



## UNFAZED PERFORMER

Actor Reyhna Pandit says she is unaffected by trolls she receives for playing a negative role on the screen

LEISURE P2



## FLASH FLOOD HORROR

Heavy rain in Himachal Pradesh's Dharamshala led to a flash flood-like situation

TWO STATES P8



## BIDEN WHISPERS IN WISCONSIN

US Prez, while talking about repairing roads and bridges, shifted gears and began speaking and interacting with people in a lowered voice

INTERNATIONAL P10



**NO GO FOR DEVOTEES:** Servitors performing rituals during the annual Rath Yatra festival in Puri, Monday. Devotees were kept away from the festival due to Covid-19 curbs.

PTI PHOTO

1800 266 266 1 (toll free)

## 74 die in lightning in UP, Raj and MP

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 12:** Lightning strikes in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh over past 24 hours claimed at least 74 lives, according to data provided by the states governments. It was one of the worst lightning disasters in the region in the recent past.

The dead include 11 visitors at 12th century historic Amer Fort on the outskirts of Jaipur who were taking selfies at a watchtower inside the fort Sunday evening. The maximum number of deaths were reported from Uttar Pradesh where 41 died across 16 districts Sunday night.

"As per the available information, 41 people have died due to lightning strikes across 16 districts in the state and 30 people have been injured. Taking note of this incident, 4 lakh ex-gratia each will be provided to kin of the deceased," Uttar Pradesh relief commissioner Ranvir Prasad told a news agency.

In Rajasthan, twenty-three people, including 12 in Jaipur, were killed and 27 injured in incidents of lightning strikes, officials said on

Monday. Besides Jaipur, the deaths were reported from six other districts - Kota, Jhalawar, Baran, Dholpur, Sawai Madhopur and Tonk - according to the Disaster Management and Relief department.

In a major tragedy in Jaipur, 12 people, mostly youngsters, were killed and 11 injured in an incident of lightning strike at the iconic watch tower near the Amber Fort, the officials said. Some of them were taking "selfies" on the watch tower; while the others were on the hill nearby, they said, adding that those on the tower fell on the ground when the lightning struck late on Sunday evening.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Governor Kalraj Mishra, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot have expressed grief over the incidents of lightning strikes and conveyed their condolences to the families of the deceased.

In Madhya Pradesh, six people, including two minors, were killed and 11 others injured in separate incidents of lightning. In Gwalior district, two persons died on Sunday evening when lightning struck them at Sunarpura village.



**IRREGULAR** by MANJUL  
I've checked. Only lying for marriage is punishable, not lying for votes!

# Chariots roll amid Covid restrictions

PNN & AGENCIES

**Puri, July 12:** Amid beating of cymbals, blowing of conch shells and chanting of 'Hari Bol', Lord Jagannath and his celestial siblings' annual Rath Yatra began in Puri Monday with strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols as the holy town was placed under curfew.

This was for the second consecutive year and the second time in the history of the 12th-century shrine that the annual mega-festival, considered one of the biggest religious events in the country, was held sans devotees.

The entire 3-km stretch of the Grand Road in front of the temple wore a deserted look as only some selected priests and police personnel were allowed to participate in the festival.

Only those servitors, police personnel and officials who have tested negative for Covid-19 have been allowed to take part in the festival, Puri Collector Samarth Verma said.

Gatherings on streets or rooftops have been prohibited. The curfew has been imposed in the interest of public health, he said.

The elaborate rituals started from Sunday night and the sibling deities, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath, along with Lord Sudarshan, were carried to their respective chariots in a step-by-step procession called 'Pahandi'.

Descending from the 'Ratna Sinhasana', the bejewelled throne, the three deities were taken out of the temple down the 22 steps known as

### LOW-KEY AFFAIR

- Only those servitors, police personnel and officials who have tested negative for Covid-19 have been allowed to take part in the festival
- Gatherings on streets or rooftops have been prohibited. The curfew has been imposed in the interest of public health
- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik refrained from visiting Puri and watched the proceedings on television

'Baisi Pahacha' through the Lion's Gate in an elaborate ritual.

A number of traditional rituals like 'Mangala Arati', 'Mailam' and 'Surya Puja' were held before the presiding deities set out from the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. Lord Sudarshan, the wheel weapon of Lord Krishna, was first seated in the chariot of Devi Subhadra, called 'Darpadalan'.

After that, Lord Balabhadra was seated on his chariot 'Taladhawaja' and finally, Lord Jagannath was taken to his chariot 'Nandighosh'. The three wooden chariots draped in layers of red, black, green and yellow cloth were parked in front of the Lion's Gate.

The 45-ft-high 'Nandighosh' stood with 16 huge wooden wheels, while 'Taladhawaja' stands at 44-ft-high with 14 wheels, and 'Darpadalan' is 43-ft-high and has 12 wheels.

After the deities were seated on the

chariots, Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb, the titular king of Puri, performed the 'Chhera Panhara' (sweeping of chariots) ritual with a golden broom, following which Jagatguru Shankaracharya of Govardhan Peeth, Swami Nischalananda Saraswati, had a darshan of the deities as per tradition before the pulling of the chariots.

'Taladhawaja' was pulled first by about 500 servitors, following which 'Darpadalan' and 'Nandighosh' started rolling. Though it was earlier decided that the pulling of the chariots will begin at 3pm, the process actually began much before schedule, an official of the Shri Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) said.

All entry points to Puri town have been sealed and over 65 platoons of police, each having 30 personnel, were deployed and CCTVs installed at various locations as part of the security arrangement for the nine-day festival, officials said. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik refrained from visiting Puri and watched the proceedings on television. The state government has made elaborate arrangements for free live broadcast of the festival for devotees across the country.

President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Andhra Pradesh Governor BB Harichandan and many others greeted people on the occasion.

## Petrol costlier, diesel rate cut

PNN & AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 12:** Global cues pushed fuel prices to increase again across the country Monday adding more misery to the common man already grappling with rising food prices amid shrinking income.

However, unlike uniform price movement earlier, oil marketing companies Monday continued with their practice adopted more than two months ago to increase the price of petrol but reduced the primp price of diesel for the first time in close to three months.

Accordingly, while the price of petrol increased by 28 paise to ₹101.19 a litre in Delhi, the price of diesel was cut by 16 paise per litre to ₹89.72 a litre in

CITY FUEL PRICES	
PETROL	₹102.06 (+0.28)
DIESEL	₹89.72 (-0.17)

Delhi.

Across the country as well, petrol prices increased in the range of 25-35 paise per litre, diesel prices reduced by 15-20 paise per litre.

Before Monday, the retail prices of petrol and diesel rose by a sharp 35 paise and 26 paise per litre Saturday while it remained unchanged Sunday.

In the city of Mumbai, where petrol prices crossed ₹100-mark for the first time ever May 29, the fuel price reached a new high of ₹107.20 per litre Monday. Diesel price in the city is also at ₹97.29, the highest among metros.

Petrol prices in all metros have now crossed the ₹100 per litre-mark and OMC officials said that if international oil prices continued to firm up, prices may rise further. With Monday's price hike, fuel prices have now increased on 39 days and remained unchanged on 34 days since May 1.

## State daily Covid cases below 2,000

**Bhubaneswar:** The state's count of single-day Covid-19 cases fell below the 2,000-mark for the first time in almost three months, even as 63 more fatalities pushed the toll to 4,662 Monday, a health official said. The coronavirus tally mounted to 9,41,745 with 1,993 fresh cases, reported from all the 30 districts, he said. While 1,154 new infections were reported from quarantine centres, the remaining 839 were local-contact cases. Odisha now has 24,567 active cases, and 9,12,463 patients have recovered from the disease so far.

## Italy win Euro 2020

**London:** Italy became the European football champions after a gap of 53 years by defeating hosts England in a dramatic penalty shootout in the Euro 2020 final at the historic Wembley stadium here. Italy had won their first Euro title in 1968 and they won their second one when goalkeeper Donnarumma blocked a poor effort by 19-year-old Bukayo Saka of England, after Jorginho had missed the last Italian kick, to win the penalty shootout 3-2 after both teams were deaekotted 1-1 after 120 minutes of action.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	52372.69 ↓ 13.50
NIFTY	15692.60 ↑ 2.80
DOLLAR	75.26 ↓ ₹0.03
EURO	88.44 ↑ ₹0.04
GOLD	₹47,805 ↓ ₹118
SILVER	₹69,436 ↑ ₹139

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	33.3°C	33.6°C
MIN	25.8°C	25.4°C
Humidity	80%	71%
Rainfall	0.2mm	Nil
Forecast	Light rain very likely	

## Flipkart valuation surges to ₹2.79L cr

**NEW DELHI:** Flipkart Group Monday said it has raised USD 3.6 billion (about ₹26,805.6 crore) in funding led by Singapore's sovereign wealth fund GIC, CPP Investments, SoftBank Vision Fund 2 and Walmart, valuing the e-commerce giant at USD 37.6 billion. The company, which competes with Amazon, Reliance Industries' JioMart and others in the burgeoning Indian e-commerce market, said it will continue to make deeper investments across people, technology, supply chain and infrastructure to address the requirements of a rapidly growing consumer base in the country. While details about the investment made by these entities individually were not disclosed, sources said Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPP Investments) infused about USD 750-800 million, while SoftBank has pumped about USD 500 million. The funding round values Flipkart Group at USD 37.6 billion (about ₹2.79 lakh crore) post-money, it added.

## LIC IPO receives Cabinet approval

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 12:** Keeping the government's plan to come up with the mega IPO of insurance major LIC in the ongoing financial year intact, the Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs (CCEA) has given in-principle approval to the initial public offering (IPO).

A top official source said the CCEA in its meeting July 7 approved the reworked plan for IPO finalised by the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), clearing the several impediments for the country's largest IPO.

"We have also fixed the way for the offer and how investors should be roped in to the insurer. With this, the road has been cleared for the IPO that in any case we were planning for FY22," the official said. The highly placed source further



told IANS that now the alternative mechanism (AM) or the Group of Ministers would sit to decide on the timing and quantum of shares to be offered. The appointment of managers for the issue will also follow.

Post the Union Budget FY22, the government has taken several legislative and executive steps to pave way for the mega IPO.

As per the amendments proposed under the Finance Bill 2021, the au-

thorised share capital of LIC shall be ₹25,000 crore, divided into 2,500 crore shares of ₹10 each. The capital market regulator SEBI has also eased the minimum public offer norms in a bid to pave the way for the LIC IPO.

In February, the board of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has decided to recommend changes in regulations, and for issuers with post issue market capital exceeding ₹1 lakh crore, the requirement of minimum public offering (MPO) will be reduced from 10 per cent of post issue market capital to ₹10,000 crore along with 5 per cent of the incremental amount beyond ₹1 lakh crore.

The government expects to bring the IPO around Diwali this year. According to the Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) KV Subramanian, the LIC IPO may fetch the government around ₹1 lakh crore.

## OJEE DEADLINE EXTENDED AGAIN

The Odisha Joint Entrance Examination (OJEE) Committee Monday again extended the dates for submission of online application forms for all the courses (except B Tech) under OJEE 2021 up to July 26, 2021 (11.59pm) and the last date for payment of fees up to July 28, 2021 (11.59pm). These dates are final and there will not be any more extension of these dates. The online application process for the courses (except B Tech) under OJEE 2021 has been extended a number of times. **MORE P3**

have said conduction of physical examination in the current situation is unfair.

Students have also suggested the NEET-UG exam should be conducted twice or thrice this year, just like the JEE Main 2021 examination. However, NTA later clarified that the medical entrance exam will be conducted only once this year. Earlier, the NTA had issued a statement alerting candidates about fake news about the NEET exam dates. "It has come to the notice of the NTA that a fake public notice with the subject line - 'Conduct of National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (UG) - 2021' is being circulated through various means.

# leisure



## QUITTING SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BEEN 'DIVINE':LORDE

Singer Lorde says quitting social media has been a 'divine' experience. "It has been divine, I really enjoy it. I realise how I was just pummelling myself with headlines and thoughts from other people all day," she said on Australian radio show *Ash London Live*.

## HILTON SHOWS HOW TO WORK LIKE A 'BOSS BABE'

Socialite and entrepreneur Paris Hilton has showcased how to work like a 'boss babe' in a video she shared on social media. In the video, she is seen giving advice on how to work. "How To Work Like A Boss Babe," Paris wrote as caption.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

**ARIES**  
You are ever eager to socialise, and today especially, you may want to mix business with pleasure. You will be welcomed to join in group activities because you can work and play with equal enthusiasm. In fact, you may learn a lot from such a healthy exchange of ideas, says Ganesh.

**TAURUS**  
Light bulbs will flash relentlessly today, as you ideate in the fervour of a creative mood. Your business acumen will help you negotiate problems with ease. The reticent Taurus charm will ring out loud in your laughter, as you deal with your bosses and colleagues at the workplace, says Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Routine work bores you, and today you will go all out to break free from the shackles of boredom. The results, however, may not be as dramatic. You will have to depend on your children, if any, to rescue you from the tyranny of routine. Monetary gains can be expected either in the form of inheritance of ancestral property or as increment in your basic salary.

**CANCER**  
You may feel like flaunting your so-called superior social and financial status today. Chances are that all that gas about how successful you are may end up exploding in your face, and you may end up spending a lot more than you would have liked. However, if you only stick to buying a household item for your spouse, it may turn out to be a pretty satisfying day.

**LEO**  
If it's a fresh start that you are looking for, then this day promises to give you just that, predicts Ganesh. If you have chalked out plans for your future, today you may go ahead and implement some. Remember that rushing blindly into anything is not the solution; it is always the slow and steady who wins the race. Consider executing your ideas in phases, advises Ganesh. It's easier to achieve targets in good time when they come in manageable bits.

**VIRGO**  
Today, your power and finance will be greater than ever before, says Ganesh. You will also be inclined to make monetary provisions for any future economic instability that may arise. The people around you will stand up and take notice of the leader in you. A word of caution from Ganesh: there may be unprecedented fluctuations in financial transactions.

**LIBRA**  
Today promises to be a busy day that will keep you occupied. You may also engage in written correspondence to re-establish some old contacts. Ganesh doesn't rule out optimum use of the phone for this purpose. When it comes to the work front, Ganesh predicts you will be asked to bring order to the workplace.

**SCORPIO**  
You might find your spirit sagging as worries cloud your thinking. Small things might probably bother you in a big way. Do not let them bog you down as life is all about mind over matter. As the day progresses, things will begin to look up. Take a break from the rigmorale if stress begins to take a toll on you, advises Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Watch out for Cupid's arrow today, warns Ganesh. Love will strike and strike hard. Alternatively, you may also find yourself in an argument with a loved one that ought to have been avoided. An evening of romance beckons... keep the roses ready and the carpet rolled to heal any bruises you might have caused.

**CAPRICORN**  
You may be attentive, as much as an eagle is while chasing its prey, but you still need to be careful when signing any important legal documents, advises Ganesh. Brokers and dealers, especially, are likely to incur heavy losses unless they take necessary precautions to avert misfortune.

**AQUARIUS**  
You have changed your approach towards life from materialism to mysticism. Your friends and family members are pleasantly surprised to see this change. Later on the day, you may plan to visit a temple or other religious places, foresees Ganesh. You are on the right track, keep on going, you'll find the solace you have been seeking.

**PISCES**  
You are striving hard to influence your destiny. You are not going to kneel down without a fight against heavy odds. With persistent efforts you will succeed in achieving your goals. While victory is a given, hard work will be necessary. In brief, today will be a challenging day for you, says Ganesh.

## Reyhna unfazed by negativity



**MUMBAI:** Television actress Reyhna Pandit says she is unaffected by trolling or the negativity she receives on social media for playing a negative character on the screen. Rather, it inspires her to work harder.

Reyhna, who plays the telly-vamp Aaliya in the daily soap *Kumkum Bhagya*, said: "To be honest, I really don't give a heed to trolls. In fact, when someone trolls or abuses you because they hate your negative character, it means you are doing a wonderful job as an actor. So, it really doesn't bother me but pushes me to continue working hard. However, having said that, I really don't pay much attention to trolls."

Quizzed about the experience of playing a negative character on the screen, the actress replied: "To be honest, I don't see if my character is positive or negative. I just consider it as a character that I need to portray to the fullest of my potential and I give my best every day." IANS

## DEVIDAS CLOCKS 19 YEARS MADHURI GOES DOWN MEMORY LANE

**MUMBAI:** The beautiful actress Madhuri Dixit Nene got nostalgic on the completion of 19 years of her movie *Devdas* that also starred Shahrukh Khan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan.

