterite and morum to make them fit for industry use.

The locals are fumed with the large-scale damage to the hills and increased level of air pollution owing to movement of trucks. The

report also revealed about rising tuberculosis cases in the areas. The number of patients has jumped from 1,025 in 2015-16 to 1,530 in 2018-19 and is heading northward.

Experts claimed that many contractors engaged in road expansion seldom care about existing laws for the excavation of the minor mineral (like laterite & morum).

"Earlier, a case of illegal stone quarry was filed before the NGT and massive irregularities were revealed through ground inspections by the NGT appointed panel. It was only about a small region in the district but now it seems that illegal stone quarry is rampant in the district and everything is going on under the nose of the district administration," NGT lawyer Sankar Prasad Pani told **Orissa POST**.

BJP ridicules CM's letter on Aawas+ app

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 6: Opposition BJP Tuesday ridiculed Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking opening of the Aawas+ mobile app for one more month.

At a presser, BJP state general secretary Prithviraj Harichandan said, "The demand of the CM is laughable. Even though the eligible beneficiaries could not get their houses geo-tagged, the demand to provide more Aawas houses in non-Fani affected districts is laughable."

He said the window of Aawaas software was open from July 6, 2017 to March 31, 2018. The state government got its first extension till June 30, 2018. In another extension, the window was opened till September 30, 2018 from June 30, 2018, he said.

The window was again extended till March 7, 2019 in two phases only because the Odisha government could not upload all the beneficiary details on time, he said, adding that the state government could upload only 45,903 names of beneficiaries even after so many extensions.

Block cashier among 2 held for embezzlement of funds

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the state Crime Branch has arrested two persons, a cashier with Balikuda block office and an office assistant with Union Bank of India (UBI), on charges of embezzlement of government funds, an official said Tuesday.

EOW sources said Nihar Ranjan Das, a cashier at Balikuda block office, and Sanjay Samal, an office assistant with UBI's Arilo branch in Jagatsinghpur, have been taken into custody Monday on the basis of an EOW case registered under Sections 420, 409, 403, 467, 468, 471, 477A and 20B of the IPC following a complaint filed by Balikuda BDO Kalyan Saurav Dash.

Dash had alleged that the then manager of UBI's



Arilo branch had unauthorisedly debited ₹2,63,65,089 from the official accounts of Balikuda BDO and misappropriated the money.

Investigation revealed that the BDO has been officially maintaining two savings bank accounts with Corporation Bank (now UBI) for dealing with the funds received under Ama Gaon, Ama Bikash scheme and the Critical Gap Fund, an EOW source said.

"During the local fund audit held during December 2020, the BDO came to know that there

was an unauthorised debit of ₹2,61,89,272 and ₹1,75,817 from the accounts maintained for Ama Gaon Ama Bikash and Critical Gap Fund respectively," the source pointed out.

The EOW found that Das was working as a cashier in the block office and was dealing with the accounts when the fraud occurred. "A considerable amount out of the total misappropriated funds is found to have been diverted to the personal account of Das. Similarly, around ₹20 lakh has been diverted to Samal's personal account," said an EOW official.

It has also been ascertained that out of ₹20 lakh, a major share has been routed through the then branch manager of the bank, Jugal Kishore Rout who had committed suicide January 1 last after the fraud came to the fore.

Fire service centre soon at City AIIMS

FIRE STATIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SET UP AT SCB IN CUTTACK, MKCG IN BERHAMPUR AND VIMSAR AT BURLA IN SAMBALPUR



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday approved a proposal for opening a fire service centre on the premises of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar.

The proposed fire service centre will have a station officer and 10 fire services personnel for which the state

Hospital in Berhampur and VIMSAR at Burla in Sambalpur.

The state has a total of 338 fire stations at various places to deal with fire related mishaps, sources added.

Meanwhile, the City AIIMS has resumed the walk-in OPD services after assessing the pandemic situation. It had suspended the OPD services April 26 in the wake of surge in Covid-19 cases.

Taking into account the status of the pandemic, the competent authority has decided to restart the walk-in OPD services with a limit on calling patients at various departments, said Sachidananda Mohanty, medical superintendent of the AIIMS. It has also been decided to continue the telemedicine service. However, the consultation will be provided via WhatsApp, not through voice calls, Mohanty added.

Meherda takes charge as W&CD principal secy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: Senior IAS officer Pramod Kumar Meherda took charge as the commissioner-cum-principal secretary to Woman and Child Development (W&CD) department, an official said Tuesday.

Soon after assuming the office, Meherda reviewed the department's action plan during the pandemic as well as implementation of various schemes like Mamata. On the occasion, Meherda said the W&CD department is committed to ensuring welfare of woman and children in the state. "Despite challenges posed by the pandemic, the department ensured state's schemes for woman and children reach its beneficiaries," the senior officer pointed out.

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50+ nCoV deaths for 2nd straight day

ODISHA HAS CONDUCTED OVER 1.41 CRORE SAMPLE TESTS FOR COVID-19, INCLUDING 63,184 MONDAY

Bhubaneswar, July 6: Odisha's Covid-19 tally mounted to 9,27,186 Tuesday as 2,487 more people tested positive for the infection, while 51 fresh fatalities pushed the death toll to 4,299, a Health department official said.

Of the new cases, 1,428 were reported from quarantine centres and the remaining 1,059 during contact tracing.

Cuttack district registered the highest number of fresh cases at 422, followed by Khurda (407), Jajpur (202), Balasore (157) and Puri (154).

Of the 51 fatalities, nine were registered in Khurda, five each in Bargarh, Mayurbhanj and Dhenkanal, three each in Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Sundargarh and Jajpur districts. Similarly, two deaths each were reported from Bhadrak, Deogarh, Ganjam and Nayagarh, and one patient each succumbed to the infection in Kandhamal, Kendrapara, Keonjhar and Nabarangpur.



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Fifty-three other Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities, he said. According to data shared by the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department, Mayurbhanj and Nayagarh have the highest TPR of above 7 per cent, while Bolangir and Jharsuguda have the lowest TPR

of less than one per cent. As far as confirmed Covid cases are concerned, out of 30 districts, 19 have more than 20,000 cases with Khurda registering the highest number of 1,32,588 cases followed by Cuttack (74,921) and Sundargarh (58,546). Nine districts have the Covid

Bulletin doesn't reflect real-time deaths

Amid the allegation that the state government is suppressing the exact number of Covid deaths, the Health and Family Welfare department clarified that the fatalities are not included in the health bulletin on a real-time basis.

"This list does not reflect deaths occurring on a particular day. It gives details of past deaths for which the audit process has been duly completed and the cause of death has been Covid-19," the Health department said on Twitter.

Directorate of Medical Education and Training chief CBK Mohanty

said the Covid-19 fatalities are included in the bulletin after the completion of the death audit process.

"If a coronavirus-positive patient dies, the authorities verify whether the death is due to Covid-19 or comorbidities. The process takes time to confirm. Even some Covid patients ended their lives," Mohanty said while denying the allegation.

Notably, Odisha currently has 28,730 active cases, while 3,326 more patients were cured of the disease, taking the total number of recoveries to 8,94,104.

cases between 10,000 and 20,000, while only two districts—Deogarh and Gajapati—have less than 10,000 cases so far.

The state has conducted over 1.41 crore sample tests for Covid-19, including 63,184 Monday and the positivity rate stands at 6.53 per cent.

Altogether, 4,02,434 people were inoculated Monday, the highest single-day count so far, a senior official said.

The state has administered 1,24,91,857 doses of the Covid vaccines to the beneficiaries till Monday, the official added.

City social worker duped of ₹40 lakh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: A social worker in Capital city accused an associate of cheating him of around Rs 40 lakh on various pretexts between 2020 and 2021.

A case has been registered with Bharatpur police on the basis of a complaint lodged by the victim, Ramakanta Mishra of Kalinga Nagar area in Ghatikia.

Mishra alleged that in March last year during the Covid outbreak, he had come into contact with one Rajesh Kumar Sethi of Patkura, pretending to be an RI, Rajesh Kumar Mohapatra.

Mishra was engaged in providing food packets, dresses and financial aid to the poor and slum dwellers who were hit hard by the pandemic and lockdown.

The accused reportedly assured the victim of helping him get all the help from government sources using his contact. Meanwhile, Mishra sought the help of Sethi to

settle some problems faced by his brother-in-law at Rayagada. Sethi offered help through one Swarnalata Mohapatra, a government of India employee at Rayagada. Sethi allegedly received Rs 4 lakh from Mishra in this regard.

Similarly, he again took 30 lakhs from the complainant promising to facilitate a BDA plot at Kalinga Nagar between May 22, 2020 and March 13, 2021. However, he did not hand over the promised plot to Mishra despite repeated requests.

Mishra claimed that he gave another 8 lakhs to Sethi who promised him another plot registered in the name of his uncle.

This apart, Sethi has reportedly taken around 10 lakhs from the complainant under various pretexts. Sethi's friend Kailash Mishra had allegedly taken around 4 lakhs from Mishra to get his two daughters admitted Kendriya Vidyalaya.

Police have started investigation into the matter after registering a case in this regard.

UG admissions in 3 varsities through SAMS



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: The Higher Education department Tuesday directed Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC) to include three universities of the state in degree (UG) admission process through SAMS from the current academic session.

In a letter to the general manager of OCAC, the deputy director of Performance Tracking Cell of HE department, Rajesh Kumar Sahoo, said that three universities - Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar; Rajendra University, Bolangir and Kalahandi University - have expressed their willingness to participate in UG admission process through Student Academic Management System (SAMS) platform from the 2021-22 academic session.

The technical verification of RD Women's University has already been completed but the same for other two universities should start immediately, Sahoo said.

Therefore, you are requested to complete the process by July 20, 2021.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar I, SK Ashique Uddin, S/o-SK Aftabuddin, state that in my HSC Certificate my name mis-spelt as SK Ashiqueuddin instead of SK Ashique Uddin. Henceforth, I declare that SK Ashique Uddin & SK Ashiqueuddin is one and same person.

LOST

Original ROR (Patta) of Mz-Kakrudrapur, Khata No.131, Plot No. 266, A 0.100 dec & Plot No. - 412, A 0.080 dec stand record in the name of Ms. Kunilata Prusty W/o Late Narendra Prusty which was issued by Tahasilidar, Baliana has been lost on the way. FIR has been lodged Police Station Baliana, Bhubaneswar vide Register SL.No.-742/BLAPS Dt.03.07.2021. Finder inform at 9938665493.

BHIMTANGI BLOODSHED Families of accused, deceased questioned

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: A team of Commissionerate Police went to Jajpur to interrogate family members of the accused in connection with killing of a married woman, Priyanka Priyadarshini Sahu in Bhimtangi area here Monday.

Speaking to media, Deputy Commissioner of Police Umashankar Dash stated that the team has questioned the family members of the accused as well as the deceased, and her in-laws in Jajpur. He also informed the media that the blood stained handwritten suicide note seized from the crime scene is one of the most vital evidences which will be sent to the state forensic science laboratory for examination. DCP claimed that the accused Jagannath is now out of danger.

From the suicide note, police

came to know the evil designs of Pradhan who had planned to kill the three-year-old son of the deceased, before killing her.

On the other hand, sources claimed Pradhan had sent messages on the family WhatsApp group indicating towards ending his life. Pradhan accused the deceased of ruining his life in the message.

Pradhan's mother, while speaking to media, said that he had snapped all relations with Priyanka and gone to Bangalore after her marriage in 2015. She claimed that it was Priyanka who first contacted him after the birth of her son.

The Airfield police recorded the statement of Priyanka's parents and brother who reportedly denied having any knowledge about the alleged relationship between the accused and deceased.

FOR A GREENER TOMORROW



Governor Ganeshi Lal plants a sapling at Raj Bhawan in Bhubaneswar to observe Van Mahotsav, Tuesday

NEWS SNIPPETS

BPIA gets new dir

Bhubaneswar: Pravat Ranjan Beuria took charge as the new Director of Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here, Tuesday. Beuria replaced the incumbent V.V. Rao. Speaking to the media, Beuria said that international flight services in the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here will be increased keeping the present demand in sight. He also mentioned that several developmental projects, which have been stalled due to Covid-19 pandemic, will be expedited after relaxation of restrictions.

CM unveils 2 books

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday released two books at Naveen Niwas here. The two books are: 'Ajira Dinati Mora' authored by Ganjam Collector Vijay Amrita Kulange and 'Urbashira Gaan' by Rabi Priya. In his first book, Kulange talks about his life struggle and success. The book also talks about Kulange's dedication and hard work to achieve success. The second book is a collection of poems telling the story of life's journey. The Chief Minister wished both of them a grand success.

New Action Chair of Rotary Int'l

Bhubaneswar: Former president of Rotary Club of Bhubaneswar Elite and youth social activist Rotarian Saroj Dash has been selected as the new Action Chair for empowering girls of Rotary International Dist 3262. Dash has been working for a long time to protect and educate girls and make them self-sufficient. He has been honoured at the state and national level by serving as the National Convener of a social organisation called 'Kanya Anmol Hai'.

Lord recovers from fever, ready to go on pleasure ride

AGENCIES

Puri, July 6: Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra have recovered from the sickness Tuesday.

After the Snana Purnima grand bath, the Trinity fell sick and were taken to Anasor Ghar located inside the temple where they were treated by temple physicians with herbal drugs and kept on fruit and Pana (liquid diet) while wearing white clothes.

During this period, their bodies were massaged with Phuluri oil to relieve them of pain and then next day 'Ghana lagi' followed by 'Khali lagi' and finally by administration of 'Dasamula' herbal medicine. The temple physician today announced that the deities have recovered from their sickness. The deities were dressed in red clothes and other items.

The Daita servitors accompanied by Patimahaptra in a procession from the Srimandir to the palace of Gajapati carried the discarded white clothes, sandalwood paste and other such items which were extricated from the bodies of deities during treatment.

The Netra Utsav will be celebrated July 9 and the subsequent day the Lords would appear in rejuvenated youth called Nabajouban Vasha. July 11 afternoon, after receiving 'Ajnamalliyas' from the deities, the chariots would be veered from the construction yard and

parked in front of the Simhadwar ready for use.

The Daita servitors today conveyed the message to the Puri Gajapati that the Deities had recovered from sickness and were ready for their pleasure ride to Gundicha temple.

The Puri king asked the Daitas to render their religious service with devotion for smooth conduct of the grand event to be held without participation of devotees and in strict adherence to the Covid protocols.

The Puri Gajapati said he would perform Chhara Pahanra seva on Rath Yatra and Bahuda. He advised Daitas not to obstruct the front of the deities on the chariots as devotees across the globe would be watching the Rath Yatra live.

In the chariot construction yard, Biswakarmas are busy giving final touches while Roopakaras have been painting the chariots with their respective colours.

The Darzi (tailors) servitors are stitching the covering cloths for three chariots with specific coloured clothes.

State Chief Secretary S C Mahapatra Tuesday took stock of the festival preparedness. Puri Collector Samarth Verma apprised the Chief Secretary about the arrangements and steps taken to conduct the fete following Covid norms. Verma said about three thousand servitors would participate in the fete.

