



## VOICE FROM ISLAMABAD

Pakistani actor Sarwat Gilani opens up about the ban on Pakistani artistes in India

LEISURE P2



## TALIBAN CALLS CHINA FRIEND

Taliban says it sees China as a friend of Afghanistan and assured Beijing that it would not host Uyghur Islamic militants

INTERNATIONAL P10



## BARTY TRIUMPHS

Ashleigh Barty wins the women's singles title at Wimbledon defeating Karolina Pliskova in a hard-fought match

SPORTS P12



READY TO ROLL: Chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra near completion ahead of the annual Rath Yatra festival at Grand Road in Puri, Saturday PTI PHOTO

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## ENCOUNTER WITH MAOISTS

### 2 injured jawans airlifted to AIIMS

**POST NEWS NETWORK** clement weather. Speaking on the media, DGP said, "Today morning, there was an exchange of fire between the Odisha police's SOG jawans and Maoists under Gochapada PS of Kandhamal district. Two of our jawans have been injured and we received information that some Maoists were also injured."

**Bhubaneswar, July 10:** Two security personnel of Special Operation Group (SOG), the elite paramilitary unit of the state police, Saturday sustained severe injuries during an exchange of fire with the Left Wing Extremists in Uma forest near Boudh-Kandhamal border. According to sources, the condition of both the jawan is stable. A special team of doctors has been formed to treat the injured jawans at the AIIMS.

The gun battle broke out early in Saturday morning when the security forces, including the SOG and District Voluntary Force (DVF), launched a combing operation in the area on the basis of specific information about the presence of top Maoists.

The personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force whisked away the injured jawans from the spot where the operation was going on to a safer place. Later, Director General of Police, Abhay who was on his way to undivided Koraput district to review anti-Naxal operations airlifted the injured jawans to AIIMS, Bhubaneswar. Abhay cancelled his visit midway and went Kandhamal to rescue the jawans.

The IAF helicopter called to airlift the jawans returned from Mahasamund in Chhattisgarh due to inclement weather.

An Indian Air Force helicopter was also requisitioned but could not make it because of bad weather. However, the BSF pilot immediately took an alternative route and landed at a very small place named Padelpada and successfully airlifted the injured jawans," the DGP informed.

On the other hand, top police sources told **Orissa POST** that the security forces suspect the presence of more than 15 ultras, including some top Maoist cadres, at the spot during the exchange of fire. The actual casualties among the ultras could be established only after the end of the gun battle which is still on till the last news came in.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

Of course, things have changed with new Cabinet in place. Petrol prices have shot further up!

# UP goes for two-child norm

THOSE WITH MORE THAN TWO CHILDREN CANNOT APPLY FOR GOVT JOBS, CONTEST POLLS, RECEIVE SUBSIDIES

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**Lucknow, July 10:** According to a draft of the proposed population control Bill, anyone violating two-child policy in Uttar Pradesh will be debarred from contesting local bodies elections, from applying for or getting promotion in government jobs, and receiving any kind of government subsidy.

The Uttar Pradesh State Law Commission (UPSLC) states that the provisions are part of the draft titled The Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilisation and Welfare) Bill, 2021.

The UPSLC website says, "The State Law Commission, UP is working on control, stabilisation and welfare of the population of the state and has prepared a draft Bill."

Suggestions have been invited from the public to improve the draft Bill and July 19 is the last date for it.

Listing incentives for public servants who adopt the two-child norm, the draft Bill says, "Public servants who adopt the two-child norm will get two additional increments during the entire service, maternity or as the case may be, paternity leave of 12 months, with full salary and allowances and three per cent increase in the employer's contribution fund under national pension scheme."



A State Population Fund will be constituted for the purpose of implementation of the Act.

Listing the government's duties, the draft Bill states that maternity centres will be established at all primary health centres. The centres and NGOs will distribute contraceptive pills, condoms, etc, spread awareness about family planning methods through community health workers and ensure mandatory registration of pregnancies, deliveries, births and deaths across the state.

The draft Bill also says that it shall be the duty of the government to introduce a compulsory subject relating to population control in all secondary schools.

The Bill seeks to revitalise efforts and provide for measures to control, stabilise and provide welfare to the population of the state by implementing and promoting two-child norm.

The draft Bill reads, "In Uttar Pradesh, there are the limited ecological and economic resources at

**UP POPULATION DRAFT BILL**

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- Suggestions have been invited from the public to improve the draft Bill and July 19 is the last date for it

hand. It is necessary and urgent that the provision of basic necessities of human life including affordable food, safe drinking water, decent housing, access to quality education, economic/livelihood opportunities, power/electricity for domestic consumption and a secure living is accessible to all citizens."

It is necessary to control, stabilise the population of the state for promotion of sustainable development with more equitable distribution, it says.

It is necessary to ensure healthy birth spacing through measures related to augmenting the availability, accessibility and affordability of quality reproductive health services to achieve the goal of population control, stabilisation and its welfare in the state, the draft Bill reads.

It seems that the two-child policy has become the norm with the BJP. A few days back, the Assam government had also announced the two-child policy for the state saying that anyone violating the norm would not be entitled to government jobs or promotions, taking part in local elections and government subsidies. Political observers are of the view that gradually this policy may be implemented in all the BJP-ruled states.

**Srimandir's last 'devadasi' Parasmani Devi dies**

**Puri:** Parasmani Devi, the last surviving 'devadasi' of the Shri Jagannath Temple in Puri, died due to old-age related ailments Saturday. She was 90. Parasmani lived in a rented house in Balisahi area of the temple town with people's support as the Devadasi system had ended at the 12th-century shrine decades ago. Devadasis were married to Lord Jagannath and accepted him as the "divine husband", and they remained spinsters throughout their lives. P4

**WEATHER**

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	39.8°C	39.2°C
MIN	25.5°C	23.5°C
Humidity	71%	85%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Heat wave

## Decision on EUL of Covaxin soon: WHO

THE WHO HAS APPROVED VACCINES BY PFIZER/BIONTECH, ASTRAZENECA-SK BIO/SERUM INSTITUTE OF INDIA, ASTRAZENECA EU, JANSSEN, MODERNA AND SINOPHARM FOR EMERGENCY USE

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**New Delhi, July 10:** The World Health Organization (WHO) is likely to take a decision on including Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin in the emergency use list (EUL) within four to six weeks, Soumya Swaminathan, the global health body's chief scientist has said.

Speaking at a webinar organised by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) Friday, Swaminathan said the WHO is reviewing Covaxin as its manufacturer Bharat Biotech is now uploading its entire data on the health body's portal. According to WHO guidelines, EUL is a procedure to streamline the process by which new or unlicensed products can be used during public health emergencies.

"There is a process to be followed for EUL and pre-qualification of vaccines under which a company has to complete phase 3 trials and submit the whole data to the regulatory department of WHO which is examined by an expert advisory group," Swaminathan said.

"The completeness of the data, which includes safety and efficacy



and also the manufacturing quality, standard is provided. So, I expect that Bharat Biotech has already submitted data and in four to six weeks there will be a decision on its inclusion," Swaminathan added. At present, the WHO has approved vaccines by Pfizer/BioNTech, Astrazeneca-SK Bio/Serum Institute of India, Astrazeneca EU, Janssen, Moderna and Sinopharm for emergency use.

"We currently have six vaccines approved with EUL and have recommendations from our Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE). We continue to look at Covaxin. Bharat Biotech has now started uploading their data on our portal and that is the next vaccine that will be reviewed by our experts committee," the chief scientist said. She also mentioned the WHO Research and Development Blueprint prepared in 2016, shortly after the Ebola outbreak, in which a research roadmap for diseases with pandemic potential was laid out.

"I want to mention the Research and Development (R&D) Blueprint. I

think we need to think about how we can do better in the future in terms of development of not just vaccines but drugs, diagnostics and ensuring equitable access. This blueprint was developed after the Ebola outbreak and essentially it laid out a research roadmap for diseases which have pandemic potential," she said. "So, when the roadmap was developed in 2016, it mentioned Pathogen X in it which showed that we were anticipating a pandemic, which is now COVID-19," she added.

Swaminathan also said the roadmap essentially laid out the steps in terms of developing target product profiles - like standards for vaccines, diagnostics regulatory standards, trial designs, and trial simulators.

"This pre-thinking helped because WHO was able to bring together scientists, researchers, academics and companies at the beginning of last year to develop a research roadmap for COVID," she said. At present, there are 105 candidate vaccines in clinical evaluation out of which 27 are in phase three or four, she said.

There are another 184 candidate vaccines in preclinical evaluation. Most of the vaccines are designed for a two-dose schedule, she added.

## No respite from soaring fuel prices

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**New Delhi, July 10:** Petrol price Saturday crossed the Rs 100-per-litre mark in some places in Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Nagaland after fuel prices were hiked yet again.

Petrol price was hiked by 35 paise per litre and diesel by 26 paise, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. This took fuel prices across the country to a fresh high.

In Delhi, petrol price rose to ₹100.91 a litre and diesel to ₹89.88 per litre.

The increase led to petrol price surge above ₹100 per-litre- mark in Rampur district of Uttar Pradesh, Kanpur, Jashpur and Narayanpur districts of Chhattisgarh and Kohima in Nagaland.

The three states are in a growing list of places where the fuel is at over Rs 100-a-litre mark. States where petrol had reached those levels over the past few weeks are Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bihar, Punjab, Ladakh and Sikkim.

**CITY FUEL PRICES**

PETROL	₹101.78 (+0.35)
DIESEL	₹98.01 (+0.28)

## Hotels vacated in Puri ahead of Rath Yatra

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**Puri, July 10:** With less than 48 hours to go for the annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath here, the Puri district administration directed all visitors to vacate hotels, lodges and guest houses as the Odisha government has banned public participation in the mega festival to be held Monday.

For the second consecutive year, the state government has restricted people's participation and large gathering in the Rath Yatra (chariot festival) in the interest of public health due to the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic.

The administration has also announced a 48-hour curfew to stop any congregation. The restrictive measure will be imposed at 8 pm July 11, a day before the Rath Yatra, and continue till 8 pm July 13.

Puri Collector Samarth Verma on Saturday said that the owners of hotels and lodgings have been asked to ensure that no tourists stay in the town during the Rath Yatra. Private guest houses of various companies and corporate houses have also been given similar instructions, he said.

He said that during the 48-hour curfew period, there will be no operation of business establishments and essential services, barring medical emergencies.

Optical shops, medicine outlets and the shops dealing with medical equipment will remain open in other areas of the town during the curfew period, while all activities are banned in the three-kilometre stretch of the Grand Road connecting the 12th century shrine and the Sri Gundicha Temple, the destination of the chariots.

The Special Relief Commissioner has relaxed weekend shutdown norms for Puri town on Saturday in order to make people undertake essential shopping for two days.

Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) said that the three chariots- Lord Jagannath's 'Nandighosh', Lord Balabhadra's 'Taladwaja' and Devi Subhadra's 'Darpadalan' chariots are ready to roll on the Grand Road on Monday.

All arrangements have been made for the smooth conduct of the festival, SJTA chief administrator Kishan Kumar said.

# leisure



## GERWIG TO DIRECT ROBBIE IN BARBIE

Actor-filmmaker Greta Gerwig has been officially roped in to direct *Barbie*, starring Margot Robbie as the world-famous Mattel doll. Gerwig was signed in 2019 as a writer and it was reported at the time that she was considering directing, following the success of her debut *Lady Bird*.

## KALEY CUOCO HAS STUFFED REPLICA OF HER LATE DOG

Actress Kaley Cuoco, popularly known as Penny in the sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*, was gifted a stuffed replica of her late dog by her husband Karl Cook after celebrating her third wedding anniversary, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*. Cuoco's dog Norman passed away aged 14 in January.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You may pick up the hammer and chisel today. No, you're not taking up sculpture; you're finally giving in to your spouse's demands to take some home improvement measures. It's in your interest to be speedy and focused, as you are the guilty party, says Ganesh.

**TAURUS**  
There is a strong possibility of receptivity and sensitivity in your love life. On the down side, your negativity may lead to mediocre results. You are a fire-fighter when it comes to others' problems, but can forget digging a well for your own home, says Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Emotional and material security will hold equal importance today. You want to be in love, but you know that love can't buy you dough. In academics, you will be able to solve whatever problems you set your mind on. Your spare time will be spent on devising methods of making the best use of your knowledge.

**CANCER**  
In all likelihood, this is going to be a fairly easy day for you, says Ganesh. The only tough part of the day would be how to spend it. There will be hardly anything to do, anyone to talk to. Ideally, this is what you would call a perfect day. But not today. Today, you'll miss people.

**LEO**  
The trader in you comes to the fore today. With an impeccable eye for recognising profitable avenues, you will quickly spot opportunities that arise from buying goods at cheaper prices, and selling them off at a rate that leaves you with a lump sum profit.

**VIRGO**  
There is a strong indication that you will dabble in writing or performing arts, and emerge with excellent results. Since these are your passions, you may cultivate hobbies in these fields, if they are not already your profession. Enjoy the power you have over people today as you grip them with sweet words, swinging to your whims, says Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
Your family is the cornerstone of your success. And today is no different. Your auspicious day starts from your home, and you manage to carry this luck everywhere you go with the same tempo and gusto, predicts Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**  
You will spend most of the day in self-introspection and in testing your capabilities. You will take all the needed steps to improve your professional proficiency. Your rare insight and gifted understanding of human nature will prepare you for leadership in the near future, hopes Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Today, you will most certainly put your heart and soul into your work. But it is rather unlikely that you will get the returns in proportion to the efforts you put in. Yet, at the end of the day, you will be more than satisfied that you have got the chance to display your innate talents, says Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
You'll have apparently no time for anything else, as partnerships and projects will keep you on your toes. You communication skills and diplomacy will fetch you accolades in meetings, and also enable you to judge a person or a situation correctly, and form the right opinion. The efforts you have in the past may come to fruition today, feels Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
You plot and plan well today! A lot of your time, energy and money may go into less productive activities. But the quality of your work will near perfection. Keep it up, says Ganesh, it is this creativity which gives you an edge over others.

**PISCES**  
You can probably count your chickens before they hatch today, for it is likely that every nest-egg you expect to mint money will. A good day to trade in the stock markets as well, as long as you keep in mind that the horns of a rampaging Bull market can be every bit as deadly as the paws of a lumbering Bear market, says Ganesh.

## PAKISTANI ACTRESS SARWAT GILANI ON ARTISTE BAN

# 'Art, music can't be contained in a box'



As Pakistani actress Sarwat Gilani says that the ban on Pakistani performers in India is 'a temporary phase that both the countries are going through' and emphasises that 'the people of the two countries don't want this to happen'. Sarwat, who also acted in Zee5 web series *Churails*, says: "It's a temporary phase that both the countries are going through. I know that the people of the two countries don't want this to happen. We have similar cultures, similar traditions, but because of these political setbacks, these things make our art and the love for art bounded by boundaries and borders. I feel it's a phase and should go away hopefully, because music and art can't be contained in a bottle or a box. It will make its way itself in due time. Inshallah!"

As part of her latest project, the cross-border actress will be seen reading veteran lyricist-poet Gulzar's short stories in the Zee Theatre multi-starrer show *Yaar Julahay*, which draws its name from a Gulzar poem. The episode will be screened at Tata Sky Theatre in the coming week. Asked if she is an admirer of the poet-writer's work, Sarwat shares: "Yes, I am. When we were little, I remember we weren't allowed to watch movies so we would hear Gulzar Sahab, Manto and Tagore. Gulzar Sahab's work really resonated with me because his work was literary and popular fiction. It was a really delightful surprise that I was offered to read a Gulzar Sahab poetry."

## Shweta opens up on daughter's film debut

**Mumbai:** Shweta Tiwari is a proud mother as daughter Palak Tiwari gets ready for her debut in a Hindi horror film, *Rosie: The Saffron Chapter*. However, the television star regrets the fact that she could not provide Palak with much beyond her support because she primarily belongs to a different industry.

"I feel very proud because everything that she got, she did it with her hard work and her auditions. I was just there to support her. I could not provide her anything else being in a different industry. (I belong to) The TV industry, and she is going to enter the film industry," Shweta said.

Shweta, 40, has been a part of the television industry for over two decades now. She gained popularity with her performance as Prerna Sharma Bajaj in *Kasautii Zindagii Kay*, and later featured in shows such as *Parvarish*, *Begusarai* and *Mere Dad Ki Dulhan*.

"The way of working in these two industries is absolutely different. I think I could not help her much, which I feel sad about. She is such a hardworking girl and I am so proud of her," the actress added.



## When Shamita wowed fans in Moroccan costumes

**Mumbai:** Actress Shamita Shetty shared some weekend glamour on Instagram, posing a throwback picture from a dance show. In the picture uploaded Saturday, Shamita poses in a green Morocco dress and coordinating custom jewellery.

The actress wrote about her memories from the show: "Throwback #throwback #shows #dancing #morrocon #dancedance."

Shamita appeared as a contestant on *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa* in 2015.

Lately, the actress has been sharing her home workout videos with fans on social media. Her elder sister Shilpa is known to be a fitness enthusiast and regularly posts videos of her fitness regime and yoga sessions.

The actress made her entry in the world of web series with *Yo Ke Hua Bro* and *Black Widows*. She will soon be seen in director Sushrut Jain's upcoming film *The Tenant*.

## Art expo Sri Gundicha held in City



A painting showcased at the event

POST NEWS NETWORK

**BHUBANESWAR:** As many as 100 artists from different parts of the state took part in a virtual art exhibition titled *Sri Gundicha* held at Buddha Art Gallery in Bhubaneswar, Saturday.