She took to social media and poured out her emotions saying that even after 19 years those moments are so refreshing and paid tribute to legendary actor Dilip Kumar who recently passed away. She said, "Reminiscing some great and happy memories from the sets of *Devdas*. Even 19 years later it all feels so fresh! Thank you Sanjay for sharing these. Will Cherish these forever! Here's our

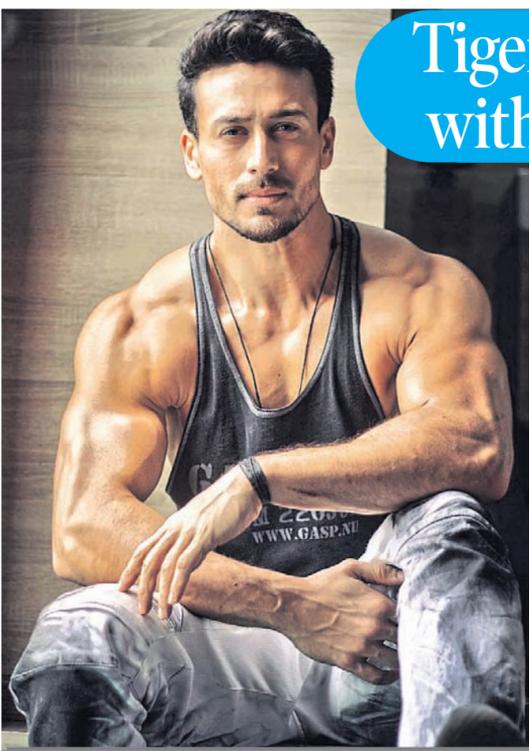
ode to #Dilipkumar, just like #Devdas, you will continue to live on...forever! #19yearsofDevdas." Shah Rukh Khan retweeted on this, saying, "All the late nights, early mornings, problem worked out bcoz of the gorgeous (he tagged Madhuri Dixit), the stunning Aishwarya, ever cheerful (tagged 'bindasbhidu' that is Jackie Shroff), full of life (he tagged Kirron Kher) and the whole team slogging under the masterful Sanjay Bhansali. Only issue - the dhoti kept falling off! Thx for the love." IANS



Sanjay Bhansali, Madhuri Dixit and Shahrukh Khan in a file photo from *Devdas* set



## Tiger inspires fans with fitness video



**MUMBAI:** Tiger Shroff took to Instagram Monday and shared a video clip of his Monday fitness routine.

"Hope u guys have a flying start to the week," wrote Tiger on Instagram. In the boomerang video clip, Tiger sports active wear and is seen doing a back flip in a fitness studio.

The actor is active on his social media as he constantly updates fans with his fitness goals. Minutes after the video clip was posted, Tiger's Instagram page was flooded with comments.

Actor Ronit Roy wrote: "I can never get tired of seeing your videos Tig! Inspiring and awesome to say the least!" Celebrity photographer Atul Kasbekar commented: "Nailed that landing Wow!!"

*John Wick 3* actor Mark Dacasos commented: "Tiger, Awesome! Please watch out for that pipe; you went so high I thought you were going to hit your feet! Much aloha."

Tiger Shroff has an interesting lineup of upcoming films including *Ganapath*, *Baaghi 4*, *Heropanti 2* and *Rambo*. IANS



## Sharing screen space with veterans is flattering: Gabbi

**MUMBAI:** Actress Wamiqa Gabbi says she is flattered to be cast alongside experienced, successful actors in an upcoming thriller series *Mai*.

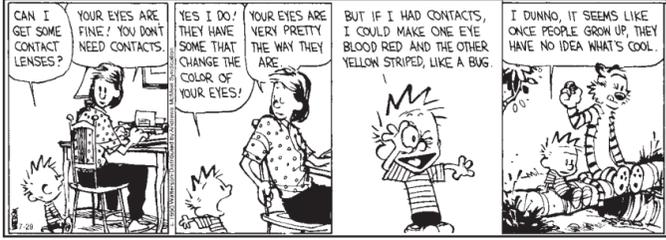
*Mai* is an upcoming Indian drama web-series co-starring Sakshi Tanwar, Raima Sen, Vivek Mushran, Prashant Narayanan, and Seema Pahwa. Wamiqa said: "*Mai* is a wonderful project and to be cast along with such experienced, successful actors is very flattering for me. The

script of the series is absolutely great and I can't wait to go on set to share screen space with this incredible cast whom I'm sure there'll be a lot for me to learn from." The plot of the series moves around the murder of a prisoner. Upon accidentally killing a mafia leader, a middle-aged woman is unwittingly swept into the underworld, where her cult slowly gains renown. As things take a new turn, she has to fight for survival while preparing herself to enter the underworld to stay secure. Directed by Atul Mongia and Anshai Lal, *Mai* is written by Atul Mongia, Amita Vyas along with Tamal Kumar Sen. IANS

### PEANUTS



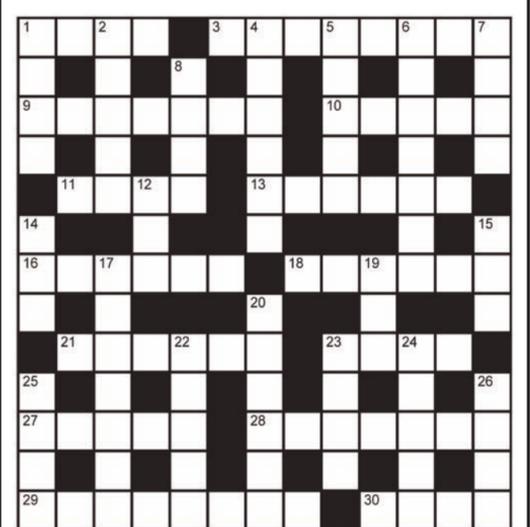
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



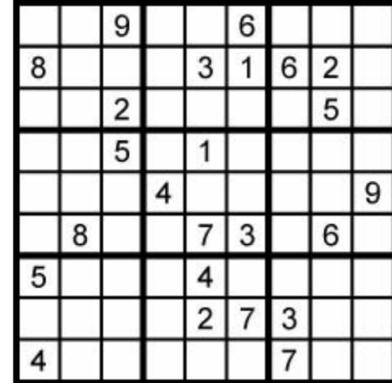
### FUN post CROSSWORD



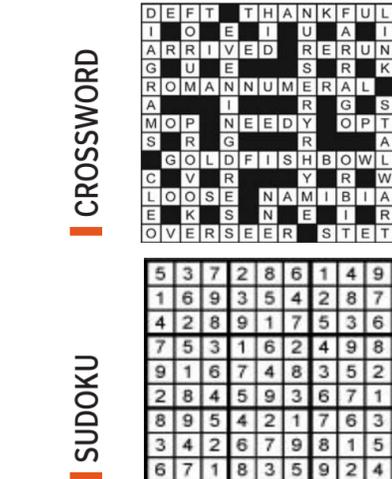
- Across**
- 1 Warty hopper
  - 3 Pedigreed racehorse
  - 9 Highly proficient, like a surgeon
  - 10 Office stations
  - 11 Mongrel
  - 13 Shell wearer
  - 16 Cash in, as a coupon
  - 18 Adders
  - 21 Argentine grassland
  - 23 Subsides
  - 27 Like krypton
  - 28 Pariah
  - 29 Barren
  - 30 Lake, in Aberdeen
  - 7 Two tablets, maybe
  - 8 Skirt feature
  - 12 Informal wear
  - 14 Wrath
  - 15 Query
  - 17 Baby's wear
  - 19 Beer garden
  - 20 Chaperone
  - 22 Flower feature
  - 23 Young newts
  - 24 Opera chant
  - 25 Blue yonder starter
  - 26 Use acid
- Down**
- 1 Deep-six
  - 2 French farewell
  - 4 Modernise
  - 5 Pillow filler
  - 6 Firmness of purpose

### 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

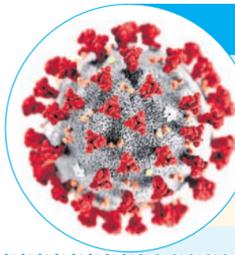


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**CAR FEST SPECIAL**

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik unveils special issues of 'Utkal Prasanga' and 'Odisha Review' magazines on the occasion of Rath Yatra, Monday



**COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	18,77,98,623	17,17,14,073	40,51,822
India	3,08,74,376	3,00,14,713	4,08,764
Odisha	9,41,745	9,15,400	4,662

**Firm registrations grew amid nCoV surge**

The registrations came down to two digits by Jan and Feb when the Covid cases dipped substantially

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 12: Amid the doom and gloom of Covid-19 last year, the state witnessed emergence of new entrepreneurs even as pay cuts and layoffs had already started haunting people.

Data from the Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs claimed that when Covid cases remained high, more number of registrations of companies and Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) started coming up. However, when the cases dipped, the enthusiasm for entrepreneurship also dwindled.

The data claimed that new registrations remained high in the second and third quarter of 2020 while the same started declining in the fourth quarter when the Covid cases started dipping and a sense of restoration of normalcy prevailed.

The ministry data claimed that while the registration of new firms and LLPs remained at 375 in August 2020 and 392 in September, the number came down to 259 in December. The registrations came down to two digits by January and February in the state but as soon as the virus cases again started rising in March 2021, a sudden jump of 368 new registrations was noticed then.



DATA FROM UNION MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS CLAIMED THAT WHILE THE REGISTRATION OF NEW FIRMS AND LLPs REMAINED AT 375 IN AUGUST 2020 AND 392 IN SEPTEMBER, WHEN COVID CASES WERE HIGH, BUT THE NUMBER CAME DOWN TO 259 IN DECEMBER WHEN THE CASES DIPPED

The registrations came down to two digits by January and February in the state but as soon as the Covid-19 cases again started rising in March 2021, a sudden jump of 368 new registrations was noticed then

MONTH	FIRM REGISTRATIONS	COVID CASES
August 2020	375	71,659
Sept 2020	392	1,15,583
Oct 2020	369	70,997
Nov 2020	301	28,609
Dec 2020	259	10,896
Jan 2021	17	5,451
Feb 2021	30	2,119
March 2021	368	3,726

SOURCE: INDIA DATA PORTAL

Data from the ministry of Health and Family Welfare claimed that in September when Odisha reported the maximum of 392 company registrations, total Covid cases were also at the peak of 1,15,583.

In January 2021, when Odisha saw only 5,451 total monthly cases, the total registrations also stood at meagre 17.

On the other side, data from the Ministry of Rural Affairs also claimed that as compared to 2019, 2020 saw a massive jump in de-

mand for daily wage jobs as many people wanted to work under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

For example, the demand for MGNREGS jobs shot up from 7,49,296 in September 2019 to a whopping 20,49,355 in September 2020, hinting at large-scale joblessness in the informal sector and also among the migrants.

Industry experts, who have seen the impact of Covid-19 on the informal sector, validated the trend.

Jagannath Sahoo, president of Juggernaut Association of Entrepreneurs, said, "Indeed, we saw a surge in entrepreneurs in the state especially in the healthcare sector and agri business during the pandemic as there is high demand in these sectors. However, due to the pandemic people preferred to do things in a more organised and legal way - through proper registration and due process - while several online services from the government also boosted firm registrations."

**INMATES URGE DGP TO RAID KUJANG SUB-JAIL**

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

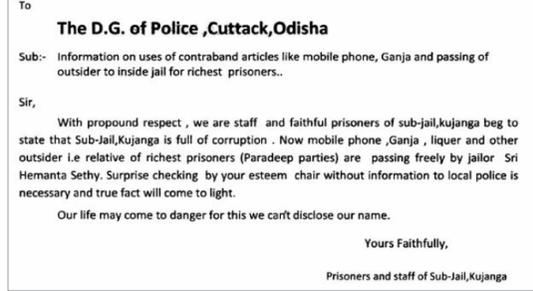
Bhubaneswar, July 12: At a time when 'Operation Clean up' launched by state Prisons Directorate to curb illegal activities in jails has failed to yield the desired results, inmates and staffers of Kujang sub-jail have secretly written to the DGP to conduct surprise raids on the jail premises.

The inmates have urged the Director General of Police (DGP) to carry out surprise raids to unearth the illegal activities in Kujang sub-jail under the alleged protection of jailor Hemanta Sethy.

The inmates and staffers alleged that outsiders and relatives of some rich prisoners of Paradip are freely moving inside the prisons without any official permission. Mobile phones, liquor and ganja are available for the prisoners in the sub-jail.

The inmates have urged the DGP not to involve the local police in the surprise raid as they have been hand-in-glove with the jailor.

"Surprise checking by your esteemed chair without information to the local police is necessary and fact will come to light," requested the inmates.



**PRISON AS SAFE HAVEN**

The inmates and staffers alleged that outsiders and relatives of some rich prisoners of Paradip are freely moving inside the prisons without any official permission

Mobile phones, liquor and ganja are available for the prisoners in the sub-jail, the inmates alleged

On the other hand, the persons who have written the letter have not mentioned their names fearing threat to their lives.

Sources revealed that the DGP office, after receiving the letter

July 8, forwarded it to the Prisons Directorate for necessary action.

Notably, under 'Operation Clean up', senior officials of the directorate had raided several jails to crack down on illegal activities like use of mobile phones, availability of drugs, and ganja inside the jails in May.

As per sources, as many as 52 mobile phones and huge quantities of ganja were unearthed by the officials from the prisons. The Prisons Directorate also initiated stringent actions against some staffers for helping prisoners to get mobile phones, ganja and drugs.

However, these illegal activities in the prisons across the state continue unabated.

**AISF backs Left's call for bandh**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 12: All India Students' Federation (AISF), Odisha State Council Monday extended its support to the July 15 'Odisha bandh' called by the Left parties over rise in prices of petrol, diesel and essential commodities.

Sanghamitra Jena, president of AISF Odisha State Council, said, "Apart from the above mentioned issues, the AISF will join the bandh demanding opening of educational institutions in the state in compliance with Covid guidelines.

Earlier, Odisha unit of the Congress party had extended its support to the bandh to be observed by the Left parties July 15 over rise in the prices of petrol, diesel and essential commodities.

The Left parties have called for a six-hour bandh July 15 blaming the Union and state governments for the rising prices of fuel and other essential commodities. The protest will start 6am and continue till 12pm.

"Vehicles will have to stay off the roads and other business establishments will also remain shut during the period," said CPI state secretary Ashis Kanungo



National Students' Union of India members trying to break a barricade as part of their demonstration near Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar, Monday, condemning the skyrocketing prices of petrol, diesel and essential commodities

**OJEE 2021 application date extended till July 26**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 12: The Odisha Joint Entrance Examination (OJEE) Committee, Monday, once again extended the dates for submission of online application forms for all the courses (except B.Tech) under OJEE 2021, upto July 26, 2021 (11.59 pm) and last date for fee payment up to July 28, 2021 (11.59 pm).

Interested candidates may kindly note that these dates are final and there will not be any more extension.

Online application forms for all the courses (except B. Tech), under OJEE 2021, had started from April 14, 2021 and has been extended a number of times. Earlier, it was extended till July 12.

**The revised dates of the Odisha Joint Entrance Examination (OJEE - 2021) will be notified, on assessment of the situation, in another two weeks said OJEE chairman SK Chand**



"The revised dates of the Odisha Joint Entrance Examination (OJEE - 2021) will be notified, on assessment of the situation, in another two weeks," said OJEE chairman SK Chand.

The entrance exam will be conducted to offer admission to various undergraduate and postgraduate programmes including BPharm, MBA, MCA, MTech, MArch and Integrated MBA programme. The registration fee for OJEE is Rs 1,000 for all the programmes. However, candidates applying for MBA/MCA/PGAT will have to shell out Rs 1,500.

**BMC deploys RRTs to quell dengue scare**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 12: Amidst a reported rise in dengue cases in the Capital city, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has started sending rapid response teams (RRTs) in affected areas.

As per sources, the BMC Sunday sent a team of doctors which visited different pockets of Sailashree Vihar and Niladri Vihar that are mostly hit by the vector-borne disease. With an objective of providing doorstep counselling to people having dengue symptoms, the team also created awareness about the disease.

"The teams informed people about the need of conducting Elisa tests which are important for determining dengue. These tests are available free of cost at Capital Hospital and Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC). We cannot term all the prevailing symptoms as those of dengue without confirmation as it can create panic among people," said a BMC official.

As per sources, the city has reported about 51 dengue cases so far. While only 17 cases were reported last week, the number has tripled now. Sources said that about 90 per cent of dengue cases were de-

**About 90 per cent of dengue cases were detected from slum pockets of Sailashree Vihar, Niladri Vihar and Chandrasekharpur**

tected from slum pockets of Sailashree Vihar, Niladri Vihar and Chandrasekharpur. "Sanitisation teams have been deployed in these areas and they have destroyed more than 800 sources where aedes mosquito larvae were found. Fogging is continuing in different parts of the city along with anti-larva spray. Paracetamol tablets and ORS packets are being distributed to people with fever," the official added.

Meanwhile, BMC Commissioner Sanjay Singh also requested people to follow the due procedure for getting themselves tested. "Many are found diagnosing themselves through different non-Elisa tests, which is neither accepted nor advisable. Rather those having symptoms should contact nearest health worker or BMC staff for a confirmatory test abiding protocol," Singh said.

**Naveen lays stones for 2 cancer care institutions**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 12: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday laid the foundation stones for two state-of-the-art cancer care institutions at Infovalley here.

He laid the foundation stones for Bagchi-Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital & Research Centre and Bagchi-Karunashraya Palliative Care Centre.

Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA) chairman Subroto Bagchi and his wife Sushmita Bagchi have donated Rs 340 crore for establishment of these two cancer-care institutions in Odisha.

This is after a long time that Naveen physically attended a public programme as he had last stepped out during the Prime Minister's visit in the aftermath of cyclone Yaas.

While Sri Shankara Foundation will run the 750-bed cancer hospital, Bangalore-based Hospice Foundation will run the palliative care unit. The palliative care unit will have 110 beds and will provide free services.

Speaking on the occasion, Patnaik said that both the institutions will help the patients of Odisha, especially the poor in accessing quality healthcare facilities.