Fire at Sanskrit dept of UU



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: A major fire broke out in the Post Graduate department of Sanskrit at Utkal University here Tuesday afternoon. No casualties have been reported as the offices in the building were closed during the mishap.

According to sources, some students and officials in the university spotted smoke billowing out of the ground floor of the three-storey building at around 3pm. The Fire Services personnel reached the spot to douse the blaze.

Properties including one AC, a photocopier and important files worth around Rs 2 lakh were destroyed.

The officials suspected short circuit as the reason behind the fire.

AM/NS donates 100 units of O2 cylinders to PPT



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) Tuesday delivered 100 medical grade oxygen cylinders to Paradip Port Trust (PPT). PPT deputy chairman Asish Kumar Bose and chief medical officer Prahallad Panda were present along with other senior officials.

Bose said, "The effort taken by AM/NS India will help us fight against Covid-19 pandemic collaboratively and we are thankful to AM/NS India for taking initiatives for the treatment of Coronavirus-affected patients."

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India executive director (Odisha Operations) G Suresha said, "The country is now facing the biggest public health crises and our focus throughout this pandemic has been the health of our people and our communities. We appreciate the state government for taking necessary measures that have helped us strengthening our hands further in the fight against Covid-19."

Suresha added, "We have a responsibility to support the government at this hour. We are confident that we will overcome this crisis, together."

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KANGAROO COURT PUNISHES 'SORCERER'

ELDERLY MAN THRASHED; FORCED TO DRINK URINE, EAT HUMAN FAECES



the villagers suspected Haribandhu of practicing witchcraft and sorcery on the locals. The villagers then decided to hold an unofficial court and punish him.

Accordingly, July 3, some villagers went to Haribandhu's house, dragged him out and thrashed him badly. A group of youths held Haribandhu, while some others forced him to drink urine and eat human faeces.

They also shaved his head and paraded him through the village, said Bhubana Bagarti, who was present at the spot during the incident. The youths as well as the on-lookers also recorded the act on their mobile phones and made it viral on social media.

"Though we tried to stop the villagers while they were dragging Haribandhu, they did not budge. Instead, they threatened us of dire consequences. Later, they took Haribandhu outside his house and thrashed him," Bhubana said.

When contacted by the media, Haribandhu said he does not know anything about witchcraft and sorcery and has been wrongly framed.

Three persons have been arrested in this connection and produced in the court, Titlagarh Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Surendra Nath Satpathy said. The victim is stable now, he added.

Bolangir SP Nitin Kausalkar has appealed to the people to report all such incidents to the police and not take the law in their hands. Notably, Sindhkela is infamous for killings and assaults of people over suspected witchcraft and sorcery practices.

The incident occurred July 3, but it came to light after a video footage of the brutality went viral on social media. The accused Tunu Parabhu, Kailash Ghibela and Dayanand Jhankar were produced in court

said Tuesday. Police have registered a case on the basis of a complaint and arrested three persons in connection with the incident. Later, the three were produced in the court, Tuesday.

The accused were identified as Tunu Parabhu, Kailash Ghibela and Dayanand Jhankar. Two other accused are said to be absconding.

According to reports, residents of Paruabhadri often fell ill for unknown reasons, following which



Youths try to get a feel of a train on a wall painting drawn on the residential office of the district Collector in Nabarangpur. The area has become a selfie-zone with the district having no rail connectivity till yet

Probe begins into road construction by Ch'garh in Malkangiri village



POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, July 6: The Malkangiri district administration has initiated an investigation into the alleged construction of a road in Akarpali village of the district by the Chhattisgarh government, a report said.

The action came following publication of media reports, including in Orissa POST.

A team of district officials comprising tehsildar Gunanidhi Nayak, BDO Ajay Kumar Pradhan, the local revenue inspector and the local public representatives visited Akarpali village Monday and took stock of the development.

The team members also verified the stone pillars that have been used as demarcating lines between the two states. During verification, it was found that the neighbouring state has trespassed into Akarpali village in Malkangiri district and constructed a 500-metre-long road there.

However, the actual reason behind the construction of the road is yet to be ascertained.

When contacted, tehsildar Nayak said that a report on the issue will be prepared and submitted to the DRDA project director for action. BDO Pradhan said that subsequent action will be taken by the Revenue department officials.

Notably, Akarpali revenue village is in Matapaka panchayat under Sadar block of Malkangiri district where the Chhattisgarh administration has constructed a road. Sukma district in Chhattisgarh is located about 1 km from Akarpali village.

The Mangipali-Darba village in Chhattisgarh is about 1 km from Akarpali village on Akarpali-Sukma road. The borderline between the two states is drawn at Mangipali-Darba village.

SELFIE-ZONE

Woman suffers rib fractures in stampede at vax centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

Polsara, July 6: A woman who visited a vaccination centre in Ranipada village here in Ganjam district to receive her dose of anti-Covid shot had to be admitted to a hospital as she suffered rib fractures in a stampede at the centre Tuesday.

According to a source, a Covid-19 vaccination centre has been set up at a kalyan mandap in Ranipada village. Bhanumati Sahu, a resident of Laxmanpali village near Polsara police station, had gone to the centre to receive her shot.

With no proper arrangement in place for smooth conduct of vaccination and no deployment of police to maintain law and order situation, people were shoving each other while trying to enter the centre. Bhanumati was caught in the crowd.

Suddenly the scene turned ugly with people going berserk. Before she could understand anything, Bhanumati felt a push and subsequently fell on the ground. As she was trying to stand up, people trampled her and some even fell on her.

The family members immediately rescued a seriously injured Bhanumati and rushed



Bhanumati felt a push and fell on the ground. Before she could understand anything, people trampled her

On being informed, Polsara police station IIC Jitendra Kumar Mallick; tehsildar Pradeep Kumar Nayak and executive officer, NAC, Prasanna Kumar Das reached the spot and brought the situation under control.

her to Polsara community health centre (CHC). As her condition was serious, she was shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur. Following diagnosis, the doctors said her ribs were fractured in the stampede.

Holding the administration responsible for his mother's present health condition, Pratap Sahu said, "Had the administration taken measures for smooth conduct of vaccination at the camp, my mother would have received her dose and been fine now."

RISKY PROPOSITION



Travelling on second bridge on Mahanadi in Sambalpur has become a risky proposition with stray cattle squatting on the bridge and impeding the movement of vehicles

OP PHOTO

3 killed, one injured in road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, July 6: Three persons were killed and one severely injured after the motorcycle they were travelling by crashed into a roadside tree near Murlapadar village under Junagarh police limits in Kalahandi district Monday night.

The deceased have been identified as Pintu Majhi and Sadanand Majhi of Mariabandhli village, and Raju Bagarti, a resident of Chancharabhadri village. The injured, Mukesh Majhi, of Jharbandh village is undergoing treatment. Eyewitnesses said that the four were travelling on a motorcycle from Jharbandh to Junagarh. As they were approaching Murlapadar village, the driver of the two-wheeler lost his control, leading to the mishap.

The four were rescued by locals and rushed to Junagarh community health centre (CHC). However, doctors at the health centre pronounced Pintu, Sadanand and Raju 'brought' dead on arrival.

patterns were described as a new species, *Paradoxurus jorandensis*.

In the fresh survey, researchers said that though there is no molecular evidence available to support the splitting of the species, the findings suggest the distribution of the coat pattern beyond the Similipal region. These specimens were photographed in May 2020.

The study suggested that since the colour variations in furs of pal civet are often influenced by climate and geography, further investigation into their taxonomic and distribution status is required. Both morphologic and pelagic characteristics besides molecular data will be helpful in the study.

According to the researchers, a study that incorporates samples/specimens from the Indian region, especially from eastern India, is required to validate the existence of sub-species within *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, which has been lacking in the earlier studies.

The study was conducted by a team comprising IFS officers Pradeep Raj Karat and P Ramasamy OFS officers Saroj Panda, Subhendu Behera and researchers from Wildlife Institute of India Vaishali Vasudeva, Gatikrishna Behera, Sandeep Gupta and K Ramesh.

Earlier, wildlife researchers had spotted an albino chital among a herd in Satakosia tiger reserve in 2014. The body colour of the animal was white with few faint spots. The eyes, nasal tips and lips of the animal were pink, while its eyebrows were white.

Albino palm civets seen in Satakosia Tiger Reserve

FINDINGS OF A STUDY PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL SAID THE COAT COLOUR VARIATION IN INDIAN PALM CIVET WAS REPORTED CENTURIES BACK IN KANDHAMAL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul/Bantala, July 6: Indian palm civets with colour variation in their furs have been caught by cameras at Satakosia Tiger Reserve near here in Angul district, a report said.

Pleasantly surprised over the development, wildlife experts conducted a research into the taxonomic and distribution status of the mammal which has thrown up interesting findings on the existence of its sub-species in the region.

The findings have been published in a research paper – the June edition of the journal *Zoo*. According to the research paper, the coat colour variation in Indian pal civet was reported centuries back in Kandhamal and in southern Rajasthan in 2004.

This time, the colour variation has been reported in civets that were photographed with the help of camera traps installed in the western part of the tiger reserve. The camera traps have been installed in the tiger reserve to monitor the movement of big cats and prey distribution in the Satakosia region. The civets found in Satakosia were partially albinistic.

The first photograph of a partial albino palm civet was captured at two places in Majhipada reserve forest of Satakosia wildlife division in March last year.

The photograph showed that the body of the mammal below its shoulders had creamy and whitish fur without any marks or spots on it. However, no pigmentation or pattern was visible on its legs and tail. Pigmentation



Camera traps have been installed in the tiger reserve to monitor the movement of big cats and prey distribution in the Satakosia region

on the fur was visible only behind the ears, near the eyes and close to their muzzle. On the other hand, patches on the head below the eyes were distinctly visible.

Later, another civet with normal colour coat was captured by a camera trap in April with distinct markings. Researchers also recorded a civet hav-

ITI LIMITED (A Govt. of India Undertaking) M-5/26, Acharya Vihar, Bhubaneswar - 751013 Phone: (0674) 2567225/2567229 EOI is invited for selection of Back-end partner for implementation of Aerial OFC works with Network Connectivity using GPON Technology in Odisha. Due date: 15.07.2021, at 15.00 hrs. For details please visit the website: www.itilttd.in / www.eprocure.gov.in Chief Manager, ITI Ltd., Bhubaneswar	आई टी आई लिमिटेड (भारत सरकार का उपक्रम) एम 5/26, आचार्य विहार, भुवनेश्वर - 751013 फोन: (0674) 2567225 / 2567229 ऑडिशन में एरियल ओएफसी का कार्यान्वयन partner for implementation of Aerial OFC works with Network Connectivity का उपयोग करते हुए नेटवर्क कनेक्टिविटी के साथ काम करने के लिये बिक-एण्ड पार्टनर चयन हेतु ई ओ आई अंतिम तरीका 15.07.2021 (15.00 घंटा) Website: www.itilttd.in / www.eprocure.gov.in मुख्य प्रबंधक, आई टी आई लिमिटेड, भुवनेश्वर
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OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, GUNUPUR
Email ID: eomun-gunupur@gov.in
No.1444 Dt.05.07.2021

Tender Call Notice
No.C-512:- Sealed tenders for supply of Sanitary Materials are invited in the prescribed bid document containing the detail specification of items and related terms and conditions from intending and eligible registered firms/ authorized suppliers / manufacturing units having upto date GST clearance certificate / valid PAN card / MSME registration certificate. The prescribed bid documents / related terms & conditions shall be available in the office website: www.gunupurmunicipality.com from 06.07.2021 to 13.07.2021. A sealed tender should reach to the undersigned in a separate set of envelope for paper cost (in shape of Demand Draft) and bid document along with Security Deposit (in shape of DD) in favour of Executive Officer, Gunupur Municipality by Regd. Post/ Speed Post/ Courier / by hand in the office before the 1.00 P.M. on dtd. 19.07.2021. The sealed tender will be opened on the same day at 4.00 P.M. in the office of the undersigned in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives present if any at that time. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sl. No.	Name of the item	Cost of bid document	Security deposit
1	Sanitary Materials	Rs.2000/-	Rs.10,000/-

Sd./- Executive Officer, Gunupur Municipality
OIPR-13104/11/0007/2122

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Tel. No.06752222092, e-mail ideerpuri@gmail.com
TCN NO. TENDER ONLINE - 03 OF 2021-22
No.4799 Dt.05.07.2021

No.O-413:- The Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Puri on behalf of Government of Odisha invites percentage rate tenders through e-procurement for 12 Nos. of work for the year 2021-22 in the district of Puri. 1. Total No. of works: 12 Nos. 2. Tender cost of packages: Amount varies from Rs. 4.42 lakhs to 40.71 lakhs. 3. Class of contractor: As per DTCN. 4. Period of completion: 2 (Two) calendar months. 5. Period of availability of tenders on-line/ Date & time of bidding on-line/ last date of seeking clarification/ Date of opening of tender papers.

Procurement Officer	Bid identification No.	Availability of tender online for bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date, time & venue of opening of tender
		From	To		
1	2	3	4	5	6
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Puri	Online-03	09.07.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	23.07.2021 upto 3.00 P.M.	22.07.2021 upto 1.00 P.M.	29.07.2021 at 11.00 A.M. Office of the E.E., R.W. Division, Puri

6. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents, which is available in website "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>".
OIPR-25065/11/0006/2122
Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Puri

FOCUS NATION

A LOT ELSE DIED WITH FR. STAN



In many ways, Father Stan Swamy's suffering reflected the suffering of the people of India. His case represents the crossing of all boundaries of sanity and sense, and signals that India is in territory it has not seen before

tall for its values and its constitutional guarantees in the comity of nations.

The case also highlights the tyranny of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), and the way the law is being applied in cases that are related to anything but terrorism. As has been well reported, Swamy's arrest was based on seizure of electronic records from his computer. Swamy himself asked many questions on the seized material. He never received any replies to those simple questions. He was never present at the site that led to what has come to be called the Elgar Parishad case. Yet, he became the 16th activist to be arrested in the case, and was accused by the NIA of being involved in the activities of the banned CPI (Maoist).

But for so many who knew the person and his work, Father Swamy stood out as a picture of service. Even if we take the extreme prosecution case and assume that the charges carried any merit, there was no justification for keeping an ailing grandfatherly figure behind bars for so long; there was nowhere he would run or escape. There was nothing he could keep or hide. Father Swamy could not walk well; he could not hear; he reportedly fell in jail. His condition deteriorated while he was behind bars.

A case as shameful as this may yet become a lightning rod and allow the nation to see where we have landed. There are many who will still not be able to see this fall. In India today, every attempt is being made to break the nation, to divide between 'them' and 'us'. More such attempts may follow the death of Father Stan Swamy. It is becoming easier to see these attempts. Yet, these divisions will continue to take their toll before they halt. Till these prejudices are not seen and called out, and brought to a halt and the guilty brought to book, India will continue to bleed.