The event was jointly organised by the Department of Odia Language, Literature and Culture (OLLC) and Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi (OLKA). Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi inaugurated the expo virtually and unveiled the paintings and graphics on Lord Jagannath and His annual sojourn Rath Yatra.

Following the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's instructions, the Akademi had earlier conducted an art workshop at craft village Raghurajpur to provide

financial assistance to the artists during the pandemic. The minister appreciated Akademi's support to the artists during these difficult hours.

He also maintained that the government is committed to promote the art and culture of the state. The 100-odd art works on Lord Jagannath, which are available on YouTube, Facebook and other social media networks, will certainly help in spreading Odishan culture across the globe, added Panigrahi.

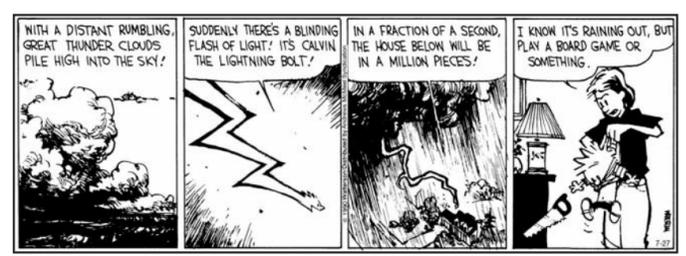
Among others, the event was attended by Suresh Chandra Dalai, Commissioner-Secretary of the Department, Additional Secretary Ranjan Kumar Das, OLKA President Sudarshan Patnaik and Secretary Panchanan Samal.

### FUN post

#### PEANUTS



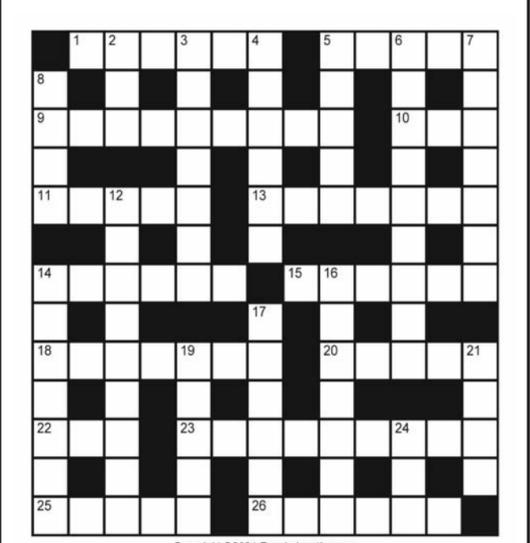
#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### BREVITY



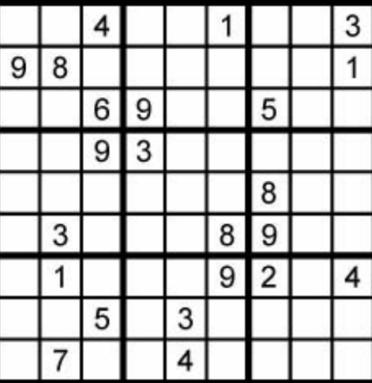
#### CROSSWORD



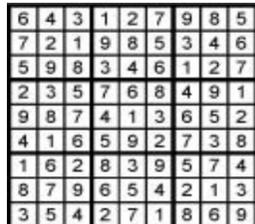
- Across
- 1 Radioactive metallic element
  - 5 Welcome
  - 9 Become suspicious (5,1,3)
  - 10 Suds source
  - 11 Loathing
  - 13 Trap
  - 14 Fight against
  - 15 Been there, done that (4,2)
  - 18 Ship sinker
  - 20 Fresh from the shower
  - 22 Samoan staple
  - 23 Old printer (3,6)
  - 25 Kind of energy
  - 26 Elaborate party in Mexico
  - 5 Airport features
  - 6 It's usually beside the seashore
  - 7 Dramatic scene
  - 8 Norse capital
  - 12 Unbiased
  - 14 Devilfish
  - 16 Enclosed territory
  - 17 In a way (4,2)
  - 19 Downy duck
  - 21 Barbershop call
  - 24 Groove

#### 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



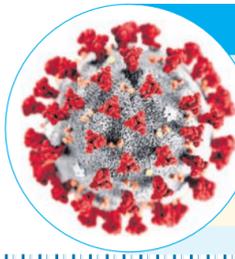
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## MAINTENANCE WORK

A team from the Archaeological Survey of India returns from Srimandir after examining the structural status of the shrine, Saturday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	18,70,58,291	17,10,43,918	40,38,560
India	3,07,95,716	2,99,33,538	4,07,145
Odisha	9,37,470	9,09,639	4,534

# Shacks at 6 beaches on the anvil



## FILLIP TO TOURISM

The beach shacks will have a refreshing ambience along with delectable food, chilled alcohol, and most importantly, the backdrop of white sands and gushing waves

This will not only attract tourists from outside Odisha, but the local tourists visiting the beaches will also have fun there

The operators have been asked to engage at least 75% manpower from the local community so that locals can get employment

tantly, the backdrop of white sands and gushing waves, state tourism secretary Vishal Dev told IANS.

Initially, shacks have been planned in six locations, which will be increased later, he said.

The government has decided to allow five shacks on the Puri-Konark marine drive in Puri district and five others in Gopalpur beach in Ganjam district.

Similarly, three shacks will be opened on the Talsari-Udaipur beach front in Balasore district while the same number of shacks will come up on the Paradip sea beach in Jagatsinghpur district.

The Chandipur beach in Balasore district and Pati Sonapur in Ganjam district will have at

least two shacks each.

The Tourism department, in consultation with the Revenue and Forest departments, is identifying suitable land for the shacks, which will be allotted on lease basis for a period of three years.

The state government will provide common infrastructure such as power, water and sewerage facilities to the beach shacks which are proposed to be developed in a cluster in each of the locations.

For tourism promotion, serving liquor in beach shacks is now allowed under the Excise Policy, 2021. The OTDC will obtain a licence from the Excise department for the selected operators for each location, subject to payment of annual fee, licence fee and other rentals.

The selected operators will have to develop the beach shacks at their own cost. They have to ensure that the staffers engaged for the purpose are well trained, polite and free from communicable diseases. The operators have been asked to engage at least 75 per cent manpower from the local community so that locals can get employment.

If the quality of service is found unsatisfactory, the operator will be instructed to take corrective measures. Further, if the service quality is found to be unsatisfactory repeatedly, the operator will not be allowed to operate, the sources said.

Odisha has a 482-km long coastline comprising beautiful beaches spread over six districts with tremendous tourism potential.

## LEISURELY HOURS



Boys playing cricket near a temple in the Old Town area of Bhubaneswar, Saturday

OP PHOTO

## WORLD POPULATION DAY

# Male sterilisation in state abysmally low at 0.2 pc

ONUS OF CONTRACEPTION MORE ON WOMEN AS FEMALE STERILISATION AND PILLS OCCUPY A LION'S SHARE OF FAMILY PLANNING PROCEDURES

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 10: Family planning in India has always been a major concern for female health which the government and development agencies have tried to work on. Data shows that male sterilisation in the state account for a meagre 0.2 per cent which is a cause of concern.

When it comes to Odisha, the government data on family planning and contraceptives claim that the onus on family planning had always been more on women than on men.

According to the latest data from the state government, 28.2 per cent of contraception share is from female sterilisation while 12 per cent is from the consumption of oral pills. Usage of intra-uterine devices (IUDs) among women also accounted for around 1.1 per cent of the contraception techniques. Moreover, 3.4 per cent of the total studied contraception interventions included use of condoms.

What is more significant is that male sterilisation in the state stood at a meagre 0.2 per cent. According to experts, sterilisation of women is more complex than that of males. "In government setups, surgeries are conducted free of cost in government hospitals. We also provide incentives to persons coming for such surgeries. Males get Rs 2,000 while females get Rs 1,400 as incentives. Grassroots workers who encourage people to go for the surgery also get incentives. However, male sterilisation is simpler while female sterilisation is more complex and involves more incision," said Dr Muralidhar Padhy, additional director (Maternal Health)



- 28.2% of contraception share is from female sterilisation while 12% is from the consumption of oral pills
- Usage of intra-uterine devices among women accounted for around 1.1 per cent of the contraception techniques
- Moreover, 3.4 per cent of the total studied contraception interventions included use of condoms
- Incentives are being provided to persons coming for such surgeries. Males get Rs 2,000 while females get Rs 1,400 as incentives

of the state Health department. With passage of time and advancement of technology, sterilisation techniques have also improved. Under the female sterilisation surgeries, their fallopian tubes (where fertilisation takes place) are clipped to check pregnancies. "There are several contracep-

tion methods for women. Female sterilisation (vasectomy) is a permanent solution wherein the fallopian tubes are clipped through surgeries. With the advent of laparoscopic surgeries, these have also become minimally invasive wherein a patient undertakes the procedure and goes home the same day with minimum cuts and faster recovery," Dr Abhijit Mishra, a gynaecologist from the city, said.

Studies said besides contraception methods, several couples refrain from family planning. A study on contraceptive use among post-partum women in parts of Odisha conducted by scholars of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar and Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) was published in International Journal of Recent Scientific Research. It claimed that merely 20.4 per cent of studied 12,500 population used contraceptives for birth control.

The Health department said that all the sterilisation surgeries like vasectomy (males) and tubectomy (females) are done free of cost at government hospitals in the state.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, July 10: Like Goa, tourists visiting Odisha beaches will very soon enjoy the best of food, chilled beverages, music and sea, all at one place.

Accordingly, the state government has decided to introduce the facility of beach shacks at six beaches. The Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) has invited applications for the operation of shacks in six major beaches of the state, official sources said Saturday.

This will not only attract tourists from outside Odisha, but the local tourists visiting the beaches will also have fun there. The beach

shacks will have a refreshing ambience along with delectable food, chilled alcohol, and most impor-

# Jaydev Vihar-Nandankanan parallel roads in 3 months

CHIEF SECRETARY ASKS OFFICIALS TO PLANT SAPLINGS ON BOTH SIDES AND MEDIANS OF THE PARALLEL ROADS



Chief Secretary Suresh Mahapatra and other officials inspect the road construction work in Bhubaneswar

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 10: In a bid to ease traffic congestion in Chandrasekharpur area here, the state government has decided to complete the parallel roads from Jaydev Vihar to Nandankanan within three months.

Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra along with Development Commissioner PK Jena, Finance secretary AK Meena and BMC Commissioner Sanjay Singh inspected the progress of works at field level Saturday afternoon.

After inspecting the roads, Mahapatra asked the concerned officials to complete the work in

three months.

The road from Jaydev Vihar is being constructed from Xavier Square to KIIT Square via Government Polytechnic, Rail Vihar, Utkal Hospital, OERC building, Trident, Infocity Square and Sikharchandi. This parallel road will also be connected to Chandaka square via Pathargadia and Institute of Mathematics, official sources said.

The total length of the road is around 13 km which will be laid at an estimated cost of around Rs 92 crore. Out of this, construction of 1.5 km road has been completed and the construction of four stretches is in progress, the

source said.

Similarly, Mahapatra also inspected the progress of the other side of the road from Acharya Vihar Square to Big Bazar Square and directed the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) to connect the road up to Damana Square via Press Chhak, MCL Square, Railway Stadium, Kelucharan Park within three months.

The total road of the right side (from Jaydev Vihar) is about 6.25 km and the estimated cost is Rs 239 crore including the cost of land acquisition. Out of this, work for 1.05-km stretch has been completed and work on the balance portion has been taken up, they said.

Further, the Chief Secretary directed the authorities to plant the old seedlings on both sides and median of the new roads. He also emphasised on strengthening the forest walls on the side of the roads for protecting both the wildlife and the people.

Strengthening of forest walls would deter the wild animals straying into the roads and residential areas. The Forest and Environment department was asked to supply the older seedlings for plantation during the current season.

With completion of these parallel roads, the traffic load on Jaydev Vihar to Nandankanan will be reduced substantially.

# HEAVY RAIN FOR NEXT FOUR DAYS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 10: The regional office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday issued warnings of heavy rainfall in different districts of Odisha for the next four days.

The department said that heavy rainfall is likely to be witnessed in five districts, especially in southern part of the state.

"Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places of Malkangiri, Koraput, Gajapati, Ganjam and Rayagada districts," the department said.

It also added that light to moderate rain could also be seen during the day Sunday. "Light to moderate rain or thundershower is very likely to occur at many places in the districts of south Odisha, north coastal Odisha and at a few places in the districts of north interior Odisha," it said.

The weatherman, while issuing warning for Monday, said that heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places in Malkangiri, Koraput and Nabarangpur districts while light to moderate rain could also occur in different places of southern Odisha.

Cuttack reported the highest rainfall of 29.8 mm during the last 24 hours while 22 mm rainfall was recorded in Malkangiri.

Likewise, the highest temperature of 35.6°Celsius was recorded in Cuttack and Chandbali each, said the Met department.

# Two killed as bike hits tree

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Phulbani, July 10: Two persons died when their speeding motorcycle hit a roadside tree in



Kandhamal district after the motorcycle lost control over the two-wheeler, police said Saturday. The gruesome accident took place Friday night at Madinata village, about 90 km from here, an officer said. The deceased were identified as Sunil Dugal and Sumanta Dugal, Balliguda Police station Inspector In-charge (IIC) Baba Shankar Sharaf said.

Both were from Kutikia village in the district, Sharaf added. The bodies were sent to Balliguda Sub-Divisional Hospital for postmortem, added the IIC.

# Khurda artisan family's unique service to Lord

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, July 10: An artisan family from Gurujang in Khurda has been decorating the chariots of Srimandir deities with flowers made of natural thermocol during the annual Rath Yatra for the last 21 years.

The family of Raj Kishore Nayak decorates Nandighosa, Taladhwa and Darpadalan chariots out of its devotion to Lord Jagannath and his siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra. Nayak's family does not accept any remuneration from the temple authorities.

"We are fortunate that we have been allowed by the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) to decorate the three chariots during the Rath Yatra. We are serving the Lord out of our love and devotion to Him. The issue of remuneration is immaterial here," said Raj Kishore.

## DECORATING CHARIOTS FOR 2 DECADES

Raj Kishore Nayak's family usually collects natural thermocol from Kakatpur, Astarang and Nimapara areas of Puri district and process it with due care

At least 10 members of Raj Kishore's family assist him in preparing flowers and other decorative pieces from thermocol

The family does not accept any remuneration from the temple authorities

Raj Kishore's family members usually supply thermocol-made decorative pieces to various temples and other religious institutions in the state.



Raj Kishore and his family with the thermocol-made flowers

OP PHOTO

Raj Kishore claimed that he and a few of his family members had prayed before Lord Jagannath to give them an opportunity to decorate the chariots during the car

festival. "We had been to Puri in 1999 to witness the Rath Yatra. Soon, a wish came to our mind that we should decorate the chariots. The SJTA happily

accepted our request. We have been providing service to the Lord Since 2000," narrated Raj Kishore.

At least 10 members of Raj Kishore's family assist him in

preparing flowers and other decorative pieces from thermocol. The family does the work with utmost care and devotion.

"We usually collect natural thermocol from Kakatpur, Astarang and Nimapara areas of Puri district and process it with due care. We cut the raw thermocol into small pieces and use needle and cotton thread to prepare flowers and garlands," said Raj Kishore's brother Bira Kishore.

Raj Kishore and his brothers are all set to visit Puri Sunday for decorating the chariots for this year's Rath Yatra, which is being organised without the presence of devotees due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We get immense satisfaction while decorating the chariots on the Grand Road. We always think this opportunity as Lord Jagannath's blessings to us," said Somanath, another brother of Raj Kishore.

# ILS decodes genome of salt-secreting mangrove

IT IS AMONG THE RARE PLANT SPECIES WHICH CAN EXCRETE 40% OF THE SALT THROUGH SALT GLANDS IN THE LEAVES, BESIDES ITS EXTRAORDINARY CAPACITY TO EXCLUDE SALT ENTRY TO THE ROOTS

PNN/AGENCIES

New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, July 10: Scientists have reported, for the first time, a reference-grade whole genome sequence of a highly salt-tolerant and salt-secreting true mangrove species 'Avicennia Marina', the Department of Biotechnology said Saturday.

The genomic resources generated will pave the way for researchers to study the potential of the identified genes for developing drought and salinity tolerant varieties of important crop species of the coastal region that is significant for India with 7,500 kilometres of coastline and two major island systems, it added.

Mangroves are a unique group of species found in marshy intertidal estuarine regions and survive a high degree of salinity through several adaptive mechanisms. They are a critical resource for the coastal region and are of great ecological and economic value.

They also form a link between marine and terrestrial ecosystems, protect shorelines, and provide habitat for a diverse array of ter-



restrial organisms.

Avicennia Marina is one of the most prominent mangrove species found in all mangrove formations in India. It is a salt-secreting and extraordinarily salt-tolerant mangrove species that grows optimally in 75 per cent seawater.

It is among the rare plant species which can excrete 40 per cent of the salt through salt glands in the leaves, besides its extraordinary capacity to exclude salt entry to

the roots.

This study, conducted by Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Institute of Life Sciences, Bhubaneswar in collaboration with SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Tamil Nadu has been published in the recent issue of the Nature Communications Biology. It reports the assemblage of a 456.6 Mb (megabase) of the estimated 462.7 Mb Avicennia Marina genome (98.7 per cent

This study assumes significance as agriculture productivity, globally, is affected due to abiotic stress factors such as limited water availability and salinisation of soil and water

Availability of water is a significant challenge to crop production in dryland areas, accounting for 40 per cent of the world's total land area

Salinity is prevalent in 900 million hectares globally (with an estimated 6.73 million hectares in India), and it is estimated to cause an annual loss of USD 27 billion

genome coverage) in 31 chromosomes derived from 88 scaffolds and 252 contigs.