CM Naveen Patnaik lays the foundation stones for two cancer care institutions at Infovalley in Bhubaneswar, Monday. ST Secretary VK Pandian is also seen

He assured that the state government will provide all kinds of support for its early completion.

Naveen congratulated the Bagchi couple for their philanthropy and noble efforts to create two world-

**HEALTHCARE BOOST**

WHILE SRI SHANKARA FOUNDATION WILL RUN THE 750-BED CANCER HOSPITAL, BANGALORE-BASED HOSPICE FOUNDATION WILL RUN THE PALLIATIVE CARE UNIT

STATE WILL PROVIDE ALL KINDS OF SUPPORT FOR EARLY COMPLETION OF PROJECTS

PALLIATIVE CARE WILL BE PROVIDED FREE OF COST

class institutions in Odisha. Their philanthropy is an inspiration for Odisha and people will remember them for their contributions, he said.

Sri Shankara Cancer Foundation, led by Dr Srinath, is setting up the cancer hospital which will work on a cross-subsidy model, he said.

"I am very happy to learn that the hospital will now be 750-bed with the latest technology. I am sure this centre will become the leading research institution and attract oncologists from across the world to serve humanity," Naveen

further said. The Chief Minister also said that Shri Kishore Rao and Shri Gurmeet Randhawa, founders of Bangalore Hospice Trust, and their team have been serving the needs of the dying with dignity for over 25 years through their Karunashraya.

"We are happy that such a kind of institution providing world-class palliative care is now being set up in Odisha. It's heartening to note that world-class palliative care would be completely free of cost," he added.

Attending the programme, Srinath said that the hospital will be a one-stop cancer centre with all the treatment facilities including bone marrow transplantation. The hospital will have a PG training facility on oncology, Srinath said.

Randhawa said that the palliative centre in Bhubaneswar will be developed as the best palliative care facility in the world. They will train over 25,000 youth, including tribal girls, in the next five years.

He added that they have 26 years of experience in palliative care and have served over 26 thousand patients providing best possible quality of life to people who are at the sunset of their life.

# Below 2k daily Covid cases after 3 months

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** For the first time in almost three months, Odisha reported less than 2,000 Covid-19 cases in a day, a Health department official said Monday.

The coronavirus tally mounted to 9,41,745 with 1,993 fresh cases in the last 24 hours, reported from all the 30 districts of the state, even as 63 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 4,662, said the official.

On April 12, the state reported less than 2,000 cases and May 22, a record 12,852 positive cases were reported.

Odisha has been witnessing a decline in daily Covid load since July 2. While 1,154 new infections were reported from quarantine centres, the remaining 839 were local contact cases.

For the second consecutive day, the local contact cases remained below 1,000. It was 967 July 10.

Odisha now has 24,567 active cases, and 9,12,463 patients have recovered from the disease so far, including 2,824 since Sunday, the official said.

Official sources said as many



The coronavirus tally mounted to 9,41,745 with 1,993 fresh cases in the last 24 hours, reported from all the 30 districts of the state

The Test Positivity Rate in the state recorded 2.7 per cent as out of 72,754 tests, 1,993 were found to be infected with coronavirus

as 24 districts have reported less than 100 new cases, while six other districts have cases more than 100 with Khurda registering the highest number of 322 cases followed by Cuttack (297), Balasore (181), Puri (144), Jajpur (141) and Mayurbhanj (110). According to Health and Family Welfare department sources, only two dis-

tricts—Khurda and Cuttack—have 4,841 and 3,690 active cases respectively and remained under 'Red Zone', while five other districts with 1,001 to 2,500 cases are under 'Orange Zone' and the rest 23 districts with less than 1,000 active cases are in 'Green Zone'.

The fatalities include 13 from Khurda district, Bargarh (seven), Mayurbhanj (six), Ganjam and Puri (five each).

A total of 53 other Covid-19 patients have also died due to comorbidities.

The state has thus far conducted over 1.46 crore sample tests, which include 72,754 in the past 24 hours, the official said. The Test Positivity Rate (TPR) in the state recorded 2.7 per cent as out of 72,754 tests, 1,993 were found to be infected with coronavirus.

Only two districts have recorded TPR above 5 per cent—Nayagarh (5.8) and Mayurbhanj (5.5). The other 28 districts in the state reported TPR less than 5 per cent.

Odisha's positivity rate stands at 6.43 per cent, data released by the Health and Family Welfare department showed.



Clouds hover over Capital city sky as seen from Rasulgarh area of Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

# Stone laid for BJD's new party office

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** Biju Janata Dal (BJD) President and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday laid the foundation stone for a new office of the party here on the occasion of Rath Yatra.

Naveen conducted the Bhoomi Pujan amidst Covid-19 protocol in presence of senior party leaders. The new office will not only be a venue for party activities but also a platform for service to the people of Odisha, he said.

Several social welfare activities like blood donation and others will be carried out on its premises, Patnaik added.

BJD's Organising Secretary Pranab Prakash Das said the new office building of the party has been dedicated to the people of this state. It will not only be the party's office, but will also serve as a centre for service to the people, Das stated.

The new office building of BJD will have a special cabin for the party president, meeting room for staffers, a conference hall, and a special meeting room for the media. There will be special arrangements for parking of



vehicles, sources said.

The new office will be constructed on its existing office at Unit VI. The BJD is also planning to construct its permanent offices in all district headquarters of the state. This sudden move of the ruling party for a new party office has raised many eyebrows.

On the other hand, the state unit of BJP is also planning to construct a new building at its existing office premises near Ram Mandir Square. The saffron party has constructed district office buildings in eight districts.

## ATROCITIES ON TRIBALS

# NHRC seeks ATR from Forest dept, Kalahandi Collector, SP

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Monday directed the Principal Secretary of Forest department, Kalahandi district Collector and superintendent of police (SP) to submit Action Taken Reports (ATRs) over alleged atrocities on tribal and scheduled caste (SC) families by some miscreants in Koksara block of the district June 30.

The commission's move came while hearing a plea filed by rights activist Dilip Kumar Das. The authorities have been asked to submit the ATRs within six weeks.

Das, in his petition, alleged that some members of Van Sanrakshan Samiti (VSS) have damaged the houses of around 200 people from 34 tribal and SC families of Bhatapani and Dumerpani hamlets of Gotomunda gram panchayat under Ampani police limits in Kalahandi. The members of VSS were also accused of forcefully taking away their goats, sheep and other belongings in presence of



The commission issued the directions while hearing a plea lodged by human rights activist Dilip Kumar Das. The authorities have been asked to submit the ATRs within 6 weeks

Forest officials who did not pay heed to stop the atrocities. "In this incident, miscreants have demolished all the houses, physically assaulted women and children, looted all their belongings, killed their domestic animals and birds, damaged their plants in the backyard, and poisoned the drinking water source by urinating in it and putting chemicals in the well. The victims have been living with fear at makeshift shanties and at school buildings at neighbouring Nabarangpur district where the district adminis-

tration has been providing food and other essentials to them," alleged Das.

Das further accused that the Forest officials have been promoting various activities of the VSS in the tribal-dominated district.

The victims have been residing in the localities for the last 25 years and those who possess Aadhaar cards have already been enrolled as voters of Kalahandi district. A petition has also been filed with the Odisha Human Rights Commission in this regard.

# Prez, PM, Naveen greet people on Rath Yatra

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday greeted people on the occasion of Rath Yatra in Puri, and prayed for the good health of all.

Modi took to Twitter to say, "Greetings to everyone on the special occasion of the Rath Yatra. We bow to Lord Jagannath and pray that his blessings bring good health and prosperity in everyone's lives. Jai Jagannath!"

Tweeting in Hindi, President Kovind also wished everyone happiness and good health. He said, "I wish that with the blessings of Lord Jagannath, the lives of all the countrymen remain full of happiness, prosperity and health."

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also wished that the Covid-19 pandemic would end soon with the blessings of the deities. He prayed for the happiness, prosperity and well-being of all.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah prayed that Lord Jagannath may shower his blessings on everyone and fill everyone's life with good health, prosperity and good fortune.

"Hearty greetings to all the coun-

## CM watches Rath on TV

In view of Covid-19 restrictions, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, for the second year in a row, paid his obeisance to the holy Trinity watching television from his office. Patnaik along with his private secretary VK Pandian watched the live telecast of Rath Yatra on television at the Chief Minister's Office. When the pulling of chariots began, both stood up from their seats and prayed to the deities with folded hands. The Chief Minister has thanked all as chariots of Lord Jagannath and His siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra reached Gundicha temple in the pilgrim city Monday.

trymen on the auspicious occasion of Shri Jagannath Rath Yatra. May Mahaprabhu Jagannath shower his blessings on everyone and fill everyone's life with good health, prosperity and good fortune. Jai Jagannath!" Shah tweeted.

Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswasbhusan Harichandan, BJP President J P Nadda, Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Ashwini Vaishnav and many senior leaders too greeted people on the auspicious occasion.

## INAUGURAL SESSION



Dignitaries pose for a photo op at the inaugural occasion of 'Utkarsha' by Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre (GKCMORC) and Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi at GKCMORC in Bhubaneswar, Monday

# ASI TO CHECK STRUCTURAL STATUS OF PURI SRIMANDIR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) will conduct laser scanning of parts of Srimandir structure during the 9-day Rath Yatra that began Monday.

Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief administrator Krishan Kumar Sunday said the ASI, which looks after the conservation and preservation of the 12th century shrine in Puri, had requested the temple administration for a laser scanning of the temple.

"After discussions with stakeholders, it was decided to allow the ASI to conduct laser scanning at Nata Mandap, Jagamohan and other parts of the temple, except the Garbha Gruha (sanctum sanctorum)," he said.

Laser scanning is usually done in heritage structures to check structural stability so that timely repairs can be carried out. ASI has earlier done 3-D laser scanning of



It was decided to allow the ASI to conduct laser scanning at Nata Mandap, Jagamohan and other parts of the temple, except the Garbha Gruha

Konark Sun temple and the UNESCO world heritage site Hampi among others.

An ASI team had earlier visited the shrine and observed that laser scanning is required to ascertain the condition of structures in the ancient temple.

"As other people are not allowed entry into certain parts of the temple on normal days, we want to complete the laser scanning when the deities are out of the temple for the nine-day Rath Yatra," ASI's Superintendent Archaeologist Arun Mallick said. Kumar said a decision on conducting a laser-scan of the Garbha Gruha will be

taken after analysing the benefits of scanning. He said a committee of servitors has been formed in whose presence the laser scanning at the temple will be done. The chief administrator also said the work of silver plating eight 'dwaras' (doors) will be done with help of a donor. The temple administration is not in a hurry to finish the work and no time limit has been fixed for the work, he said.

The silver required for the silver-plating of the temple doors were donated by a Mumbai-based devotee of Lord Jagannath. The silver packets reached the SJTA office Friday, sources said.

## Youth held for immolation bid

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** Commissionerate Police Monday arrested a youth for allegedly trying to immolate himself before Naveen Niwas, the residence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

The accused youth was identified as Pramod Kumar Nayak of Biswasari slum under Sahid Nagar police limits.

As per sources, the accused revealed before the police that his wife and brother-in-law have been torturing him for the last several years.

Although he has lodged several complaints with Sahid Nagar police, the police did not take any action in this regard.

Finding no other way, Nayak Monday afternoon tried to immolate himself before the Chief Minister's residence but the alert cops foiled his attempt.

Airport police arrested Nayak after registering a case (182/21).

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# GLIMPSES OF RATH YATRA



Servitors escorting Lord Balabhadra to His chariot Taladhwaaja during Pahandi bije in Puri



Lord Jagannath being escorted to His chariot Nandighosha



Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb performing 'Chhera Panhara' on a chariot at Badadanda in Puri



Pahandi bije ritual being performed for Lord Sudarshan and Devi Subhadra



Puri Shankaracharya Swami Nischalananda Saraswati having darshan of deities at Badadanda



Servitors performing rituals during Rath Yatra on ISKCON temple premises in Bhubaneswar



Ghantua servitors beating gongs during Rath Yatra



Rath Yatra at Haripur-Dolamunda Jagannath temple in Cuttack



Police deployed near the tallest chariot of the world on premises of Sri Sri Baladevjeev temple in Keonjhar

## Patali Srikshetra still waits for its Jagannath temple

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sonepur, July 12:** Nine years have passed since the Puri king Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb laid the foundation stone for the proposed Jagannath temple atop Chhhalia hills at Patali Srikshetra, about 20 kilometres from here. However, work on the proposed temple got stuck due to red tape and except for setting up a foundation stone plaque there has been no work on the premises.

The hills at Kotasomalai village had been the abode for Lord Jagannath for nearly 144 years. In order to save the Trinity from the attacks of Kalapahad and Raktabahu, the idols of the deities in Puri temple were hidden in a cave here.

A team of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), State Archaeology Department, Jagannath cult researchers and Puri Jagannath Temple servitors led by the then temple administrator Suresh Mohapatra visited the place in 2007. They concluded that a cave of Trikuta hills had been the abode of Lord Jagannath for 144



years. Subsequently, the Puri Temple administration granted 'Patali Srikshetra' status to Kotasomalai village.

Subsequently, Patali Srikshetra Action Committee built a small temple atop the hill and installed the idols of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Sudarshan provided by the Shri Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) in 2011.

The local people's hope of getting

a Jagannath temple rekindled after Puri king Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb laid foundation stone for it, July 5, 2012.

Subsequently, a technical team from the Puri Jagannath Temple visited the area to identify places for the construction of main temple and its Jagamohan. In order to construct the temple, the SJTA also roped in sculptor late Raghunath Mohapatra.

As per estimate prepared by

Mohapatra, the project would have cost ₹1,34,31,200 to ₹3,98,34,600 for stone carving, ₹91,28,000 for Jagamohan construction, ₹71,38,400 for Nata Mandap construction, ₹27,63,000 for the construction of temples for Goddesses Laxmi and Bimala.

The plan was tabled at a meeting of Shri Jagannath Temple Managing Committee held at the SJTA's conference hall, May 8, 2014. The committee requested the state government to bear the construction cost.

The Subarnapur district Culture department received a letter from the Shri Jagannath Temple Managing Committee (No. 6241/2/2014 dated 02.06.2014), informing the district Collector about steps to be taken for the construction of the proposed Jagannath temple at 'Patali Srikshetra'.

In response to the letter, the district administration wrote a letter (No. 7452/15.09.2014) to the Commissioner, Tourism and Culture department, informing him about the place identified for temple construction and urging him to approve the budget worth

₹4 crore for the temple construction. But the district administration is yet to receive any response in this regard from the department.

The delay in construction the Jagannath temple at 'Patali Srikshetra' has only intensified the dissatisfaction among the people. At 'Patali Srikshetra', the Rath Yatra is observed with all the rituals that are followed in Puri Jagannath Temple. The festival is observed at the foot of the Chhhalia hill.

A visit to witness the festival here is said to be incomplete if one misses the 'Pahandi' ritual. Witnessing servitors carrying deities from the hilltop to the foothill covering a distance of 50 metres amidst beautiful natural settings gives a divine feeling. Like Baripada and some other places, here too the chariot of Devi Subhadra, Debadalana, is pulled only by female devotees.

However, due to the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic, the festival has not been observed here for two years now. Like last year, this year too, the chariots were constructed, hoping to get the nod to observe the festival.

## Tidal waves wreak havoc in Ganjam village again



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Gopalpur, July 12:** Tidal waves again wreaked havoc in seaside Rameyapatna village under Golanthara police limits in Ganjam district as it washed away 50 per cent of the 36 houses in the village, Monday.

This is the second such incident in 12 days. Earlier, tidal waves washed away six houses in the village. Sunday the waves had knocked down three houses in the village. The incident has sparked unprecedented panic among the villagers.

However, no official from the Irrigation department or local administration is yet to visit the village after the incident. The villagers also alleged that they did not receive any financial or other assistance from anyone. Locals apprehended that many more houses might soon get submerged in the village. Reports said the village comprises 650 families, mainly of fishermen community who eke out their living by fishing in the sea.

Such incident was first reported in 2016 when the wind changed direction and started blowing southwards due to heavy deposit of sand at Bahuda river mouth. As a re-

This is the second such incident in 12 days. Earlier, tidal waves washed away six houses in the village. Sunday, the waves knocked down three more houses

sult, tidal waves crossed the coastline and destroyed many lives and properties in the village. Even a 'Sahi' (street in the village) got submerged in the sea.

Three villages were swept away in tidal waves, Sunday. Villagers have been demanding a permanent solution to the problem as the incident has become a regular affair every year during the monsoon season. The village will completely get submerged in the sea if the administration delays in taking measures to save the village, they said.

Apprised of the matter, the engineer-in-chief of the state Water Resources department visited the spot July 3 and assured the villagers to take up a project to protect the village by inviting tender within 10 days.

## Advanced version of BrahMos missile test-fired

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, July 12:** An advanced version of supersonic cruise missile BrahMos was test-fired Monday morning from launch pad No. 5 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur in Balasure district, officials said.

According to a senior official of the ITR, the missile with a target range of 400 kilometres can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft and land-based platforms. It is supposed to be the fastest supersonic missile in the world. The newly-developed missile attains 2.8 times the speed of sound when it is

launched, the official added. Notably, a number of other versions of the supersonic cruise missile were earlier developed by BrahMos Aerospace under joint venture between the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India and NPO Mashinostroyeniya (NPOM) of Russia.