The writer is a senior journalist and a faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal. ©THE BILLION PRESS

Father Stan Swamy has died. He has found peace and eternal rest and has at last been freed of the tyranny unleashed on him by a hate-filled power machinery that thinks the only way to silence resistance is to lock up people, to browbeat them with the might of the State and to try and break them into submission. The nation can never forget that an octogenarian, peace-loving activist, who devoted years working for tribals in Jharkhand, who lived a simple life and stood up for what he thought was right, has died after spending nine months in jail as an undertrial, with poor medical attention that led him to suffer from Covid-19 and brought on a deterioration in his health. He was later shifted to the Holy Family Hospital in Mumbai from the Taloja Central Jail and died on a ventilator at the hospital July 5, only hours before another hearing on his bail application was scheduled to come up in the Bombay High Court.

This is a case that will remain a blot on the police team that investigated it, the political masters who undoubtedly thought it fit for this kind of harassment of an 84-year-old to continue for so long and the judiciary which in a glaring instance of insensitivity did not routinely and immediately direct that a sipper be provided to a man suffering from Parkinson's disease so that he could drink water without spilling it; the National Investigation Agency instead asked and got 20 days to reply to the demand for a sipper. The legal back-and-forth on a request of an ailing senior citizen whose hands would shake because of Parkinson's underlined that pain, suffering, humiliation and disregard for minimum courtesies are a part of the Indian system where punishment is meted out long before the trial. In the India of today, this is heaped on activists, never mind if the activist is elderly, ailing and fighting it by himself in the midst of a pandemic. In fact, the trial may fail but the sentence is already served as an undertrial.

The predicament of Father Stan Swamy is a fit case for a full-

fledged judicial investigation into the conduct of various arms of the State, to fix responsibility for the conditions that led to his death and for setting out exemplary punishment to all those who had a hand in what is nothing short of a heinous crime. Like it or not, it will be difficult to escape the charge that Father Stan Swamy was killed by a system that was out to get him for his views, his work and his passion in standing against exploitation and for justice to the poor.

In many ways, Father Stan Swamy's suffering reflected the suffering of the people of India. His case represents the crossing of all boundaries of sanity and sense, and signals that India is in territory it has not seen before. A hate-filled dagger has been drawn deep into the heart of India and

all that the nation stood for – democracy, secularism, a free press and space for diverse and dissenting voices.

In other ways, Father Stan Swamy by going through the suffering he did may have even served us in his last days. For one, his case will never be forgotten. It must be and will be studied, recounted and discussed again and again across schools and colleges, civil society institutions, in our courses on law and politics, in our training manuals for the police and the judiciary. It must stand out as the case that lowered India like never before. It will keep telling us that 'emergency' was not a one-off – that this danger and the danger of it getting worse is ever present, only on the edge, waiting to snatch away a young nation and its aspirations to standing



Jagdish Rattanani

A HATE-FILLED DAGGER HAS BEEN DRAWN DEEP INTO THE HEART OF INDIA AND ALL THAT THE NATION STOOD FOR – DEMOCRACY, SECULARISM, A FREE PRESS AND SPACE FOR DIVERSE AND DISSENTING VOICES

There should of course be left a field of work for the sake of experiment but at all times one must remember that there will always remain open a possibility of err.

SRI AUROBINDO



Merciless

It is a sad commentary on the country's system of justice and investigation that Father Stan Swamy, a Jesuit priest and tribal rights activist, has died. He underwent inhuman treatment behind the bars after his arrest in the Bhima Koregaon case in October 2020. The treatment meted out to him was horrific, to say the least. Father Swamy was suffering from multiple physical ailments such as Parkinson's. Yet he had to fight for even simple things like permission from Court to obtain a straw or sipper to drink water since his facial muscles were growing weak. The case of Swamy is illogically interesting to note. When the Bombay High Court said at 2.30 pm July 5 that it would hear his appeal for bail as the first item the next day, the Division Bench of Justices SS Shinde and NJ Jamadar were informed at that point that Father Stan Swamy had passed away an hour back.

Till he breathed his last, Fr. Swamy did not know what his crime was for which he had been arrested October 8, 2020 on charges under the dreaded Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) of having links with Maoists in the Bhima Koregaon-Elgar Parishad case of 2018. It is interesting to note that Swamy was in no way involved with the events of January 1, 2018 at Bhima Koregaon. He had never been to Koregaon in his life, the scene of violence, he once pleaded. He had, for decades, fought for the rights of tribals and 'moolavasis' in Jharkhand. This was a fight against the rapacity of big business to plunder the natural resources with the help of friendly governments, while tribals lived in the mineral rich land in abject poverty. Fr. Swamy had filed a PIL in Jharkhand High Court in 2017 against prolonged detention of 72 prisoners belonging to SC/ST and backward castes for alleged Left-wing extremist activities – and charged under UAPA provisions – in just one district, West Singhbhum. Invoking Article 21, he questioned the protracted pre-trial and asked for a court-monitored inquiry in all the 24 districts of Jharkhand. Ironically, three years later, even as his PIL was pending in the court, he was arrested under the same UAPA and denied bail sought on medical grounds.

Fr. Swamy's repeated pleas that he might contract Covid-19 while in judicial custody did not get response from the judiciary. It was only June 28 that the Bombay High Court allowed him the facilities of a private hospital till his bail plea was taken up. The JJ Hospital in Mumbai, where the jail authorities had admitted him before, did not even care to conduct a Covid test. His death certificate revealed "there were post-Covid effects on his lungs."

It won't be an exaggeration to call the death of Swamy an act of murder by a ruthless, autocratic administration that won't brook challenge to its anti-people decisions and measures, while the judiciary meekly watched the butchery of justice by the state machinery. The fact that the National Investigation Agency, probing the case, had never for once sought Fr. Swamy's custody, but persistently opposed his bail pleas says it all about the government's intent. It has been seen in several cases how the government has been using the draconian UAPA and the harsh provisions of the sedition law to silence its critics by forcing incarceration without trial.

Recent pronouncements by the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court have laid bare the growing tendency of the government to use the harsh laws to deny bail since most of these cases have insufficient evidence to prove the charges. The Delhi High Court has even questioned how the term of terrorist acts can be used so indiscriminately as the investigating agencies seem to be applying. The apex court, however, could not see eye to eye with the Delhi High Court's courageous interpretation of the UAPA.

Now comes more shocking news that the law enforcement agencies have been using the punitive Section 66A of the Information Technology Act even after the provision having been struck down by the court in 2015. This section empowered the police to make arrests over what was construed as 'offensive' or 'menacing' or for the purposes of causing annoyance and inconvenience by sending messages through computer, mobile phone or other devices. In 2015, the Supreme Court struck down the Section calling it "open-ended and unconstitutionally vague."

When told how the defunct law is still being used to coerce people, Justice RF Nariman exclaimed July 5: "Amazing. What is going on is terrible." Hearing a plea by the NGO People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUC), a Bench of Justices Nariman, KM Joseph and BR Gavai of the apex court issued notice and directed the Centre to make a written submission. The government argued the annulled Section is still being used because the ruling on the cancellation is put as a footnote only.

Such events demonstrate that the state, indeed, has become rotten.

WISDOM CORNER

- The strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone. **HENRIK IBSEN**
- If you are lonely when you're alone, you are in bad company. **JEAN-PAUL SARTRE**
- Solitude vivifies; isolation kills. **JOSEPH ROUX**

WORDSWORTH

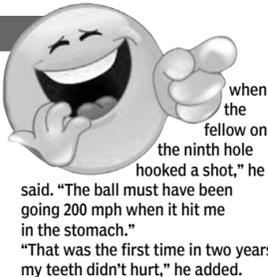
Oche

The classic pub game, darts is the ultimate non-sportsman's sport – you don't need any special clothing and little equipment (a set of darts is a good idea, but pubs lend those out), and you don't need to be fit (the aptitude of players often appears to be in direct proportion to the size of their beer guts). All you have to remember is to count back from 501, end on a double, and avoid putting your toes over the oche. Oche, for the line behind which darts players stand when throwing, is the classic bit of darts jargon, even more obscure and basic than double top for a double twenty, bag o' nuts for a score of 45, Shanghai for a score made up of a single, treble and double in that order of the same number, usually 20 when you need 120 to end a game (ditto), mugs away as an invitation to the losing player to start the next round, or mad house for a double one (because getting it can drive you crazy). Oche is pronounced like hockey without the initial h. Attempts are sometimes made to derive it from an obsolete word meaning to chop off, from Old French ochen to cut a deep notch in something, though the link with darts is obscure. Eric Partridge preferred an origin in hoggins line, for no good reason that one may discern. However, the earliest written examples – from the 1930s – are all spelled hockey and the oche form didn't become standard until the late 1970s. But why hockey? One story holds that it's from the name of a West Country brewery, S Hockey and Sons, whose crates were just the right size with which to mark out the throwing distance. That's so unlikely as to be merely funny. After this piece first appeared, Peter Brooke e-mailed to suggest that the word might well come from the Victorian hockey-dockies for shoes. This is an elaboration of hock-dock, using hock as a slang term for the foot. A hock-dock might be a place where one docks one's hocks, that is, places one's feet, but is probably a nonsense reduplication.

LOL

Is he a good dentist?

A couple of old guys were golfing when one said he was going to Dr Taylor for a new set of dentures in the morning. His friend remarked that he had gone to the same dentist a few years before. "Is that so?" the first said. "Did he do a good job?" "Well, I was on the course yesterday



when the fellow on the ninth hole hooked a shot," he said. "The ball must have been going 200 mph when it hit me in the stomach." "That was the first time in two years my teeth didn't hurt," he added.

IN JEST THIS

We're going crazy with all the fireworks



Melvin Durai

PETS ARE NOT PREPARED FOR THESE LOUD SOUNDS. THEY DO NOT KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT FIREWORKS; NOR DO THEY KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT INDEPENDENCE DAY

Independence Day in the United States is also known as "Fourth of July," a day of celebration that excites many people. While most Americans are happy to celebrate independence, some are happier when it's over because they can finally get some sleep. No more mini-explosions in the middle of the night.

By "mini-explosions," I'm referring to the sound of firecrackers. Some of them are extremely loud, a barrage of bangs and booms that make it seem like fighter planes are dropping bombs in the neighbourhood.

Millions of Americans enjoy setting off firecrackers. They enjoy it so much, they can't wait until Fourth of July. "What's the harm in celebrating early?" they ask themselves.

Thanks to such people, Fourth of July celebrations in America begin around Fourth of June. For an entire month, in many parts of the country, the sounds of firecrackers can be heard at night, sometimes an hour or two after midnight.

Yes, Independence Day has grad-

ually turned into Independence Month.

This is a boon for all the companies that make firecrackers and fireworks, but it's a headache for all the people who enjoy sleeping at night. They keep getting woken up.

Wife: "Oh no, what was that? Are the Russians attacking us?"

Husband: "No, honey, it's the Mexicans."

Wife: "Mexico is attacking us?"

Husband: "It's the Mexicans next door. They're setting off firecrackers again. Do you want me to go over and complain?"

Wife: "No, it's okay. They'll just say we aren't patriotic enough."

It's not just Mexican-Americans who love firecrackers. It's all kinds of people, many of them seemingly unconcerned that they're disturbing their neighbours, and also frightening dogs, cats and other animals.

Dogs and cats have noise-sensitive ears and the sound of fireworks can cause them to panic. Pet dogs may run away from homes, while stray dogs may run into homes.

Pets are not prepared for these loud sounds. They do not know anything about fireworks; nor do they know anything about Independence Day. They have never enjoyed independence.

Dog: "What are the humans celebrating?"

Cat: "Independence. They've been in dependence for a long time."

Dog: "I know. They depend on me for love and security."

Cat: "Not to mention the stains on the carpet!"

Firecrackers cause some pets to suffer long-lasting anxiety. By the end of Independence Month, some of them are in desperate need for therapy. If their owners can't afford to send them to individual therapy sessions, they may need to go to group therapy. At these group sessions, they sit in a circle with other distressed pets and share their experiences.

Irish Terrier: "As soon as I heard those bangs, I ran under my owner's bed and refused to come out."

German Shepherd: "The poor terrier was terrified!"

Terrier: "Stop making fun of me. Aren't you here for the same reason?"

German Shepherd: "No, I wasn't afraid. I just like being in the closet."

The pets that deserve the most sympathy are the ones that live in Indian-American households. Once they have recovered from all the firecrackers during Independence Month, they have to endure more firecrackers on Diwali.

Of course the Diwali celebrations in North America are nothing compared to the Diwali celebrations all over India. Not surprisingly, animal activists in India are just as concerned as those in America about the impact of firecrackers on dogs, cats and other animals. If people really need to create mini-explosions to celebrate Diwali, Independence Month and other occasions, can't they at least provide ear plugs to all the animals?

Trust me, it would be a lot cheaper than all the therapy sessions.

Bypoll in West Bengal

Sir, Since West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has lost the election from Nandigram, she must get elected within six months from the date of assuming office to continue as chief minister of the state. The Representation of People's Act allows anyone to be minister or chief minister or prime minister provided he or she is elected within six months from the date of assuming office. Mamata should not have accepted the post of chief minister on moral grounds. She should have waited till she is elected as MLA before assuming the office. Moral bankruptcy among our politicians is not uncommon these days. Trinamool Congress MP and the party's spokesman Saugata Roy has said, "If the bypoll is not conducted she (Mamata) will resign two days before the stipulated time and take oath as the chief minister again after two days." This is nothing but circumvention of constitutional provisions. A Supreme Court bench comprising Justices AS Anand, RC Lahoti and KG Balakrishna had clearly said, "If a non-MLA has served as minister for six months without getting elected to the Assembly, he cannot be appointed as minister during the same term of the office." **KV Seetharamaiah**, HASSAN (KARNATAKA)

Tokyo flag-bearers

Sir, Acclaimed boxer MC Mary Kom and men's hockey team skipper Manpreet Singh will be the flag-bearers at the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics. One of India's biggest medal hopes, grappler Bajrang Punia, will lead the contingent during the closing ceremony August 8. This is the first time countries will have more than one flag-bearer at the Games to ensure gender parity. Over 100 Indian athletes will vie for a medal at the event, which was postponed by a year because of the pandemic. **NJ Ravi Chander**, BANGALORE

Governor appointments

Sir, Ever heard of Mangubhai Chagabhai Patel, Hari Babu Kambhampati and Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar? Well, they are the newly-appointed Governors of Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram and Himachal Pradesh respectively. The first and basic requirement for the appointment of a Governor, as recommended by the Sarkaria Commission, was that he or she should be an eminent person. I would like to be educated about the eminence of these gentlemen and most of the others who now adorn the Governor's chair in various states. And yes, I had also never heard the name of Ram Nath Kovind before he was nominated for the highest position of our land. **Bhaskar Roy**, NEW DELHI

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Angul's forest cover declines despite annual afforestation drives

Gajapati student wins int'l laurels

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, July 6: Every year lakhs of saplings are planted on thousands of hectares in Angul district. The Forest department has been undertaking the plantation drive for a long time now. If the department has been planting saplings year after year, it stands to reason that there would have been dense forest in the district. But that is not the case. Let alone a dense forest, the district's green cover is decreasing slowly but steadily.