"The percentage of genomes in gaps was 0.26, thereby proving it to be a high-level assembly. The Avicennia Marina genome assembled in this study is nearly complete and can be considered as a reference-grade genome reported so far for any mangrove

species globally and the first report from India," the study said.

This study employed the latest genome sequencing and assembling technologies, and identified 31,477 protein-coding genes and a "salinome" consisting of 3,246 salinity-responsive genes and homologs of 614 experimentally validated salinity tolerance genes. The study reported identification of 614 genes, including 159 transcription factors, which are homologous to the genes that were functionally validated for salinity tolerance in transgenic systems.

This study assumes significance as agriculture productivity globally, is affected due to abiotic stress factors such as limited water availability and salinisation of soil and water.

Availability of water is a significant challenge to crop production in dryland areas, accounting for 40 per cent of the world's total land area. Salinity is prevalent in 900 million hectares globally (with an estimated 6.73 million hectares in India), and it is estimated to cause an annual loss of USD 27 billion.

# City firm dupes Assam man of ₹3L

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 10: The manager of a city-based firm allegedly duped a businessman from Assam of around ₹ 3 lakh on the pretext of selling fishnet.

The victim, Eli Muddin of Badpeta area in Assam, has lodged a complaint in this regard with Nayapalli police.

According to sources, the victim, after coming across some advertisements appeared in local dailies, contacted the firm to buy fishnets in bulk in January this year. Subsequently, the company officials provided the contact number of the accused, Pradeep Kumar Palei, who works as the manager of the firm.

Muddin claimed in his complaint that he agreed to purchase 1,050 kg of the material at ₹270 per piece with the additional 18 per cent goods and services tax (GST). He reportedly deposited more than ₹3 lakh in the account of Pradeep between February and March 2021.

However, Pradeep neither sent the consignment to Muddin on the scheduled date nor did he respond



The victim reportedly deposited more than ₹3 lakh in the account of the accused between February and March 2021

to his phone calls or emails.

Finding no other way, Muddin contacted the firm's office at IRC Village in Nayapalli area here. He learnt from the firm's office sources that Pradeep has also duped several other customers earlier.

The police have started investigations into the matter after registering a case in this regard.

# GANJA WORTH ₹10L SEIZED



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 10: The Special Task Force (STF) of Crime Branch arrested three drug peddlers along with a huge quantity of ganja in Khandagiri area early Saturday morning. The accused persons were identified as Prasant Majhi, Sujay Majhi and Prasant Kumar Gamango.

Following a tip off, the STF, with the help of Khandagiri police, intercepted one Indigo car (OD 05 K 0633) at Khandagiri square. The cops found the contraband weighing 1 quintal and 35 kg packed in gunny bags in the car. The seized contraband has been valued at more than ₹10 lakh.

A case (359/21) has been registered at Khandagiri police station. During the course of investigation, the accused trio revealed that they had procured the ganja from Mohana area of Ganjam and were transporting the same to Kolkata, West Bengal for selling.

The STF has succeeded in the seizure of 22 quintals and 35 Kgs of ganja this year.

# UUTA, Congress push for Central varsity tag to UU

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 10: The Utkal University Teachers' Association (UUTA) Friday expressed happiness over appointment of Dharmendra Pradhan as new Union Education Minister and hoped that under his leadership, the Ministry of Education would be instrumental in implementing the national education policy in letter and spirit.

Bihar has four central universities and Andhra Pradesh has three, Odisha has only one central university in Koraput district, which caters to needs of students in southern parts of the state.

Maheswar Sahoo, president of UUTA said that there is a dire need for setting up a second central university in the state, especially around Bhubaneswar which is set to become an economic and edu-



Secretary of UUTA, Kunja Bihari Panda said, "We congratulate Dharmendra Pradhan on his appointment against one of the most important portfolios in the Union cabinet."

Earlier, Pradhan had sought personal intervention of former Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal to accord Central University status to Utkal University.

There has been a long-standing demand from academicians in Odisha to accord central university status to Utkal University. While

educational hub in eastern India.

Meanwhile, Congress party leader Suresh Routray Saturday reiterated the demand of granting central university tag to Utkal University. He said, "Dharmendra Pradhan has now received the charge of education ministry. A proposal was earlier sent to grant central university tag to Utkal University. Pradhan has himself flourished under the university. I urge the minister to please consider the demand and fulfil the aspiration of the people."

# Identify children with disabilities, Collectors told

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 10: With the improvement in Covid-19 situation, the state government has asked the district Collectors to commence the process for a survey to identify children with disabilities.

The survey was scheduled to be conducted during January and February this year. However, the exercise was put on hold in view of the second wave of the pandemic and the training programme of officials to be engaged in the survey was cancelled, official sources said Saturday.

Now, the department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) has asked the Collectors to resume the process.

"Since the unlock process has begun in a phased manner you are requested to start the training programmes for block-level trainers and also train the anganwadi workers following Covid-19 guidelines issued by Central and state governments," SSEPD secretary Bhaskar Jyoti Sarma wrote in a letter to all Collectors.

Sarma has asked the Collectors to fix the training schedule as per their convenience and intimate the same to the department. The department will depute teams of master trainers to provide training at the district level.

# Srimandir's last devadasi Parasmani Devi dies at 90

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Puri, July 10: Parasmani Devi, the last surviving 'devadasi' of the Srimandir, died due to old-age related ailments Saturday, temple sources said. She was 90.

Parasmani lived in a rented house in Balisahi area of the temple town with people's support as the Devadasi system had ended at the 12th-century shrine decades ago.

Devadasis were married to Lord Jagannath and accepted him as the 'divine husband', and they remained spinsters throughout their lives. The Devadasi system at the temple gradually ended after the Odisha government took over the administration of the shrine from the Puri royal family in 1955 through an Act. There were two types of devadasis in the temple - dancers and singers.



Parasmani was a singer who sang devotional songs like Geeta Govinda during the bed-time of the presiding deities. Parasmani was adopted by Kundamani Devadasi and she began her training as a devadasi at the age of seven.

According to the temple's Record of Rights (RoR), there were about 25 devadasis in Puri about 100 years ago, while the Orissa Gazette of 1956 lists nine devadasis and 11 musicians at the temple. Till 1980, only four devadasis remained at the temple --

Harapriya, Kokilaprava, Parasmani and Sashimani. While the others had died, Parasmani, who had worked for around eight decades, continued to sing devotional songs at the temple despite derecognition of the devadasi.

Earlier, devadasis had specific roles during the Nabakalebara festival (rituals associated with the change of wooden bodies of deities). They became widows as per tradition and again wore vermilion after the new idols were worshipped.

Ahead of Lord Jagannath's Nabakalebara in 2015, Sashimani died at 92. She had served as a devadasi since the age of seven and performed her role during the Nabakalebara festivals held in 1977 and 1996. Parasmani's adopted son Prasanna Kumar Das lit her funeral pyre at Swargadawar crematorium here.

# 58 FRESH DEATHS TAKE COVID TOLL TO 4,534

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 10: Odisha's Covid-19 tally Saturday surged to 9,37,470 after 2,334 more people tested positive for the infection, while 58 fresh fatalities pushed the toll to 4,534, a Health department official said.

Of the 2,334 new cases, 1,342 were recorded in quarantine centres and 992 during contact tracing, the official said. Khurda district, of which Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the maximum number of new cases at 380, followed by Cuttack at 371, and Kendrapara at 196. Eight of the state's 30 districts reported new cases each in triple digits.

Eleven fresh fatalities were reported from Khurda, seven each from Bargarh and Puri, six each from Ganjam and Sundargarh, four from Sambalpur, three from Kendrapara and two each from Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar and Naygarh.

One each succumbed to the infection in Angul, Gajapati, Jajpur, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi and Mayurbhanj. This apart, 53 Covid-19 patients in the state have died due to comorbidities.

Amid allegations that the state government was suppressing casualty figures, the Health department, in a statement, said, "The list does not reflect deaths that have occurred on a particular day. It gives details of past deaths for which the audit process has been duly completed and the cause identified as Covid-19."



Of the 2,334 new cases, 1,342 were recorded in quarantine centres and 992 during contact tracing

Eleven fresh fatalities were reported from Khurda, seven each from Bargarh and Puri, six each from Ganjam and Sundargarh, four from Sambalpur, three from Kendrapara and two each from Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar and Naygarh

Inoculation drive halted in 10 districts -- Balasore, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Kendrapara, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nayagarh and Sonepur - owing to shortage of vaccine doses

Odisha currently has 26,364 active cases, while as many as 9,06,519 have recovered from the highly in-

fectious disease. The coastal state's positivity rate stands at 6.46 per cent. Over 1.44 crore samples have been tested for Covid-19 in Odisha thus far, the official added.

Meanwhile, due to the dearth of vaccines, the government Saturday stopped the inoculation drive in 10 districts -- Balasore, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Kendrapara, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nayagarh and Sonepur. The state, at present, has 59,920 doses of Covishield and 3,93,010 shots of Covaxin.

In accordance with Centre's directive, the state government has decided to vaccinate patients housed in mental health establishments, officials said. The Health department has written to all district Collectors and municipal commissioners, asking them to personally monitor and ensure vaccination of inmates at mental health institutions.

# BUS TERMINAL PLAN



Trees being felled at Biswanath Pandit park in Cuttack to facilitate Netaji Bus Terminal work, Saturday

OP PHOTO

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Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri-Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

# 'Odisha to become a surplus state in fish production'



Pradhan said steps are being taken to help fish farmers harvest fish twice a year from their ponds like farmers cultivating paddy on their farmlands. Youths are being particularly motivated to take up fish farming which is going to help in raising fish production, he said

Over 50 per cent subsidy is also given on fish food and on infrastructure development to farmers buying fish from CIFA and NFDB for production of fish. This apart, the government is also providing various facilities to the fish farmers under various schemes

Pradhan assured that more funds would be sanctioned in coming days to boost fish production in the state. After becoming fully operational, the fingerling production centre at Bhanjanagar will sell fingerlings to fish farmers round the year

would be sanctioned in coming days to boost fish production in the state. After becoming fully operational, the fingerling production centre at Bhanjanagar will sell fingerlings to fish farmers round the year. He said steps are being taken for production of high quality fingerlings, manufacturing of fish food and application of modern technology to increase fish production.

He asked the department officials to make use of ponds on the 22 acre unused land owned by the fisheries department in fish production. Dr Arun Padiyar, World Fish Centre in Malaysia, Pramod Rout, district fisheries head, engineer Sarada Prasanna Sethy, Sarif Ahmed, manager of Bhanjanagar centre accompanied Pradhan during his visit to Bhanjanagar.

Incentives and subsidies are being given under various schemes to help farmers carry out fish farming and help in increase in fish production in the state. Elaborating, he said 50 per cent subsidy is being given on fish food for production of high quality fingerlings per hectare.

Moreover, 50 per cent subsidy is also given on fish food and on infrastructure development to farmers buying fish from CIFA and NFDB for production of fish. This apart, the government is also providing various facilities to the fish farmers under various schemes.

He said the state government aims to increase the per hectare fish productivity in the state to 15 tonne which currently lies at only 4 tonne. The state government has taken up various schemes with the help of World Fish Centre in Malaysia to help increase fish production in the state.

Under the scheme, the state government has sanctioned ₹4 crore for upgradation of infrastructure of the fingerling production centre at Bhanjanagar.

He assured that more funds

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhanjanagar, July 10:** The state government has planned big to make Odisha a surplus state in fish production as the state fisheries department decided to harvest fish twice a year by taking up fish cultivation on its 22 acres of unused land here, a report said. The matter came to the fore during a visit of the state fisheries director Engineer Smruti Ranjan Pradhan to the fingerling production centre at Bhanjanagar in Ganjam, Friday.

Speaking to this correspondent, Pradhan said that fish production has increased in the state as he expressed confidence that Odisha will be a surplus state in fresh water fish production in the country in coming days.

Pradhan said steps are being taken to help fish farmers harvest fish twice a year from their ponds like farmers cultivating paddy on their farmlands. He said that youths are being particularly motivated to take up fish farming which is going to help in raising fish production.

## AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT



Farmers being trained at sowing paddy and fertilisers on their farmlands with a buffalo-drawn machine in Malkangiri district

OP PHOTO

# Gas leak in RSP; SC stays NGT order

The dependants of the workers, who died January 6, 2021 shall continue in employment till further orders, the bench said.

PNN/ AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 10:** The Supreme Court has stayed a National Green Tribunal order directing payment of compensation to the families or heirs of those who died in a toxic gas leak in Rourkela Steel Plant.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and MR Shah issued notices to the Central Pollution Control Board, Odisha State Pollution Control Board, Department of Factories and Boilers of Odisha and others.

The dependants of the workers, who died January 6, 2021 shall con-



tinue in employment till further orders, the bench said.

The apex court was hearing an appeal filed by Rourkela Steel plant against an NGT order which took cognisance of a media report about gas leak in the plant and directed payment of compensation to the families or heirs of people who died in the gas leakage.

The tribunal also constituted an expert committee for the purpose of suggesting safety measures to be

taken by the industries.

Additional Solicitor General Madhavi Goradia Divan submitted that the National Green Tribunal has no jurisdiction to take up the matter suo moto and this point is pending consideration in two appeals before this court.

She further submitted that the dependants of three out of four workers who died January 6, 2021 have been given compassionate appointments.

The NGT had directed the constitution of an expert committee comprising the Ministry of Environment, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), and the Odisha Pollution Control Board (PCB) to look into the matter of suspected toxic gas leak in Rourkela Steel Plant January 6.

The bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel in an order passed February 11 had said that the committee may co-opt two other industrial safety experts.

At least four workers died and a few others fell ill after inhaling a toxic gas leaked from a unit at Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) of the state-run SAIL in Odisha, official sources had said.

The mishap took place at the Coal Chemical Department of the RSP in the morning, when a total of 10 workers were on duty.

# Inter-state wildlife smuggling racket busted in Kalahandi

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kesinga, July 10:** In a major crackdown, a joint team of forest officials from Odisha and Chhattisgarh busted an inter-state wild animal body parts smuggling racket following a surprise raid in Kalahandi district, an official informed Saturday.

The team personnel arrested four persons in this connection and seized three leopard hides including a tooth, from their possession. The joint team comprising M Rampur forest ranger Asit Kumar Das and officials of Chhattisgarh forest department conducted a raid in the district Friday afternoon leading to the arrests and seizure.

According to a senior official, the team got information from a reliable source that traders were carrying leopard hides. Swinging into



action, they stopped a motorcycle at Palam area and seized three leopard hides and a tooth from the vehicle after a thorough search.

The four arrested smugglers were identified as Manoj Behera of M Rampur, Narottam Bhoi of Narla, Rangacharan Bhoi of Bafra and Kartik Rana of Amath areas, the forest official added.

The four inter-state wildlife smugglers were active mainly in Odisha, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal. The accused were forwarded to court, a police source said.

# Anti-liquor activist held for smuggling liquor

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhadrak, July 10:** A youth spearheading a total prohibition campaign in Dhamnagar area in this district was arrested on charge of liquor smuggling, police said.

The accused was identified as Shankar Mishra, a native of Dalang village under Dhamnagar block and a total prohibition activist in the area. Mishra aligned to a particular party was leading a campaign for liquor free Dhamnagar opposing illegal sale of liquor and

hooch in the area. This apart, he was also carrying out other social works in the area.

However, police were taken aback when intelligence inputs alerted them about Mishra's involvement in liquor smuggling. He was arrested by Dhamnagar police which conducted a raid and caught him smuggling beer and country liquor to Dohal area on his bike, Friday. His arrest has sent the chatters abuzz in the area. Police registered a case and produced him in court.

# JEERA BRIDGE MISSES DEADLINE, STOKES ANGER

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, July 10:** The construction of Bargarh-Ambapali Jeera bridge, which has already jumped its deadline, is yet to be completed, triggering dissatisfaction among the residents.

The Jeera river separates Bargarh town from Ambapali. There used to be a British era bridge over the river connecting Bargarh town and Ambapali. However, the bridge had to be pulled down as it lay in a deplorable state. In its place, a new bridge was announced. At a budget of ₹14 crore, the construction of the bridge was started in 2018 and a deadline of 36 months was fixed for its completion.

The set time frame has already expired but the construction has not completed yet. In order to facilitate communication between Bargarh town and Ambapali, a temporary fair weather road has been laid out. But this road is washed away every rainy season. The time of when it was washed away and constructed again, the connection between Bargarh town and Ambapali remains suspended. The residents of both the sides of the river apprehend that this rainy season, the road will again be destroyed in flood water, snapping the connection.

"Due to the lack of will power on the part of the administration, the construction of the bridge is get-



ting delayed. It was when the British era bridge was there many auto drivers used to earn their livelihood carrying passengers on it. With the construction work moving on at a snail's pace, resentment is brewing among the local people. The administration should intervene and make sure of its early completion.

Alleging that the fair weather road is of no use, Rabindra Pujari of Ambapali said the road once gets destroyed, the connection between Bargarh and Ambapali remains suspended for three to four months. The same situation will happen this season as well. So besides taking steps for completion of the construction work, steps should also be taken for strengthening the temporary road.

Echoing the same problem, Sibananda Matari, a Bargarh town resident, said since the day

one of the construction, people of both sides depend on the temporary road. During the period when the connection between Bargarh town and Ambapali remains snapped, people have to make a detour, travelling an extra five to seven kilometers to reach the other side. So, administrative officials and people's representatives should give priority to the completion of the bridge.

When contacted, Debesh Acharya, Bargarh MLA, said there have been some technical faults affecting the construction work. With the faults being brought to the notice of the concerned engineer, steps are being taken to rectify those. "I feel the problems of the people. This is why I have already taken the matter up with the secretary, requesting him to take steps for early completion of the bridge," he added.