The BrahMos supersonic cruise missile range derived its name from two rivers, the Brahmaputra in India and the Moskva in Russia. The earliest versions of the ship launched BrahMos and land-based system are in service of the Indian Navy and the Indian Army since 2005 and 2007 respectively.

## NHAI to build bridge across Mahanadi

Road connectivity between Jharsuguda and Bargarh to reduce from 155 km to 12 km

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jharsuguda, July 12:** People of Jharsuguda and Bargarh have been pressing for a bridge across the Mahanadi for a long time to reduce the connectivity distance between the two districts. Their long-pending demand is likely to be realised soon as a proposal for the construction of a bridge at Pujaripalli under Lakhampur block of Jharsuguda district has been mooted.

In view of people's demand, Bargarh MP Suresh Pujari had earlier held talks with people of both the districts about it and in-

spected the proposed site. Later, the MP had drawn the attention of the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI).

Meanwhile, a firm engaged by NHAI has conducted a survey on the project and submitted its report to the NHAI.

The report said that the distance between Jarimuli (Bargarh) and Pujaripalli (Jharsuguda) is only 12 km. However, in the absence of a bridge across the Mahanadi in the region, people from both sides have to take a long route via Chhattisgarh. The distance between Lakhampur (Jharsuguda) and Ambabhana block (Bargarh)

via Chhattisgarh is 155 km. Locals said that if a bridge is constructed across the Mahanadi in the region, it will reduce distance to a great extent between the two districts.

The bridge is expected to help create opportunities in tourism, education, agriculture, commerce, socio-economic and cultural sectors.

The director of the NHAI is weighing the importance of the bridge across the Mahanadi in the area, while the MP said that the bridge will definitely be constructed to reduce distance between the two districts and boost connectivity.

FOCUS REGION

# WHITHER ASIAN TIGERS



In India, annual growth slowed from 8 per cent in 2016 to 4 per cent in 2019, and even these figures are widely considered to be overestimates because of changes in the calculation process

This was supposed to be the Asian century, with the ascent of China being only one – albeit a major – part of the story. The rest of it was going to be about other rising regional stars: potentially huge economies like India, rapidly industrialising upper-middle-income countries such as Malaysia, strategically significant exporters of minerals and other raw materials like Indonesia, and some relatively new kids on the block, including Vietnam and Bangladesh.

Many regarded Asia as the world's most dynamic region, one with relatively favourable demographics and potential for economic diversification, while China's increasingly gargantuan economy and evolving supply chains would inevitably pull along much of the region. China's own external trade and foreign investment plans strengthened this belief. The country would provide substantial foreign aid, direct investment, and loans from institutions like the China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China, and then in a supposedly more structured way through the Belt and Road Initiative. And agreements like the 15-country Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership would later advance the rise of a formidable economic bloc.

This, at least, was the widespread perception at the start of the 2010s, reinforced by the relatively rapid recovery of most of the region from the 2008 global financial crisis. But a lot changed over the past decade. The West's obsession with China and the perceived threat of that country's rise mean that G7 leaders (and most Western commentators) have not looked in much detail at other Asian emerging markets. Had they done so, they would have observed that some of them were experiencing a more troubling trajectory. Obviously, output and investment both plummeted during the Covid-19 crisis, and recovery

prospects remain uncertain. But the region's economic dynamism had dimmed even before the pandemic disrupted everything. Although a few relatively small Asian economies (like Vietnam) reported strong goods exports in the pre-pandemic period, many others showed disturbing signs of slowdown and a weaker impetus to diversify.

Consider four emerging-market economies that were widely touted as examples of 'Asian success' and had briefly become the darlings of global financial markets: India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. GDP growth in each of these countries has decelerated significantly in recent years. In India, annual growth slowed from 8 per cent in 2016 to 4 per cent in 2019, and even these figures are widely considered to be overestimates because of changes in the calculation process. Thailand's economy, which was expanding by more than 7 per cent per year at the start of the last decade, grew by only 2.3 per cent in 2019, while growth in Malaysia declined from 7.4 per cent to 4.3 per cent over the same period. Only in Indonesia, where growth slipped from 6.2 per cent in

2010 to 5 per cent in 2019, was the slowdown relatively minor.

One obvious cause of this deceleration was the decline in investment rates. In Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand, this reflected a medium-term trend triggered by the 1997-98 East Asian Crisis, after which investment rates collapsed by at least a quarter, from previous highs of close to 40 per cent of GDP to around 30 per cent. In Malaysia, investment fell further during the 2010s, to only 19 per cent of GDP by 2019. Investment in India also declined sharply, from 40 per cent of GDP in 2010 to 30 per cent in 2019. And investment in all of these countries decreased again during 2020.

Covid-19 aside, why have investment rates come down? After all, these economies were the beneficiaries not only of positive stimuli from China, but also of active interest from global finance. They attracted capital of all kinds: foreign direct investment, portfolio flows, bond financing, and other external commercial borrowing. Why didn't all of this generate higher investment and growth? It turns out that unrestricted

capital flows were actually the problem. Although inflows from non-residents were large and growing, so were residents' outflows. As a consequence, net inflows were often small. Malaysia was in fact a net exporter of capital for much of the past decade, as was Thailand in some years. Even worse, the rates of return on these countries' financial assets held abroad (whether by central banks or private investors) were significantly lower than those on financial assets inside the economy held by non-residents.

This differential led to significant annual seigniorage losses. In Thailand, for example, these losses amounted to as much as 5.2 per cent of GDP each year in 2010-18 according to UNCTAD – far more than the net inflow of capital. And even where net capital inflows were positive, as in India and Indonesia, they did not translate into increased domestic investment or enable investment in desired sectors. Instead, central banks added to their foreign-exchange reserves in order to self-insure against possible capital flight and manage the exchange rate in the face of substantial capital movements. Meanwhile, emerging-economy governments became so worried about negative financial-market responses that they limited their own capacities for fiscal stimulus during downturns, including in the current pandemic. Ironically, therefore, the financial liberalisation that was supposed to provide emerging markets with more resources for domestic investment has led to exactly the opposite pattern.

There is no magic bullet that can ensure 'emerging' Asian economies actually emerge and live up to their huge promise. But a radical reconsideration of capital-account management in such countries would be a good place to start.

The writer is Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Jayati Ghosh

THE REGION'S ECONOMIC DYNAMISM HAD DIMMED EVEN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC DISRUPTED EVERYTHING

## Olympian Risks

Japan has imposed a state of emergency in its capital Tokyo, to be in force during the Summer Olympic Games 2020 to be held in the city from July 23 to August 8. The step has been taken to keep spectators out of the stadiums in view of a recent surge in Covid infections, especially the Delta variant. Earlier, the government had decided to allow entry to a limited number of spectators, for which tickets have already been sold. What has surprised the international community is the insistence by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that the show must go on even though about 80 per cent of Japan's population wants the games to be postponed and the country spared of the consequences of another Covid surge. The survey was conducted by Japan's leading daily Asahi Shimbun which has also joined the chorus for postponing the games.

The Paralympic Games will be held between August 24 and September 5 and the Japanese government will take a call on the question of letting in spectators by July 16. The 2020 Olympics and Paralympics were postponed last year because of the pandemic. The Olympics now will feature 33 sports at 339 events across 42 venues. The Paralympics will feature 22 sports at 539 events across 21 venues. Most events will be in the Greater Tokyo area, although some football games and the marathon will take place in the northern city of Sapporo.

Japan has had relatively low Covid caseload, but a new wave of infections began in April. Figures till July 8 reveal there are about 812,000 confirmed cases and 14,848 deaths. What causes concern is the fact that Japan began vaccinating people only in February, which is much later than most other developed countries. Just over 15 per cent of Japan's population of about 126 million is fully vaccinated. In Tokyo and Osaka, the two cities hit the hardest by the recent surge, authorities hope people over 65 years will be fully vaccinated by end July. The youth of the country are now the most vulnerable as they are yet to be covered by vaccination.

In May, a Japanese doctors' union said it was 'impossible' to hold the games, given the pandemic. A number of sports bodies and experts have expressed similar concern. The World Players Association, representing 85,000 athletes in over 60 countries, said the IOC must ensure athletes' safety. Japanese athletes have largely kept a low profile, but the country's biggest sports star, tennis champion Naomi Osaka, has stated there should be a debate about whether the games should be held at all. Olympics-related events have already spread the virus among those helping to run the event. In May, eight people involved in the torch relay were infected with the virus.

Currently, there is a ban on entry to Japan of foreigners from 159 countries, including the UK. It indeed seems like a joke to organise the biggest international sporting event in such a situation. This reminds one of an old counter-culture saying that went 'What if they declared war and no one turned up?' Question is why Japan is willing to take such high risks of organising the Olympics for which about 60,000 athletes, coaches, journalists and others will travel to the country. Health experts, both in Japan and outside, have voiced their concern that the Olympics could be a springboard for the Covid outbreak across the country and possibly spread across the globe. Surely, the mega meet gives athletes the opportunity of a lifetime to showcase their talent and get international acclaim. But it is difficult to assess whether the games are being held for the athletes, corporates or for some other reasons. Since the corporates are also cribbing in the changed circumstances of total ban on spectators and involvement of less number of countries, it is worth questioning the reasoning of the Japanese government.

Apparently, the athletes and sports enthusiasts have been taken for a ride by colossal commercial interests involved in organising the games. The contract between the IOC and the host city Tokyo made it clear only the IOC could cancel the event. The IOC is reported to make around 70 per cent of its money from broadcast rights, and 18 per cent from sponsorships. Naturally, it has no compunction in insisting the games can go ahead safely, if necessary under a state of emergency which is exactly what the Japanese government has done. The latter's worry apparently stems from the fact that if Tokyo cancels the games, it will entail breach of contract and Japan will have to compensate the IOC for the financial loss. The budget for Tokyo 2020 was set at \$12.6bn (£8.9bn), though the actual cost is reported to be much higher.

Only solace for us Indians is that, now after seeing Japan and the mental health issues that the Japanese government seems to be suffering from, our government's oddities and idiosyncrasies seem sort of acceptable if not welcome.

### WISDOM CORNER

- The traveller sees what he sees, the tourist sees what he has come to see. **GILBERT K. CHESTERTON**
- We have, I fear, confused power with greatness. **STEWART UDALL**
- You are remembered for the rules you break. **DOUGLAS MACARTHUR**

### WORDSWORTH

#### Old fogey

An old fogey is a person of advanced years – or seems to be so to the person doing the describing – who holds on to attitudes that they learned when they were young and rejects new things, so appearing old-fashioned, behind the times and past it. There's nothing new about old fogey. It was first recorded by Francis Grose in his Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue in 1785. He said that old fogey, and fogey by itself, was a nickname for an invalid soldier. Others later suggested it was also used for a garrison soldier, one too old or infirm for active service, who was often sent out to get new recruits. The only real-life example I can find is this, in a report of one such from Carrickfergus in northern Ireland: During the last week, a recruiting party of the Old Fogies had decoyed a number of young lads, by means of intoxication, &c. at which the friends and comrades of the deluded recruits were exceedingly displeased and disgusted (Morning Post, 3 Apr. 1793). Other early examples focus on old age and out-of-touchness: Well, here I am, on the eve, or rather on the day, of visiting a rich old fogey of an uncle, who has not been in London for these forty years (The Duel, or My Two Nephews, by Richard Brinsley Peake, 1823). It became common in the 1860s and has remained in use ever since, though the last half century has seen a falling off in its popularity. On occasion, it has been compared and contrasted with a young fogey, a youngish person with notably conservative tastes and attitudes. We call them old fogies; but there are young fogies, too. Old fogysm begins at a younger age than we think. I am almost afraid to say so, but I believe that in the majority of human beings it begins at about twenty-five (Talks to Teachers on Psychology; and to Students on some of Life's Ideals, by William James, 1899). Young fogey became popular quite suddenly in Britain in the early 1980s, during Margaret Thatcher's first period in office, referring to a particular brand of young conservative who aped the clothes, opinions and manners of their seniors. It's still around, though the fashion for the term and the type have both passed. Were there ever fogies, not particularised as old? Francis Grose hints so in his dictionary but a systematic search finds nothing. Enquiries about its origins leave us uncertain. Grose suggested that it came from the French fougueux, fierce or fiery, which doesn't fit the sense at all. Modern dictionaries prefer foggy, a Scots dialectal word meaning moss-grown or decrepit. It could also mean damp or boggy and it's the source of fog for a coarse grass growing in damp or boggy conditions and also fog for the type of weather. Foggy is also recorded from the sixteenth century for a person who was, as the Oxford English Dictionary puts it, "unwholesomely bloated, swollen with flabby and unhealthy corpulence". Some dictionaries mention fogram, a superannuated person or an old fuddy-duddy, which appeared a few years before old fogey. From its date, form and meaning it must be connected in some way, but nobody knows how. One other suggestion that appears in some books and also online argues that old fogey is from the one-time American armed forces slang foggy for a long-service pay increase.

### SPECTRUM POPULATION CONTROL

## UP's proposed new law will hurt the state

The draft bill by the Uttar Pradesh government to enforce what is commonly referred to as the two-child norm has caused much political noise. In sum, the Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilisation and Welfare) Bill, 2021 proposes that married couples who bear more than two children will forfeit the right to a government job, to contest local polls and a host of other benefits. The timing is of course wrong, but there is much more that is obnoxious here with the trap of false debates on population numbers being the root of all the nation's troubles. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was plain wrong when he said July 11 that rising population is the root of inequality and other ills facing society. But he is not the only one to blame. Across the political spectrum, the idea appears to have taken root that our population numbers are problematic. Witness Sharad Pawar and some others coming out in support of this position, which turns all understanding of demographics on its head. Several other states already have put in place some version of the two-child norm over several years, but its impacts have not been formally studied.

The movement on the population graph follows the same patterns everywhere. Underdeveloped economies, poorer families, uneducated couples have a high fertility rate. As they move up the socioeconomic ladder, the number of

children per couple declines and this taken in the aggregate eventually leads to population numbers stabilising, even declining. Couples forced by their circumstances take decisions that are wise and useful and meaningful from their point of view, their unique lenses and their expectations of the place they will land in the foreseeable future. The poor tend to have more children because of several reasons that are well-researched, widely understood and universally accepted among all demographers. The poor have less access to health services and so child mortality tends to be higher; a higher number of children then becomes an insurance against the death of the child and the financial support that an extra pair of hands can provide early on in life. The poor also have less education, are less aware of the available contraception method-mix and often cannot access services in a safe, timely and cost-effective manner. And when the girl child is not educated, when the age at marriage is low, when the health of the child is weak, it leads to poor health of the mother and low birth weight of the child in pregnancies that are early in life, reinforcing a cycle that leads to more children and higher mortality. In other words, a high population growth is nothing but a mirror to the state of development of the nation or the state under question.

In these terms, Uttar Pradesh

is a less developed state. It featured among the earlier 'Bimaru' states, so called because of the poor demographic indicators these states showed, relative to the rest of India. Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, UP made for the acronym 'Bimaru', which indicated that they were demographically 'sick'; the areas also covered Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand, which were not separate states when the term was first coined in 1980. Research dating to 2015 showed that the 'Bimaru' states had not converged on most of the indicators studied – they continued to be backward compared to the national average.

Yet, there has been progress and it has come without the draconian law that is now being proposed, denying rights to a couple on the basis of the number of children they have. Consider this simple statistic: UP's Total Fertility Rate, or TFR has steadily declined – 4.2 in 2006, 3.5 in 2010, 3.1 in 2015 and 2016, 3.0 in 2017 (SRS data). To compare, Kerala's TFR has moved in the same years down from 1.8 to 1.7, staying well below replacement levels of 2.1. How has this been achieved by Kerala? The answer is well-known – active policy measures that support health and education. In UP, the decline is slow as support systems and health infrastructure improve rather slowly over time.

The proposed law limits ration card entitlements but fails to ask who in the family will suffer if food

runs short – it will inevitably be the mother and the children, further ingraining poverty into the next generation rather than helping the state move up the development ladder. It speaks of polygamy and polyandry and gives multiple sets of explanations on how the number of children will be calculated – still restricted to two, but it offers no view on divorcees, widows or widowers. It does not speak of children who may be born out of wedlock. It says adopting more than two children would be in contravention of the proposed law, if the couple already has two children, opening new worries and questions on how adoption should be viewed. It appears not to consider the risk of a rise in unsafe abortions, sex selection or children being given up for adoption.

We will sink further into the idea of force, power, law to fix an issue that has everything to do with people, poverty and development. We will spend money on administering rewards and punishments, on affidavits and claims, on increments and incentives, and that much less on healthcare and services that are the only guarantee of giving us a nation where people are educated, healthy and on the way to becoming productive citizens so that the nation can truly reap the demographic dividend.

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Jagdish Rattanani

A HIGH POPULATION GROWTH IS NOTHING BUT A MIRROR TO THE STATE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATION OR THE STATE UNDER QUESTION

## 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)

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#### Indifferent nation

Sir, It's unfortunate that the demise of Fr. Stan Swamy did not evoke the kind of condemnation from the people that it deserved, given the circumstances under which he met his death. Apart from the isolated outrage expressed by the print, electronic and social media and candle light marches at a few places, there were hardly any reports of mass indignation elsewhere. This lack of concern is indeed worrisome and raises the question whether we, as a nation, have become indifferent and insensitive to human suffering in general and political-judicial injustice in particular. It's difficult to find an answer.