The Forest department is planting saplings every year only because there is a directive from the government in this regard. However, if the present forest cover in the district is any indication, the exercise has been futile so far.

Local environmentalists, green lovers and intelligentsia allege that the Forest department is not taking proper care of planted saplings and this is the reason why most saplings are destined to wither and die within few days of plantation.

Expressing his concern over the



manner in which the afforestation drive is being undertaken in the district, environmentalist Swapna Sarangi said that in this mineral-rich district trees are being felled mindlessly for mining activities. They should be compensated by planting saplings. But it is not the

practice here. If the number of saplings planted every year is taken into consideration, there would have been dense forest across the district. But the ground reality is different.

"This is because the forest department is not maintaining the

Forest department is planting saplings every year only because there is a directive from the government

planted saplings properly. Its time all of us should think seriously and take action to make up the loss," she observed.

Echoing Sarangi's views, Ashok Satpathy, an environmentalist, said that the trees planted by spending lakhs of rupees under the Compensatory Afforestation and Management and Planning (CAMPA) are not being taken care of properly. He alleged the avenue plantation is of no help in increasing the green coverage.

"The total forest cover in the district will increase only when the natural forests are saved from being sacrificed at the altar of development," he opined.

According to information shared by the Angul Forest Division of

fore, afforestation was undertaken in the district on 367.53 hectares in 2017-18 fiscal under eight different yojanas. Of them, saplings were planted on 32 hectares of open space and 335.530 hectares in forest areas to increase the density of the greenery. Similarly, saplings were planted along the sides of an eight-kilometre-long road. The Forest department also planted 1,33,596 saplings, and sold and distributed 33,000 saplings.

Similarly, to increase greenery and forest density, saplings were planted on 51.682 hectares and 1701.25 hectares of forest land respectively in 2018-19. Sapling plantation was carried out along the sides of a 37-kilometre-long road. The Forest department had planted and distributed 4,46,851 and 3,00,430 saplings respectively.

In 2019-20, the department had planted 4,32,458 saplings. It had sold and distributed 8,66,490 saplings. Then, plantation was undertaken on 71.23 hectares of open space and 1686.2 hectares to increase forest density. The department had carried out

plantation in 95 hectares of open space and 1120 hectares of forest land in the year 2020-21. This apart, saplings were planted along the sides of roads measuring 68 kilometres. While the Forest department planted 4,32,160 saplings, it had sold and distributed 15,28,000 saplings.

This year, a total of 12,09,914 saplings have been grown. Of them, 4,49,914 saplings are kept aside for afforestation purpose, the remaining 7,60,000 saplings are to be sold and distributed. The department is yet to inform what number of saplings has been set aside for avenue plantation.

When contacted, Angul, DFO, Prasanna Kumar Behera admitted that the district is losing its green cover to mines and industries. So it is not the responsibility of the Forest department alone to plant trees. Industrial houses, mine owners and even common people should come forward to plant trees to increase the district's green cover. And this will go a long way in bringing down the pollution level in the district.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, July 6: A student here has brought laurels for Gajapati district and Odisha by winning the gold honour in a virtual meet on international astronomy and astrophysics, a report said.



The student was identified as Lagnajeet Mahanty, son of Anasuya and Dipak and a student of Centurion Public School in the town.

Mohanty stemmed to the final round of International Astronomy & Astrophysics, Edition 2021, and secured the gold honour. The competition was held in Germany, June 29, in virtual mode.

He had to overcome a stiff competition to qualify for the apex round and left no stone on his wits & talent. Sumita Panigrahi, principal of Centurion Public School, and all teaching staff have congratulated him on his achievement.

OSPCB orders closure of hotel

Nitish doesn't rule out JD(U) joining Union govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, July 6: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Tuesday did not rule out the possibility of his JD(U) joining the Narendra Modi government during its likely expansion but insisted it was the party's national president who will take a call on the number of berths acceptable to it.

Talking to reporters here, Kumar said expansion of the Union Council of Ministers was a prerogative of the prime minister and that he "did not have much information" about what was being offered to his party.

"I relinquished the party's national president's post a few months ago. Current president RCP Singh has been authorised to take a call in the matter. Only he can share the details," the Chief Minister, the party's de facto leader, said.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, July 6: The Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) has issued a directive to the closure of Silver Moon Hotel located beside NH-55 under Burla police limits in Sambalpur district.

The OSPCB took the action against the hotel on charges that it was creating pollution by not managing its sewerage and wastages properly.

The action was taken following a report from the OSPCB Sambalpur regional officer who had visited the hotel July 1. The OSPCB has in its letter (No. 3475/21) to Mamata Choudhary, the owner of the hotel, directed the closure of the hotel, failing which legal actions would be initiated.

The district Collector, SP and the Electricity department in Burla have been appraised of the move. The Electricity department has been asked to snap the power connection to the hotel at the earliest.

This apart, the regional office of OSPCB has also been directed to take steps against the hotel.

Notably, Silver Moon Hotel has been releasing its sewerage water

THE ACTION WAS TAKEN FOLLOWING A REPORT FROM THE OSPCB SAMBALPUR REGIONAL OFFICER

ELECTRICITY DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN ASKED TO SNAP THE POWER CONNECTION TO THE HOTEL AT THE EARLIEST

A TEAM FROM THE OSPCB HAD DONE AN INSPECTION AND ASKED THE OWNER TO INSTALL A SEWERAGE TREATMENT PLANT (STP)

to farmlands and a nearby water body. It had also been dumping its solid wastages there. 'Paryabaran Suraksha Samiti', a local outfit fighting for environment, had taken up the matter with the OSPCB.

Odia daily Dharitri had also carried a news item on its March 31, 2017 edition on the basis of allegations made by local residents.

Thereafter, a team from the OSPCB had done an inspection and asked the owner to install a Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP). However, the owner had not taken any permanent steps to manage its sewerage.

OSD projects give slums a complete facelift

THE BALASORE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION HAS STARTED OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS UNDER THE MUKHYAMANTRI KARMA TATPARA ABHIYAN 'MUKTA'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, July 6: Angargadia and Jadabpur slums under Balasore Municipality have undergone a complete facelift. With small parks coming up in these localities, the two slums have got an altogether different look. This has been possible as the municipality is spending huge sums for beautification projects. The effort is to provide the slum dwellers, especially kids, the facilities that are enjoyed by people in urban areas.

Under the Mukhyamantri Karma Tatpara Abhiyan 'Mukta', the Balasore district administration has started open space development (OSD) projects. Under this project, small parks are being constructed in slum areas.

The objective of the 'Mukta' scheme is to provide employment to the urban poor during the times of the pandemic.



The new parks at Angargadia and Jadabpur slums have swings for children; cement structures have been built for people to sit and relax as well as exercise. The parks have been beautified with flowers and shrubs of different types.

Most importantly, the residents of the slums have been engaged as labourers for the maintenance and further development of the areas. This enables these people

to earn a living. The involvement of local slum dwellers also develops a sense of closeness with the project as they know that these new developments will be the main identities of their localities.

A single OSD project is being undertaken at an expense of anything between ₹1,00,000 and ₹2,00,000.

Executive officer of the Balasore Municipality, Ashish Ishwar Pati talked about their future plans re-

The effort is to provide the slum dwellers, especially kids, the facilities that are enjoyed by people in urban areas

garding such projects. "There are 41 slums under the municipality. Among them 21 are on government land. The remaining slums have come up on lands owned either by the Railways or individuals. We are facing problems in undertaking OSD projects on private lands," informed Pati.

"In some slums, people are objecting to the construction of parks. Hopefully, people will realise the importance of OSD and cooperate with us for such beautification projects in future," Pati added.

Two arrested for posing as Tehsildar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, June 6: Police arrested two members of gang on charge of impersonating Tehsildar and collecting fines from minor mineral-laden vehicle drivers on the national highway near College Bypass here. An associate of the accused has also been apprehended.

The accused were identified as Aswini Kumar Dhal, 29, and Kalu Dora, 28. Another member of the gang managed to escape. According to police sources, the accused duo had detained a truck driver on the NH Monday night and demanded money from him.

In the meantime, a patrolling team of the police reached the spot. On realising that the police had arrived, the accused tried to escape but were nabbed.

Aswini impersonating as a tehsildar demanded money from the truck driver and threaten to get him arrest by the Gobindpur outpost police if he does not concede their demand.

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS



Youths take it upon themselves to repair a two-km stretch of National Highway-353 near Pendraban village in Nuapada district

Honey bee farming project a non-starter

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, July 6: Lakhs of rupees spent by the Horticulture department here to start a honey bee farming project at its Kuanr farm three years ago have gone down the drains as the project has proved to be a non-starter. Lack of proper maintenance is said to be the reason behind the failure of the ambitious project.

There was a time when people would buy honey collected in Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj on good faith. The quality of Keonjhar honey used to be its unique selling point. Then, honey bees used to build hives on trees in the forests of the district. They would collect nectar from different flowers in the jungles and fill their hives. Tribal people living in forests would collect this honey and sell it in markets. Their honey was in great demand then.

However, with the passage of time, the jungles were destroyed and they gave way to various developmental and mining activities. The role of timber mafia in destroying jungles also can't be ignored.



Honey bees used to build hives on trees in the forests and would collect nectar from different flowers in the jungles and fill them

All these adversely impacted the production of natural honey. In the absence of natural honey, people

started using packaged honey bought from markets. Even the traditional ayurvedic practitioners couldn't get pure honey to prepare medicines.

Realising the demand for Keonjhar honey and shortage of its supply, the Horticulture department decided to start honey bee farming at its Kuanr nursery. The project was started with 120 boxes three years ago.

However, these boxes have been lying unused for the last two years.

Lying in the open, they are now damaged. As a result, the money spent on the project has gone waste. Subsequently, the department bought boxes with bees, each costing ₹4,500. Thus, the department had spent around ₹5,50,000 so far just for purchasing boxes.

While no enquiry has been ordered to find who is responsible for the failure of project, the department is now planning to restart the project. "And efforts are already underway," some sources said.

Meanwhile, it has been widely discussed that appointments should be made to fill up the vacant posts in the department to look after the project. Unless new appointments are made, it would be case of throwing good money after the bad.

When contacted, deputy director of Horticulture, Sukant Nayak said that he was unable to say who were responsible for the failure of the project and the reasons that led to mismanagement because it happened prior to his posting. "Lying in the open, all the boxes are damaged. The departmental efforts are on to revive the project," he informed.

Alarming decline in Pb groundwater level, says study

INDIA IS THE LARGEST USER OF GROUNDWATER IN THE WORLD FOR IRRIGATION, DOMESTIC AND INDUSTRIAL NEEDS. THE TOTAL ANNUAL GROUNDWATER ABSTRACTION IN INDIA IS ABOUT 245 KM3, OUT OF WHICH ABOUT 90 PER CENT IS CONSUMED FOR IRRIGATION



New Delhi, July 6: Groundwater level in northwest India has dipped to alarming levels, especially in Punjab and neighbouring Haryana, according to a new study.

The research paper published by IIT Kanpur has used more than 4,000 groundwater well data from northwest India to demonstrate that groundwater levels in the states of Punjab and Haryana have fallen to alarming levels in the last four-five decades.

Several parts of the Ganga plains are currently suffering from similar over exploitation of groundwater and it may still be time to arrest the situation if proper strategies can be designed for groundwater management, it said.

The states of Punjab and Haryana are the worst affected region and the study led by Prof. Rajiv Sinha and his PhD student, Suneel Kumar Joshi, at IIT Kanpur shows that shallow groundwater fell from 2 metres below ground level (bgl) during 1974, to about 30 metres bgl in 2010.

This translates to an average loss of groundwater of more than 50 km³ (1.0 km³/yr) particularly after 2002. "The situation is equally bad for states like UP and Bihar which are agriculture dominated states and where the groundwater management strategies are still quite primitive," the study said.

The study reveals that the rice cultivation area increased from 1,92,000 to 14,22,000 hectares between 1966-67 and 2017-18 for Haryana and from 2,27,000 to 30,64,000 hectares between 1960-

61 and 2017-18 in Punjab. As a result, groundwater abstraction increased to fulfil the demand.

Also, the most significant decline in groundwater levels is recorded along the Ghaggar-Hakra paleochannel (Kurukshetra, Patiala and Fatehabad districts), and in along the incised valley of the Yamuna River (parts of Panipat and Karnal districts).

The authors suggest that the rate of groundwater abstraction in the states of Punjab and Haryana, which make up the leading agricultural region of India, rose sharply since the mid-20th century to support a massive increase in agricultural productivity, termed the "Green Revolution," which was aimed at achieving self-sufficiency in food production.

The Green Revolution has been cited as the primary cause behind the dramatic fall in groundwater levels in the region through uncontrolled pumping and groundwater abstraction by several workers before but this paper provides high resolution data on groundwater level change to validate this hypothesis.

An important finding of this paper is that local geomorphology like positions of former channel paleochannels, control the groundwater availability in a major way and creates a strong spatial heterogeneity in depletion patterns over time. This study has significant implications for designing sustainable strategies for groundwater management not only for northwest India but for most of the Ganga plains covering parts of UP and Bihar.

Delimitation Commission begins meet

The delimitation has attained an urgency amid indications that the Centre is keen to hold early Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir

AGENCIES

New Delhi/Srinagar, July 6: On day one of the four-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir, the Delimitation Commission Tuesday started its meeting with the leaders of different political parties in the Union Territory (UT) to gather first hand information and input related to the ongoing process of delimitation, as mandated under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.

The meeting started at 3.30 p.m. with representatives from Bahujan Samaj Party including its leaders Mushtaq Ahmad, Sunia Koul (BDC member), and District Presidents Manzoor Ahmad Thokar and Abdul Rashid Dar. The meeting ended with BSP party leaders at 3.50 p.m.

The Commission's meeting with BJP's Sofi Yusif (Ex-MLC), G.M. Mir;



File image of members of the Gupkar Alliance.

PTI

Surinder Ambardar (Ex-MLC) and Altaf Thakur took place between 3.50 p.m. and 4.10 p.m. Communist Party of India's G.M. Mirza (secretary) along with members state council, Bashir Ahmad and Manzoor Ahmad Daikoo had a meeting with the commission for around 20 minutes till 4.30 pm.

The Commission further met with CPI-M leaders -- Gh. Nabi Malik (secretary J&K), Ramesh Kumar Bhat, Ab Rashid Pandit, Mohd Subhan and Wahi Sultan Dar between 4.30 pm to 4.50 pm. Six Congress leaders including G.A. Mir (President), Peejzada Mohd Sayeed (Former President), Taj

Mohd Mohi-u-Din (Former Minister), Bashir Ahmad Magrey (Ex-MLA), Surinder Singh Channi (General Secretary) and senior leader Vinod Koul met with the commission later.

From National Conference, Abdul Rahim Rather, Mohd Shafi, Mia Altaf Ahmad, Nasir Aslam Wani and Sakina Ittoo later met with the commission till 5.30 pm. Jammu and Kashmir's National Panthers Party members Syed Masood Andrabi, Manzoor Ahmad Naik, Hakikat Singh Jamwal, Farooq Ahmad Dar and Hakeem Arif Ali will later meet with the commission.