# UTs allege brutal torture inside Bargarh sub-jail

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, July 10:** Two under-trial prisoners (UTPs) lodged in the Bargarh sub-jail sustained injury after jail officials allegedly brutally assaulted them on opposing the sub-standard food being served to them, a report said. Mother of one of the accused, Sunita Gupta, has alleged that her son was beaten so severely that he fainted inside the jail.

She has alleged that the jail authorities are serving sub-standard food. Her son lost his sense after being brutally assaulted by nine jail officials when he opposed serving of sub-standard food to him. When her son fainted, they examined him using a machine to find out whether he was dead or alive. She alleged that her son is now in a critical condition.



She claimed that her son would be punished as per law if he has committed any offence. However, jail authorities have no rights to torture him inside the prison, she said. However, jail officials straightaway rejected the allegation leveled by the mother of the under-trial prisoner. They rather accused the prisoners of getting involved in nuisance and causing damage to jail properties.

They alleged that both the accused misbehaved with jail staff and quarreled with other inmates. They have also beaten up other inmates and left them injured without any reason. The allegation of sub-standard food is completely false as the two have been caught earlier stealing snacks stored for other inmates while the food provided to prisoners may be examined to assess quality, a jail official said.

## LOK ADALAT



A national level Lok Adalat underway in Jharsuguda, Saturday

OP PHOTO

# Woman jumps to death from 3rd floor of Rayagada DHH

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, July 10:** A 28-year-old woman undergoing treatment at the district headquarters hospital here allegedly committed suicide by jumping off from the 3rd floor of the hospital building Saturday morning.

The deceased was identified as Rajani Meleka, 28, a native of Tumbiguda village under Town police station in Rayagada.

According to reports, the deceased was admitted to the hospital July 7. Rajani was undergoing treatment on bed no-35 at the Medicine ward on the third floor of the hospital. She was suffering from high fever and mouth ulcer.

Rajani took the extreme step when she went to the toilet at around 4 am on the same floor and



jumped off from the building by breaking open the glass panes of the window in toilet.

She dropped on the ground with a thud when security personnel and some hospital staff

rushed in and found her lying dead in a pool of blood.

The exact cause behind the incident is yet to be ascertained while it is suspected that the woman took the extreme step as she was mentally disturbed.

On being informed, ADMO Dr Baradakanta Mishra reached the spot and informed the police. Police along with a scientific team reached the spot and began a probe into the incident. The body was sent for post-mortem and further probe is on.

An accidental death case has been registered and an investigation is underway, police said.

When contacted, the ADMO said that the actual reason behind the woman's death could be ascertained after police complete the probe.

FOCUS WORLD POPULATION DAY

# PROMOTING HEALTHY AGEING



**This significant demographic transition calls for an unprecedented need of an age-friendly and responsive healthcare system and a range of coordinated services to address the complex needs of an ageing population**

formed for direct implementation of planned interventions. The WHO is working in that direction with global experts and country-level stakeholders. It is recognised that a focus on some key areas would enable the progress of the healthy ageing decade. These include – engaging older people and bringing out their voices, leadership development and capacity building among stakeholders across all sectors, connecting stakeholders, and strengthening research, data collection and innovation.

In India, several key initiatives have been taken up in the last couple of decades or so to address the challenges of population ageing – drafting a National Policy for Older Persons, introduction and adoption of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act of 2007, and formulation of National Programme for Health and Care of the Elderly (NPHE) and National Old Age Pension Programme. These national-level initiatives will need to be scaled up across the country in the decade of healthy ageing, in partnership with various stakeholders.

CSOs are well placed to play an important role in the decade of healthy ageing action in India. There is a need for forming and strengthening multi-sectoral partnerships in which CSOs can play the last mile delivery role. Initiatives of CSOs targeted at older people in the spheres of community-based groups' formation and capacity building, promotion of self-care and home-based care, and on enhancing food, nutrition and water security may be scaled up. Civil society has both the credibility and capacity of bridging the inequities and ensuring that older people are not left behind in health and social protection services.

SDG 3 intends to ensure healthy lives and to promote well-being for 'all' at 'all ages', and to realise the progress on this goal; older people's health needs must be addressed comprehensively. The decade of healthy ageing is a great opportunity

*The writer works for promotion of rural health in Jodhpur.*

The proposal of observing a healthy ageing decade from 2021 to 2030 was endorsed by the 73rd World Health Assembly August 3, 2020. It was also welcomed by the UN General Assembly December 14, 2020 through a resolution, leading to the proclamation of a UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030).

Population ageing and consequent demographic transition are complex realities. As per estimates, the global population of people over 60 years of age which is currently around 1.1 billion will grow to around 1.4 billion by 2030, and to about two billion by 2050. Between 2015 and 2050, the proportion of 60+ population is expected to rise from 12 per cent to a staggering 22 per cent. Also by 2050, people above 60 years will outnumber those below the age of 15, which will happen for the first time in history.

In India, the transition has been taking place at a much rapid pace. The 104 million-population of older people from the 2011 Census is estimated to triple by 2050. While for a county like France, it took about 150 years for the aged population's proportion to rise from 10 per cent to 20 per cent, a similar rise in India would occur in about 20 years.

Out of those older people, large numbers, particularly in lower and middle income countries live under severe poverty and with no or limited access to basic health services and social protection benefits. While older people living longer is an opportunity for themselves and for society, there is not much evidence suggesting older people are currently living healthier lives than their previous generations did.

Inequity of access to healthcare for older people is mainly caused by attitudinal and behavioural reasons such as ageism and stigma, as well as by physical factors such as the remoteness of rural population settlements and limited outreach of services in those areas. These pre-existing inequities have been growing rapidly and widely as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to spread across the world,

and are clearly stark in older women, in older people with disabilities and in older people living in remote and rural areas. This significant demographic transition calls for an unprecedented need of an age-friendly and responsive healthcare system and a range of coordinated services to address the complex needs of an ageing population. The UN decade of healthy ageing is an initiative led by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and is a global collaboration that will bring together governments, civil society organisations (CSOs), international agencies, professionals, academia, the media, and the private sector, and will continue its interventions in alignment with the last 10 years of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To foster healthy ageing and improve the lives of older people, the decade of healthy ageing will focus on four action areas. The first is to create and strengthen age-friendly environments by removing physical and social barriers and by converting environments into better places to live and to age. The second is to combat ageism. Older people, despite their significant contributions to society, are overlooked and neglected with an 'ageism' bias. There is a need of addressing issues of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination related to old age.

The third is to provide inte-

grated care. All older people should have non-discriminatory access to integrated care which should include, but is not limited to, preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative, palliative, and 'end of life' care – which must be safe, affordable and of good quality.

The fourth is to support long-term care. With a significant decline in mental and physical capacities, many older people are unable to live an independent life or to actively participate in society. Hence, access to good long-term care service is essential to maintain their functional ability, to ensure that they enjoy basic human rights and live a life of dignity.

The decade of healthy ageing action plan has been drafted by the WHO which has 10 years of concerted, catalytic and sustained collaboration. Older people themselves will be at the centre of this plan, and it will bring together governments and all other stakeholders together to improve the lives of older people, their families and their communities. It is the second action plan of the WHO global strategy on ageing and health, building on the United Nations Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002), and is strongly aligned with the timing of the United Nations Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

With a global framework for the decade of healthy ageing, country-level mechanisms are being

## Attack on activists

“Ourselves within us lethal forces nurse; we make of our own enemies our guests.”

SRI AUROBINDO



Stan Swamy, who died a few days ago after being denied bail in the Bhima Koregaon case, was a Tamilian priest who spent decades working with the Adivasis in Jharkhand. Before that he was director of the Indian Social Institute in Bangalore. So why was he in jail for an event in Pune? The Bhima Koregaon case is five separate and unrelated things. The first was an event called Elgar (or Yalgar, meaning battle cry) Parishad held December 31, 2017 in Pune. Speakers at the gathering included former high court judge BG Kolse-Patil and PB Sawant, a former Supreme Court judge. Jignesh Mewani, the independent MLA from Gujarat and Umar Khalid, the activist from JNU also spoke. Members of Kabir Kala Manch, who are artistes-activists, also participated.

The second event was the following day, January 1, 2018. This was the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Koregaon Bhima, a suburb of Pune on the Bhima river where January 1, 1818, the British defeated the remnant of the Maratha Empire. The British side had many Dalit Mahar soldiers who overpowered a larger army led by the Brahmin Peshwa.

Since 1927 when BR Ambedkar visited the village to speak of the victory, hundreds of thousands of Dalits came to Koregaon Bhima each year to gather at the obelisk raised to mark the battle. But in 2018 there had been tension because of events in the neighbouring village of Vadhu Budruk. This had to do with who had cremated Sambhaji, the son of Shivaji who was executed by Aurangzeb in 1689 near Koregaon Bhima. The Mahars claimed it was one of them, Gopal Govind, who had cremated the Maratha in defiance of Aurangzeb's orders. This offended the Marathas, who claimed two of their community had performed the rituals. Govind's tomb in Vadhu Budruk, was in the same village square as Sambhaji's. December 28 a board was placed over Govind's tomb, claiming the feat of his cremation of Sambhaji. The next day Govind's tomb was desecrated: the board was removed and the umbrella structure over the tomb was damaged. A complaint was filed by the Dalits under the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act against individuals. The Koregaon Bhima panchayat asked its residents to boycott the event of January 1 and called for shops to remain shut. That morning violence broke out between Dalits, who said they were attacked by a group carrying saffron flags and the local Marathas, who said they had been attacked by the Dalits. One Maratha was killed. The violence spread to other towns in western Maharashtra and 300 Dalits, including some children, were held by Mumbai police.

The third event was a police complaint, filed a few days later, by a man who said the agenda of the Elgar Parishad event was “to mislead the Dalit community, to convert them to Maoist thought...and adopt the path of violence” and that “through their publications, books and speeches, they want to increase enmity in society.” The man who filed the complaint, Tushar Damgude, said he followed a 'simple' rule for his Hindutva: “We should keep things which are helpful for Hindus; rest should be abandoned.”

It was on the basis of this complaint that the police began arresting the activists, who had nothing to do with, and were not present at, the Bhima Koregaon. The fourth event was a report produced by an RSS organisation called the Forum for Integrated National Security, whose secretary general, Seshadri Chari, was on the BJP's national executive committee. This report said there was a Maoist strategy to lure people into joining 'mass organisations' concerned about such issues as caste, justice and equality. Such organisations would then help Maoists recruit for the final armed struggle against the State, the report, released March 9, 2018 said.

Another report by the same author was submitted to then Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in April. In May, the UAPA law was added to the Bhima Koregaon case. June 6, the Maharashtra police arrested five people including Dhawale of the Republican Panthers, lawyer and Dalit activist Surendra Gadling, scholar Mahesh Raut, who worked for Adivasi rights, assistant professor of English at Nagpur University Shoma Sen and Rona Wilson of JNU who worked with the Committee to Release Political Prisoners. They were described by the police as the “top brass of the urban Maoists.”

The police say they found a letter in Wilson's house dated July 2017 which said: “Comrade Kisan and few other senior comrades have proposed concrete steps to end Modi-Raj. We are thinking along the line of another Rajiv Gandhi type incident.”

On the basis of this material the police arrested Sudha Bharadwaj, who studied mathematics at IIT Kanpur and gave up her US citizenship at age 18, Gautam Navlakha an author who also wrote for the Economic and Political Weekly, Anand Teltumbde, assistant professor at the Goa Institute of Management and married to a granddaughter of Ambedkar, Arun Ferreira, a lawyer who was defending the accused in this case, Vernon Gonsalves, a professor of business management and economics at Ruparel College and HR College of Commerce and Economics, Varavara Rao, an author and poet who had been a lecturer of Telugu literature, Hany Babu, a professor of linguistics at Delhi University, three members of the Kabir Kala Manch, Sagar Gorkhe, Jyoti Jagtap and Ramesh Gaichor, and Stan Swamy, the 83-year-old Jesuit and theologian.

None of them had anything to do with the violence at Bhima Koregaon, where they were not even present. The case is said to be sensitive because of the allegation of the assassination plot, but trial has not started. Last year, the BBC carried a report on Stan Swamy under the headline “The oldest person to be accused of terrorism in India.”



Dr Prakash Tyagi

**BY 2050, PEOPLE ABOVE 60 YEARS WILL OUTNUMBER THOSE BELOW THE AGE OF 15, WHICH WILL HAPPEN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY**



Aakar Patel

**Last year, the BBC carried a report on Stan Swamy under the headline “The oldest person to be accused of terrorism in India”**

SPECTRUM CITIZENSHIP

## Statelessness in a pandemic

Maijaan Nessa, a 38-year-old Muslim woman, was born in India to Indian parents. She has lived in the state of Assam all her life. But, seven years ago, she was declared a foreigner, arrested, and detained. While she languished in detention, her distraught eldest son died by suicide. Despite this devastating personal tragedy, and the barriers created by poverty and illiteracy, her Bengali Muslim husband and the rest of her family continued to fight for her release until, almost five years after she was first detained, Maijaan was freed. But her status is far from secure.

Maijaan is a victim of a multi-year, politically motivated project to update the National Register of Citizens in Assam in a way that excludes huge swaths of the population, mostly Muslims and people of Bengali origin. In 2019, when the NRC was 'finalised,' 1.9 million people were officially declared to be non-citizens, as Maijaan had been. Suddenly, they were on the brink of statelessness.

Such 'bureaucratic violence' is nothing new. From the Kurds in Syria in the 1960s to the Rohingyas in Myanmar in the 1980s, minority groups have often been targeted by ethnicity-based citizenship laws.

Members of majority communities probably cannot imagine having to prove their nationality to suspicious and hostile agents of the state in the country where they were born and raised. They take for granted basic documentation like birth certificates and identification cards, which can easily be presented to a questioning official.

And yet, for members of minority communities and those of migrant heritage, nationality is often tenuous, at best. Without documentation, citizenship can be nearly impossible to prove. And, as we have seen in Assam and elsewhere, it can simply be rescinded by discriminatory laws and practices.

Today, an estimated 15 million people are stateless, and tens of millions more are at risk of losing their nationality. While minorities are disproportionately affected, citizenship laws also often target women by preventing them from passing their nationality on to their children on equal terms with men; limiting their right to acquire, change, or retain their nationality; or limiting their ability to confer nationality on non-citizen spouses.

Moreover, the stateless – who already endure endemic structural discrimination – were often scape-

goated, vilified, and targeted for arbitrary detention and even expulsion from their own countries.

More than a year after the pandemic began, little has changed. In fact, institutional and public indifference to the exclusion of the stateless, together with structural violence toward them, continues unabated. And new challenges are emerging, such as ensuring equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines.

Again, Maijaan is a case in point. She was freed because of the pandemic, which prompted the Supreme Court of India to order the release of 'foreigners' who had been detained for two or more years. But her family's meagre resources had already been depleted by costly legal fees. And, as a 'foreigner,' she was not entitled to the modest support that the Indian government provided for citizens.

Furthermore, as a condition of release, Maijaan must report weekly to the local police, so she cannot earn a living as a migrant worker like her husband. If structural discrimination pushed Maijaan to the brink of poverty, the pandemic threatens to push her over the edge – all under the looming spectre of statelessness. Maijaan's story is one of many documented in a ground-

breaking new report, “Together We Can: The Covid-19 Impact on Stateless People & a Roadmap for Change.” The report is the work of a unique collaboration among a consortium of stateless activists, grassroots groups, and NGOs currently operating in 13 countries.

Grounded in the consortium members' experiences and expertise, the report highlights the pandemic's impact on stateless people's rights – including the right to nationality, documentation, and legal status; the right to non-discrimination; the right to health; and civil rights – in countries from Bangladesh to Malaysia to Montenegro.

The pandemic should spur governments, UN agencies, and international organisations to work directly with stateless people, respect their rights and be accountable to them, address the structural causes of statelessness, and ensure lasting change. The stateless people of the consortium, together with their partners, have shown how to do it. But they cannot carry the world down the right path alone.

*The writer is Co-Director of the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion.*

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WISDOM CORNER

“Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.” LAO TZU

“People only see what they are prepared to see.” RALPH WALDO EMERSON

“He is happiest, be he king or peasant, who finds peace in his home.” JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

WORDSWORTH

Ocker

An Ocker is certainly an Australian, but one of a particular type: a rough and uncultivated working man. Think of the Australian characters in the Crocodile Dundee films, especially the Paul Hogan one, all stereotypical Ockers. An Ocker can be boorish and aggressive, blinkered, often strongly nationalistic in speech and outlook, though my impression is that tolerance and good humour are as common. The archetypal Ocker may be pictured in shearer's singlet, shorts and thongs, leaning against a bar, sinking large quantities of beer. He will certainly be speaking in a characteristically slurred and mangled Australian accent with lots of slang, a lingo parodied as Strine, from an Ocker way of saying Australian. (The word Strine, incidentally, was invented by Alistair Morrison in 1964. He used it the following year in the title of his book, Let Stalk Strine, under the pseudonym of Afferbeck Lauder, whose name needs to be said with a Strine accent to fully savour its flavour.)