Bhaskar Roy, NEW DELHI

#### Livelihood support

Sir, The Assam government should be applauded for launching a scheme to grant one-time financial help of Rs 2.5 lakh each to women whose husbands died of Covid-19. Widows with a family income of less than Rs 5 lakh per annum will benefit from the new scheme. Other states have also introduced schemes to rehabilitate pandemic-affected households. Financial assistance may provide some relief to widows. State governments and private organisations must provide them with chances for skill development and employment at various levels. Widows may benefit from self-help groups led by women. Society's efforts and constructive support are needed to empower the 'Covid widows'.

Amit Singh Kushwaha, SATNA (MP)

#### Soccer mania

Sir, The month-long mesmerising football bonanza is over – with Argentina kissing the Copa America 2021 and Italy the Euro Cup 2021, but the moments of these two tournaments will linger in the hearts of soccer fans around the world. Various nations, football federations and authorities deserve a big applause as the matches were conducted smoothly and safely especially at a time when the whole world is under the grip of a pandemic. The tournaments undoubtedly gave all soccer fans unlimited enjoyment and excitement and offered a big relief during these tough times. For a month the tournament made fans 'nocturnal beings' as they had their eyes glued to TV screens throughout the nights watching their favourite soccer stars display their incredible skills with the wonder ball!

M Pradyu, KANNUR

# Dhenkanal's forest cover increases in 5 years

IN SPITE OF WILDFIRES AND TIMBER MAFIA PLAYING HAVOC WITH THE GREEN COVER IN THE DISTRICT, FOREST COVER HAS INCREASED BY 4,261 HECTARES



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, July 12:** In spite of wildfires and timber mafia playing havoc with the green cover in this district, it is surprising to note that the forest area has actually increased. While the tireless efforts of Vana Surakhya Samiti and introduction of technology have been credited for this, environmentalists see this as a good sign for the environment in the region.

Rapid industrialisation and national highway expansion are constantly taking place at the cost of thousands of trees. Every summer, many valuable trees get destroyed in wildfires. In addition, the timber mafia is also there. Yet, a satellite survey has confirmed it that the forest area in the district has increased by 4,261 hectares in the last five years. The district's total forest area was 1,40,300 hectares in 2015. In 2020-21, it has increased to 1,44,561 hectares.

Presently, an expert team from the Forest Survey of India, Bangalore, is camping in Kamakhyanagar to analyse the findings of the satellite survey.

Surakhya Samitis (VSS) to protect the forest resources. Of the 350 VSSs, 150 are receiving funds. Coordinating with the Forest department, these VSSs are guarding the jungle on rotation basis. At the same time, 60 camera traps have been installed at the strategic locations in the jungle to keep a watch on the movement of timber mafia. These strategies seem to be paying dividends, it was learnt.

Informing about the satellite survey's revelations, DFO Prakash Chand Gogineni said the district's forest area has increased in last five years. This has been possible because of the steps taken by the department.

"In order to keep a vigil on the timber mafia, we have installed camera traps in the forest. We are changing the locations of these camera traps constantly. This apart, patrolling has been intensified. Our staff is trained to deal with wildfires."

With respect to less number of teak trees in the jungles, he said, "Wild animals hardly get any benefit from these trees. So we are not planting teak saplings in the jungles."

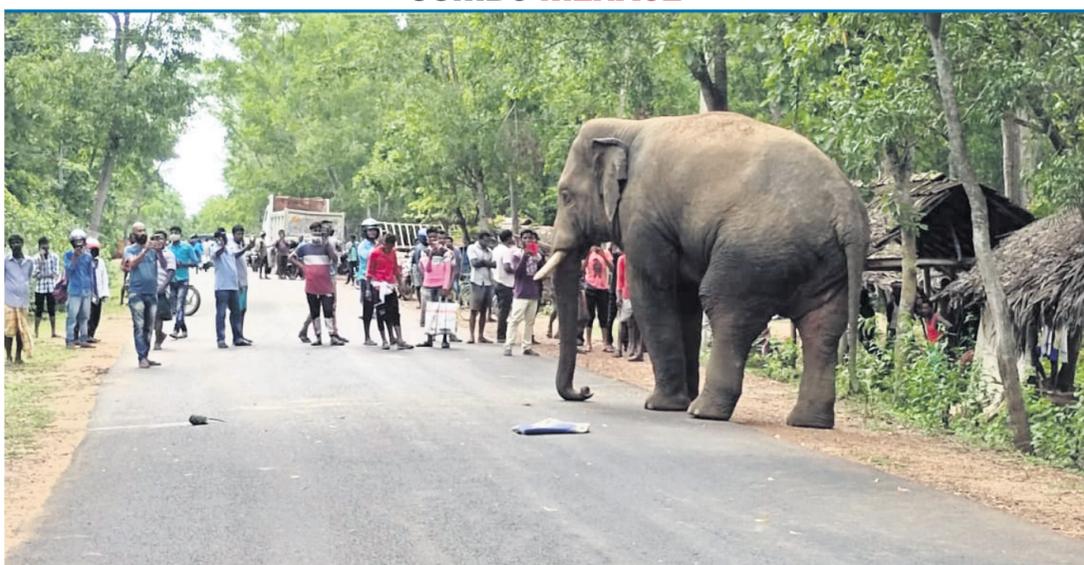
Sources said that the district's cool climate is conducive for elephants. This apart, the reserve forests host animals like boars, bears, deer, porcupines and variety of reptiles including pythons. Even leopards have been spotted in Kamakhyanagar and Kankadahad areas on several occasions. In addition, the number of king cobras has also increased significantly.

But, according to some animal lovers, the exact number of leopards and king cobras in the reserve forests is yet to be ascertained. This is because there has been no counting of these animals.

Notably, there are eight ranges in the district. They include Dhenkanal Sadar range, Kapilas range, Sarangi range, Bhuban range, Kamakhyanagar eastern range, Kamakhyanagar western range, Mahabirod range and Hindol range. It is worth mentioning that the reserve forests comprising these eight ranges have more 'Sal' trees than any other species. In some places, mixed forests of 'Asan', 'Arjun', 'Harida' and 'Bahada' trees can be found in plenty. However, the number of teak trees in the reserve forests is not so encouraging. Only a few teak trees are left in Saptasajya Reserve Forest under Sadar range and Kandhara Reserve Forest under Hindol range.

The Kapilas sanctuary, which is rich in flora and fauna besides being a treasure trove of herbs and medicinal plants, and spread over an area of 12,559.59 hectares, is the most sensitive sanctuary. It is better known as 'jumbos' paradise' and has been a safe haven for poachers.

To keep the sanctuary out of the poachers' reach, the Forest department has deputed 350 Vana



A tusker from Similipal, which had drifted away from its herd, moving on Khirapada road in Mayurbhanj district as people try to scare it off risking their lives. OP PHOTO

## Choked canal adds to farmers' woes

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhandaripokhari, July 12:** Insufficient rainfall has affected agricultural activities in Bhandaripokhari area of Bhadrak, while a choked canal in the area has added to farmers' woes. Farmers lamented that the Badakolipadi minor canal, which is supposed to come handy at this time, is choked with silt and now fails to deliver water to farmlands.

They said that Badakolipadi minor canal used to irrigate hectares of farmlands in the area, but it has been rendered useless due to silting. The water resources department is allegedly taking no step to restore the canal, local alleged.

Reports said, thousands of farmers in Dakhinabada, Sasan, Tulasipur and Badakolipadar villages depended on the water from this minor canal. "Now, not a drop of water passes through the canal. Farmlands are dry and badly need water to nurture saplings, which



have started wilting. If the canal had been repaired, it would be of great use now," many farmers observed.

The farmers also alleged that a construction company, which is undertaking the expansion of NH-16, has been dumping earth and other materials into the canal. About 200 metres of the canal from the local cooperative bank to the Rest House chhak has been choked.

Maa Padmalochani Pani Panchayat is looking after the maintenance of the canal. Members of the panipanchayat have apprised

the Water Resources department about the bad shape of the canal.

A junior engineer of the Water Resources department and officials of the construction company have taken stock of the canal.

Local farmers demanded immediate repair of the canal and warned of halting the road expansion work.

Junior engineer of the Water Resources department Kailash Chandra Sahu said that the canal will be dredged as soon as possible in the larger interest of the farmers.

## 2 killed in Nuapada road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nuapada, July 12:** Two persons were killed in a road mishap when an SUV and a motorcycle collided head-on near Jadamunda Chhak under Komna police limits in Nuapada district Monday morning. Eyewitnesses said that the driver of the SUV lost control over the vehicle and hit the ill-fated motorcycle from the front. Both the bike-borne men sustained fatal injuries.

Locals took the two seriously injured persons to a nearby hospital. However, doctors pronounced the injured as 'brought dead' on arrival. On being informed by the locals, personnel from the Komna police visited the spot. Police have registered a case in this connection and launched a probe.

The bodies of the two deceased have been sent for post-mortem. Police are trying to ascertain the identities of the two deceased, an official of Komna police station informed.

## Tusker tramples elderly woman to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Champua, July 12:** Even as various parts of the Champua range in Keonjhar district have been witnessing elephant menace, a woman was reportedly trampled to death by a tusker in Panchapokharia, Monday night. The deceased was identified as Rajeswari Munda (60) of Mundasahi. In addition, an elderly man was critically wounded in the elephant attack, a report said.

The animals have damaged crops in several acres of farmland in the area. According to the report, the woman went out of her house at 1.30 am to relieve herself when she encountered the elephant. Locals said that the tusker lifted the woman with its trunk from near her house and trampled her a few yards away. However, she was alive. When the woman screamed for help after the animal left the place, her kin rushed her to the Champua CHC, but doctors declared her "brought dead" on arrival.

Later, the same tusker attacked a man at Godhuli while the later was on way from a river. His condition is critical and was admitted to the Champua CHC. The wounded was identified as Kartik Chandra Nayak.

## SUPERSTITION PREVAILS IN BOLANGIR VILLAGE

# Goat sacrifices before PMAY house construction

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Loisingha, July 12:** Even as our country has made rapid advancement in the field of science and technology, superstition and orthodox practices continue to hold sway among the majority in Odisha, a report said.

Animal sacrifice before the village deity during construction of houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) by the beneficiaries at Dandapani village under Ratakhandi panchayat of Loisingha block in Bolangir district is a case in this point.

The animal sacrifice clearly establishes the fact that superstition continues to remain ingrained in the minds of the villagers regardless of the development that the state has witnessed during past years.

The villagers, apprehending that some untoward incident might take place, sacrifice goats to propitiate the deity before construction of houses under the Centre-sponsored scheme.

Reports said that 130 families live in the village consisting of two wards. The villagers living in



thatched houses have been denying construction of any government-sponsored pucca houses with RCC roof or tiled roof since long as they believe that doing so would invite the wrath of the village deity.

They believe that any attempt to break the age-old tradition would result in the death of the person or might cause immense sufferings to the family. As a result, the Centre-sponsored Indira Awas Yojana or its newer version - Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - was never implemented in the village.

The district administration got to know of this after reports ap-

peared in various media. The Collector visited the village and persuaded the villagers to move with the time and construct houses under the Centre-sponsored scheme. Finally, the villagers gave their consent to the proposal.

In the first phase, 50 families were included in the scheme and constructed their houses. Some of the beneficiaries like Bachan Bariha, Nehru Udurkulia and Nilanchal Bariha said that they got the houses after applying in the block office.

Village elder Bachan Bariha said the beneficiaries constructed

## Collector visited the village and persuaded the villagers to move with the time and construct houses under the PMAY scheme

their houses after performing various rituals and sacrificing two male goats before the village deities Pitabali and Bianrpali.

Villager Nilanchal Bariha also admitted to animal sacrifice before construction of the house by the beneficiaries.

Sarpanch Pramodini Khamari said out of the 50 work orders issued for house construction work of 17 beneficiaries has been completed. She said the beneficiaries had informed her that two goats were sacrificed on the day of roof laying of their houses.

When contacted, BDO Rama Chandra Khadia said 50 work orders were issued in the first phase. Meanwhile, he has visited the village twice to oversee the work but is not aware of any animal sacrifice.

## Maoist camp busted in Kandhamal, firearms seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Phulbani, July 12:** Security forces seized a large cache of firearms and other Maoist while busting a Naxalite camp near Dubasara village under Gochhapada police limits in Kandhamal district following a gun battle with the rebels, Saturday.

Two SOG commandos were injured and airlifted to Bhubaneswar for treatment.

This was stated here by SP Vinet Agrawal at a presser held at the SP office here, Monday.

Country-made guns, two haversacks, radio, batteries, medicines, wires and Maoists literatures were seized from the spot.

Acting on a tip-off, a joint team of SOG and DVF jawans in Kandhamal launched a combing operation July 9 near Dubasara. The team was combing the area the next day when the ultras launched heavy firing from advantageous position. The jawans immediately took cover and asked Maoists to surrender. The jawans also retaliated and fired in a controlled manner in self-defence. Taking the benefit of forest cover and difficult terrain,



the ultras escaped from the spot.

Two commandos were injured in the gun battle and airlifted to Bhubaneswar for medical treatment on the order of DGP Abhay, who was on an anti-Naxal review of Koraput and Malkangiri district.

On being informed, the DGP immediately diverted his chopper to a small ground in Padelpada in Boudh district and took them to Bhubaneswar for medical treatment. The health condition of both commandos is stable.

Later, a search operation was launched in the area when the jawans busted a Maoist camp and seized the articles, the SP added.

## TRAIN DERAILMENT



Rail and road traffic was disrupted on Rajgangpur railway gate in Sundargarh following derailment of a goods train on the route, Monday. OP PHOTO

## OBITUARY

# Hakim Babu: An advocate of girls' education

At 8.30 am of July 11, when my phone beeped, the least I expected was to receive the shocking news of the sudden passing away of a lovely gentleman, our colleague of thirty-five years, Sk Hakim. We fondly, and of course with tremendous respect for his human qualities, called him Hakim Babu.

He was 62 years of age when death came calling him. With his demise, not only we lost a true friend, but a person with tremendous integrity. We met first in 1984. I had joined as a teacher and he, as peon, at Banamalipur Girls High School, the first such institution in Balipatna block.

Earlier, the girl students of the region depended on the only government high school at Banamalipur: It was difficult for the girl students, for, many had to walk a distance crossing the Kushabhada river to reach another school. Our school was set up



due to the efforts of Manoranjan Ray whose father Mardaraj Ray was an eminent educationist. His primary aim was to promote girls' education, by then less than 10 per cent of the girls from the minority community went to high schools. It was Hakim Babu who was the catalyst behind Ray's drive. Ray believed that if a girl received proper education, she would build a civilised family, which would lead

to a healthy society.

We, along with some others, worked from the first day of this new school. Hakim Babu's personality, work ethics and behaviour commanded respect from all, including the headmistress, while the students liked him for his advice and assistance to them during school hours.

Soon, like me, the entire school staff, learned that Hakim Babu was equally popular in and around the large business hub Banamalipur, which comprised 27 thickly populated and large-sized villages called Sahis or Patanas.

He was an active Congress Sevadal member from the time of ex-Chief Minister; a daughter of the block, Nandini Satpathy. We knew that he had a lot of difficulties in running his own family and raising four children. Some even said that at times, they slept without dinner. However, he never showed a hint of that and ran to extend his support to one in need, in whatever

and whichever way possible. He was over caste or religion.

Another reason for his popularity was his other service - homeopathy practice. He saw patients, offered medicines, free of cost. Every day, at least three hours prior to the school time, he would arrive on his bicycle, which never had bells or brakes. He would immerse himself in the garden, clean it and water the plants. He would also arrange something for the poor students to eat at recess time, regularly. He often said, "These students are the daughters of our school and it's our responsibility to groom them well."

Upon the reopening of school post-Covid, classes will be held as per routine, the flowers in the garden will bloom and the students will score well in the matriculation examination as they have been doing since the school was set up, but sans the real guardian, Hakim Babu. May his soul rest in peace.

Mina Ketan Mohanty

# Flash flood horror in Dharamshala

**Dharamshala (HP), July 12:** Flash flood triggered by heavy rains swept away buildings and cars at tourist spots as bad weather also led to the closure of the airport here.

The district administration also instructed tourists to postpone their visit to Dharamshala in view of the heavy rains. A drain near Bhagsu Nag in upper Dharamshala adjoining Meeleodganj changed its course owing to heavy rains, sweeping away four cars and several bikes, video clips showed.

A government school building at Bhagsunag was also damaged and adjacent hotels there were inundated, it showed. "Due to inclement weather and heavy rains, all incoming flights to Dharamshala airport at Gaggal have been cancelled," said airport's traffic in-charge Gaurav Kumar.

Owing to flash flood at Manjhi Khad area adjoining Dharamshala, two buildings were swept away while several others were reported to be damaged, the video clips. The flash floods also damaged a bridge on the Mandi-Pathankot highway after which traffic was stopped on both sides, leading to a traffic jam. In a tweet, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "The situation in



An earthmover machine removes a vehicle stuck in flood water

## Centre deploys NDRF

The Central government Monday deployed the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) as heavy rain in Himachal Pradesh led to flashfloods in upper Dharamshala in Kangra district, washing away parked cars and partially damaging houses. Two persons have been reported missing after heavy rain in the district. Reviewing the ground situation in the state, Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on the phone, assuring him that an NDRF team will be deployed to handle any exigency.

of inconvenience."