Besides, four members of J&K People's Conference and five members of J&K Apni Party will also subsequently meet with the commission as per the prescribed 20-minute slot for each party.

This is the first visit of the three-member Delimitation Commission headed by Chairperson, Justice (Retd) Ranjana Prakash Desai and its ex-officio members Sushil Chandra (Election Commissioner) and K.K. Sharma (State Election Commissioner, J&K). All the commission members reached Srinagar in the morning Tuesday.

In its four-day visit to the erstwhile state till July 9, the commission will also meet public representatives and Union Territory administration officials, including District Election Officers or Deputy Commissioners of 20 districts in order to complete the delimitation process of Assembly seats so that elections can be held in the UT.

The commission will have detailed interaction with deputy commissioners of Kashmir division at Pahalgam and Srinagar July 7 and those of Jammu division at Kishtwar and Jammu July 8 and 9.

Amarnath board launches online services for devotees

AGENCIES

Srinagar, July 6: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Tuesday launched various online services of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board to provide a personal experience to the devotees.

"For millions of devotees who are unable to visit the holy cave of Shri Amarnath Ji this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Shrine Board has brought Darshan, Hawan, and Prasad facility under the virtual mode. The devotees can book their Pooja, Hawan, and Prasad online, and priests at the holy cave will offer it in the devotee's name. Prasad will be subsequently delivered at doorsteps of the devotees," a spokesman of the board said.



With the launch of new online services of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, the devotees of Lord Shiva from across the world can perform online virtual 'pooja' and 'hawan' at the holy cave, the Lt Governor said. The online 'prasad' booking service was also extended to the devotees through this initiative, he added. "Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board is extending online services including virtual pooja for devotees in their name, virtual hawan (with darshan) by name and online prasad booking," said Nitishwar Kumar, CEO of the shrine board.

The CEO said online services can be booked through the board's website www.Shriamarnathjishrine.Com by visiting the 'Book Online Pooja/Hawan/Prasad' page and also through the board's mobile application from Tuesday onwards, by paying Rs 1,100 for virtual pooja, Rs 1,100 for prasad booking (with 5 gm silver coin of Amarnathji), Rs 2,100 for prasad booking (with 10 gm silver coin of Amarnathji), Rs 5,100 for the special hawan or combination of any of the above.



A security personnel stands guard as members of Delimitation Commission arrive to meet leaders of different political parties in Srinagar

PTI PHOTO

Hot weather conditions prevail across Punjab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, July 6: Hot weather conditions continued to prevail in Haryana and Punjab Tuesday, with Gurugram sizzling at 42.6 degrees Celsius.

Gurugram, where the maximum temperature was five notches above normal, was the hottest place in Haryana.

Among other places in Haryana, Hisar recorded a high of 41.5 degrees Celsius, three notches above normal, while Narnaul and Bhiwani recorded a maximum

temperature of 41.2 degrees Celsius and 41.4 degrees Celsius respectively, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Ambala recorded a high of 39.7 degrees Celsius, four notches above normal, while Karnal's maximum temperature settled at 38.8 degrees Celsius, four notches above normal. In Punjab, Bathinda recorded a high of 40.2 degrees Celsius, three notches above normal, and Patiala recorded a maximum temperature of 40.6 degrees Celsius, five notches above normal. Amritsar



Women cover their faces with a piece of cloth to protect themselves on a hot summer day in Patiala.

PTI PHOTO

recorded a maximum temperature of 40.3 degrees Celsius, four notches above normal, while Ludhiana's high settled at 38.2 degrees Celsius, three notches above normal.

Chandigarh, the common capital of the two states, recorded a high of 39 degrees Celsius, four notches above normal. "Accordingly, the southwest monsoon is likely to advance over remaining parts of west Uttar Pradesh, some parts of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi around July 10," it said.

Police use teargas on school teachers



AGENCIES

Chandigarh, July 6: Police Tuesday lobbed teargas shells and used water cannons to disperse school teachers as they tried to force their way through barricades put up on the Chandigarh-Mohali border in a bid to reach Punjab CM Amarinder Singh's official residence here.

Demanding that their services be regularised, temporary teachers have been protesting outside the Punjab School Education Board building in Mohali for the past several days. Under the banner of the Temporary Teachers' Union, they had planned to lay siege to the official residence of the Punjab CM to press for their demands. When scores of protesting teachers, including women, tried to force their way through barricades, the Chandigarh Police used water cannons and teargas shells to prevent them from heading towards the CM's residence. The protesting teachers claimed that some of them sustained injuries.

Mughal, Sinthan roads reopened after nearly 2 yrs

The roads were closed August 4, 2019 as a precautionary measure as the Centre abrogated Article 370 that provided special status to Jammu and Kashmir while bifurcating the then state into two Union Territories

AGENCIES

Srinagar, July 6: The historic Mughal and Sinthan roads, connecting Kashmir valley to Poonch-Rajouri and Chenab Valley regions respectively, were thrown open for vehicular traffic Monday after remaining closed for nearly two years following the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status in August 2019.

"Light motor vehicles as well as heavy motor vehicles were allowed to ply on Mughal road Monday. The road was reopened for civilian movement after two years," an official said. The historic Mughal road connects Shopian in south Kashmir to Poonch and was the route used by the Mughal kings to reach Kashmir.

The Sinthan-Kokernag road, which connects Anantnag district to Kishtwar, was also opened for civilian traffic. The roads were closed August 4, 2019 as a precautionary measure as the Centre abrogated Article 370 that provided special status to Jammu and Kashmir while bifurcating the then state into two union territories.

The opening of the roads comes four days after Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha made an announce-



ment to this effect. "In the past few days, many delegations from Rajouri, Poonch, Kishtwar, Doda met me. Today, we've decided that Mughal Road and Sinthan Road will be opened for the common public from July 5," Sinha said.

"Opening these will not only facilitate movement for people but also improve J&K's overall economy. I've issued orders. People of Rajouri

& Poonch can now come to Srinagar easily. People of Kishtwar & Doda will be able to come to Kashmir division easily," he added.

Mughal Road is the road between Buzilaz, a town in Poonch district, and the Shopian district. The 84 km road traces a historic route used in the Mughal period over the Pir Panjal Pass. It connects Poonch and Rajouri to Srinagar

in the Valley, reducing the distance between Shopian and Poonch from 588 km to 126 km.

The Sinthan Road connecting Kishtwar in Jammu region with Anantnag in Kashmir Division goes through the Sinthan pass located at 3,800m above sea-level. It reduces the distance for the people who otherwise need to go via Jammu to reach Kashmir.

Amarinder meets Sonia amid infighting in Punjab Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 6: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Tuesday met Congress president Sonia Gandhi at her residence here amid infighting in the state unit, and said whatever decisions she takes on changes in the organisation and the government will be acceptable.

The meeting that is part of the party leadership's efforts to end factionalism in the poll-bound state lasted around 90 minutes and the two leaders discussed governance and political matters.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi was present during the meeting along with senior party leader Mallikarjun Kharge who headed the party panel set up to resolve the infighting in the Punjab Congress. The meeting assumed significance as the party high command has been trying to resolve the internal rift in the Punjab unit of the Congress and there is talk of its revamp, with just months to go for the assembly polls. Congress leader for former minister Navjot Singh

Sidhu has been at loggerheads with the chief minister, attacking him on issues like the alleged delay in the completion of a probe into the 2015 desecration of Sikh texts and the subsequent police firing on protesters. After his meeting with Sonia Gandhi, Singh told reporters, "Whatever decision the Congress president takes, we will implement it in Punjab. The decisions taken by Congress chief on anything -- the party and the government -- will be acceptable."

He said the party was all geared up for the assembly elections in the state, slated for early next year. The chief minister said he always meets the Congress president whenever he is in Delhi and this was one such meet.

"I do not know anything about Sidhu sahib, I only discussed our government's work. Political issues were also discussed," he said, when asked whether a role for Navjot Singh Sidhu was also discussed during the meeting.

Singh was in Delhi twice last month to meet the three-member panel headed by Kharge.

national

of the day quote

In the initial stage, we had a maximum of 70 beds but in the last one year, we thought of ways to increase ICU capacity. Our total strength of ICU beds in GMCH and various COVID-19 centres in Kamrup Metro has gone up to 591, including the addition of 200 ICU beds today

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CHIEF MINISTER

France has started a probe in the Rafale case, but in India, where commission was paid, no inquiry is being conducted. If one compares the Rafale deal with the Bofors case, the then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi had, on his own, constituted a JPC

DIGVIJAYA SINGH | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

The BJP government has added one more lie to its hundred lies by saying that it had planted 100 crore saplings during its term. He said the BJP, instead of planting trees, was sowing the seeds of hatred

AKHILESH YADAV | FORMER CHIEF MINISTER OF UTTAR PRADESH

SHORT TAKES

Jaishankar to visit Russia

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will go to Russia on a two-day official visit Wednesday. A statement from the Ministry of External Affairs said that during the visit from July 7 to 9, Jaishankar will meet his counterpart Sergey Lavrov, the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation.

'Khela Hobe Diwas' in WB

Kolkata: To commemorate the 'Khela Hobe' (Game is On) slogan that modulated the election campaign sloganeering during the recently-concluded Assembly polls in West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Tuesday announced on the floor of the Assembly that a 'Khela Hobe Diwas (Day)' will be observed in Bengal. Though she didn't mention any particular date to celebrate the Khela Hobe Diwas, the Chief Minister promised to distribute 50,000 footballs on that day.

Maliwal gets another term

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Tuesday approved another term for Delhi Commission For Women (DCW) chief Swati Maliwal and her team for doing "excellent work". The panel's term is for three years and this will be Maliwal's third stint, according to a DCW official. "Delhi Commission for Women has been doing an excellent work. Their term comes to an end. I approved another one term for the present Commission today. Best wishes to Swati and her team. Keep doing good work," Kejriwal said in a tweet.

Policeman held

Kochi: A policeman and five others were arrested by police here Tuesday in connection with the killing of a 32-year-old autorickshaw driver. According to police, Krishnakumar was bludgeoned to death by the gang comprising policeman Bejoy midnight last allegedly over a financial dispute between the victim and Faisal, the first accused in the case.

Sailor found dead

Kochi: A 19-year-old sailor hailing from Uttar Pradesh was found dead at his duty post in Kochi Naval base, with bullet injury, early Tuesday.



Our shameless PM has failed the country but his picture is found everywhere -- from vaccine certificates to hoardings

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

250 FALL ILL AFTER CONSUMING 'PRASAD'

At least 250 villagers of Bihar's Munger district fell ill after consuming 'prasad'. The incident occurred Monday evening in Kothwa village where a 'Puja' was held in the house of a villager named Mahesh Koda



Govt warns of lockdown if norms ignored

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 6: The Union Health Ministry Tuesday expressed concern over people roaming in hill stations and markets without following Covid-19 appropriate behaviours and warned that such laxity can nullify the gains made in the management of the pandemic so far.

Stressing that the pandemic was not yet over, officials described the images of large numbers of people thronging popular hill stations as "frightening".

"People are indulging in revenge travel with restrictions being lifted. Some photos published in the media of Manali and Shimla in Himachal Pradesh, Mussoorie in Uttarakhand, Sadar Bazar and Laxmi Nagar in Delhi, and Dadar market in Mumbai show a huge crowd roaming around without following social distancing and wearing masks. Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Health Ministry, also sounded alarm on the situation saying that people travelling to hill stations are not following Covid-appropriate behaviour. "We can nullify the ease in restrictions again if protocols not complied with," he said.

CROWDS AT HILL STATIONS



"People need to understand that the virus and the disease is still here. People roaming in hill stations and markets without maintaining physical distance and not wearing masks can nullify the gains made in the management of the pandemic so far," joint secretary in the health ministry Lav Agarwal said as he stressed on following Covid-appropriate behaviour and vaccination.

Stating that the pictures from hill stations and markets are "frightening", ICMR Director General

Balram Bhargava said some states in the country are still struggling with the second wave of Covid-19.

"The second wave of COVID-19 has come down in most states. However, some states are still in the midst of the second wave." "The areas reporting a test positivity rate of over 10 per cent have to impose/ reinstate certain restrictive measures which have shown to be time tested and found to be effective because the virus is still lurking around," he said.

If the test positivity rate is below

5 per cent then it is a good sign and some of the restrictions can be eased. And the same momentum of high-level testing needs to be maintained, he underlined.

Agarwal said as many as 73 districts across 17 states and union territories, including Arunachal Pradesh (18 districts), Rajasthan (10), Manipur (9), Kerala (7), Meghalaya (6), Tripura (4), Sikkim (4), Odisha (3) and Nagaland (3), reported more than 10 per cent Covid positivity rate in the week from June 29 to July 5.

Eighty per cent of the new Covid cases in India are being reported from 90 districts across 14 states and union territories, including Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka, indicating the need for focused attention in these areas, he said.

According to sources, the health ministry is writing to these 14 states and union territories that are reporting high positivity in India.

The ministry is also likely to write to the Himachal Pradesh government over rampant flouting of Covid-appropriate behaviour and social distancing norms in Shimla and Manali, a source said.

OPPN LEADERS WRITE TO PREZ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 6: Outrage mounted over the death of Father Stan Swamy with top UN and EU rights bodies terming it "disturbing" while leaders of 10 opposition parties wrote to President Ram Nath Kovind Tuesday urging him to direct the government to take action against those responsible for allegedly meting out "inhuman treatment" to the activist in jail.

The government, however, maintained that all actions were taken strictly in accordance with the law in the case, stressing that India's democratic and constitutional polity is complemented by independent judiciary and a range of human rights bodies.

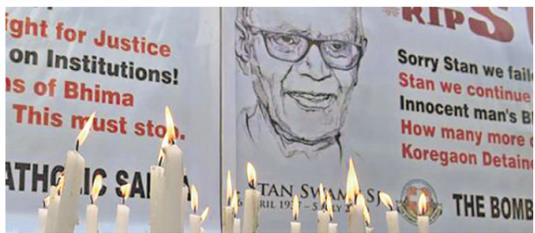
A small funeral service, which was joined by many online, was held at the St. Peter's church in suburban Bandra in Maharashtra under the COVID-19 protocol for the 84-year-old Jesuit priest, who was arrested in October under the anti-terrorism law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in the Elgar Parishad case and died at a Mumbai hospital Monday in the middle of his fight for bail on health grounds.

Opposition leaders and activists had lashed out at the Centre after Swamy's death, calling it "custodial murder" and alleging that those who repeatedly denied bail to the ailing activist had "blood on their hands". On Tuesday, leaders of 10 parties including Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, NCP chief Sharad Pawar and former prime minister H D Deve Gowda wrote to the President Kovind urging him to

STAN SWAMY'S DEATH

direct the government to act against those responsible for "foisting false cases" on Swamy, "his continued detention in jail and inhuman treatment." West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee (TMC), Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin (DMK) and his Jharkhand counterpart Hemant Soren (JMM) have also signed the letter, besides D Raja (CPI), Sitaram Yechury (CPI-M) and Tejashwi Yadav (RJD). "We the undersigned leaders of major opposition parties are writing to you in deep anguish expressing our intense grief and outrage at the death of Father Stan Swamy under custody," the opposition leaders said in their joint letter. "We are urging your immediate intervention as the President of India to direct your government to act against those responsible for foisting false cases on him, his continued detention in jail and inhuman treatment. They must be held accountable," the letter said.