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Rissalgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### Scientific vax policy needed

Sir, Covaxin has been found to be 77.8 per cent effective against symptomatic Covid-19 infections. The vaccine has also shown 65.2 per cent efficacy against the Delta variant of the coronavirus. Researchers said a higher vaccine efficacy against severe Covid-19 indicates that cases, which require hospitalisation and threaten to overwhelm healthcare facilities, will be markedly decreased among fully vaccinated people. But the question is can the government's immunisation policy meet the needs of the people? We need a scientific vaccine policy that is still awaited. The government relies on only two private companies – Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute of India – which have not yet provided the government with information on their production. These two companies are unable to provide the required vaccines to India in the short-term. They also have international commitments as they have signed agreements with other countries. If the Delta Plus variant spreads in the next two months, it will become necessary to vaccinate 100 per cent of India's population which is impossible.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

### One nation, one law

Sir, This is in reference to “India needs uniform civil code, says HC,” Orissa POST, July 10. The Delhi High Court's contention stressing the need for a uniform civil code is most welcome. Different personal laws in fact conflict with the Right to Equality and to secure gender justice. Uniform civil code is a reformative move and is strengthened by the example of its successful implementation in the state of Goa. The Supreme Court too has repeatedly batted for the implementation of a uniform civil code. But, the opposition to the much needed reform is politically motivated, driven by hidden agendas and vested interests. The argument that the reform is against democracy doesn't have a leg to stand on because in that case uniformity in criminal laws would also have been against democracy. Also, the argument that links uniform civil code with religion is completely baseless. Religion has its ingredients rooted in spirituality, mode of worship, conduct of prayers and rituals relating to religious practices, whereas the domain of personal law includes marriage, divorce, adoption and inheritance. In this perspective, the Centre should initiate steps, notwithstanding political ramifications, to formulate a 'one nation, one law'.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

# ODF tag a misnomer for 25 GPs in Angul

# Keonjhar DD College cries for attention

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhendipada, July 10:** Out of 34 panchayats in Chhendipada block of Angul district, 25 panchayats are declared as 'open-defecation-free' panchayats. But the real pictures tell different stories.

There are 34 panchayats in Chhendipada block. While Swachh Bharat Mission is yet to be implemented in four panchayats due to coal mines problems, each household in the rest 30 panchayats has a toilet. The District Water and Sanitation Mission (DWSM) has declared 25 panchayats as 'open-defecation-free' panchayats.

But there are many such beneficiaries in as many as 120 villages that are yet to get any benefit from the Swachh Bharat Mission. And those who have toilets under the mission alleged that their toilets are of extremely low quality. Going to describe about the condition of their toilets, these beneficiaries alleged that their toilets are in dilapidated condition, with walls of many already caved in. Due to low quality construction work, their walls collapsed within one month of their construction. They ascribed the failure of the mission to the unholy nexus between the contractors and the employees.



In some villages, people have toilets but are not using them. Lack of awareness is blamed for this. A tribal-dominated Godarasahi of Barasahi panchayat can be taken as a case in point. A peep into the toilets will make you realise how ignorant the residents are. They are using these toilets as their store rooms and still go out to relieve themselves in the open. Like these tribal people, there are many people in the 25 ODF panchayats who are still not aware of what the health-related problems are they may face from defecation in open. Yet, there are plaques at the end

District Water and Sanitation Mission (DWSM) has declared 25 panchayats as 'open-defecation-free' panchayats. There are many such beneficiaries in as many as 120 villages that are yet to get any benefit from the Swachh Bharat Mission

Due to low quality construction work, the toilet walls have collapsed within one month of their construction due to unholy nexus between the contractor and employees

of these villages announcing that the villages are ODF villages. "The residents of Bahalsahi pan-

chayat have toilets under Swachh Bharat Mission. But the toilets of over 30 beneficiaries are lying half-constructed for six months now. So they are forced to go outside for defecation," rued Durgacharan Mohapatra, a Bahalsahi resident.

Informing about the situation of his village, Mukli Pradhan, a resident of Shimilipal village, said, "Swachh Bharat Mission has not been implemented in Shimilipal village. So, they don't have the facility of using toilets in their households. To defecate, they go to open fields or farmlands, covering a distance of at least one kilometre."



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, July 10:** Once one of the most preferred institutions of the state, Dharanidhar (Autonomous) College, popularly known as DD College, has become a shadow of its past. The problem of teaching staff shortage is taking its toll on the college.

Established in 1957 as Keonjhar Science College, the college was later rechristened as Dharanidhar College after Dharanidhar Naik, a tribal leader. Standing as a mute spectator to several remarkable incidents in its journey from Keonjhar Science College to Dharanidhar (Autonomous) College, it has played a great role in shaping the future of numerous students.

For some years now, a shortage of teaching staff has been taking its toll on the institution's quality of education. The college is under Shriram Chandra Bhanj Deo University in Baripada of Mayurbhanj district.

Investigation reveals that around 1,500 students read in Plus II Science, Arts and Commerce while around 2,000 students study in Plus III and PG courses. The college offers PG courses in Political Science, Geology, Chemistry and Commerce.

While there are four lecturers for Geology, two for Chemistry and four for Commerce, there is no permanent lecturer for Political

Established in 1957 as Keonjhar Science College, the college was later rechristened as Dharanidhar College after Dharanidhar Naik, a tribal leader

Science. Guest lecturers are managing the show.

Informing about the teaching staff's strength, principal in-charge Narendra Sahu said, "There are 28 permanent lecturers against 53 posts for Plus III Science, Commerce and Arts. In place of 49 permanent lecturers for Plus II, only 22 are there. We are managing with guest faculties."

Besides the shortage of teaching staff, many posts of non-teaching staff are also lying vacant. Out of 82 posts of administrative and other employees, only 29 are there.

Moreover, the college doesn't have a permanent principal in last 10 years, except for a year in between when it had a permanent principal.

It has been widely discussed here that the college is at the mercy of guest lecturers and in-charge principals. Students' sits-in, strikes and demonstrations demanding steps to address the problems notwithstanding, the deplorable situation is still prevailing.

# WOMAN DIES OF SNAKEBITE, SAVES SON

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 10:** In a tragic incident, a woman was killed by a snakebite, but not before saving the life her son, in Jajpur district in Odisha, the police said Friday.

The deceased woman has been identified as Priyadarshini Rout from Deulabad village in Dasarathpur block of Jajpur district. The villagers said that Priyadarshini died after being bitten by a poisonous snake while saving her son Thursday afternoon.



**PRIYADARSHINI WAS RUSHED TO THE DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS HOSPITAL IN JAJPUR WHERE THE DOCTORS DECLARED HER DEAD**

The incident happened when Priyadarshini was putting her two-and-a-half-year old son to sleep at around 3 pm on Thursday. At that time, she spotted a cobra approaching his son. She immediately caught hold of the snake, but it bit on her right hand.

Priyadarshini was rushed to the district hospital in Jajpur where the doctors declared her dead. Later, members of the local snake helpline rescued the cobra from the area.

Inspector-in-charge Manas Ranjan Chakra said an unnatural death case has been registered and the body has been handed over to the family after an autopsy on Friday morning.



Construction of Ambahata canal on the left embankment of Salandi river under Khaira block in Balasore district has kicked up a row with villagers alleging sub-standard works and demanded a Vigilance probe

# Ganja worth ₹1cr seized in Koraput, two arrested



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sunabeda, July 10:** In a major crackdown, Sunabeda police in Koraput district Friday seized a large quantity of cannabis from a banana-laden truck during a routine patrolling in the area, a police source said.

Market value of the seized contraband is estimated to be more than ₹1 crore.

A team of police officials intercepted the truck which was on its way to Bihar from Jalaput area in the district and seized over 12 quintals of cannabis from the vehicle following a thorough search, Koraput Superintendent of Police (SP) Varun Guntupalli informed.

Two persons were arrested in this connection. The arrested were identified as Rajiv Kumar Mahato (19) from Bokaro area of Jharkhand and Raman Kumar Raut (33) from Bihar, Sunabeda police station IIC Pradyumna Kumar Mohapatra stated.

According to a police source, the seized cannabis weigh around 12.04 quintals. They were packed in a number of large sacks and kept under several banana bunches.

The speeding truck (JH-09 AS-4335) was detained by police after it was doubted that there was something wrong with the rash driving. Police have registered a case (No-91/21) and launched a probe which is underway, a senior official said.

# Ex-BM arrested for embezzlement

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, July 10:** Former manager of a nationalised bank in Kendrapara district was arrested for allegedly embezzling around ₹1.5 crore, police said Saturday.

Manmohan Mohanty allegedly perpetrated the fraud when he was the manager of Canara Bank's Kakat branch in 2016, they said.

Mohanty had sanctioned loans in the names of 14 account holders based on forged documents and cheques, said Jyotiranjana Samantray, the inspector of Kendrapara town police station.

He was dismissed from service in 2018 after the fraud was detected by an audit squad of the bank, the police officer said.

Police swung into action after a local businessman, Satyajit Das, complained, alleging that a sum of ₹13 lakh was withdrawn from his account, he said.

Das had applied for a commercial loan and handed over documents and signed blank cheques to Mohanty as prerequisites for the sanctioning of the loan, police said.

The loan was not sanctioned



THE EX-BM OWNS LUXURY APARTMENTS IN BHUBANESWAR AND PIPILI. BESIDES, HE HAS PURCHASED PRIME PLOTS IN KENDRAPARA TOWN AND WAS EVADING ARRESTS

but ₹13 lakh was withdrawn from his account, they said. Mohanty allegedly defrauded 13 other businessmen in a similar fashion, they said.

"Mohanty has been evading arrest. Acting on a tip-off, we ar-

rested him from the Saheed Nagar police station area in Bhubaneswar on Friday," Samantray said.

"He owns luxury apartments in Bhubaneswar and Pipili. Besides, he has purchased prime plots in Kendrapara town," he added.

Mohanty had sanctioned loans in the names of 14 account holders based on forged documents and cheques, said Jyotiranjana Samantray, the inspector of Kendrapara town police station. He was dismissed from service in 2018 after the fraud was detected by an audit squad of the bank, the police officer added

Police swung into action after a local businessman, Satyajit Das, complained, alleging that a sum of ₹13 lakh was withdrawn from his account. Das had applied for a commercial loan and handed over documents and signed blank cheques to Mohanty as prerequisites for the sanctioning of the loan

Mohanty has been booked under relevant sections of the IPC, including 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery of valuable security) and 468 (forgery for cheating). When produced at the court, he was sent to judicial custody.

# Man beaten to death by security guards inside RSP; video viral



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, July 10:** A man was allegedly beaten to death by security personnel engaged by a private company on the premises of the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) in Sundargarh district, a source Saturday said.

However, the inhuman act came to the fore after a video purportedly showing some security guards mercilessly beating the youth in pres-

ence of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel went viral on social media Friday. The man is said to be in an inebriated condition while entering the plant.

On the other hand, Tangaripalli police have registered an unnatural death case in this connection and launched a probe. The deceased has been identified as Sachin Gopa from nearby Dehuri Basti located on the outskirts of Rourkela city, the source

added. According to a Tangaripalli police official, some locals found the victim Thursday evening near RSP boundary wall outside its premises, in critical condition.

Later, the injured was rescued by the locals and rushed to a hospital where doctors declared him 'brought dead'.

Gopa was in inebriated condition and by mistake had strayed into the RSP premises. Some security guards took the victim inside the RSP and severely roughed him up leading to his death, brother-in-law of the deceased alleged.

Subsequently, Gopa's body was thrown outside the plant premises, the victim's brother-in-law said. Despite several attempts, reactions of the local police as well as RSP authorities could not be obtained.



Congress workers taking out a bicycle rally over hike in fuel, LPG and prices of essential commodities at Sasang panchayat under Sadar block in Balasore district, Saturday

# GORKHAS WELCOME GOVT'S MOVE TO CALL COMMUNITY BY PREFERRED NAME

The community also expressed satisfaction at the Cabinet decision to declare Gorkhas a 'protected class' as it will give the community members land rights, among other benefits, in tribal belts of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, July 10:** The indigenous Gorkha community of Assam welcomed the state Cabinet's recent decision to describe its members as 'Gorkhas', saying that identifying them as Nepalis, as they had been called for many years, had made them feel like citizens of another country.

The community also expressed satisfaction at the Cabinet decision to declare Gorkhas a 'protected class' as it will give the community members land rights, among other benefits, in tribal belts of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

This 'protected class' status should also be extended to areas outside the BTR, community leaders said.

For years we have been demanding that our community be identified as Gorkha. Referring to us as Nepali creates a sense of alienation, as if we are from Nepal and not Indians, Harka Bahadur Chetry, chairman of the Gorkha Autonomous Council Demand Committee (GACDC), told PTI.

The demand was placed before the previous government also, during a meeting between the GACDC and then chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal, September 10, 2016.

Among the demands we had placed before the chief minister, one was that the term Nepali be substituted with the Gorkha in all existing gazette notifications, Chetry said. The move is a welcome step in that direction, he said.

The state Cabinet meeting July 7 decided to notify Nepali Graziers and Cultivators of Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886, as



Gorkha community and include it, along with some other communities, as a 'protected class' in the tribal belts and blocks in Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri districts comprising the BTR.

The community members residing there from before 2003, when the districts came under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, will get the benefits. Gorkhas had ceased to enjoy the benefits of the 'protected class' when these four districts came under the Sixth Schedule.

The Gorkhas have also been demanding the 'protected class' status in all tribal belts and blocks created post-Independence, as they currently enjoy it only in the areas thus demarcated prior to 1947.

This notification of protection of Gorkhas should be extended to

other existing tribal belts and blocks being reviewed by the government, and also to those which the government is proposing to create, Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh (BGP) national vice-president Yam Prasad Ghimire said.

BGP Assam unit president Prakash Dahal said, it (the decision) is historic for the Gorkhas battling identity crisis for years as we were being seen as foreigners due to the use of the word Nepali.

Our forefathers were inhabitants of this land as much as were those of the other indigenous tribes and communities. But during the course of history, misguided by the governments, we came to call ourselves Nepalis, which assumed a different connotation once different countries were formed, Chetry said.

He claimed that the Gorkhas are a heterogeneous community formed by different tribes, many of whom have been living in Assam since, or even before, the Ahom rule started in the 13th century.

Getting the name right is a major step for ensuring the inclusion of the Gorkhas as a part of Assam, BGP state secretary and spokesperson Nanda Kirati Dewan said.

The population of the Gorkhas is about 6 lakh in the state as per the 2011 Census but the figure actually is much higher, he claimed.

These 6 lakh people are those who are enlisted as Nepali-language speakers. But the Gorkha is a heterogeneous community and formed of many tribes and sub-tribes, who have their own languages, like the Limbu or Tamangs, he said.

## PHONE-TAPPING

# Maha sets up probe panel

Nana Patole had claimed that his phone was tapped during 2016-17 when he was a Member of Parliament. The terms and references for the committee are to scrutinise the cases of phone-tapping between 2015 and 2019 and find out whether there was any political motive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 10:** The Maharashtra government has appointed a high-level committee under state DGP Sanjay Pandey to probe state Congress chief Nana Patole's allegation that his phone was tapped when he was MP in 2016-17 under the watch of the then BJP government led by Devendra Fadnavis.

State intelligence department commissioner and additional police commissioner (special branch)

will be part of this three-member panel, as per the order issued by the state government Friday night.

During the two-day monsoon session of the Maharashtra legislature held earlier this week, Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil had made the announcement about setting up a high-level inquiry while speaking in the Legislative Assembly.

Patole had claimed that his phone was tapped during 2016-17 when he was a Member of Parliament (MP) and when the state government was headed by Devendra Fadnavis. He said his phone was tapped on the pretext that it belonged to drug-peddler Amjad Khan.

The committee would probe the case and submit its report to the legislature in three months, the order said. The terms and references for the committee are to scrutinise the cases of phone-tapping between 2015 and 2019 and find out whether there was any political motive.

If the phone surveillance was politically motivated, action will be taken, the order said.

When Patole raised the issue in the House, several members supported the need for a high-level probe.

Patole represents the Sakoli Assembly segment in the Bhandara district of the Vidarbha region. He had earlier quit the Congress and won the 2014 Lok Sabha election on the BJP's ticket. However, he left the saffron party in 2017 citing differences with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Fadnavis, and returned to the Congress.

Saturday, BJP MLA and former minister Ashish Shelar questioned Patole's silence for two years before raising the allegation against the erstwhile Fadnavis government, even as the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) dispensation in the state was formed in November 2019.

The Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress and NCP are the constituents of the MVA government.

Speaking to a regional news channel, Shelar said, "Patole has levelled the allegation that his phone calls were tapped by the previous Fadnavis government. However, he has made the allegation two years after the formation of the MVA government. What was he doing in the last two years?"

The BJP leader quipped that Patole keeps passing amusing comments.



# Police encounters continue in Assam

WITH THE FRESH CASUALTIES, AT LEAST 13 SUSPECTED INSURGENTS AND CRIMINALS HAVE BEEN KILLED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, July 10:** Amid opposition parties decrying the rising number of police encounters under the Himanta Biswa Sarma government, one more murder accused was killed and two alleged ganja smugglers were injured as they attempted to escape from custody in separate incidents in Assam Saturday.

With the fresh casualties, at least 13 suspected insurgents and criminals have been killed and dozens, including rape accused and cattle smugglers, injured in police encounters in the northeastern state since the second BJP-led government assumed power two months ago.

The latest incidents took place in Chirang and Kokrajhar districts, both part of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

A person accused of the murder of a home guard was killed while attempting to escape from police custody in Chirang district.

Within 24 hrs Chirang Police cracked the case of brutal murder of Home Guard Eyad Ali. 3 persons arrested & the murder weapons were recovered.

In an attempt to flee from Police custody, escaping accused Abdul Khalek sustained bullet injuries and later succumbed to his injuries, Chirang district police

tweeted. In another incident, Kokrajhar district police intercepted a truck allegedly smuggling 840 kg of ganja worth over Rs 2 crore, at Srirampur near the Assam-West Bengal interstate border.