He said the tourists who have already arrived in Dharamshala and its surrounding places have also been advised to stay where they are as roads etc. Have also been damaged due to heavy rains, which may cause problems in their movement.

Officials have been directed to complete relief and rehabilitation immediately, he said, adding that control rooms have also been set up and steps have also been taken to make the weather forecast available to people.

## NATURE'S FURY

Officials have been directed to complete relief and rehabilitation immediately

Owing to flash flood two buildings were swept away while several others were reported to be damaged

Himachal Pradesh due to heavy rains is being closely monitored. Authorities are working with the State Government. All possible support is being extended. I pray for the safety of those in affected areas." Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur Monday

to take stock of the situation arising due to the floods in several districts of the state and assured him all possible help from the Centre.

Thakur also expressed concern over the losses due to heavy rain and directed the administrations of various districts to ensure speedy relief and rescue operation in the

affected areas. He also urged the local people and tourists to refrain from going near the river banks to avoid any untoward incident.

Deputy Commissioner Dr Nipun Jindal said, "All the tourists visiting Dharamshala have been instructed to postpone their tour so that they do not face any kind

# Monsoon reaches Jaisalmer: IMD

THE SOUTHWEST MONSOON COVERS SRI GANGANAGAR AND JAISALMER IN RAJASTHAN AFTER IT HAS COVERED ALMOST THE ENTIRE COUNTRY



Representative image

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur/New Delhi, July 12:** Southwest Monsoon rains reached the desert district of Jaisalmer and Ganganagar, its last outposts, Monday, but gave Delhi and parts of Haryana a miss.

In 2002, monsoon reached Delhi July 19. This is the most-delayed monsoon in the city since then.

The Northern Limit of the Southwest Monsoon (NLM) currently passes through Jaisalmer, Nagaur, Bharatpur, Aligarh, Karnal and Ganganagar, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

"In association with continued prevalence of moist easterly winds from the Bay of Bengal in the lower levels since the past three days, enhanced cloud cover and scattered to fairly widespread rainfall during past 24 hours, the southwest monsoon has further advanced and covered most parts of Rajasthan and Punjab and some more parts of Haryana and west Uttar Pradesh July 12," the Met office said.

IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said the Southwest Monsoon clouds are hovering over the national capital since Saturday, even the wind pattern has changed and easterlies have brought moist winds.

The IMD had earlier said monsoon would hit Delhi June 15, which would have been 12 days early, but the wind system entered a "break" phase.

The Northern Limit of the Southwest Monsoon (NLM) currently passes through Jaisalmer, Nagaur, Bharatpur, Aligarh, Karnal and Sri Ganganagar, the IMD report said

In early June, the Met office said the conditions will become favourable for monsoon to advance to Delhi and other parts of north-west India by July 7.

Later, it said Delhi will get its first monsoon rains around July 10.

The weather department revised the prediction yet again Saturday, saying monsoon, the most delayed in 19 years, may reach the capital in the next 24 hours. But it kept the city residents waiting on Sunday and there has hardly been any rainfall Monday too.

As monsoon played truant in the region, Central Delhi is now the most rain-deficient district in the country. Receiving only 8.5 mm rainfall against the normal of 132 mm since June 1, when the monsoon season starts, it has recorded a shortfall of 94 per cent.

Overall, Delhi has so far received 67 per cent less rainfall than normal, putting it in the category of "large deficient" states.

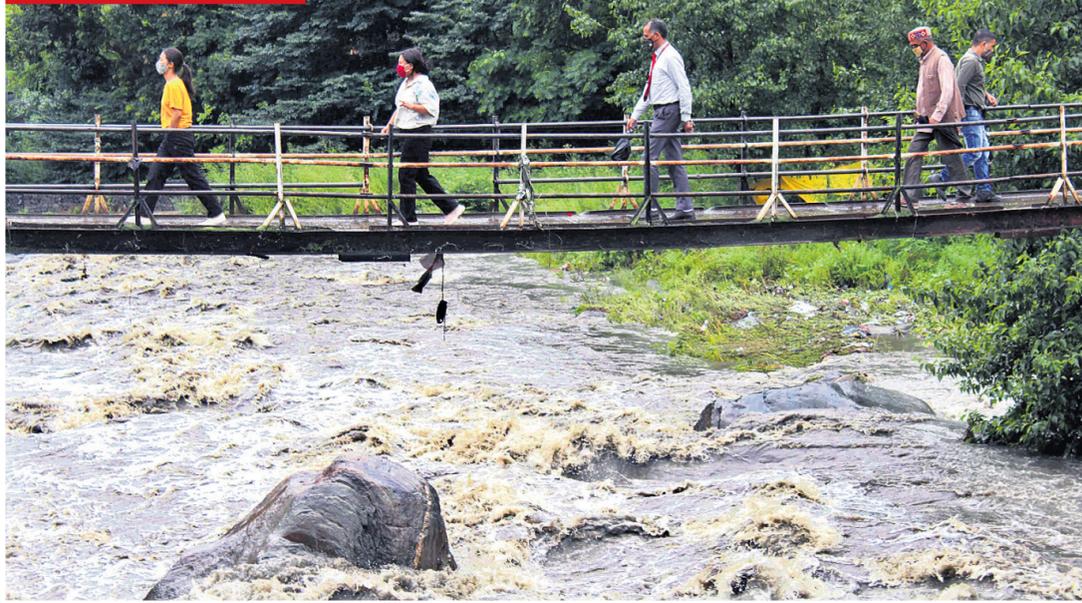
# ₹100 CR FOR TRIBAL AREA DEVELOPMENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, July 12:** Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has given in-principle approval to sanction an amount of ₹100 crore for the smooth operation and development works of various schemes, programmes and activities in tribal areas of the state.

Gehlot has approved ₹10 crore in tribal public participation scheme; ₹15 crore for the upgradation programme of tribal community of Marwar division; ₹10 crore for development of community forest jurisdiction; ₹10 crore for capacity development in residential schools; ₹5 crore for malnutrition, TB, sickle cell anaemia and other medical and health facilities; ₹10 crore for development of facilities for improving the ranking of residential schools and hostels besides other schemes and programmes.

## RAIN WORRIES



Water level rising in river Vyaas after continuous rain in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh

UNI PHOTO

# COVID BOOSTER SHOT FOR DYING CAMEL ECONOMY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, July 12:** At a time when Rajasthan's camel population has been seeing a steady and precipitous decline, the Covid-19 pandemic seems to have given a new lease of life to the ship of the desert.

With wedding parties unable to use regular modes of transport because of social distancing norms, camels are back in demand to move grooms and their families to the villages of the brides.

Camels have also emerged as the saviours of schools in remote villages that are not connected by roads or do not have the luxury of internet connectivity. These animals transport teachers to such schools and even reach study material and stationery to students in far-flung areas.

Unfailingly coming to man's rescue, the camels, though, are in dire need of help. Their population has

been declining at a steady pace in the last many years. The Rajasthan government's 20th livestock census reveals that the number of camels in the state has dropped from 3,25,713 in 2012 to 2,12,739 in 2019.

Earlier in 2007, Rajasthan's camel population stood at 4,21,836, but it declined by 22.79 per cent to 3,25,713 in 2012. Till 1991, the country had more than a million camels, so its present population is a quarter of this number.

Rajasthan, incidentally, has the largest population of camels in the country. A big question mark, though, hangs over the prospects of their survival.

These camels are dolled up with nose pins, ghungroos, mirror-fitted garments and other baubles, making people wonder why they should not become a permanent feature of wedding celebrations.

As Anand Singh, a member of a

wedding party put it: "What can be a more unique way of arriving at a wedding than on the back of a beautifully decorated camel?"

He was travelling with the groom on a camel from Bandeva village in Pokhran to Kusumbia village in Barmer.

Chaturbhuj Singh of Rajputana Cabs, who organises camel safaris at different locations in Rajasthan, put the change in perspective when he said: "The once famous practice of 'i; %Lawazma', whereby camels and elephants were used by the erstwhile royals for their wedding processions, has come back in these pandemic times. The new trend will surely give tourism a much-needed booster dose.

The pandemic therefore has come as a blessing for camels

They are back in business, ferrying baraatis during the wedding season



Representative image

# Vax shortage in Rajasthan

In Rajasthan, over 2.63 crore people have already received their first dose, and out of these, over 46 lakh have received the second dose



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, July 12:** Covid-19 inoculation sessions were not conducted in at least 25 of Rajasthan's 33 districts Monday due to vaccine shortage, an official said.

"The state had only 10,000 doses Monday. So, vaccination sessions could not be conducted in about 25 districts of the state," Health Secretary Siddharth Mahajan said.

Mahajan said that the state had demanded 1.5 crore anti-Covid vaccine doses for July, but the Centre allocated 65 lakh doses. The officials said that a large number of people need to be vaccinated for the second dose in July for which adequate supply is required.

Rajasthan has also written to the Centre to give the vaccine doses allocated to private hospitals to the state government, Mahajan said. According to the health department, from June 21 to July 8, the state had received 31.63 lakh vaccine doses from the Centre.

During this period, 48 lakh people were vaccinated against the coronavirus and among the doses administered, were also those which the state had purchased on its own expense.

# Tale of drugs, missing foreigners in Himachal's mystic Kullu Valley

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kullu, July 12:** More than 20 foreigners have reportedly gone missing in as many years

from the picturesque valleys in Himachal Pradeshs Kullu, known for growing world-class cannabis.

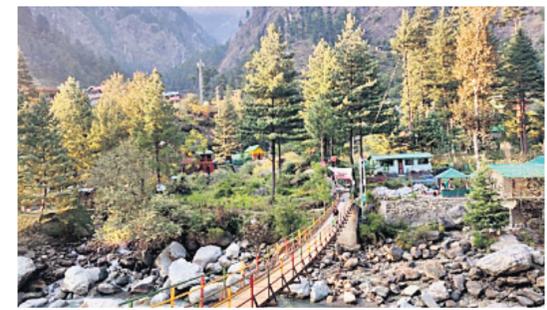
Their illegal settlement in inaccessible hamlets and the changing trends in drug trafficking and addiction amongst the youth is a stark reminder of the deepening nexus between local peddlers and the international drug mafia with the tacit support of some powerful people, including politicians.

Chandigarh-based senior journalist Aditya Kant's debut novel "High on Kasol" uncovers the changing trends in drug trafficking and substance abuse in Kullu Valley and has created a buzz a week after its release on online platforms.

The crime thriller, which is a murder mystery also, touches upon the issue of the mysterious disappearance of foreigners from the valley in the past several years.

The whodunit mystery has already figured amongst the hot releases in the Indian writing category at Amazon, soon after it went live for sale last week.

The book also raises the issue of conflicts between locals and outsiders with a large number of foreigners settling in the valley. Kant says though his story is a work of fiction, it is a stark reminder of the deepening nexus between local peddlers and the international drug mafia, which with the tacit support of some powerful people, including politicians, has made inroads into the lives in the hills and adjoining



states like Punjab.

The book's catchy title, "High on Kasol", Kant explains is a play on the traditional agriculture of psychedelical plants in the far-flung areas of small hamlets in the Himalayas. The story is told in the words of an aspiring writer who goes looking for a "great plot" and winds up in a web of love, deceit, and unimaginable horror.

Though it's a thriller, the racy plot moves ahead with elements of humour and romance. The story is written in the backdrop of the quaint customs and beliefs of the locals and their conflict with the foreigners, including Israelis, many of whom have settled in the township, giving Kasol the dubious identity of a 'Mini Israel'. It also breaks the myth that life is simple in the hills. The twists and the unpredictability of the plot and characters keep the readers hooked till the mystery is solved.

Elaborating about the writing of the book, Kant says he had written the story with youngsters in mind. "But later it turned out to be a blend of crime, suspense, and romance, and is now drawing an overwhelming response from all

the age groups. The narration takes readers to the unexplored mystic Magic Valley in the Himalayas that has fascinated foreigners, as well as the local tourists, for many years. The growing narcotics menace in Himachal Pradesh can be gauged from official figures that 2,126 cases were registered across the state under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance (NDPS) Act and 2,909 people were arrested between January 1, 2020, and April 31, 2021.

During this period 682 kg charas, 15 kg heroin, 50 kg opium, 4,805 kg poppy husk, 376 kg ganja, 128,330 synthetic tablets and 52,194 capsules were seized. To check the supply of contraband, illicit cultivation of 12,52,455 cannabis plants in 7,917 bighas and 266,353 poppy plants in 52 bighas was detected and they were destroyed by the police during this period.

The police also succeeded in tracing 66 bighas under illicit cultivation with 15 lakh poppy plants in a remote Tikken sub-tehsil in the Chauhar Valley of Mandi district. The police have attached properties of drug offenders worth ₹11.37 crore in 19 cases.

of the day quote

The situation in Himachal Pradesh due to heavy rains is being closely monitored. Authorities are working with the State Government. All possible support is being extended. I pray for the safety of those in affected areas

Thirty-eight people lost their lives in the last 24 hours due to lightning strikes in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. I appeal to the state governments to extend all possible help to the families of the deceased

I am happy to note that we have, together, built on that vision. India and Bangladesh continue to attach a very special importance to their bilateral relations

SHORT TAKES

New Assam cattle Bill placed in House

Guwahati: The Himanta Biswa Sarma-led government Monday tabled a bill in the Assam Assembly which seeks to ban cattle slaughter and sale of beef in parts of the state where Hindus, Jains and Sikhs are in a majority. It also makes transportation of cattle from one district to another and outside Assam illegal in the absence of proper documentation.

NIA arrests 3 in Kashmir

Srinagar: The National Investigation Agency has arrested three people from South Kashmir for allegedly being involved in a conspiracy of the banned terrorist organisation ISIS to radicalise and recruit impressionable youths in India to wage violent jihad against the State. The NIA spokesperson said Monday that the three --Umar Nisar, Tanveer Ahmad Bhat and Rameez Ahmad Lone -- all from Achabal in Anantnag of South Kashmir, were placed under arrest Sunday night after the agency carried out searches at seven places.

Woman gangraped

Gurugram: A woman was allegedly confined in Ballabhgarh (Faridabad) for 9 days and raped by four men. The culprits are yet to be nabbed, the police said. The rapists let the woman go after nine days of confinement, following which she informed her family members about the incident.

Seven prisoners escape from jail

Itanagar: Seven undertrial inmates fled from East Siang district jail in Arunachal Pradesh by spraying chilli, salt and pepper powders on the jail guards, police said. A police official said that a massive search operation has been launched to nab the escaped prisoners immediately after the undertrial jailbirds escaped from the jail located in district headquarters in Pasighat Sunday night.

Priyanka's 'Mission UP'

New Delhi: Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will be on a visit to Lucknow from July 14 to hold meetings with party functionaries which will be followed up by tours of other districts of the state aimed at energising the party cadre and preparing the organisation for a pitched electoral battle against the BJP, sources said Monday.



Maharashtra has set an example for the whole country when industries continued to operate without hindrance even during the Covid-19 pandemic last year

SHOCKING REVELATION

Over 40% of people who recovered from Covid-19 are still having post-Covid symptoms and many are reporting newer symptoms like insomnia and neuropsychiatric issues, revealed a pan-India survey by AIG Hospital



Control mass gatherings: IMA



People, flouting social distancing norms, visit a crowded market as authorities eased Covid-induced lockdown relaxation in Bangalore

Decline in daily vaccination

A decline in average daily vaccination against the coronavirus has been seen since June 21, when the new phase of universalisation of Covid-19 vaccination commenced, government data showed. According to data available on the CoWIN platform, an average of 61.14 lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccine were administered daily in the week from June 21-27 which dropped to 41.92 lakh doses daily in the subsequent week from June 28-July 4.

all are needed, but can wait for a few more months.

"Opening up these rituals and enabling people without vaccination to go scot-free in these mass gatherings are potential super spreaders for the Covid third wave," the IMA said.

The statement by the doctors' comes on a day when the annual Rath Yatra began in Puri and amid talks of allowing the "Kanwar Yatra" in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

The IMA appealed to all the states to control mass gatherings. Based on the experience of the last one-and-a-half years of the war with the virus and the emerging evidence, it is obvious that by making the universal vaccination drive reach the maximum number of people and strictly following Covid-appropriate behaviour, people can face the third wave with confidence and mitigate its impact, the doctors' body said.

"The consequences of treating a patient with Covid in a hospital and its impacts on the economy will be much better than the economic loss we suffer by avoiding such mass gatherings. It is the duty and responsibility of everyone at this moment to strictly enforce Covid-appropriate behaviour for minimum three more months and ensure that everyone near our houses is getting vaccinated," the statement said.

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 12: The IMA expressed concern Monday over governments and people being complacent and engaging in mass gatherings without following Covid-19 protocols, saying these events are potential super spreaders for a third wave of the pandemic.

Stressing that tourist bonanza, pilgrimage travel, religious fervour are needed, but can wait for a few more months, the Indian Medical Association (IMA), in a statement, said global evidence and the history of any pandemic suggest that "the third wave is inevitable and imminent".