They also demanded that all those jailed in the Bhima Koregaon case and other detainees "under politically motivated cases, misusing draconian laws like UAPA, sedition, etc, be released forthwith". Church bodies too expressed anger over the denial of bail to Swamy. "We fail to understand why an 84-year-old social worker, greatly weakened by diverse ailments, could not get a bail for a case in which he claimed absolute innocence," North East India Regional Bishops' Council (NEIRBC) Deputy Secretary Fr GP Amalraj said in a statement.



SURVIVING NATURE'S FURY



Villagers stand near a breached embankment at a flood affected village in Bihar's Araria district

PTI PHOTO

'Can't shift mental health patients to beggars' homes'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 6: The Supreme Court Tuesday directed the Centre to ensure that people lodged in mental health establishments are tested for Covid-19 and fully vaccinated at the earliest.

A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and MR Shah took serious note of Maharashtra government's shifting patients lodged in mental health institutes to homes for beggars and asked it to discontinue the practice immediately saying it is counter-productive and runs against the provisions of Mental Health Act.

It noted that Additional Solicitor General Madhavi Divan, appearing for the Centre, has assured the Court that this matter (of vaccination) would be taken up with utmost priority. "The Department of Social Justice shall take it up im-

mediately with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare so that suitable instructions are given and a plan is chalked out for all the States/Union Territories for ensuring the vaccination of persons who are institutionalized in mental health establishments," the bench said.

The bench said it agreed with the submission of petitioner-advocate Gaurav Kumar Bansal that the issue of testing, tracing and vaccinating those suffering from mental illness must be taken up on priority. "Persons who are institutionalized in mental health establishments need to be vaccinated so as to protect them," it said. The bench also asked standing counsel for Maharashtra, Sachin Patil, to take instructions with regard to shifting of persons, who are institutionalized in mental health establishments to beggar

homes/custodial institutions.

"While the Standing Counsel may do so, we are categorically of the view that any such action to shift such persons to 'beggar homes' / custodial institutions would be counterproductive and contrary to the letter and spirit of the Mental Healthcare Act 2017. We accordingly direct the State of Maharashtra to look into this aspect immediately and ensure that this practice is discontinued," it said.

The bench directed all states and UTs to extend cooperation in complying with the directions and said they ensure before the meeting that the discrepancies in the data, as noticed in the earlier order of this Court, are resolved and a status report on the implementation of the directions in regard to the establishment of Halfway Homes is filed.

ED summons Mehbooba Mufti's mother

AGENCIES

Srinagar, July 6: Hours after the PDP announced its decision to stay away from the proceedings of the Delimitation Commission, the Enforcement Directorate Tuesday served a notice on the mother of its president Mehbooba Mufti asking her appear at the agency's office here July 14 in connection with a money laundering case.

According to the notice posted by Mehbooba on her Twitter account, her mother Gulshan Nazir has been asked to appear before the probe agency. The criminal case filed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act is linked to the recovery of at least two diaries by the ED after raids on an alleged associate of Mehbooba, a former J&K chief minister. The diaries contain details of some purported payments made from the CM's discretionary fund in alleged contravention of rules, officials said.

Citing Britney case, SC nixes guru's plea for woman

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 6: The Supreme Court Tuesday refused to entertain a plea by a 42-year-old spiritual guru from Kerala seeking release of his 21-year-old live-in partner from her parents' alleged illegal custody.

A bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana cited the case of pop star Britney Spears, who has been fighting a legal battle in the US to free herself from the conservatorship of her father.

Refusing to entertain the plea, the bench also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy noted that the petitioner's credentials were suspect. The Chief Justice said: "The girl is in a fragile state of mind. She is 21 and does not

know what she is doing. The man (petitioner) is married with two children." Additionally, Justice Roy noted the facts are such and the antecedents of the petitioner are such, that it does not inspire confidence.

Citing the Spears case, the bench observed that in the US unless an adult gives consent, he or she cannot be given any form of medical or psychiatric treatment. "Now, the entire family is on the road because of that, since a mentally unstable person cannot give consent," the Chief Justice said.

Spears has been under the comprehensive conservatorship of her father, Jamie Spears, following her breakdown around 12 years ago. Recently, billionaire and Tesla CEO Elon Musk had spoken up in sup-



port of the pop icon.

In the spiritual guru's case, he had moved the top court challenging a Kerala High Court's judgment that had dismissed his habeas corpus plea seeking the release of his 21-year-old partner.

Senior Advocate Gopal

Sankaranarayanan, representing the petitioner, submitted that the woman is an adult who is being illegally detained by her parents. The bench responded by saying, "There is nothing illegal. She is with her parents."

Citing a plea on parents' con-

cern about such spiritual gurus, the bench asked Sankaranarayanan, "You also know about some of these gurus." With this observation, it refused to interfere in the matter.

The bench noted that the petitioner was married with two children, and his mother had also said she did not trust her son. "He is also involved in a POCSO case," the bench added. POCSO is an abbreviation of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, which was enacted in 2012. The apex court asked Sankaranarayanan, "How can we give this girl to this man?"

Sankaranarayanan argued that the High Court had adopted a "paternalistic approach" as it denied an adult woman the right to take independent decisions for herself.

He clarified that his client did not seek that the woman be allowed to join him, but was only asking for her freedom from the "illegal detention" of her parents.

The counsel added that it was a question of the liberty of the woman. The High Court, he said, had erred in making an assessment of the mental capacity of the woman after interacting with her, although under the provision of the Mental Healthcare Act, it was expected to refer the woman for a medical examination.

The bench replied, "No parent will say that a 21-year-old has a mental health issue. In India people cover up mental health issues. This is a case where we are clear that the woman should not go with the petitioner."

international

of the day quote

If a major incident happened (over Taiwan), it's safe to say it would be related to a situation threatening the survival (of Japan). If that is the case, Japan and the US must defend Taiwan together

TARO ASO | DEPUTY PM, JAPAN

We're going to make sure that we're not seeing a resurgence of Covid-19 cases because nobody wants to go back to further restrictions, after having done so much and sacrificed so much to get to this point

JUSTIN TRUDEAU | PM, CANADA

If immigration had not been carved out and if the National Treatment principle had been incorporated into the Chapter 9 of CECA, then indeed, Indian workers would have been treated like Singaporeans, and would have had free rein to come to live and work in Singapore

ONG YE KUNG | HEALTH MINISTER, SINGAPORE

SHORT TAKES

Lukashenko foe jailed for 14 years

MOSCOW: A court in Belarus jailed former presidential contender Viktor Babariko for 14 years Tuesday after convicting him on corruption charges he denied, sparking condemnation from the West and the embattled opposition-in-exile. Before his arrest last June, opinion polls suggested Babariko, 57, was veteran leader Alexander Lukashenko's main rival ahead of a presidential election which the opposition says was rigged last August to prolong Lukashenko's long rule.

No survivors from Russian plane crash

MOSCOW: Wreckage from a plane that went missing Tuesday in Russia's Far East region of Kamchatka was found around five kilometers (three miles) away from a runway at an airport on the coast where it was supposed to land, officials said. The governor of Kamchatka, Vladimir Solodov, told the Interfax news agency that the aircraft's fuselage was found on land near the coast, while other wreckage was found nearby in the Okhotsk Sea. According to Russian media reports, none of the 28 people on board have survived the crash.

9 Hong Kongers held for bomb plot

HONG KONG: Six secondary school children were among nine Hong Kongers arrested on terror charges for allegedly trying to manufacture a powerful explosive, police announced Tuesday. "The operation we conducted yesterday was against gangsters (who) tried to manufacture TATP explosive inside a home-made laboratory inside a hostel," senior superintendent Steve Li, from the city's new national security unit, told reporters. TATP is a high-powered explosive.

Fire reignites at Thailand factory

BANGKOK: Chemicals at a factory just outside the Thai capital burst back into flames briefly Tuesday, sending another cloud of toxic black smoke into the air and highlighting the continuing health danger from an industrial accident that killed one and injured dozens more. It took firefighters more than 24-hours to put the fire out initially after it started with an explosion at about 3 am Monday.



The news from India today is devastating. Human Rights Defender and Jesuit priest Fr Stan Swamy has died in custody, nine months after his arrest on false charges of terrorism. Jailing Human Rights Defenders is inexcusable

MARY LAWLOR | UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

WORLD FIRST FOR REWILDING

Touting a world first for "rewilding", an animal charity said Tuesday it was set to fly a herd of elephants from a British zoo to a new home in Kenya



Fallout continues from biggest global cyber attack

The attack by the notorious REvil gang came just as a long Fourth of July weekend began

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Boston, July 6: The single biggest ransomware attack yet continued to bite Monday as more details emerged on how a Russia-linked gang breached the exploited software company. The criminals essentially used a tool that helps protect against malware to spread it globally.

Thousands of organizations, largely firms that remotely manage the IT infrastructure of others, were infected in at least 17 countries in Friday's assault.

Kaseya, whose product was exploited, said Monday that they include several just returning to work.

REvil was seeking USD 5 million payouts from the so-called managed service providers that were its principal downstream targets in this attack, apparently demanding much less, just USD 45,000, from their afflicted customers.

But late Sunday, it offered on its dark web site to make available a universal decryptor that would unscramble all affected machines



KASEYA RANSOMWARE ATTACK

if it's paid USD 70 million in cryptocurrency. Some researchers considered the offer a PR stunt, while others thought it indicates the criminals have more victims than they can manage.

A wide array of businesses and public agencies were affected, including in financial services and travel, but few large companies were hit, the cybersecurity firm Sophos said. The United Kingdom, South Africa, Canada, Argentina, Mexico, Indonesia, New Zealand and Kenya were among countries affected, researchers said.

NILE DAM CONTROVERSY

Ethiopia resumes filling reservoir, infuriating Egypt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cairo, July 6: Egypt said Monday that Ethiopia has reported it is starting to fill the reservoir of a controversial dam on the Nile River's main tributary, a move likely to increase tensions ahead of a UN Security Council meeting on the dispute, which also includes Sudan.

A statement by Egypt's Irrigation Ministry said Minister Mohammed Abdel-Aty received an official notice from his Ethiopian counterpart notifying Egypt of the reservoir filling for the second year.

The statement said Egypt categorically rejects such a "unilateral move," calling it a "clear and grave violation" of a 2015 agreement. It said the move is a threat to region's security and peace.

The UN Security Council has scheduled a Thursday meeting to discuss the decade-long dispute over the dam. There has been mounting tensions in recent months after the latest round of African Union-brokered negotiations in April failed to make progress. Foreign ministers of Egypt and Sudan are in New York to attend the Security Council meeting.

TALIBAN WINS CLOSE CONSULATES

With their victories in northern and southern Afghanistan, the Taliban are putting pressure on provincial cities and gaining control of key transportation routes



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kabul, July 6: A surge of Taliban wins in northern Afghanistan has caused some countries to close their north Afghan consulates, while across the border in Tajikistan reservists are being called up to reinforce its southern border, according to officials and reports Tuesday.

Nearly 1,000 Afghan soldiers have fled the Taliban advances by crossing the border into Tajikistan, according to reports from Tajikistan.

A statement Monday from the Tajik government said President Emomali Rakhmon has ordered

the mobilization of 20,000 military reservists to strengthen its border with Afghanistan.

The Afghan military exodus comes as Taliban overrun most districts in northeastern Badakhshan province. Many of the districts collapsed without a fight but along the province's northern border with Tajikistan, hundreds of Afghan National Security and Defense Forces crossed the border seeking safety.

The consulates of Turkey and Russia have reportedly closed in Mazare-Sharif, the capital of northern Balkh province, and Afghanistan's fourth-largest city. Iran said it has restricted activities

Russia pledges to secure Tajik-Afghan border

Russian military helicopters based in Tajikistan fired air-to-surface missiles during a training exercise Tuesday as Moscow said its forces in the Central Asian nation were fully equipped to help secure the border with Afghanistan. Russian President Vladimir Putin told Rakhmon Monday that Moscow would help the impoverished former Soviet republic contend with the fall-

out from NATO's exit from neighboring Afghanistan if necessary. Russia, which operates one of its largest military bases abroad in Tajikistan equipped with tanks, helicopters, drones and ground attack aircraft, would help stabilise the border with Afghanistan if needed, both directly and through a regional security bloc, the Kremlin said in a statement.

at its consulate in the city. There has been fighting in Balkh province, but the provincial capital has been relatively peaceful.

The consulates of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, India and Pakistan have reduced their services, Balkh provincial governor's spokesman Munir Farhad said Tuesday. He said Turkey and Russia had closed their consulates and their diplomats had left the city.

The Tajik government said Afghan troops were being allowed to cross on humanitarian grounds but the border posts on the Tajik side were in control of Tajik forces

and there was no fighting with Taliban from the Tajik side.

The Taliban have made relentless territorial wins since mid-April, when President Joe Biden announced the last 2,500-3,500 US soldiers and 7,000 allied NATO soldiers would leave Afghanistan.

The Taliban wins in northern Afghanistan are particularly significant because that part of the country is the traditional stronghold of US-allied warlords and the scene of the Taliban's initial widespread losses in 2001 when the US-led coalition launched its battle to unseat the religious movement.

'Dalai Lama key to resolving conflict'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dharamshala, July 6: The Chinese government should recognise that the Dalai Lama is the key to resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict and should invite him to "Tibet and China on pilgrimage without any precondition", the president of the Tibetan government-in-exile Penpa Tsering said today.

He was speaking at a ceremony to mark the birthday of the Tibetan spiritual leader, who turned 86.

The 14th Dalai Lama has made India his home since fleeing China in 1959.



"His Holiness the Dalai Lama is one of the foremost guides of our time and is one of the few individuals who can reorient Sino-Tibetan history toward a positive direction. The Chinese government should, therefore, recognise that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the key to resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict," Penpa Tsering, who was elected as the president or Sikyong of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in May, said.

He asked China to utilise the opportunity offered by the "mutually beneficial Middle Way Approach" to foster a harmonious environment where Tibetans and Chinese can co-exist amicably.

"Therefore, we appeal to the Chinese government to earnestly invite His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and China on pilgrimage without any precondition," Penpa Tsering said.

At the ceremony, he paid rich tributes to the Dalai Lama for his "visionary leadership" and pledged to strengthen Tibetan unity by resolving the minor differences within through constructive discussion.

Tech giants threaten to quit HK over proposed data laws



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hong Kong, July 6: Facebook, Twitter and Google have warned the Hong Kong government that they could stop operating in the territory if officials proceed with planned changes to data protection laws that could make them liable for the malicious sharing of individuals' information online, The WSJ reported.

A letter sent by an industry group that includes the Internet firms said companies are concerned that the planned rules to address doxing could put their staff at risk of criminal investigations

or prosecutions related to what the firms' users post online.

Doxing refers to the practice of putting people's personal information online so they can be harassed by others, the report said.