While recovering another 10 kg of ganja, which the accused had hidden along the highway, the duo attacked the police personnel & tried to escape from the custody.

In order to prevent it, Police team resorted to control firing, in which both the accused were grievously injured, the Kokrajhar district police said in a Twitter post.

July 6, a suspected drug peddler from Manipur was critically injured when he had allegedly tried to escape from police custody near Rani in Kamrup district.

The rising number of shoot-out encounters in the last two months has whipped up a political furore in Assam with the opposition alleging that the police has turned trigger-happy under the Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma-led regime, which assumed charge May 10.

Justifying the series of encounters since he assumed power, Sarma had July 5 said that shooting at criminals should be the pattern if they attempt to escape from custody or try to snatch guns from the police to fire at them.



# 'New department to protect indigenous faith and culture'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, July 10:** The Assam cabinet Saturday decided to create a new department to protect the culture and practices of people belonging to tribal and other indigenous communities, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said here.

The new department, he stated, would ensure that the state's indigenous population gets to preserve their faith and traditions, while providing requisite support to them. Addressing a press meet, Sarma also said that the cabinet, during the meeting, has agreed that financial and administrative reforms were necessary to remove red tape and ensure speedy implementation of schemes.

It further decided that departmental heads will be entitled to give its nod for projects worth Rs 2 crore and below, and a finance committee headed by chief secretary for those between Rs 2 crore and Rs 5 crore, the CM explained.

A special standing finance headed by the finance minister will be ap-



## TWO MINISTERS GET ADDITIONAL PORTFOLIOS

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has allocated additional portfolios to two cabinet ministers Ranaj Pegu of the BJP and Urkhao Gwra Brahma of the UPPL, a notification said. Brahma, who holds the Handloom and Textile, and Soil Conservation portfolios, will also be in-charge of the Welfare of Bodoland Department, it said. Besides the Education (Higher, Secondary and Elementary) Department, Pegu will also take care of the Welfare of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes Department. Sarma's 13-member cabinet has 10 ministers from the BJP, two from the AGP and one from the UPPL. The alliance has won 75 seats in the 126-member assembly.

proving projects that are worth anything between Rs 5 crore and Rs 100 crore, and only the cabinet

gets to give a go-ahead to schemes that involve funds over Rs 100 crore, he added.

# Aadhaar reunites missing mentally-ill man with kin

The man was handed over to his biological parents June 30 after 10 years, said Samarth Damle, who looked after him all these years as a family member

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Nagpur, July 10:** An 18-year-old mentally-challenged man, who had gone missing at the age of eight years from Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh and started living in Maharashtra's Nagpur, was reunited with his family with the help of his Aadhaar details, an official said Saturday.

Before he went missing in 2011, his family members had got his Aadhaar registration done, which now helped in tracing them, he said.

The man was handed over to his biological parents June 30, said Samarth Damle, who looked after him all these years as a family member.

Damle used to run an orphanage

at Panchsheel Nagar in Nagpur, which was closed down in 2015. "The boy was found at the railway station when he was around eight years old. He was brought to our orphanage by the police," Damle told PTI.

"He is mentally-challenged and is unable to speak properly. We named him Aman as he could only utter 'Amma Amma'. He stayed in the orphanage till 2015. But after the facility shut down, Aman had no one to look after him, so we brought him home and since then he had been living with us as a family member. I have one daughter and a son," he added.

Aman was also admitted to a local school and he studied in Class X this year, Damle said.

"The school needed his Aadhaar



card details. I tried to register his name for Aadhaar, but it used to get rejected due to the biometric issues. After that, I approached the UIDAI office in Nagpur's Mankapur area, where the centre manager found that Aman's Aadhaar registration had already been done and his real name was Mohammed Amir, which ultimately helped

us in tracing his family," he added.

Talking to PTI, centre manager of Aadhaar Seva Kendra in Mankapur, Anil Marathe, said that Damle had approached his office for Aman's Aadhaar registration on June 3. "We tried to register his name several times, but due to the biometric issues it was not happening. So, with the help of UIDAI's

technical centre in Bengaluru and the regional office in Mumbai, we were successful in getting his Aadhaar details based on his biometric details," he said.

It was found that his Aadhaar registration had been done in 2011 in Jabalpur and his real name was Mohammed Amir, he added.

"The photos of Aman and Mohammed Amir also matched," Marathe said. He said Damle told him that Aman was found at the railway station 10 years back and had been living as his family member.

"So with Damle's consent, I contacted my old friends in Jabalpur, who with the help of locals, found out Aman's real parents living in Hanumantal area of Jabalpur. After that, both the families spoke over phone," he said. Amir's parents, who run a food stall in Jabalpur, visited the Damle family in Nagpur and after following all the procedures, he was handed over to them on June 30, Marathe added.

# Court accepts closure report against Chhota Rajan by CBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 10:** A special court here Saturday accepted a closure report filed by the CBI against jailed gangster Chhota Rajan in the case related to a firing on builder and film financier Yusuf Lakkdawala in 2001.

A closure report is filed when an investigating agency believes that it does not have enough evidence to proceed against an accused.

Special Judge A T Wankhede accepted the report and directed that Rajan be 'released' as per section 169 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (release of accused when evidence is deficient).

The court also asked Rajan to furnish a personal bond of Rs 50,000. However, the gangster would not walk out of jail as he is facing numerous other cases.

Special Public Prosecutor Pradeep Gharat said the Central Bureau of Investigation had filed the closure report about three months ago. Appearing through video link, 76-year-old Lakkdawala told the court that he had no objection if the closure report was accepted, Gharat said. Rajan's lawyer

## LAKDAWALA CASE



advocate Tushar Khandare said the incident of firing on Lakkdawala had taken place in suburban Bandra in 2001.

Rajan and some others were named in the case for alleged attempt to murder and also under the Maharashtra Control of Organized Crime Act (MCOCA).

Rajan is lodged in Tihar Jail in Delhi after his deportation from Indonesia in October 2015. He is facing around 70 cases, including the 2011 murder of journalist J Dey.

Lakkdawala too is in judicial custody after being arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case.

The ED case is based on a 2019 FIR of the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Mumbai Police about alleged cheating and forgery related to a Rs 50 crore-worth land at Khandala in Pune district.

# national

## of the day quote

The inclination of the people was towards the BJP and I am happy to say that the strategy of the party has yielded this result

YOGI ADITYANATH | CM, UTTAR PRADESH

Uttarakhand generates electricity and also sells it to other states. Then, why is electricity so expensive for the people of Uttarakhand? Delhi does not generate its own electricity and buys it from other states and yet, electricity in Delhi is free

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

The United States has passed through a similar situation which India is facing today. It was difficult for American doctors and other HCWs who faced extreme work pressure, stress and fear. Our learnings from the American experience will help support this helpline for healthcare workers

SUDHAKAR JONNALAGADDA | PRESIDENT, AAPI

## SHORT TAKES

### Forces kill three ultras

**Srinagar:** Three militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir Saturday. Security forces had launched a cordon and search operation in Kwarigam, Ranipora area of the South Kashmir district following inputs about the presence of militants there, a police official said. While the forces were conducting searches in the area the militants fired upon them.

### Fmr Himachal CM cremated

**Shimla:** Former Himachal Pradesh chief minister Virbhadra Singh was cremated with full state honours at a royal crematorium in Jogni Bagh near Shimla's Rampur Saturday afternoon. His son Vikramaditya Singh performed the last rites around 4.30 pm. Thousands of his well-wishers gathered at the crematorium to bid adieu to the leader. Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur also attended the last rites. A delegation of Congress leaders represented party president Sonia Gandhi at his cremation Saturday.

### Major Maoist attack foiled

**Ranchi:** Security forces have foiled a major Maoist attack by recovering a 40-kg Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in Jharkhand's Giridih district. The IED was recovered and later defused by a joint team of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Jharkhand Police Friday afternoon following a tip-off. On getting information that Maoists have planted an IED in the forest area of village Tengraikhurd under Nimiyaghat police station to target the security forces, an operation was immediately launched by the troops of Quick Action Team (QAT) 154 CRPF and state police to detect and defuse the IED and avert any losses, said the CRPF.

### Ayurveda doyen PK Warriar dies

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Doyen of Ayurveda and managing trustee of Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala (KAS) Dr PK Warriar passed away here Saturday, family sources said. He was 100. KAS sources said Dr Warriar breathed his last around noon. In his lifetime spanning a century, he treated tens of thousands of patients from across the globe and his patients included former presidents and former prime ministers of India and abroad. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a tweet, extended his condolences to Warriar's family.



In the current reign of the BJP in UP, there is no rule of law, but a jungle raj is prevailing under which there has been widespread violence in the panchayat polls and indecent behaviour with a woman in Lakhimpur Kheri. This is highly condemnable

MAYAWATI | BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY CHIEF

## 11 J&K govt employees sacked for 'anti-national' activities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, July 10:** The Jammu and Kashmir administration has sacked 11 of its employees, including sons of Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin and two from the police department, for allegedly working as over ground workers for terrorist organisations, officials said Saturday.

The 11 employees, who have been dismissed, are from the Jammu Kashmir Police, the education, agriculture, skill development, power and health departments, and the Sher-I-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS).

Among the employees, four are from Anantnag, three from



Budgam, and one each from Baramulla, Srinagar, Pulwama and Kupwara districts, the officials said.

These employees were dismissed under Article 311 of the Indian Constitution under which no inquiry is held and dismissed em-

ployees can only approach a high court for relief.

The officials said that the designated committee in Jammu and Kashmir for scrutinising such cases, in its second and fourth meeting, recommended dismissal of three and eight employees, respectively, from government service.

Syed Ahmad Shakeel and Shahid Yousuf, who are sons of Hizbul Mujahideen chief and one of the most wanted terrorists, Salahuddin, were also dismissed from service for allegedly being involved in terror funding, the officials said.

One of them was working with SKIMS and the other, was in the education department, they said. The National Investigation

Agency has tracked terror funding trails of both the persons. They were involved in raising, receiving, collecting and transferring funds through Hawala (non-banking) transactions for terror activities of the banned Hizbul Mujahideen, the officials said.

The three officials recommended for dismissal in the second meeting of the committee, included an orderly of the ITI in Kupwara, who was an over ground worker (OGW) of terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba, they said.

He was providing information to terrorists about the movement of security forces, and abetting and harbouring terrorists to carry out activities in a clandestine manner, the officials said.

## India, Vietnam talk ties as Modi wishes his new counterpart

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 10:** Extending his wishes to his newly appointed Vietnam counterpart Pham Minh Chinh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday expressed confidence that the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries would continue to become stronger under his able guidance.

Modi welcomed the fact that both countries share a similar vision of an open, inclusive, peaceful and rules-based Indian Ocean Region, and hence the India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership can contribute to promote regional stability, prosperity and development.

In this context, a statement issued from Prime Minister's Office said, the Prime Minister also noted that both India and Vietnam were presently fellow members of the UN Security Council.

Prime Minister Modi pursued India's opinion in a telephonic conversation with the Vietnam Prime Minister earlier this morning.

Modi thanked PM Chinh for the valuable support provided by the government and people of Vietnam during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in India.

The leaders agreed that both countries should continue consultations and cooperation to support each other's continuing efforts against the pandemic.

Both Prime Ministers reviewed the state of bilateral relations and shared their views on different areas of cooperation.

Noting that year 2022 marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the leaders agreed to celebrate this auspicious milestone in a befitting manner through various commemorative activities.

Prime Minister Modi also invited PM Chinh to undertake an official visit to India at an early suitable date.

## BJP ex-min expelled for backing farmers' cause in Punjab

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chandigarh, July 10:** The Punjab BJP unit Saturday expelled its former minister Anil Joshi for anti-party assertions. For quite some time, he had been questioning the central government on its policies, particularly on three farm laws that farmers have been protesting and demanding to revoke them.

The action against him came two days after he gave his reply to a show-cause notice.

According to the notice, Joshi had been making statements against the BJP-led Central government and its leadership and policies.

Joshi was expelled on the order of state unit President Ashwani Sharma.

The former Amritsar (North) legislator, in a reply, said I neither spoke against the Centre's farm laws nor against central leadership.

He, in fact, asked state party chief Sharma whether it was an indiscipline to talk about the farmers.

## INDIA'S KHARIF PLANTING LAGS AS MONSOON RAINS TAPER OFF

India, one of the world's top agriculture producers, has received 5% below average rainfall since June 1, when the four-month rainy season began

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 10:** Indian farmers have planted 49.9 million hectares (123 million acres) with summer crops, down 10.43% from a year earlier, according to the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, as monsoon rains taper off after a strong start last month.

Farmers typically start planting summer-sown crops June 1, when monsoon rains usually reach India. Planting then continues until early August.

Planting of rice, the key summer crop, was at 11.5 million hectares as of July 9 versus 12.6 million hectares in the previous year, the ministry said.

The area planted with cotton was at 8.6 million hectares versus 10.5 million hectares the prior year.

Planting of overall oilseeds, including soybean - the main summer oilseed crop - was at 11.2 million hectares, down from 12.6 million hectares the previous year.

Soybean sowing was at 8.2 million hectares against 9.2 million hectares last year. India is the world's biggest buyer of cooking oils.

Sugarcane sowing in the world's second biggest sugar producer was almost unchanged at 5.3 million



hectares. Farmers planted protein-rich pulse on 5.2 million hectares against 5.3 million hectares in the previous year.

The figures are provisional and subject to revision as the June-September monsoon season progresses.

India, one of the world's top agriculture producers, has received 5% below average rainfall since June 1, when the four-month rainy season began. Monsoon rains were 46% below average in the week to July 7.

The state-run weather office defines average, or normal, rainfall as between 96% and 104% of a 50-year average of 88 cm for the entire season.

Monsoon rains, which turned patchy at the tail-end of June, will pick up later this week, India's top weather official told Reuters in an interview Wednesday.

Nearly half of India's farmland has no irrigation and is dependent on monsoon rains that account for 70-90% of annual rainfall. Farming contributes almost 15% to India's \$2.7 trillion economy.

## 2 HELD, 6 COPS SUSPENDED AFTER NCW WROTE TO DG

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 10:** Two men have been held and 6 cops have been suspended after the National Commission for Women (NCW), taking suo motu cognisance of an incident wherein a woman was allegedly attacked and misbehaved when her sari was pulled in full public view in Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh, wrote to state's Director General of Police to take strict action against the culprits.

NCW Chairperson Rekha Sharma wrote the letter to the DG to immediately intervene in the matter and take strict action against the accused involved in the act, following which two men were arrested

### Lakhimpur Kheri case

and six policemen were suspended.

Those arrested by the Uttar Pradesh Police have been charged with assaulting and misbehaving with a woman candidate of the Samajwadi Party for the block pramukh election. A supporter of the candidate was also allegedly manhandled and had her sari pulled by two men who were preventing her from participating in the nomination process on Thursday.

In a video of the incident two men could be briefly seen pulling the sari of the woman in full view outside the Pasgawan block compound in Lakhimpur Kheri district.

## Hefty fines for noise pollution in Delhi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 10:** To curb noise pollution in the national capital, Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) Saturday revised the penalty for violation of noise pollution rules. It has directed the authorities to impose hefty fines for noise pollution caused by loudspeakers and public address systems.

As per a notification by DPCC, Rs 1 lakh fine will be imposed for diesel generator sets of more than 1,000 kilovolt-ampere (KVA) and Rs 50,000 for sound-emitting construction equipment without prior permission.

According to new guidelines framed the plant causing noise pollution will be confiscated.

Now if any construction equip-



ment makes noise more than the prescribed standards, fines up to Rs 50,000 will be imposed and equipment causing noise would also be seized, said the guidelines.

## ISRO swinging back in full action to launch GISAT-1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, July 10:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is getting back into launch activity fully at Sriharikota spaceport with the planned orbiting of geo imaging satellite GISAT-1 on board GSLV-F10 rocket August 12.

It's going to be only the second launch of the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency in the Covid-19-hit 2021. ISRO successfully launched PSLV-C51 mission February 28 with Brazil's earth observation satellite Amazonia-1 and 18 co-passengers, including some built by students, on board.

The 2,268-kg GISAT-1 was originally slated to be launched from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh's Nellore district, about 100 kms north of Chennai, March 5 last year but was postponed a day before the blast-off due to technical reasons.



Thereafter the launch was delayed due to Covid-19 induced lockdown which affected normal work.

It was scheduled for March 28 this year but a minor issue with the satellite forced its postponement.

The launch was later expected in April and then in May but the campaign could not be taken up due to lockdown in parts of the country triggered by the second wave of the pandemic.

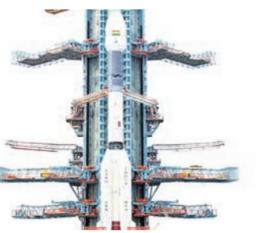
GISAT-1 was originally slated to be launched from Sriharikota March 5 last year but was postponed due to technical reasons. Thereafter the launch was delayed due to Covid-19 induced lockdown

It's going to be only the second launch of the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency in the Covid-19-hit 2021

We have tentatively planned the GSLV-F10 launch August 12, at 05.43 am, subject to weather conditions, an ISRO official told PTI Saturday.

According to ISRO, GISAT-1 will facilitate near real-time observation of the Indian sub-continent, under cloud free conditions, at frequent intervals.

GISAT-1 will be placed in a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit



by GSLV-F10 and, subsequently, it will be positioned in the final geostationary orbit, about 36,000 km above earth's equator, using its on board propulsion system.

The earth observation satellite will provide the country near real-time images of its borders and also enable quick monitoring of natural disasters.

Experts said positioning the state-of-the-art agile earth obser-

vation satellite in geostationary orbit has key advantages.