Trolled for wrong prediction, MeT dept clarifies on monsoon

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 12: After being trolled for faulty predictions about the monsoon arriving in Delhi, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a clarification here Monday on the advancement of southwest monsoon.

"The delay in monsoon advance was mainly due to (i) no formation of low pressure area over Bay of Bengal, (ii) No presence of monsoon trough at mean sea level near Delhi, (iii) 5-6 Western disturbances moved west to east across North India which dominated over the monsoon easterlies," it said.

The Met Department said Southwest Monsoon continued its advance over the country till June 13 in association with favourable atmospheric circulation and a low pressure system over Bay of Bengal after the onset of monsoon over Kerala 3rd June. It also led to revival of monsoon over the region and occurrence of fairly widespread rainfall activity over east Rajasthan, HP, Uttarakhand, J&K and scattered rainfall over Punjab and west Rajasthan.

37,154 fresh cases

With 37,154 new coronavirus infections, India's total tally of Covid-19 cases rose to 3,08,74,376, while the total recoveries crossed three crore, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Monday. The death toll climbed to 4,08,764 with 724 fresh fatalities.

that in this crucial time, when everyone needs to work for the mitigation of the third wave, in many parts of the country, both governments and the public are complacent and engaged in mass gatherings without following Covid protocols. Tourist bonanza, pilgrimage travel, religious fervour,

Choksi granted bail on medical grounds

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 12: In a relief to fugitive Indian businessman Mehul Choksi, who is wanted in India in the Rs 13,500 crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud case, the Dominica High Court Monday granted him bail on medical grounds.

Choksi's lawyer Vijay Agarwal told IANS: "Yes, Choksi has been granted bail on medical grounds."

"Dominica's courts finally upheld the rule of law and rights of a human to be treated in the medical facilities of his choice. And all attempts by various agencies did not bear fruits. There is a solace in saying that all clever foxes end up as fur coats," he said.

Choksi had gone missing May 23 from Antigua and Barbuda, sparking a massive manhunt. He was later captured in Dominica and is



facing charges of entering the country illegally. Choksi had filed a case in the high court of Dominica, seeking to quash the proceedings against him alleging that his arrest was "dictated" by representatives of the Indian government. The case was filed against the Immigration Minister of the Caribbean nation, its police chief and the investigating officer of the case.

Choksi pleaded that the decision to charge him for illegal entry violated the law and, accordingly, was null and void. He has been kept at the Dominica China Friendship Hospital while awaiting an outcome in his illegal entry case. Choksi's lawyer has alleged that their client was kidnapped and forcibly taken to Dominica. He is wanted in India by the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate.

BRAVING THE ODDS



Commuters make their way through a water-logged road after heavy rain in Amritsar

PTI PHOTO

BJP MPs to push private members' Bills in Parl session



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 12: BJP MPs will introduce private members' bills on population control and uniform civil code in the upcoming Monsoon session of Parliament, according to information from the secretariats of both Houses.

BJP Lok Sabha MP from Uttar Pradesh Ravi Kishan and Rajya Sabha MP from Rajasthan Kirori Lal Meena are scheduled to introduce the private members' bills on population control and uniform civil code respectively in the very first week of the Parliament session which is starting from July 19.

A bill introduced by a member other than a minister is known as a private member's bill and there is little possibility of it becoming a law without the government's support. The proposed legislations on population control and uniform civil code, issues that usually trigger heated polemics in the country, are in line with the BJP's ideological agenda.

Opposition parties have criticised the BJP's moves in this regard,

claiming that they are aimed at targeting one specific community, while the BJP has accused them of pursuing appeasement politics.

According to the details available with Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha secretariats, Kishan and Meena will get an opportunity to introduce their respective private members' bills July 24, which was decided through the lottery system.

A notice for a similar bill on population control has also been given by BJP MP in Rajya Sabha Rakesh Sinha.

The proposed legislations on population control emphasise on deinstitutionalising couples having more than two children, by making them ineligible for government jobs and subsidies on various facilities and goods given by the government. The draft UP population control bill says people having more than two children will be debarred from contesting local bodies polls, applying for government jobs or receiving any kind of subsidy. Similar legislation is under discussion in another BJP-ruled state Assam.

SC cancels bail of man accused of 'honour' killing

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 12: The Supreme Court Monday cancelled the bail of a man from Rajasthan, accused of conspiring to murder his Keralaite brother-in-law, who was shot dead in front of his pregnant wife in an alleged case of "honour killing".

A bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana set aside a Rajasthan High Court order that had granted bail to the accused.

The bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy, said: "We are of the considered opinion that the order dated December 1, 2020, passed by the High Court of Judicature for Rajasthan, Bench at Jaipur, impugned herein is not sustainable. The same is accordingly set aside and the bail granted to respondent No. 2 is cancelled."

The top court order came on an appeal challenging the high court order filed by the wife, Mamta Nair, of the deceased, Amit Nair, who was shot at point-blank range.

The bench said: "We, therefore, direct the respondent No 2 Mukesh Chaudhary to surrender before the court of upper District and Sessions Judge, Jaipur City. We make it clear that we have not expressed any opinion on the merits of the case and the trial court shall consider the case being uninfluenced by any of the observations herein." The High Court, at the time of passing the impugned order, has taken note that 17 witnesses out of 47 have been examined so far.



Rath Yatra low-key affair in WB amid Covid curbs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 12: Much like last year, the traditional gaiety on Rath Yatra was missing in Bengal Monday as authorities at the much-revered Mahesh temple in Hooghly district cancelled all festivities in the wake of COVID-related restrictions, and ISKCON temples in the city and Mayapur marked the occasion with muted celebrations.

At the Kolkata temple of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), which had to put off its 50th year celebrations amid the pandemic-induced curbs, Lord Jagannath travelled in a decorated carcade, along with his divine siblings, as part of the rituals. No chariot was taken

out on the streets, in a departure from tradition.

The cavalcade travelled a distance of three kilometres - from Alfred Road premises to the organisation's office on Gurusaday Road.

In Mayapur, the global headquarters of ISKCON, a makeshift Gundicha temple was set up on the courtyard, where the three deities -- Sri Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra Devi -- will be putting up for nine days.

Only 50 servitors and devotees were allowed to pull a chariot in the temple complex during the day.

Similarly, temple authorities in Mahesh performed all rituals, with just a handful of locals visiting the shrine to offer obeisance.



Priests carry the idols of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and goddess Subhadra during the Rath Yatra festival in Kolkata

PTI PHOTO

Only 50 servitors and devotees were allowed to pull a chariot in the temple complex during the day. Early in the day, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee sent offerings to the deities at ISKCON temple here on the occasion, official sources said

Smaller chariots rolled out on the premises of the temple to mark the journey of the deities to their aunt's place at Gundicha temple.

In accordance with the custom, the 'narayan shila' (sacred stone) at

the shrine was taken to another temple, which represented the aunt's house, around a kilometre away.

The ritual was performed by local Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee.

Under normal circumstances, the temple, which had been celebrating Rath Yatra with fanfare for over six centuries, draws thousands of devotees every year.

Early in the day, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee sent offerings to the deities at ISKCON temple here on the occasion, official sources said.

Taking to Twitter, she wrote, "Warm wishes to all on the auspicious occasion of #RathYatra! I pray to Lord Jagannath for the safety and well-being of all my brothers & sisters. Jai Jagannath."

# international



Cases will rise as we unlock, so as we confirm our plans today, our message will be clear. Caution is absolutely vital, and we must all take responsibility so we don't undo our progress, ensuring we continue to protect our NHS  
BORIS JOHNSON | UK PRIME MINISTER

## POPE TO SPEND A FEW MORE DAYS IN ROME HOSP POST SURGERY

The 84-year-old appeared for the first time in public since the surgery Sunday, looking in good form as he delivered his weekly prayer from the 10th floor hospital balcony. He used the occasion to call for free health care for all.



### of the day quote

Human genome editing has the potential to advance our ability to treat and cure disease, but the full impact will only be realised if we deploy it for the benefit of all people, instead of fuelling more health inequity between and within countries  
DR TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WHO DIRECTOR GENERAL

We are monitoring the changing situation in Afghanistan and trying our best for a way forward in Afghanistan through a peaceful regime based on the suggestions from all stakeholders. Even if this fails, we will not let the unrest spillover to Pakistan  
FAWAD CHAUDHRY | INFORMATION MINISTER, PAKISTAN

I can see the greatness of the CPC, and it will deliver what it says, and what it promises in less than 100 years, but only a few decades. I want to become a CPC member  
JACKIE CHAN | HONG KONG BASED HOLLYWOOD ACTOR

## Nepal SC reinstates House, Deuba for PM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kathmandu, July 12: In a dramatic move, the Nepal Supreme Court Monday overturned Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli's decision of dissolving the House and issued an interim order to reinstate it, while also ordering President Bidya Devi Bhandari to appoint opposition Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba as the new premier.



A five-member constitutional bench, led by Chief Justice Chandra Shumsher Rana, issued the ruling stating that President Bhandari's decision to dissolve the House of Representatives upon a recommendation of Oli was "an unconstitutional act".  
The court also ordered the President to appoint Deuba, who had presented his majority during the election process May 24, as the new Prime Minister by Tuesday evening. The bench further ordered the summoning of a fresh session of the House July 18. Prime Minister Oli had dissolved the House May 21 and declared snap elections November 12 and 19.  
This is the second time that the apex court has decided in favour of reinstating the House during Oli's tenure. Earlier December 20, 2020, Oli had dissolved the House and the

Supreme Court had reinstated it February 25, 2021.  
Major political parties besides Oli's Communist Party of Nepal-UML, have welcomed Monday's decision.  
After failing to secure a trust vote May 10, Prime Minister Oli was re-appointed as per Article 76 (3) of

the Constitution in his capacity as the parliamentary party leader of the largest party in the House. Oli, however, opted not to seek a vote of confidence from the house as per Article 76(4) and recommended President Bhandari to initiate a new government process as per the Article 75 (5).  
President Bhandari, May 20, asked the members of the House to stake their claim to the new government by 5 p.m. the other day. Deuba and Oli laid claim to the prime ministerial position. Deuba claimed to have the support of 146 lawmakers, while Oli said he had the backing of 153 MPs. President Bhandari, however, dismissed both the claims and dissolved the House May 22 as recommended by the meeting of the Council of Ministers.

Following the dissolution, more than two dozen writ petitions were filed, seeking the restoration of the House and issuing an order that Deuba be appointed as the new Prime Minister.

## UK minister hails British apple exports to India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, July 12: UK International Trade Secretary Liz Truss has hailed the export of apples from England to India, for the first time in 50 years, as a sign of the UK-India Enhanced Trade Partnership in action.

Truss took to Twitter over the weekend to point out that the export of apples from a farm in south-east England marks a first for the UK-India trade relationship in 50 years, in her response to a tweet by UK trade minister Ranil Jayawardena sharing details of his visit to the AC Goatham and Son apple farm in Kent.

"Our apples are now on the way to India for the first time in 50 years thanks to the Enhanced Trade Partnership," said Truss.  
British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Prime Minister Narendra Modi agreed on the Enhanced Trade Partnership, seen

as a precursor to a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA), during their virtual summit in May.

It was followed up by Truss and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, formally signing the agreement, setting a target to double UK-India bilateral trade by 2030.

"India is an outlet that we've looked at for a number of years but unfortunately we were precluded at the time because of a ban running back to the 70s," AC Goatham and Son co-owner Ross Goatham told the UK Department of Trade (DTT).  
"With the announcements made the other week of the trade deal, we were pretty much straight on the front foot and I think we've had about 20 Indian firms contact us recently, asking if they can buy our apples," he said.

Jayawardena, during his visit to the farm, noted that the move reflected the government's post-Brexit strategy of expanding Britain's export markets.

## Taliban crackdown on Afghan women, media

According to the Afghan government, about 30 per cent of the civil servants are now women who were not allowed to work outside their homes during the Taliban's rule

AGENCIES

Kabul, July 12: Many Afghans, who hoped that the Taliban would reform their extreme views amid ongoing talks with the Afghan government and the US troop withdrawal, have been disappointed by the new severe restrictions imposed on the local population in some of the districts recently captured by the militant group, a media report said.  
Several residents of Balkh, a district in Balkh that is located 20 km north of the provincial capital Mazar-e-Sharif, confirmed to the Voice of America (VOA) that the Taliban have distributed leaflets, ordering locals to follow strict rules that are similar to those they imposed on Afghans when they last governed the country from 1996 to 2001.

According to the Afghan government, about 30 per cent of the civil servants are women who were not allowed to work outside their homes during Taliban rule. Another resident of Balkh, who requested anonymity, said, "salons were ordered not to shave or trim beards when the Taliban controlled the district last month."  
"It is possible that they impose more restrictions. In some of the mosques, during the Friday sermons, Mullahs say that the Sharia law should be implemented," another Balkh resident told VOA.

In several districts of Takhar, Badakhshan, and Kunduz provinces that came under Taliban control recently, local reports claim the group issued similar restrictions on women and forced men to grow beards. The acting US Ambassador in Kabul, Ross Wilson warned that the Taliban's growing violence violated human rights and triggered fears that "a system this country's citizens do not support will be imposed".  
The report quoted Heather Barr, a senior Human Rights Watch researcher in Asia, said that reports about the Taliban's recent crackdown on women and media were "not very surprising" since her organisation's investigation has found that "the Taliban's policies are not that different from what they were in 2001".

"They want to impose the restrictions that were imposed on women under their rule," said Nahida, a 34-year-old resident of Balkh district, adding that the restrictions targeting women include "not leaving our houses without a male companion and wearing hijab".  
Nahida, who requested to be identified by her pseudonym due to safety concerns, said the group's new restrictions will be difficult for women to follow "since many of them are the breadwinners of their families and they have to work outside".



Taliban fighters in a field

### SHORT TAKES

#### Blast in Shanghai kills 2, injures 4

Shanghai: An explosion caused by a liquefied gas cylinder leakage killed two people and injured four others in an apartment building in Shanghai Monday, said local authorities. The accident took place at 4.50 a.m. Monday, reports Xinhua news agency. The local fire brigade rushed to the scene and extinguished the fire about an hour later, according to the information given by office of the city's Fengxian District.

#### 40 militants killed in Afghan airstrikes

Kabul: At least 40 Taliban militants were killed in multiple strikes carried out by the Afghan Air Force, the Ministry of Defence confirmed Monday. In southern Helmand province, 14 militants were killed and two others were wounded after warplanes targeted Taliban hideouts in Garmser district, the Ministry said in a statement. The victims included Mawlawi Hijrat, a deputy commander of the Taliban's Sara Keta or Red Unit for Garmser. Twenty militants died and 35 others were injured when the air force targeted hideouts in Dilaram district in western Nimroz province, according to the Ministry.

#### Israel cuts \$183mn from Palestinian tax

Tel Aviv: Israel's security cabinet has decided to cut millions of dollars from tax revenues it collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority (PA), according to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office. The security cabinet Sunday decided to deduct 597 million shekels (\$183 million) from funds that were supposed to be transferred to the PA, reports Xinhua news agency. The cabinet said the funds are equal to stipends paid by the PA to the families of Palestinians jailed in Israel or killed while carrying out attacks against Israel. The PA transferred 597 million shekels to families of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.  
"These funds will be frozen on a monthly basis out of the payments that Israel transfers to the Palestinian Authority," the cabinet said. Israel says the stipends "encourage" Palestinians' attacks against Israel but the Palestinians say these are welfare payments for needy families.



Mirko Broeger, animal keeper at the Klimahaus, holds the monitor lizard which he recaptured in Bremerhaven, Germany, Monday. The almost fully-grown Nile monitor had escaped from its exhibition enclosure and disappeared for about three days. The house was temporarily closed to visitors. PTI PHOTO

## B'Desh cops nab 5 Neo-JMB militants

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Dhaka, July 12: Five members of the banned militant outfit Neo-JMB were arrested in Bangladesh by a specialised unit of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), a top official said Monday, adding that IED-making materials were also seized during multiple raids.

Md Asaduzzaman, chief of the DMP's Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit, told IANS that while three of the militants were arrested July 8, the remaining two were held Sunday. The militants arrested Sunday evening were identified as IED maker Abdullah Al Mamun alias 'David Killer', and Major Osama alias Naeem, a militant trainer.



According to the CTTC chief, Naeem was also a bomb-making instructor and used to lead the prayers at a mosque.

The raids were carried out Sunday night at a militant hideout in Arahazar, Narayanganj district, where officials also defused three IED bombs, and a huge quantity of explosives were seized from the den, said Asaduzzaman. The second raid on a house at Kazipara also in Narayanganj ended at around 4 a.m. Monday.

Many books on jihadi literature, IED-making equipment and remotes were recovered during the operation, Asaduzzaman told IANS. Last May, the Neo-JMB militants left a remote-controlled IED next to the traffic police box at Siddhirganj in Narayanganj. The bomb disposal team of the CTTC defused it. CTTC officials have said that the IED was made by Mamun.

### WHISPER IN WISCONSIN

## OLD-SCHOOL BIDEN LOWERS VOICE WHILE INTERACTING

AGENCIES

Washington, July 12: US President Joe Biden was at a public transit station in Wisconsin, talking about repairing roads and bridges, when he shifted gears and began defending his plan to send money to parents for each minor child, payments some critics call a giveaway.

ing to make a connection while emphasising a point.