Hong Kong's Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau proposed amendments to the city's data-protection laws in May that it said were needed to combat doxing, a practice that was prevalent during 2019 protests in the city.

The proposals call for punishments of up to 1 million Hong Kong dollars, the equivalent of about \$128,800 and up to five years' imprisonment.

Companies are concerned that the planned rules to address doxing could put their staff at risk of criminal investigations or prosecutions related to what the firms' users post online

"The only way to avoid these sanctions for technology companies would be to refrain from investing and offering the services in Hong Kong," said the previously unreported June 25 letter from the Singapore-based Asia Internet Coalition, which was reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.

Tensions have emerged between some of the US's most powerful firms and Hong Kong authorities as Beijing exerts increasing control over the city and clamps down on political dissent.

The US firms and other tech companies last year said they were suspending the processing of requests from Hong Kong law-enforcement agencies following China's imposition of a national security law on the city.

CLIMATE CORPS



Climate activists wearing giant heads depicting EU leaders, from left to right, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Dutch PM Mark Rutte and French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel demonstrate in front of the European Council building in Brussels, Tuesday

Nepal all set to become 'power surplus' nation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, July 6: The 456-megawatt Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project, Nepal's largest so far, has started generating power, paving the way for the Himalayan nation to become "a power surplus country capable of exporting electricity".

Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli Monday inaugurated the project, located on the Tamakoshi River in Dolakha district in north-central Nepal, approximately 200 km away from Kathmandu, by pressing a button during a virtual event held at the PM's official residence in Baluwatar. "This is an historic moment for Nepal. This makes Nepal

a power surplus country capable of exporting electricity," said Nepal Electricity Authority Managing Director Hitendra Dev Shakya.

With its inauguration, the first unit (76 MW) of the project came into operation, officials said.

Though the primary estimated cost for the project was Rs 3,500 crore, it surged to nearly Rs 8,000 crore.

Israeli govt fails to extend controversial Citizenship Law

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, July 6: Israel's parliament early Tuesday failed to renew a law that bars Arab citizens from extending citizenship or residency rights to spouses from the occupied West Bank and Gaza, in a tight vote that raised doubts about the viability of the country's new coalition government.

The 59-59 vote, which came after an all-night session of the Knesset, marked a major setback for Prime Minister Naftali Bennett.

The new Israeli leader, who had hoped to find a compromise between his hard-line Yamina party and the dovish factions in his disparate coalition, instead suffered a stinging defeat in a vote he reportedly described as a referendum on the new government. The vote means the law is now set to expire at midnight Tuesday.

Under it, Arab citizens, who comprise a fifth of Israel's population, have had few if any avenues for bringing spouses from the West Bank and Gaza into Israel. Critics,



Palestinians who are unable to get permits but try to live with their spouses inside Israel are at risk of deportation

including many left-wing and Arab lawmakers, say it's a racist measure aimed at restricting the growth of Israel's Arab minority, while supporters say it's needed for security purposes and to preserve Israel's Jewish character.

The vote exposed the deep divisions and the fragility of the new government.

The decision, however, gave some hope to Arab families that have been affected by the law. The law has created an array of difficulties for thousands of Palestinian families that span the war-torn and largely invisible frontiers separating Israel from east Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, territories it seized in the 1967 war that the Palestinians want for a future state.

of the day quote

We, at Bajaj Auto, believe that touring on a bike opens the doors to a world of 'real' experiences that widens your perspective and shapes one's character. We realise that biking for youngsters can be so much more than just street fun if the bike comes with the right dose of performance, sharp design and a superior riding experience

SARANG KANADE | BAJAJ AUTO PRESIDENT (MOTORCYCLE BUSINESS)

With the second wave of the pandemic hitting India and lockdowns being repeated across states, FY'22 will be another challenging year, or at least till the vaccination drive reaches a fair level of coverage in the country. In such times, we will continue to exercise prudence in managing our expenses

C K VENKATARAMAN | TITAN MANAGING DIRECTOR

Prior to nationalisation, private bank failures were routine. Hence, eulogising private ownership lacked a sense of history

SUKHENDU SEKHAR RAY | TMC MP

SHORT TAKES

UBI, Rayagada gets new regional head

Bhubaneswar: Sushant Kumar Das joined as the regional head of Union Bank of India, Rayagada region. Das joined the banking sector as a rural development officer in 1995 after pursuing B Tech. in Agricultural Engineering, CAIIB & MBA in Finance. He has over 26 years of rich banking experience spanning across states like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra. Das has 22 years of branch level exposure. As he has keen interest in the fields of retail, agriculture and MSME, it is expected that he will give more importance to these sectors in Rayagada region.

Roy takes over as FGMO, Indian Bank

Bhubaneswar: General Manager SSP Roy took over the charge of FGMO, Indian Bank, Bhubaneswar. Prior to this, Roy was heading Mumbai (West) Zone in Maharashtra. Roy had joined Allahabad bank in the year 1992 as an agricultural officer and having work experience in various capacities in different places of Bihar, West Bengal, Delhi, Telangana and Maharashtra. Bhubaneswar FGM Office is working for three states - Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. It has seven zones - Bhubaneswar, Berhampur, Sambalpur, Raipur, Jabalpur, Satna and Bhopal with 519 branches and business mix of ₹52,000 crore under its command area. Bhubaneswar FGMO will thus facilitate quicker disposal of credit proposals up to ₹50 crore pertaining to zones and branches. Roy, who assumed the charge of Bhubaneswar FGMO as the first Field General Manager, is an expert banker having wide exposure in various capacities in the bank. Proficient in banking and finance, Roy will make banking facility easier and will lay more focus on the MSME and retail sectors.

SMFG to buy 74% stake in Fullerton

Tokyo: Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group Inc, Japan's second largest lender by assets, said Tuesday it would buy a 74.9% stake in Fullerton India for \$2 billion, as the bank expands its business elsewhere in Asia amid low interest rates at home, marking the first entry into the South Asian country's retail financial business by a Japanese bank.



Khadi Prakritik Paint has immense potential of creating sustainable development for the benefit of the poorest of the poor and the target should be setting up a parkritik paint unit in each and every village

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MSME MINISTER

DOMESTIC AIR PASSENGER BACK TO GROWTH TRAJECTORY

Domestic air passenger traffic was back to growth trajectory in June amid the falling number of COVID-19 cases in the country with around three million passengers flying on local routes in the previous month as against around two million in May, credit rating agency ICRA said in its report Tuesday.



No deal at OPEC to hit fuel consumers badly

With expectation that global oil price may rise further in coming days, consumers would have to brace for buying fuel at new record prices everyday

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 6: There may be no respite for fuel consumers in the country facing high prices of petrol and diesel for the past couple of months as global oil scenario is expected to remain firm with oil cartel OPEC failing to reach an agreement on gradual raising of oil production to meet the growing demand.

At a meeting of OPEC plus (including Russia) differences surfaced between the world's largest oil producer Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) over raising oil production marginally in August while maintaining production level at the same till 2022.

This prevented a deal that would have helped to soften crude prices a bit next month on the back of increased oil production of 2 million barrels a day.

With no deal among prime oil producers, analysts expect oil prices to remain firm and may hit even \$80 a barrel over the next few days. At intercontinental exchange benchmark, Brent crude is currently hovering at \$77.5 a barrel, up over 1 per cent from the previous day. This is the highest crude level since 2018. In fact,



in the month of July itself crude prices have risen by over \$7 a barrel.

"The situation in global oil markets is not good news for fuel consumers in India. Unless government intervenes by lowering taxes on the two fuels, petrol and diesel retail rates could touch new highs over successive days this month," said an oil sector expert not willing to be named.

Petrol and diesel prices have been raised on 35 days since May 1. This has increased retail petrol prices by ₹9.46 a litre in the last two months while diesel has also increased by ₹8.63 per litre during the same time span.

Also, the Centre had raised excise duty by ₹13 on petrol and ₹16 on diesel between March and May last year when oil prices collapsed due to the pandemic. The two hikes raised excise duty by 65 per cent on petrol from ₹19.98 to ₹32.98 a litre and 79 per cent on diesel from ₹15.83 to ₹28.35 a litre. These high taxes are amplifying the impact of rise in crude prices, sending petrol price above ₹100 a litre and diesel above ₹90 in most parts of the country.

With expectation that global oil may rise further in coming days, consumers would have to brace for buying fuel at new record prices everyday.

Sebi to fine bourses for not swiftly acting on disruption

REUTERS

Mumbai, July 6: Indian stock exchanges that fail to respond to technical disruption and restore operations within 45 minutes will face stringent penalties, the market regulator said, months after a shutdown at the country's biggest bourse sparked investor panic.

The announcement late Monday comes after the National Stock Exchange (NSE) in February went offline for nearly four hours, leaving investors clueless as to when trading would resume and drawing the ire of brokers forced to sell holdings.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in its announcement said stock exchanges, clearing corporations, depositories and their senior management will be fined for not promptly resolving issues or not submitting root-cause analyses within 21 days.

An entity's failure to declare disruption to critical systems as

a "disaster" within 30 minutes, and failure to restore operations within 45 minutes, will in each case attract a penalty of 20 million rupees (\$269,070) or 10% of the average of the two previous financial years' net profit, whichever is higher, SEBI said.

The managing director and chief technology officer of the entity will also be fined 10% of annual pay, the regulator said.

The penalties will encourage entities "to constantly monitor the performance and efficiency of their systems," and avoid, or quickly tackle, disruption, SEBI said.

In February, during the NSE shutdown, some brokers said a lack of swift information on when, or whether, trading would resume prompted them to close intra-day equity positions on another exchange, leading to significant loss for some investors. NSE said it had acted in accordance with standard practices.



Indian bond yields spike to near 4-month highs; crude surge hurts

REUTERS

Mumbai, July 6: Indian bond yields jumped Tuesday as a rally in global crude oil prices raised worries about higher imported inflation, while a selection of papers for this week's bond buyback by the central bank also disappointed investors.

The most-traded 6.64% 2035 bond was up 6 basis points at 6.79%, while the second-highest traded 5.63% 2026 paper rose 7 bps to 5.83%. Both bonds were trading at levels last seen in mid-March. The 10-year bond, which is likely to be soon replaced as the benchmark paper, was up 6 bps at 6.15%, its highest since April 16. HDFC Bank said rising oil prices and lack of liquid papers in this week's government securities acquisition programme (GSAP) or a form of quantitative easing programme of the Reserve Bank of India, is weighing on bond prices.

"The market was hoping for the inclusion of the 5-year paper in the upcoming debt purchase given the recent devolvement of the paper by the RBI," HDFC economists wrote.

Samsung Galaxy A22 launched at ₹18,499

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: Samsung launched the much-anticipated new Galaxy A22 at ₹18,499. Galaxy A22 has 6.4 inch HD and super AMOLED display and also comes with 90Hz refresh rate, versatile 48MP Quad camera with Optical Image Stabilization (OIS) and powerful 5000mAh battery.

The new model comes in black, white, mint, and violet colours and is available in 6GB of RAM and 128GB of storage variant. As an introductory offer, customers can avail ₹1500 cashback while shopping from HDFC Bank debit or credit cards.

Its 48MP main camera with OIS enables users to capture useful ultra-wide and clear photos throughout the day. The 8MP ultra-wide lens has a 123-degree field of view, which adds additional perspective to photographs.

Galaxy A22 comes with 13 MP front camera for high-clarity, eye-catching selfies. It uses advanced AI to automatically enhance colour, brightness and sharpness with Scene Optimizer. Powered by the advanced Octa-Core Mediatek Helio G80 processor, Galaxy A22 ensures optimized performance, smooth



multitasking, and reduced power consumption even while browsing and using multiple apps. Galaxy A22 supports Android 11 and One UI 3.1.

Glass Lewis recommends vote against Adani director over Australian project



Adani Enterprises' Australian unit, Bravus Mining & Resources, is developing the Carmichael mine in Queensland to sell thermal coal to India - a controversial project due to concerns about global warming

REUTERS

Melbourne, July 6: Proxy advisory firm Glass Lewis has recommended shareholders in Adani Enterprises Ltd vote out a member of the board's risk committee.

Glass Lewis said it was making the recommendation after an Australian court in August found

that Adani Abbot Point Terminal Pty Ltd, a coal export terminal in the state of Queensland, engaged in monopolistic business practices. It awarded four companies that used the terminal a combined A\$107 million (\$80.7 million).

An Adani spokesperson said, however, that the Abbot Point Terminal was a separate company, and was not part of Adani Enterprises. The port operator is owned by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd.

The nominee, Pranav Adani, is the sole member of the Adani Enterprises' risk committee up for re-election at its annual general meeting on July 12.

Adani Enterprises' Australian unit, Bravus Mining & Resources, is developing the Carmichael mine in Queensland to sell thermal coal to India - a controversial project due to concerns about global warming. The coal will be transported via the Abbot Point Terminal.

GST revenue hits 10-month low

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 6: GST collection slipped below ₹1 lakh crore in June for the first time in eight months as the second wave of the Covid pandemic and the resultant lockdowns hit businesses and the economy.

At ₹92,849 crore, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection is the lowest in 10 months since August 2020, when it was ₹86,449 crore, official numbers released Tuesday showed.

The GST collections in June 2021 are primarily for supplies made in May - a month when most states were under different levels of lockdown, reducing business activity.

With significant relaxations in lockdown and business supplies picking up, the collections should see a definite uptick in the coming months, experts said.

The gross GST revenue collected in the month of June 2021 is ₹92,849 crore, of which Central GST is ₹16,424 crore, State GST is ₹20,397, Integrated GST is ₹49,079 crore (including ₹25,762 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess is ₹6,949 crore (including ₹809 crore collected on import of goods), the finance ministry said.

The mop-up in June 2021 is 2 per cent higher than ₹90,917 crore collected in June 2020.

GST collection had remained above the ₹1 lakh crore mark for eight months in a row and was ₹1.02 lakh crore in May. However, the collection in June 2021 dropped



Overall, the GST collections in Q1 FY2022 are nearly twice as high as Q1 FY2021, highlighting the narrower impact of the state-wise restrictions necessitated by the second wave of Covid-19 in India, as compared to the stringent nationwide lockdown last year

ADITI NAYAR | ICRA CHIEF ECONOMIST

below ₹1 lakh crore.

"The GST collection for June 2021 is related to the business transactions made during May 2021. During May 2021, most of the states/UTs were under either complete or partial lockdown due to COVID," the ministry added.

It said that e-way bill generation data for the month of June suggests that uptick in revenue is expected in the coming months.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said despite declining to a 10-month low, the June 2021 GST col-

lections provided a positive surprise.

"Overall, the GST collections in Q1 FY2022 are nearly twice as high as Q1 FY2021, highlighting the narrower impact of the state-wise restrictions necessitated by the second wave of Covid-19 in India, as compared to the stringent nationwide lockdown last year. This will buffer the revenue situation of the Centre and the states, which should support a ramping up of expenditure going ahead," Nayar added.

Rural India sinks deeper into debt as Covid wipes out work

REUTERS

Lucknow, July 6: Asha Devi doesn't remember how many meals she has skipped as she struggles to feed her family of seven in a remote corner of northern India where the novel coronavirus is compounding old problems of rural debt and poverty.