It's going to be a game-changer in some sense for India, a Department of Space official said.

With onboard high resolution cameras, the satellite will allow the country to monitor the Indian land mass and the oceans, particularly its borders, continuously, the official said.

Listing the objectives of the mission, ISRO had earlier said the satellite would provide near real-time imaging of the large area region of interest at frequent intervals.

It would help in quick monitoring of natural disasters, episodic and any short-term events.

The third objective is to obtain spectral signatures of agriculture, forestry, mineralogy, disaster warning, cloud properties, snow and glacier and oceanography.



## INDIAN RESEARCHERS SPOT RARE SUPERNOVA

An extremely bright, hydrogen deficient, fast-evolving supernova that shines with the energy borrowed from an exotic type of neutron star with an ultra-powerful magnetic field has been spotted by Indian researchers. A deep study of such ancient spatial objects can help probe the mysteries of the early universe, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) said

cmk

cmk

cmk

# international



Today we are sending three million doses to Indonesia, 1.5 million doses to Nepal, 500,000 doses to Moldova, and 500,000 doses to Bhutan. There are no strings attached to our vaccines that we're providing

## PARIS NIGHTCLUBS OPEN FOR 1ST TIME IN 16 MONTHS

Music is pulsing from Paris nightclubs for the first time in 16 months as other European countries shut nightlife down again because of rising Coronavirus cases



### of the day quote

West Nile virus activity in the state is increasing, so I urge Californians to take every possible precaution to protect against mosquito bites

The European Union has kept its word. This weekend we have delivered enough vaccines to member states to be in a position to vaccinate fully at least 70% of the EU adults this month

We also remain convinced that there can be no military solution to the Syrian conflict and reaffirm our commitment to advancing a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned UN facilitated political process in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 2254

# Taliban sees China as a friend, vows not to host Uyghur ultras

### BEIJING IS CONCERNED THAT UNDER TALIBAN RULE, AFGHANISTAN WILL BECOME A HUB FOR THE EAST TURKISTAN ISLAMIC MOVEMENT

Beijing, July 10: The Taliban has said it sees China as a friend of Afghanistan and assured Beijing that it would not host Uyghur Islamic militants from the volatile Xinjiang province, which is a major worry for the Chinese government, according to a media report.

which is waging an insurgency in Xinjiang. The resource-rich Xinjiang shares about 8-km-long border with Afghanistan. Playing down China's concerns, the Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said they see China as a "friend" to Afghanistan and is hoping to talk to Beijing about investing in reconstruction work "as soon as possible."



have investments, of course, we will ensure their safety, Shaheen said. Suhail also said the Taliban would no longer allow China's Uyghur separatist fighters from Xinjiang, some of whom had previously sought refuge in Afghanistan, to enter the country.

recalling the few meetings hosted by China in the past for Taliban delegations. China has been eyeing big scale investments in Afghanistan as the country has the world's largest unexploited reserves of copper, coal, iron, gas, cobalt, mercury, gold, lithium and thorium, valued at over USD one trillion.

## Biden warns Putin over cyber attack from Russia

Biden reiterated that the US will take any necessary action to defend its people and its critical infrastructure in the face of this continuing challenge



Washington, July 10: US President Joe Biden has warned Russia of consequences for the ransomware attacks emanating from the country, underscoring the need for Moscow to take action against groups engaged in the crime.

he said. "And, secondly, that we have set up a means of communications now, on a regular basis, to be able to communicate to one another when each of us thinks something is happening in another country that affects the home country," Biden said.

## HAITI REQUESTS US TO DEPLOY TROOPS AFTER PREZ'S MURDER

Colombians implicated in Moise's assassination were recruited by four companies

Port-Au-Prince, July 10: Haiti's interim government said Friday that it asked the US to deploy troops to protect key infrastructure as it tries to stabilize the country and prepare the way for elections in the aftermath of the assassination of President Jovenel Moise.



"We definitely need assistance and we've asked our international partners for help," Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph told The Associated Press in an interview, declining to provide further details.

The United States Friday rebuffed Haiti's request for troops to help secure key infrastructure after the assassination of President Jovenel Moise by suspected foreign mercenaries, even as it pledged to help with the investigation.

only one way people can become president in Haiti. And that's through elections." Haitian National Police Chief Léon Charles said 17 suspects have been detained in the brazen killing of Moise that stunned a nation already reeling from poverty, widespread violence and political instability.

The US sent troops to Haiti following the last presidential assassination in the country, the murder of President Vilbrun Guillaume Sam in 1915 at the hands of an angry mob that had raided the French Embassy where he had sought refuge.

### SHORT TAKES

#### LA Mayor named US envoy to India

Los Angeles: Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, who was nominated by US President Joe Biden as the country's ambassador to India, has said that he is honoured to accept the nomination and will bring the same energy, commitment and love with which he served the city to his new role.

#### Pak bans air travel for unvaccinated

Karachi: Pakistan has imposed a ban on air travel for people who have not been vaccinated against Covid-19, a move deemed to curb the further spread of the virus, it was reported Saturday.

#### Suicide bombing in Somalia claims 9

Mogadishu: A large explosion in Somalia's capital killed at least nine people and injured eight others, a health official said Saturday. A Somali police spokesman said Mogadishu's police commissioner, Col Farhan Mohamud Qaroleh, was the target of the attack but he was safe.

#### 109 ultras killed in south Afghan

Kabul: At least 109 Taliban militants were killed and 25 others injured during fierce battles and clashes in two southern Afghan provinces, the military confirmed Saturday. In Kandahar province, 70 Taliban militants were killed and eight others wounded after Afghan National Defense and Security Forces supported by Afghan Air Force conducted a clean-up operation in Police District 7 of provincial capital.

## WILDFIRE WOES



Smoke envelops trees as the Sugar Fire, part of the Beckwourth Complex Fire, burns in Doyle, California

## BILLIONAIRE BLASTOFF

# Branson-Bezos space tourism rivalry gets nastier before flight

Washington, July 10: Before they open the lucrative space tourism business to the public, Richard Branson-owned Virgin Galactic and Jeff Bezos-led Blue Origin are fighting and the online feud has only turned uglier this time.

Blue Origin tweeted a chart Friday, comparing Virgin Galactic's space plane to Blue Origin's New Shepard on window size, vehicle type, escape system, and other factors

for a few minutes of weightlessness, while Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipTwo space plane flies 89 kms high - just over the boundary of space defined by the US government, reports The Verge.



Galactic's first spaceflight with humans in 2018 and added that Blue Origin "has flown only mannequins so far."

that "they're not flying above the Karman line and it's a very different experience."

While billionaire Branson is set to fly to space aboard his Virgin Galactic's VSS Unity space plane July 11, Amazon Founder Bezos is expected to take off in his own space tourism rocket July 20.

the Karman line, so none of our astronauts have an asterisk next to their name," the company said in its tweet.

Reacting to the tweet, Nicola Pecile, a Virgin Galactic test pilot, posted: "This pissing contest about the Karman line is so childish that it's getting really embarrassing to watch."

Earlier, Blue Origin's CEO Bob Smith wished Branson well after Virgin's announcement, but said

According to the Fire Service, a huge amount of plastic and packaging materials in the building had fueled the fire in just a few minutes. They said the blocked door at the factory's staircase has caused so many deaths that could have been avoided.



**Integrating technology with inclusive service delivery would hold the key to accelerate the pace of economic recovery during the time of pandemic**  
NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

## ROBINHOOD GIVES FOUNDERS 2ND CHANCE AT \$1.4 BILLION WINDFALL

Stock-trading app Robinhood Markets Inc is giving its billionaire founders four more years to hit share price targets that trigger stock awards worth \$1.4 billion, according to a regulatory filing and four executive compensation experts who reviewed it.



### of the day quote

The future of India lies in start-ups. We have 55 unicorns and during the beginning of 2021, we added 10 unicorns. Start-ups at STPI CoEs can solve global challenges

OMKAR RAI | DIRECTOR-GENERAL, STPI

With vaccinations picking up pace considerably, and with high levels of previous infection also providing protection, I'm hopeful that any subsequent wave of the pandemic will not be as devastating as the second wave in April and May

PIROJSHA GODREJ | EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, GODREJ PROPERTIES LTD

Responding quickly to the third wave and making sure that the vaccination keeps happening at the current rate is key. Implementing the budget of February 2021 comes next. We need to also monitor the economic scenario of the country with real time data

SANJEEV SANYAL | PRINCIPAL ECONOMIC ADVISOR TO GOVT. OF INDIA

# G20 signs off on tax crackdown

REUTERS

Venice, July 10: Finance chiefs of the G20 major economies backed a historic move to prevent multinationals from shifting to low-tax profits in talks Saturday, where they would also warn that coronavirus variants are a threat to global economic recovery.

They also acknowledged the need to ensure proper access to vaccines in poor countries. But a draft communiqué for rubber-stamping at a meeting in the Italian city of Venice did not include specific new proposals to do so.

The tax deal was the biggest recent policy initiative to emerge from their talks. It follows eight years of wrangling over the tax issue and aims for national leaders to give it their final blessing at the October G20 summit in Rome.

German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz confirmed to reporters that all G20 economies were on board for the agreement, while US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said some smaller countries still opposed it, such as the low-tax Ireland and Hungary. Signing will be encouraged until October.



**GLOBAL MINIMUM CORPORATE TAX**

THE AGREEMENT WOULD ESTABLISH A GLOBAL MINIMUM CORPORATE TAX OF AT LEAST 15 PER CENT TO PREVENT MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES FROM SHOPPING FOR THE LOWEST TAX RATE

IT WOULD ALSO CHANGE THE WAY HIGHLY PROFITABLE MULTINATIONALS SUCH AS AMAZON AND GOOGLE ARE TAXED, PARTLY BASED ON WHERE THEY SELL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES RATHER THAN THE LOCATION OF THEIR HEADQUARTERS

"We will try to do that, but I must stress that it is not necessary that every country is on board," she

said. "This agreement includes a sort of enforcement mechanism that can be used to ensure that

countries that are holdouts are not vulnerable - to access tax havens that undermine the operation of this global agreement."

G20 members account for more than 80% of the world's GDP, 75% of global trade and 60% of the planet's population, including the big hitters from the United States, Japan, Britain, France, Germany and India.

Besides EU holdouts Ireland, Estonia and Hungary, other countries that have not signed include Kenya, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Among other important points, the fight in the US Congress over President Joe Biden's plan for tax hikes on corporations and wealthy Americans could cause problems, as could a separate EU plan for a digital levy on tech companies.

US Treasury officials say the EU plan is not in line with a broader global deal, even though the levy is aimed at European firms.

### TWO-TRACK RECOVERY

Beyond the tax deal, the G20 will address concerns that the rise of the rapidly spreading delta

coronavirus variant, coupled with unequal access to vaccines, poses risks to the global economic recovery.

Citing the improvements so far in the global outlook, the draft said: "However, the recovery is characterised by wide variation within and between countries and remains exposed to downside risks, particularly of the Covid-19 virus."

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said the world was facing "a worsening two-track recovery" partly because of gaps in vaccine availability. "This is an important moment that calls for immediate action by the G20 and policymakers around the world," she said in an appeal to the meeting.

While emphasising support for an "equitable global sharing" of vaccines, the IMF, the World Bank, the WHO and the WTO recommend \$50 billion in new vaccine funding, not proposing concrete new measures. The IMF is also pushing G20 countries to set a clear path to allow richer countries to contribute nearly \$100 billion to newly released IMF reserves in poor countries.

## Jio tops, Airtel at bottom in June 4G speed chart: TRAI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 10: Private telecom operator Reliance Jio topped while Airtel registered lowest in the 4G speed chart for the month of June in Odisha, as per the latest data published by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

Jio topped the 4G speed chart with 21.9 megabit per second (Mbps) average 4G download speed in the month of June 2021. On other hand, Bharti Airtel registered the lowest average 4G download speed of 5 Mbps in the month. As per TRAI data, Vodafone Idea showed an average download speed of 6.5Mbps in the same month.



In average 4G upload speed, Vodafone Idea had an average 4G upload speed of 6.2Mbps in June, which was followed by Reliance Jio with an upload speed of 4.8Mbps and Bharti Airtel with 3.9Mbps.

In Odisha, Jio also continued its leadership with highest average 4G download speed of 33 Mbps, followed by Vodafone Idea which registered an average download speed of 5.7Mbps and Airtel which showed an average 4G download speed of 4.5 Mbps, TRAI's report said. Similarly, Vodafone Idea had 7.9 Mbps average 4G upload speed followed by 5.4Mbps average upload speed of Jio and 3.2 Mbps average 4G upload speed by Airtel, in Odisha.

The download speed helps consumers in accessing content from the internet, while upload speed helps them in sending or sharing pictures or video to their contacts. The average speed is computed by TRAI based on the data it collects across India with the help of its MySpeed application on a real-time basis.

## Covid 2.0 unleashes credit stress for MFIs, small NBFCs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 10: The impact of the second Covid wave has raised concerns over the recovery of the microfinance (MFIs) and the small NBFC sector, which was already battling the elevated credit stress and declining AUM in FY21.

Accordingly, out of thirteen issuer downgrades by credit rating agencies during Q1FY22 in the financial sector, ten issuers are smaller MFI and NBFCs engaged in providing unsecured MSME loans, personal and vehicle loans.

A report by Acuite Ratings said that collection efficiencies which were seen recovering above 90 per cent in Mar-21 have dropped to between 65-85 per cent levels during Q1FY22.

"Besides the lower collections, the debt raising ability of these smaller players has been impacted with an estimated 50 per cent of players (having a loan portfolio of more than 500 crore) having received adequate funds."

"Relief measures provided by the government and RBI recently is expected to support the continuity of credit flow to microfinance and MSME borrowers while also enhance liquidity relief to the smaller lenders."

Furthermore, it said that impact of second wave of Covid has been more pronounced on collections in the asset classes of microfinance and two-wheeler loans as compared to the first cycle.

"Even as two-wheeler as an asset class fared better during the first wave of lockdowns, the impact has been greater during the second cycle on account of the spread of the pandemic in rural areas and the stress on the borrowers' cash flows due to loss of income as well as high medical expenses," said Suman Chowdhury, Chief Analytical Officer, Acuite Ratings & Research.

"Given the intermittent nature of economic activities in the wake of Covid spread in Q1FY22, the borrower income streams, particularly of those serviced by smaller NBFCs or MFIs have been severely impacted, thereby exacerbating the asset quality stress for these lenders."

# India's fuel demand rebounds as mobility picks up in June

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 10: India's fuel demand rebounded in June after slumping to a nine-month low in the previous month as restrictions to curb the spread of the pandemic were eased, helping economic activity and mobility to pick up.

Fuel consumption rose 1.5 per cent to 16.33 million tonnes in June from a year earlier and by 8 per cent over May 2021, data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas showed.

Petrol sales rose 5.6 per cent year-on-year to 2.4 million tonnes in June. It was up 21 per cent from May sales of 1.99 million tonnes. Diesel - the most used fuel in the country - rose 12 per cent from May to 6.2 million tonnes, but was down 1.5 per cent from June 2020 and 18.8 per cent from June 2019.

This is the first monthly increase since March.

Fuel demand had recovered to near-normal levels in March before the onset of the second wave of COVID-19 infections led to the re-imposition of lockdowns in different states, stalling mobility and muting economic activity.

Consumption in May slumped to its lowest since August last year amid lockdowns and restrictions in several states.

Fuel demand showed signs of resurgence in June after restrictions began to be eased and the economy gathered pace.

With COVID case addition continuing to decline and vaccination pace picking up, state governments have continued to reopen, though some exceptions



**BACK TO NORMAL**

FUEL DEMAND HAD RECOVERED TO NEAR-NORMAL LEVELS IN MARCH BEFORE THE ONSET OF THE SECOND WAVE OF COVID-19 INFECTIONS LED TO THE RE-IMPOSITION OF LOCKDOWNS IN DIFFERENT STATES, STALLING MOBILITY AND MUTING ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

CONSUMPTION IN MAY SLUMPED TO ITS LOWEST SINCE AUGUST LAST YEAR AMID LOCKDOWNS AND RESTRICTIONS IN SEVERAL STATES

FUEL DEMAND SHOWED SIGNS OF RESURGENCE IN JUNE AFTER RESTRICTIONS BEGAN TO BE EASED AND THE ECONOMY GATHERED PACE

such as Maharashtra exist.

The then Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had last month stated that India's fuel demand would recover to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2021.

"We are confident by the end of this calendar year we will be in a position to restore our original (pre-COVID) consumption behaviour," Pradhan said.

Consumption of LPG, the only fuel which showed growth even during the first lockdown because of free supplies by the government to the poor, rose 9.7 per cent

year on year to 2.26 million tonnes. It was up 26.3 per cent over June 2019.

With airlines yet to resume full-scale operations because of travel restrictions around the globe, jet fuel sales at 2,58,000 tonnes was up 16.2 per cent year on year but 61.7 per cent lower than June of 2019.

Naphtha sales dropped by about 3.1 per cent to 1.19 million tonnes while sale of bitumen - used for making roads, were down 32 per cent at 5,09,000 tonnes. Fuel oil consumption rose 1.9 per cent to 5,33,000 tonnes.

# FTC opens probe into Amazon's MGM acquisition

THE PROBE IS PART OF AN INCREASED ANTITRUST SCRUTINY FROM THE JOE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

San Francisco, July 10: The US Federal Trade Commission (FTC), headed by Lina Khan who is known as antitrust advocate and an Amazon critic, has opened a probe into Amazon's \$8.45 billion acquisition of movie and TV studio giant MGM.

According to a report in The Information Friday citing sources, the FTC probe is an "in-depth investigation into the deal."

The investigation sets the stage for a lengthy probe that could last six months or more.

"It signals that the FTC, under the new leadership of Amazon critic Lina Khan, will take a hard line on even relatively small acquisitions by the e-commerce giant in industries where Amazon does not have a strong position," the report emphasised.

Amazon was yet to react to the report. Khan, the newly appointed chief



of the FTC, is a strident Big Tech critic. "Amazon's business strategies and current market dominance pose anti-competitive concerns that the consumer welfare framework in antitrust fails to

recognise," wrote Lina Khan in the Yale Law School Journal.

The probe is part of an increased antitrust scrutiny from the Joe Biden administration. Earlier Friday, Biden signed the Executive

Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy, with several provisions relating to net neutrality. Amazon May 26 announced to acquire movie giant MGM for \$8.45 billion, at a time when the

world's largest telecommunication company AT&T has announced to merge WarnerMedia with Discovery to create a new media giant that will compete with leading streaming players like Netflix.

The report mentioned that the FTC is focused on "the larger implications of the deal for Amazon's market power."

"The FTC is wary of whether the deal will illegally boost Amazon's ability to offer a wide array of goods and services, and is not just limited to content production and distribution," it added.

Metro Goldwyn Mayer's or MGM which has a century of filmmaking history, has a vast library of over 4,000 film titles, including 12 Angry Men, Basic Instinct, Creed, James Bond, Legally Blonde, Moonstruck, Poltergeist, Raging Bull, Robocop, Rocky, Silence of the Lambs, Stargate, Thelma & Louise, Tomb Raider, The Magnificent Seven, The Pink Panther, The Thomas Crown Affair, and many others.

### SHORT TAKES

#### GGE launches EV charging station

Bhubaneswar: GG Engineering Ltd launched an EV charging station. With a view to expand its product line, the company has developed EV charging station from 3 KW to 22 KW. The company will commence manufacturing of EV charging stations. These stations shall be used to charge 2/3/4 wheeler vehicles. The production and distribution will start in three months. Recently, the company has commenced manufacturing of GG ECO, a fully automated system to manage the wet/organic/food/garden waste at any place. GGE launched India's first fully-automated and smart RVMS. GG Engineering has an order from Western Railway to install RVMS across stations with advertisement rights.

#### Iitel launches 4K Android TVs

Bhubaneswar: Iitel announced the launch of its 4K Android TVs range. The 4K Smart TVs come in both 43 and 55 inch sizes. The new television models named G4334IE and G5534IE are designed to elevate the home entertainment experience. The Smart TVs are priced at ₹32,999 for the 43-inch variant and ₹46,999 for the 55-inch version. The 4K UHD TVs offer a better resolution and come packed with an Ultra Bright Display (upto 400nits bright), 24W speaker, latest Android 10 OS, Google Assistant, Chromecast built-in TM and more storage for a superior entertainment experience. A powerful chipset from MediaTek supported by ARM Cortex A53 CPU and Mali G52 GPU ensures glitch-free picture clarity.

#### Mother Dairy hikes milk prices

New Delhi: Days after prices of Amul milk (packed) increased by ₹2 per litre, Delhi's leading milk supplier Mother Dairy too has announced an increase of ₹2 per litre Saturday. Consumers have to pay an increased price for Mother Dairy's milk from Sunday, while Amul has already implemented its revised prices from July 1. "Compelled to raise its liquid milk prices by ₹2/litre in Delhi-NCR with effect from July 11, 2021," sources in Mother Dairy confirmed to IANS. One has to pay ₹57 for one litre of Mother Dairy milk from Sunday, instead of ₹55 Saturday.



**ITALY HAVE A BETTER RECORD AGAINST ENGLAND. THEY HAVE WON 11 MATCHES WHILE ENGLAND HAVE EMERGED VICTORIOUS IN 8**

**LAST TIME THE TWO SIDES MET IN 2018, THE GAME ENDED IN A 1-1 DRAW**

**ENGLAND ARE PLAYING THE FINAL OF A MAJOR TOURNAMENT AFTER 55 YEARS**

AGENCIES

**London, July 10:** As England footballers take the field Sunday for probably the most important game of their career, till now, their fans are in frenzy. It is England's greatest opportunity of ending their

**PASSAGE TO FINAL**

ENGLAND	SCORE	ITALY	SCORE
Beat Croatia	1-0	Beat Turkey	3-0
Drew with Scotland	0-0	Beat Switzerland	3-0
Beat Czech Republic	1-0	Beat Wales	1-0
Beat Germany	2-0	Beat Austria	2-1
Beat Ukraine	4-0	Beat Belgium	2-1
Beat Denmark	2-1	Beat Spain	1-1 (4-2 penalties)



Harry Kane

trophy-less run for 55 years, their last major win coming in the 1966 World Cup final against Germany. England's run to the Euro 2020 final is sweeping the nation into frenzy ahead of Sunday's clash with Italy. However, over 60,000 fans at the Wembley Stadium here

# 'SWEET CAROLINE' SWEEPS ENGLAND

NEIL DIAMOND SONG INSPIRING 3 LIONS AHEAD OF AZZURI CHALLENGE

will be rocking to a unfamiliar football anthem. Neil Diamond's 'Sweet Caroline' has become the crowd and squad's favourite of England's first ever run to a European Championship final. "You can't beat a bit of 'Sweet Caroline'," England manager Gareth Southgate said after a 40,000 strong Karaoke session celebrated victory over Germany in the last 16. "It's just a really joyous song, I think, that brings people together," the England manager had added.

The song 'Three Lions', commonly known by its lyrics 'football's coming home' has been the soundtrack to England success, and more commonly failure, for the last 25 years. 'Sweet Caroline' first hit the charts in 1969 just three years after England achieved their last success at a major tournament. And if England win Sunday, there can be no doubt that it will again be a rebirth for 'Sweet Caroline'. "I felt like we'd beat Germany and lost to Neil Diamond in extra time," an England footballer said recently.

Diamond himself has even noticed the buzz. "What a thrill it was to hear everybody singing 'Sweet Caroline' at Wembley," he was quoted as saying by 'The Telegraph' Saturday. He has plenty of reason to smile with his song pro-

pelled up to second in the UK download charts on the back of Euro 2020 fever.

But song sentiments apart, Italy start the final against England as slight favourites. They have won 11 of their last 30 games against England while the same number of games has ended in a stalemate. However, in the Euro 2020 final, there is no chance of a draw... there has to be one ultimate winner.

England's 2-1 win July 7 over Denmark ended a run of semifinal defeats in the World Cup in 1990 and 2018 and in the 1996 European Championships. Southgate has developed a young side since 2018, working on showing his players to develop and grow into a major tournament and England have done just that.

England began their campaign with solid, if unspectacular performances in the group stage, built on being tough to score against, but with players such as Raheem Sterling and Mason Mount and Harry Kane able to produce a moment of magic in attack.

Southgate was pragmatic as they beat Germany in the last 16 showing he can adapt his system from a three-man defence to one with three central defenders and two wing-backs. England showed they can also attack with a 4-0 quarter-final thrashing of Ukraine.



Ciro Immobile

Now England have the chance to make history again and Southgate is unlikely to make too many changes to his starting XI. There is a chance he could return to three at the back to frustrate an impressive Italian attack of Lorenzo Insigne,

Ciro Immobile and Federico Chiesa, who scored against Spain in the last four games.

Italy have looked good throughout the competition, with coach

Roberto Mancini swapping their defensive game for a more expansive style of football, but they found it hard to deal with Spain's high pressing game. But then, you have to respect a team that have gone unbeaten in their last 33 matches.

Italy, who failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup (described as a national tragedy) are on redemption path. They have showed in this tournament so far that they are a very good side indeed. So England have not only got to be careful, but have to respect the capabilities of their adversaries.

## Sciver, rain help England beat India by 18 runs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Northampton, July 10:** England all-rounder Nat Sciver (55, 27b, 8x4, 1x6) smashed a record-equalling half century before the bowlers put the struggling Indian batters under pressure to ensure an 18 run-win for the hosts via DLS method in the rain-curtailed first T20I against here Friday. Sciver's sensational fifty was England's joint fastest in the format.

Put in to bat, England scored 177 for seven in their 20 overs. Wicket-keeper Amy Jones (27b, 4x4, 2x6) gave good support to Sciver and propped up the innings.

In reply, India failed to keep up with the required run-rate despite vice-captain Smriti Mandhana's (29, 17b, 6x4) quickfire knock. When rain stopped play India were 54 for three in 8.4 overs, 18 runs behind England via the DLS method.

Harleen Deol (17 off 24b), who took a sensational catch earlier in the day, was one of the main culprits in India failing to maintain the run rate as she failed to put away many loose deliveries. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (1) again failed with the bat.

Chasing 178, India was off to the worst possible start as pacer Katherine Brunt bamboozled the big-hitting Shafali Verma for a duck, leaving India at nought for one.

England now lead the three-match series 1-0 and 8-4 in the multi-format points system having lifted the ODI trophy.

Openers Tammy Beaumont and Danni Wyatt gave England a solid start, putting on runs in the power play overs. Then Sciver took over and pushed the scoring rate briskly hitting shots all round the park.

Pacer Shikha Pandey (3/32) was the best bowler for India while spinners Poonam Yadav (1/32) and Radha Yadav (1/33) picked up a wicket apiece.

**Brief scores:** England 177 for 7 (Nat Sciver 55, Shikha Pandey 3/22) beat India 54 for 3 in 8.4 overs (Smriti Mandhana 29) by 18 runs (DLS method).

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Sunny's b'day pledge

**New Delhi:** There cannot be a bigger blessing than a second shot at a healthy life for children born with congenital heart disease, according to the legendary Sunil Gavaskar. His biggest pledge on his 72nd birthday Saturday is to bring smiles on those cute little faces. Gavaskar's 'Heart to Heart' foundation has been working on this issue. Almost 16,000 surgeries have been performed 'free of cost', with a 'success rate of 99 per cent', the former Indian opener said. The batting great also said that approximately 400 surgeries are being performed every month.

#### Pope doubtful

**London:** England batsman Ollie Pope was Saturday rendered a doubtful starter for the opening Test against India after suffering a thigh injury during his stint for Surrey in the 'Vitality Blast' tournament. The 23-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman sustained the injury during his team's match against Kent July 2. "The ECB and Surrey fitness teams will work together to deliver Pope's rehabilitation with a focus for him to be available to return for the first Test against India. However, nothing can be said at this moment about his participation in the first Test," the ECB said. "His progress will be monitored closely," it added.

#### Colombia finish 3rd

**Brasilia (Brazil):** Colombia beat Peru 3-2 in the third-place match at Copa America after striker Luis Diaz scored a pair of goals, one of them assisted by goalkeeper Camilo Vargas. It was however, Peru who opened the scoring in the 28th minute through Yoshimar Yotún. However, just after the interval Juan Guillermo Cuadrado equalised by converting a free-kick. In between the two Diaz goals, the second Peru goal was scored by Gianluca Lapadula, but it was not enough.

# IT'S BARTY TIME

AGENCIES

**London, July 10:** Very few manage to turn dreams into reality and those that do it are exceptions. Well, it has always been Ashleigh Barty's dream to win the women's singles crown at Wimbledon. She did exactly that Saturday beating Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 6-7 (4-7), 6-3 in a pulsating final which saw plenty of ups and downs. On her part, Pliskova made the contest an entertaining one, challenging the prowess of Barty at every juncture. In the end however, Barty's all-round superior court craft prevailed as she won the second Grand Slam title of her career. She had earlier won the French Open in 2019. Barty did wobble as she served for the match in the third set and faced a breakpoint at 30-40. But she held firm and then produced her seventh ace of the tie to go to match point. Then she sank on her knees in disbelief as Pliskova hit a forehand into the net. No she did not eat the Centre Court grass as Novak Djokovic does, and may do so again Sunday. "It's a moment, I really cannot



**MOMENT WORTH WAITING FOR:** Australian Ashleigh Barty kisses the winner's plate after emerging victorious in the women's final

describe," Barty said after being presented the winner's trophy by the Duchess of Cambridge. "It's still an incredulous feeling, this is what I've lived for," she added. Barty was asked as to what her feelings were after the final point and pat came

the reply, "I don't remember." She may not remember, but this was a match that greets like Martina Navratilova and Billie Jean King will certainly remember. It was a match where both players played grass court tennis. No it was not just

**FINAL SCORE**  
Ashleigh Barty bt Karolina Pliskova  
**6-3, 6-7 (4-7), 6-3**

pointless hitting from the baseline. There were volleys, drop shots, lobs, passing shots and the chip and charge that make grass court tennis so exciting. In the end, Barty just played the crucial points a bit better than Pliskova to have the last laugh.

In the process, Barty emulated her mentor, her inspiration and her idol Evonne Goolagong Cawley. The latter was the last Australian woman to win the Wimbledon singles title in 1980. Since then, no one had been able to stamp Aussie authority at Centre Court. Barty did that Saturday with some great shot-making.

Barty, who is 25, was the junior champion at Wimbledon a decade ago. She then left the tennis tour for nearly two years in 2014 because of burnout. She played professional cricket back home, then eventually decided to return to her other sport. It was good that she did.

## Problems for athletes reaching Tokyo

SPORTSPERSONS FORCED TO WAIT FOR LENGTHY PERIOD WITHOUT FOOD AND WATER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 10:** IOA president Narinder Batra highlighted fresh concerns Saturday that India's Olympic-bound athletes may face on arrival in Tokyo, including spending long hours in immigration without food and water. Batra was informed Friday of the inconveniences the athletes from other countries are facing on landing in Tokyo by the Indian Chef De Mission, BP Baishya. He has raised the issue to the Games' organisers ahead of the Indian contingent's departure. "Important issues brought to my

**The athletes will have to wait at the airport for 4-5 hours without food and water. They will not be allowed to leave the airport till they test negative for Covid-19**  
BP BAIISHYA | CHEF DE MISSION

notice from Chef De Mission meeting July 9. Same issue was highlighted in the meeting by different countries including the Czech, who arrived at Narita airport," Batra said in a statement. "They had to wait for 4 hours, before the

immigration process to begin. No food and water was provided," the statement read.

The first batch of India's Olympic-bound athletes is set to depart July 17 for Tokyo. More than 120 athletes are bound for the Games.

"Sharing with all of you so that you are mentally prepared for what you may very likely expect at the airport until you reach the Village," Batra stated.

Baishya said the athletes need to be prepared for spending long hours at the airport after landing in Tokyo for testing, immigration and other clearances.

"Our athletes will have to stay at the Tokyo airport for 5 to 6 hours after arrival. The first thing after arrival will be Covid tests of the Indian contingent. Then we have to complete immigration and other required process. After that the Covid-19 test results will come and only after that, the Indian contingent will be allowed to board the bus. Without test results, we cannot leave Tokyo airport," Baishya told this agency.

Baishya also informed that weightlifter Mirabai Chanu will reach Tokyo July 15 or 16 from the US. She will not face any issue since she is coming from the US.

### EFFECT OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK

## India's games against Sri Lanka rescheduled

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 10:** The Indian team's six-match limited-overs series in Sri Lanka will now start from July 18, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said Saturday. This decision was taken a day after a Covid-19 outbreak in the home team camp forced the postponement.

The series was originally scheduled to start with the first of the three ODIs played July 13. However, the dates had to be rescheduled after Sri Lanka's batting coach Grant Flower and data analyst GT Niroshan tested positive for the dreaded virus on their return from the UK tour. It also meant an extended quarantine period for the squad members.

The tentative date that was originally being discussed for the tour was July 17. However, Shah confirmed Saturday that the matches will get underway from July 18. "India-Sri Lanka ODI series to start July 18 due to Covid-19 outbreak in home team camp," Shah said in a statement.

The three ODI matches will now be played July 18, 20 and 23 at the Premadasa Stadium. It will be followed by the T20 Internationals, starting July 25. The last two T20Is will be played July 27 and 29, respectively, at the same venue.

"We understand that circumstances are extraordinary, but the BCCI would like to extend its full support to Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) during these tough times for the smooth conduct of the upcoming series," Shah said in a statement, issued by the BCCI.

"Our medical team is in constant touch with the team of doctors at SLC and together following all safety protocols that will help the series to get underway. We are confident that both nations will put up a spirited show in the days to come and we are in for some exciting cricket," Shah assured. SLC secretary Ashley De Silva

**ODIS WILL BE PLAYED JULY 18, 20 AND 23**  
**T20 GAMES TO BE PLAYED JULY 25, 27 AND 29**

expressed his gratitude towards BCCI for standing by them during hour of crisis. "We are grateful to the BCCI for understanding the situation and agreeing to cooperate with us at this moment of time, as it has done on numerous occasions, during our long-standing relationship," De Silva said.

Earlier in the day, a Sri Lankan player in one of the two bio-bubbles tested positive for Covid-19 as the virus outbreak continued to rock the home team. "Newswire.Lk" quoted Sri Lankan sources as saying that batsman Sandun Weerakkodi has tested positive for the virus. However, Weerakkodi isn't a part of UK-returned team. That team are still in isolation, post Flower and Niroshan's positive cases.

The latest positive case emerged from a separate bubble of 13 players who are being kept as reserves.

According to a report in the website, Weerakkodi was with the 15 senior cricketers, who were training here while staying at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel in Colombo. Since he has tested positive there is also a question mark over the cricketers he was training with.

The report further stated that Weerakkodi, along with Bhanuka Rajapaksa and several other cricketers, were sent Friday night to Dambulla night to play practice matches ahead of the India series.

Sources also indicated that the BCCI is also keeping a close watch on the developments. As of now, the cricket body has not decided in calling off the tour, but may do so if more Sri Lankan cricketers test positive in the coming days. The Indians are being tested at a gap of three days.