Devi, 35, had to mortgage her land for a 20,000 rupee (\$270) loan and six months on, as the money runs out, she has stopped buying milk, halved her use of cooking oil and can afford lentils only about once every 10 days. With her construction worker husband jobless, she's facing going deeper into debt to get by.

"Sometimes I go to sleep hungry. Last week, I think I went to bed hungry at least twice but I can't remember," Devi told as she wiped away tears with her threadbare sari outside her mud house in her village in Uttar Pradesh state.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has promised free foodgrains for the poor but the ra-

tions are limited and not enough for the family, Devi said.

The coronavirus and a lockdown aimed at stopping it last year saw millions of people thrown out of jobs in cities and towns and forced back to their villages, and ever higher levels of debt.

Interviews with 75 households in a cluster of eight villages in India's most populous state showed household incomes have slumped nearly 75% on average. Almost two thirds of the households have taken on debt. Devi's husband used to have a job in construction in the more prosperous state of Punjab to the north-west, which kept the family going. Now the job has gone and he's back home and struggling to find work. Others like him who have lost jobs crowd around a brick kiln near their village every day hoping for work.

HOLDING BACK RECOVERY

Big debt and low income in the countryside will hold back any economic recovery the government is trying to generate and also



dent private savings and investment for longer than expected, economists say.

"It will have a huge impact and prolong the recovery process. Private consumption and investments both will be hurt. There is merit in finding ways to put money in the hands of the people," said N.R. Bhanumurthy, economist and vice chancellor at Bengaluru-based B.R Ambedkar School of Economics.

India's gross domestic product

fell by a record 7.3% in the year that ended on March 31. The government has forecast 10.5% growth for 2021/2022 but a second wave of the pandemic has dented expectations and several economists have cut their forecasts. The poor have especially been hit hard.

The Reuters investigation showed most of the 75 households in the Uttar Pradesh cluster; a combined 518 people, have taken out total debt of 6.12 million rupees (\$82,250),

more than 80% of which remains unserviced, the householders said.

Borrowing has risen by three times since the pandemic hit in March 2020 and about half of that was taken out the past six months, the survey found.

With no jobs or with bread-winners sick, the cumulative monthly income of the 75 households has dropped to about 220,000 rupees (\$2,960) from 815,000 rupees (\$10,960) before the pandemic.

"Almost everyone is in debt in this village ... unemployment is the biggest problem," said 55-year-old Komal Prasad, a former headman of Gauriya, a hamlet in the cluster with a population of just over 2,000 people. Only about 30% of the people in Gauriya had a job or were looking for work, many fewer than before, villagers said.

Juggi Lal, a 35-year-old farmhand, said she was struggling to buy medicine for her disabled husband because there was no work and she owed 60,000 rupees (\$806) to a moneylender. "Every morning I wake

up thinking what work will I get, how will I get through the day?" Rural unemployment rate, which used to hover around 6% before the pandemic, rose to 8.75% in June, according to the Mumbai-based Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy.

RIPPLE EFFECT

The mix of lower incomes, higher debt and rising prices of staples is dampening demand in the countryside where two-thirds of Indians live. Sales of everything from biscuits, tea and lentils to auto parts have taken a hit, vendors say. Some have shut down shops that their families have run for generations.

Gosh Mohammed, 43, used to sell up to 8,000 rupees (\$107) of groceries a day before the pandemic. Now it's down to 1,000 rupees (\$13.5) a day. He has taken 60,000 rupees worth of goods from a wholesaler on credit but hasn't been able to pay it off for six months. "I never used to take goods on credit because buying with cash gets us more of a discount," Mohammed said.



England trial awaits Danes

Paqueta leads Brazil to Copa America final



London, July 6: Wembley Stadium plays host to what ought to be a pulsating Euro 2020 semi-final encounter Wednesday, as England welcome Scandinavian surprise package Denmark to the capital for a place in this summer's final.

The Three Lions thrashed Ukraine 4-0 to make the final four, while Denmark scraped past the Czech Republic 2-1 in the quarters, and either Italy or Spain will await the victors in the showpiece event July 11.

Gareth Southgate's England have inspired a nation. Twenty-five years on from his Euro 96 penalty miss that he is surely sick and tired of hearing about, the 50-year-old has guided the Three Lions to back-to-back semifinal appearances at a major tournament having come so close yet so

far in Russia 2018. Having passed their toughest test against Germany with flying colours, England travelled away from their Wembley headquarters to take on a Ukraine side who were highly fortunate to even be in the knockout rounds to begin with, but not even the most ardent supporters could have envisaged the Three Lions' dominance in Rome.

After Harry Kane took all of four minutes to break the deadlock, England's wise young heads would net a flurry of second-half goals as Kane, Harry Maguire and first-time international goalscorer Jordan Henderson rose highest to put the game to bed with just over an hour played.

Jubilant scenes back home – coupled with endless renditions of Baddiel and Skinner – both demonstrated the pride of England supporters for their team as well

as a much-needed release following the events of the last 18 months. However, the Three Lions' job is far from over, and Southgate will know that better than anyone.

Having now gone seven games across all competitions without conceding a goal, a first-ever appearance at a Euros final will be England's should their staunch defence produce the goods once more, and no team in history has navigated a Euros or World Cup campaign with six clean sheets to their name.

Southgate's struggles to get the best out of a bright attacking contingent have been well-documented, but England's thrashing of Ukraine also represented their biggest-ever margin of victory in a major tournament knockout match, which is just what the doctor ordered before their Nordic neighbours seek to spring another surprise.

What started out as a horror show has since become the stuff

of dreams for Denmark, who are doing Christian Eriksen proud every step of the way. One can only imagine the beaming smile on the Inter Milan playmaker's face as he witnesses his team try to make history, although there is no denying that his teammates would desperately love for him to still be on the pitch with them.

Nevertheless, Kasper Hjulmand's side have coped far better than anyone could have imagined after witnessing the harrowing scenes that they did on the opening matchday, and they followed up their thrashing of Wales in the last 16 with a 2-1 success over the Czechs in the last eight. The Danes advanced to the semis for the first time since 1992.

Of course, the last time that Denmark made it this far culminated in a fairytale ending during Euro 92 – their first and only triumph at the continental champi-

onships to date – and Hjulmand's in-form attacking contingent have already notched up the most goals that their country has ever scored in a single major tournament (11).

Whichever team progress to the final over the course of the full 90, 120 or a penalty shootout will be rewarded with a final appearance versus Italy or Spain – two powerhouses that have dazzled and delighted all summer long – but as we have learned over the course of all major tournaments, form goes out of the window at this incredibly late stage.

A penalty from none other than Eriksen propelled Denmark to victory over England in last year's Nations League, and the Scandinavian side also managed to hold Southgate's men to a goalless draw before that, meaning that we have a truly tantalising battle on our hands in front of a 60,000-strong Wembley crowd.

Rio de Janeiro, July 6: Many Brazil players didn't want to take part in the Copa America tournament. Look at them now.

The Selecao advanced to the final with a 1-0 win over Peru Monday. Shortly later, their star said he hoped to see their archrivals Saturday at the Maracana Stadium.

"I want Argentina in the final," Neymar said after the match at the Nilton Santos Stadium here. "I am cheering for them because I have many friends there. In the final, Brazil will win," he added, laughing.

Argentina and Colombia will play the other semifinal Tuesday. Only Lionel Messi's team can match Brazil's campaign so far with five wins in six Copa America matches.

Neymar made the difference on the bumpy pitch of the Nilton Santos Stadium. The only goal of the match came in the 34th minute after he tricked defender Alexander Callens on the left edge of the box and assisted Lucas Paqueta, who just pushed the ball to the back of the net.

The 23-year-old Paqueta, who started the tournament on the bench,



FINANCIAL TURMOIL

Barcelona 'can't register signings'



Barcelona, July 6: Barcelona's problems seem to be unending as they are reportedly unable to register their new signings – Memphis Depay, Eric Garcia, Sergio Aguero, and Emerson – due to the financial mess they are in. The same goes for Lionel Messi and his new two-year contract.

The latest update came from Ruben Uribe and Adria Soldevila at Goal Espana who've had an in-depth look at Barca's finances and found some "disturbing" results. The report even describes the club's finances as "a horror movie."

Barca now need to cut the wage bill by 200 million euros to comply with La Liga's salary cap and be able to register the new signings. Konrad de la Fuente, Jean-Clair Todibo, Francisco Trincao have all gone. Junior Firpo's move to Premier League side Leeds United was also made official Tuesday.

However, more departures are needed with "extreme urgency." Three players that the Catalans are desperate to get rid of are Samuel Umtiti, Miralem Pjanic, and Philippe Coutinho. However, the club is struggling to find any takers because of their huge wages.

There's also another problem too. Offloading the trio would also only cut 64 million euros off the wage bill which, added to the recent departures of Konrad, Todibo, Trincao, Junior & Matheus, would only make a total of saving of 89.7m euros. That would still not be enough, as only 25 per cent could be reinvested in new signings and registrations to comply with La Liga rules.

All of which means more players may need to go. There are already whispers that Barca are willing to sell Antoine Griezmann, while those rumors about PSG and Manchester City being keen on Messi seem to be on the way back.

Bhagat recommended for Khel Ratna

New Delhi, July 6: Indian para shuttler Pramod Bhagat, who has qualified for the Tokyo Paralympics, has been recommended for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, the country's highest sporting honour, by the Odisha government.

The department of sports and youth services (DSYS) of Odisha has also recommended the Indian women's hockey team vice-captain Deep Grace Ekka for Arjuna Award.



"DSYS has recommended the names of #Odia para shuttler @PramodBhagat83 and current @TheHockeyIndia's vice-captain Deep Grace Ekka for the prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award and Arjuna Award respectively for the year 2021," the department tweeted.

Bhagat, currently ranked No.1 in SL3 category, was awarded the Arjuna Award in 2019. He had won 12 gold, 5 silver and 4 bronze medals in 2019, including the World

Championship title.

At the Dubai Para Badminton tournament early this year, Bhagat had claimed two golds and a bronze medal and remains hopeful of a medal at the Tokyo Paralympics, where badminton is being introduced for the first time.

Ekka, 27, on the other hand, has 150 international caps and is a vital cog in Indian women's hockey team. She was part of the silver-medal winning Indian side in 2018 Asian Games.

Women's Asian Cup: Bhubaneswar dropped as venue

New Delhi, July 6: Bhubaneswar has been dropped as venue for the 2022 Women's Asian Cup football tournament along with Ahmedabad as Mumbai and Pune will host the entire event. Asian Football Confederation (AFC) took the decision to minimise the travelling time for participants and ensure an 'optimum environment' for a bio-secure bubble.

The Mumbai Football Arena at the Andheri Sports Complex and the Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex in Balewadi, Pune have been chosen as the new venues.

"The decision was confirmed taking into careful consideration the existing challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic," the AFC stated in a press release.

The body said it was part of "efforts to minimise the travelling time for teams and officials between the venues, whilst ensuring the optimum environment to implement the Bio Medical Bubble for the benefit of all stakeholders."

"The 37,900-capacity DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai will remain as one of the three stadiums that will stage the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 which is on schedule to take place from January 20 to February 6, 2022," the AFC said.

Speaking about the change in venue, President of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and Chairman of the Local Organising Committee, Praful Patel said, "As the situation evolved, we had to adapt and the need was to create a bio-secure bubble."

"Hence, we chose Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Pune, venues in close geographical proximity with stadiums that have previously hosted major football competitions."

Patel also thanked the governments of Odisha and Gujarat, states that were slated to host the tournament previously.

MITHALI RECLAIMS TOP SPOT IN ODIs

Dubai, July 6: India skipper Mithali Raj Tuesday reclaimed the number one spot in the women's ODI rankings after more than three years following a stellar show in the three-match series against England.

India lost the series 1-2 but the 38-year-old Raj hit a half-century in each of the contest. She struck 72 and 59 in the first two ODIs and then guided India to a four-wicket victory in the final match of the series with an unbeaten 75, gaining four spots to reach the top of the ladder. She last occupied the top spot in February 2018.

The first time she reached No.1 position was in April 2005 after scoring an unbeaten 91 against New Zealand at the World Cup in Potchefstroom and the difference of more than 16 years at No.1 is the largest for any woman batter.

England's Janette Brittin was No.1 for the first time in 1984 and the last time in 1995, while New Zealand's Debbie Hockley is the only other female batter to have been No.1 more than 10 years apart – first achieving the feat in 1987 and for the final time in 1997.

In the bowlers' list, all-rounder Deepti Sharma is up one place to 12th after finishing with figures of three for 47 in the final match.

Virus outbreak forces England to select new team for Pak ODIs

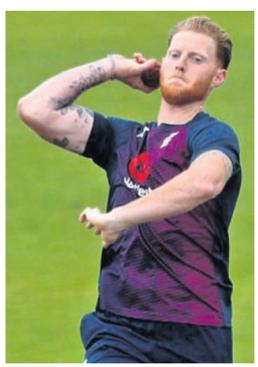
London, July 6: England was forced to select a completely new group of players and management Tuesday for the ODI series against Pakistan after the coronavirus infected three players and four members of staff.

The initially selected squad went into isolation following the results of tests taken Monday, a day after the team's last ODI against Sri Lanka in Bristol. The names of those who tested positive have not been disclosed. The remainder of the group were identified as close contacts.

The three ODIs and three T20Is against Pakistan, starting Thursday with the first ODI in Cardiff, were still going ahead and at the same venues.

Ashley Giles, director of England's men's cricket, said he was confident there had not been a breach of coronavirus protocols in the squad but that it was a natural consequence of restrictions being slightly eased around the squad in line with general society, despite cases rising in England because of the delta variant.

The players, for example, have been staying in shared hotels as op-



posed to living in strict bio-secure bubbles like last summer.

"Given this variant, which is clearly more infectious, the risks of us catching an infection was going to go up," Giles said on a video call.

"It's a reminder of what this can do to a team, and a sports team in particular, right now when we are sort of living at a different rate to society. We are almost misaligned, or at odds, with how society is operating. And that is particularly dif-

ficult when you know one case can shut you down, let alone seven."

England's revised, hastily assembled ODI squad includes nine new caps and will be captained for the first time by Ben Stokes and coached by Chris Silverwood, who had been due to take some time off during the white-ball series but has been pressed back into action. After 10 days of isolation, the initial squad will be back in time to play the T20 series, which starts July 16.

Most of those who tested positive are without symptoms, Giles said, but some have minor, flu-like symptoms. All players in the initial squad received at least one vaccine jab, but not everyone was fully vaccinated.

The new 18-man squad and staff drafted in will need to submit negative tests and complete "bridging protocols" before joining the squad in Cardiff.

REVISED ENGLAND SQUAD: Ben Stokes (C), Jake Ball, Danny Briggs, Brydon Carse, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Lewis Gregory, Tom Helm, Will Jacks, Dan Lawrence, Saqib Mahmood, Dawid Malan, Craig Overton, Matt Parkinson, David Payne, Phil Salt, John Simpson, James Vince.