Biden's critics on the right as well as some late-night TV talk show hosts say the whispers are "creepy" and "weird". Conservatives use the dramatic soft talk to fuel the narrative that the Democratic president is unfit for the job, and comedians deploy it to generate laughs. "It's an intimate form of communication," said Vanessa Beasley, associate professor of communication studies at Vanderbilt University.

Biden whispered some of his answers to reporters' questions during an impromptu White House news conference last month after he and a group of Senate Republicans announced they had reached a deal to spend \$973 billion on rebuilding the nation's infrastructure.



As he stood in the East Room, Biden was questioned about his timeline for providing additional financial help to families. He leaned in, eyes wide, and whispered "I got

The use of whispering by Biden, who was a US senator and vice president for a total of more than 40 years, is a throwback to a long-ago time of chummier relations between lawmakers and members of the Washington press corps

pered, "I wrote the bill," before bending down to get closer to the microphone and adding, "on the environment."  
On the subject of employers'

hiring difficulties, Biden leaned into the mic again, arms resting on the lectern and said softly that the solution is to "pay them more."

Beasley said the use of whispering by Biden, who was a US senator and vice president for a total of more than 40 years, is a throwback to a long-ago time of chummier relations between lawmakers and members of the Washington press corps. "I think it's a symbolic gesture to a kind of intimacy and familiarity," she said.

Beasley and others noted the contrast between Biden and former President Donald Trump, who often spoke loudly and angrily. "One of the things that Trump never did was whisper," said Robin Lakoff, professor emerita of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley.



Hey, guys, I think it's time to give ordinary people a tax break  
JOE BIDEN | US PRESIDENT

## MANDATORY GOLD HALLMARKING FIRST PHASE IMPLEMENTATION

Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Maharashtra are the top-3 states where the most number of districts have been identified for the first phase implementation of mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts, according to the Consumer Affairs Ministry



## of the day quote

The farm bill provides for competition so that the small and marginal farmer can go to the intermediary and say if you are not going to provide a good price, I can go and sell it to someone else. That someone else could be ITC, Reliance or Farm Fresh

K SUBRAMANIAN | CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISOR

India will be a 5 trillion-dollar economy - and then go on to be a 15 trillion-dollar-plus economy over the next two decades. India will emerge as one of the largest global markets, both in terms of consumption size and market cap

GAUTAM ADANI | ADANI GROUP CHAIRMAN

Water, power, transport and communication are the four most important things for development of industry, for generating employment and eradicating poverty

NTIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Exclusive Puma Store comes up

**Bhubaneswar:** With an aim to provide exclusive Puma brand products, Shree Sai Agency opened Puma Store at KIIT Square through its proprietor Jitendra Prasad Singh. The store was inaugurated by former Indian Hockey captain Padma Shri Dilip Tirkey. The inaugural function saw the presence of Puma India Sales Chief Rahul Kapoor and the store owner Jitendra Prasad Singh. The store will provide some inaugural offers to its customers.

### MSIL's online car finance

**Bhubaneswar:** Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL) customers can now finance their cars online, anywhere and anytime, with Maruti Suzuki Smart Finance. Maruti Suzuki Smart Finance is now made available for ARENA as well as NEXA customers. It covers a wide range of profiles to meet the demands of a diverse range of customers. Maruti Suzuki Smart Finance was rolled out in limited cities in December, 2020 and since its launch, it has seen over 25 lakh customer visits. To make online car financing more comprehensive, it has an integrated exchange customer journey. This will empower the customers to get an estimated value of their old cars in case of a replacement purchase. In addition to this, the platform now also offers the option of co-applicant financing, covering a wide spectrum of customer profiles.

### Ola Electric signs pact to raise \$100mn

**New Delhi:** Ola Electric Monday said it has signed a USD 100 million (about ₹744.5 crore) 10 year-term debt financing agreement with Bank of Baroda. The 10-year debt of USD 100 million is towards the funding and financial closure of phase I of Ola Futurefactory - its global manufacturing hub for electric two-wheelers, a statement said. Ola had, in December last year, said it will invest ₹2,400 crore for setting up phase I of the factory. "Today's agreement for long term debt financing between Ola and Bank of Baroda signals the confidence of the institutional lenders in our plans to build the world's largest two-wheeler factory in record time. We are committed to accelerating the transition to sustainable mobility and manufacture made in India EVs for the world and we are happy that Bank of Baroda has joined us in our journey," Ola Chairman and Group CEO Bhavish Aggarwal said.

# Flipkart raises fresh funds for \$38bn valuation as IPO looms

REUTERS

**Bangalore, July 12:** Walmart Inc-owned Flipkart will double its valuation in less than three years to US\$37.6 billion after the latest funding that included SoftBank Group Corp, as the Indian online retailer gears up to go public later this year.

The US retail giant bought a 77 per cent stake in Flipkart for US\$16 billion in 2018 and since then has expanded to small towns and cities, added more items such as furniture and grocery to its online store and increased its warehouses in its race with Amazon.com's India unit.

The Bangalore-based company is aiming for a US\$50 billion valuation for its public listing and was in talks in the United States for a deal with a blank-check firm, people familiar with the matter told Reuters in March.

"SoftBank's re-investment in Flipkart is driven by our experience with and conviction in the company's management team to continue addressing the needs of the Indian consumer in the decades to come," Lydia Jett, partner at



SoftBank Investment Advisers, said.

Like its rival Amazon, Flipkart began by selling books, but diversified rapidly into selling smartphones, clothing and other items.

Its fresh funding round was led by investors GIC, Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, SoftBank Vision Fund 2 and Walmart and marks the return of SoftBank, which had sold its roughly 20 per cent stake to Walmart during the 2018 deal.

India's rapid smartphone adoption and cheap mobile data have propelled growth for digital startups that sell everything from groceries

and cosmetics to smartphones and holidays. Several prominent Indian startups too have spelt out plans to go public to cash in on liquidity by foreign funds. Some closely watched include food delivery startup Zomato, payments services PayTM, beauty brand Nykaa and ride-hailing service Ola.

Twenty-two companies have debuted this year as of July 9. There were US\$3.6 billion worth of IPOs in India in the first half of 2021, up from US\$1.1 billion at the same time last year, according to Refinitiv.

The level so far this year is the highest since 2008.

# Retail inflation in June slips to 6.26 pc

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 12:** Retail inflation slipped a tad to 6.26 per cent in June although it remained above the comfort level of the Reserve Bank for the second consecutive month in a row.

The inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 6.3 per cent in May 2021 and 6.23 per cent in June 2020. According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) data, the marginal slippage in the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation was noticed despite some firmness in the food inflation which inched up to 5.15 per cent in June from 5.01 per cent a month ago, mainly on account of higher prices of edible oils and fat. On annual basis, the inflation in the 'oils and fats' segment was 34.78 per cent in June. While the rate of price rise in fruits basket was 11.82 per cent, it contracted in vegetables (-0.7 per cent). Inflation in 'fuel and light' segment was 12.68 per cent. The RBI has been mandated by the government to keep consumer inflation at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on the either side. The central bank factors in the CPI inflation while arriving at its bi-monetary policy.

Suresh Nagpal, Chairman of Central Organisation for Oil



Industry and Trade (COOIT), an apex association of edible oil, said internationally, the prices of edible started correcting in second fortnight of June.

"The Government of India has also reduced duty and has lifted restriction on imports of certain edible oils for the next few months. As a result, the prices of edible oils have softened in both wholesale and retail market since mid of June. We expect prices to remain at the current level over the next few months," he said.

Commenting on the data, Upasna Bhardwaj, Senior Economist at Kotak Mahindra Bank said the softer than expected CPI inflation comes as a relief after a shockingly high May reading. While the headline inflation still remains elevated and risks remain, the high frequency mandi data shows further moderation in food prices in July signalling towards a return of sub-6 per cent readings going ahead, she said.

# INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION RISES 29.3 PC IN MAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 12:** Industrial production surged 29.3 per cent in May, mainly due to low-base effect and good performance by manufacturing, mining and power sectors, but remained below the pre-pandemic level.

The manufacturing sector - which constitutes 77.63 per cent of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) - grew 34.5 per cent in May this year, as per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) Monday.

The mining sector output rose 23.3 per cent in May while power generation increased 7.5 per cent during the same month.

In May 2021, the IIP stood at 116.6 points compared to 90.2 point in the same month last year. The index was at 135.4 points in May 2019 as per



the NSO data. The data showed that industrial production recovered but was still below the pre-pandemic level in May 2019.

The IIP had contracted 33.4 per cent in May 2020. "The IIP for May at 29.3 per cent... Suggests the supply chains have adopted over the last year to dampen the impact of second wave. This points to a robust Q1 considering the high frequency parameters for June are also positive," Shravan Shetty, MD Primus Partners, said.

Industrial production had plunged 18.7 per cent in March last year following the COVID-19 outbreak and remained in the negative zone till August 2020.

With the resumption of economic activities, factory output rose 1 per cent in September. The IIP had grown by 4.5 per cent in October. In November 2020, the

factory output fell 1.6 per cent and then entered the positive territory by growing 2.2 per cent in December 2020.

The IIP had recorded a contraction of 0.6 per cent in January and 3.2 per cent in February this year. In March, it grew 24.1 per cent. For the month of April, the NSO held back the release of complete IIP data.

The second wave of the pandemic started in the middle of April this year and many states imposed restrictions to curb the spread of coronavirus infections.

"The growth rates over corresponding period of previous year are to be interpreted considering the unusual circumstances on account of COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020," NSO said in a statement.

# Mahindra launches Supro Profit Trucks

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., one of the leading automobile companies in India, launched its new range of Supro Profit Trucks— Supro Profit Truck Mini and Supro Profit Truck Maxi.

The Supro Profit Truck Mini starts at ₹5.40 lakh (Ex-showroom, Mumbai) while the Supro Profit Truck Maxi starts at ₹6.22 lakh (Ex-showroom Mumbai).

The Supro Profit Truck Mini is powered by Mahindra's powerful Direct Injection (DI) diesel BSVI engine that comes up with a 19.4kw power and delivers superior pick up and acceleration. It also gets the four-stroke, 2-cylinder 909cc displacement engine that produces 26HP at 55NM of torque, mated to a 4-speed manual gearbox. The Supro Profit Truck Mini also comes with CNG option.

The Supro Profit Truck Maxi is



powered by Mahindra's powerful Direct Injection (DI) turbo diesel BSVI engine that delivers a superior power of 35.4kw, 47HP and 100NM of torque. Despite its performance, the Supro Profit Truck Maxi delivers class-leading mileage of 21.94km/litre. This compact truck offers 1050 kg of payload carrying capacity in 8.2ft cargo box. This enables the Supro Profit Truck Maxi to carry higher payloads at lower operational cost, while at the same time improving turn-around time and thereby boosting earnings for owners.

# Paytm shareholders approve country's biggest public offer plan of ₹16,600cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 12:** Digital payments and financial services firm Paytm Monday received approval of shareholders for the country's biggest public offer of ₹16,600 crore, according to a source aware of the EGM outcome.

The shareholders have approved raising of ₹12,000 crore during the initial public offer and sale of secondary shares will take the total amount to ₹16,600 crore.

"Shareholders have approved all the proposals at the extraordinary general meeting. The shareholders have approved the proposal to raise capital and the fresh issue of shares of up to ₹12,000 crore during the IPO. The secondary raise will bring the total to ₹16,600 crore," the source said.

An email query sent to Paytm did not elicit any reply. The shareholders at the EGM approved the proposal that Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar



Sharma would not be identified as the promoter of the company but will continue to be the chairman, managing director and chief executive officer of the company.

"As per SEBI rules, Paytm is a professionally managed company. No shareholder can have 'special rights'. That is just how listed companies need to be in India," the source said.

Till date Coal India had come up with the biggest IPO issue of around ₹15,500 crore which was listed in the last quarter of 2010.

According to the source, the valuation of the firm is likely to be in the range of ₹1.78 lakh crore to ₹2.2 lakh crore. With this valuation range, Paytm is expected to be among top 10 listed financial services in the country.

# WhatsApp targeted in EU consumer complaints

REUTERS

**Brussels, July 12:** Facebook Inc's WhatsApp Monday faced a barrage of complaints by the European Consumer Organisation and others over a privacy policy update, which has prompted a global outcry and led some users to switch to rival apps Telegram and Signal.

WhatsApp in January introduced a privacy policy which allows it to share some data with Facebook and other group firms. It said the changes permit users to message with businesses and would not affect personal conversations.

The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) and eight of



its members criticised the changes and filed complaints with the European Commission and the

European network of consumer authorities, saying WhatsApp was unfairly pressuring users to ac-

cept its new policies.

"The content of these notifications, their nature, timing and recurrence put an undue pressure on users and impair their freedom of choice. As such, they are a breach of the EU Directive on Unfair Commercial Practices," the groups said in a joint statement.

"WhatsApp has failed to explain in plain and intelligible language the nature of the changes... This ambiguity amounts to a breach of EU consumer law which obliges companies to use clear and transparent contract terms and commercial communications," they said.

Facebook said BEUC has got the issue wrong. "BEUC's action is

based on a misunderstanding of the purpose and effect of the update to our terms of service," a spokesperson said.

"The update does not expand our ability to share data with Facebook, and does not impact the privacy of your messages with friends or family, wherever they are in the world. We would welcome an opportunity to explain the update to BEUC to clarify what it means for people."

The consumer groups urged the European network of consumer authorities and EU data protection authorities to work together to address these privacy and consumer rights concerns.

# AMAZON RESTORES SERVICES AFTER GLOBAL OUTAGE

REUTERS

**New York, July 12:** Amazon.com Inc said its online stores had returned to normal services after a global outage disrupted shopping on its country sites.

According to outage monitoring website Downtodetector, services were disrupted for nearly two hours and at the peak of the disruption, more than 38,000 user reports indicated issues with Amazon's online stores. They occurred Sunday evening in the United States and Monday morning for much of the rest of the world.

"Some customers may have temporarily experienced issues while shopping. We have resolved the issue, and everything is now running smoothly," an Amazon spokesperson said.



The spokesperson declined to comment on the reason for the outage. It was the second broad disruption since late June when users experienced a brief outage on Amazon platforms including Alexa and Prime Video before services were restored.

# MOBIKWIK FILES FOR ₹1,900CR IPO



REUTERS

**Bangalore, July 12:** Digital payments firm MobiKwik, backed by Sequoia Capital and Bajaj Finance, filed for an initial public offering (IPO) worth up to ₹1,900 crore with the markets regulator Monday.

The IPO includes the issue of new shares worth ₹1,500 crore and an offer for sale of shares worth up to ₹400 crore, diluting the stakes of its two founders and current investors, which also include American Express, Cisco and Treeline Asia.

MobiKwik has hired ICICI Securities, BNP Paribas, Credit Suisse, IIFL Securities and Jefferies as book managers for the IPO.

One97 Communications Ltd, the parent of digital payments firm Paytm, MobiKwik's bigger rival, is also planning to raise \$2.3 billion via an IPO, sources previously told Reuters.

# CRYPTOCURRENCY TRADING VOLUMES SLUMP 40% IN JUNE

REUTERS

**London, July 12:** Trading volumes at major cryptocurrency exchanges fell by more than 40% in June, research showed Monday, with a regulatory crackdown in China and lower volatility among the factors depressing activity.

Spot trading volumes fell 42.7% to \$2.7 trillion, with derivative volumes down 40.7% to \$3.2 trillion, London-based researcher CryptoCompare's data showed.

"Headwinds continued as China persisted with its crackdown on bitcoin mining," CryptoCompare said. "As a result of both lower prices and volatility, spot volumes decreased."



Bitcoin, the largest cryptocurrency, fell more than 6% last month, touching its lowest since January, as authorities in China tightened restrictions launched a month earlier on bitcoin trading and mining.

It had tumbled 35% in May with its losses sparked by Beijing's moves to rein in the fast-growing sector. Crypto trading volumes tend to spike during periods of extreme price swings.



### 3 ENGLISH PLAYERS RACIALLY ABUSED

**LONDON:** Three Black players who missed penalty kicks for England in the decisive Euro 2020 shootout against Italy were subjected to racist abuse online, prompting the English Football Association to issue a statement condemning the language used against the players. Bukayo Saka, at 19 one of the youngest players on the England squad, missed the penalty that gave the title to Italy and denied England their first international trophy since the 1966 World Cup. It was England's third straight failure from the penalty spot in the shootout, with Marcus Rashford and Jadon Sancho also missing. The FA said in a statement it was "appalled" by the abuse of the three players. The team had taken a knee before games at the Euros to signal its support for an end to racial inequality, and the young, multi-ethnic squad won the hearts of the football-mad country before the shootout failure brought out all-too-familiar messages of hate. London's Metropolitan Police also said it was investigating "offensive and racist" messages on social media. Rashford, who plays for Manchester United, noted the racial abuse he received on social media in May after the team lost the Europa League final. England coach Gareth Southgate was criticised for his strategy of bringing in Rashford and Sancho off the bench to take penalties while Raheem Sterling and Jack Grealish were sidelined in the shootout.



### EURO 2020 IN REVIEW

**BEST MOMENT**  
It was beautiful, touching and uplifting, so soon after a near-tragedy. Shaken fans inside the Parken Stadium were waiting for updates after Denmark midfielder Christian Eriksen collapsed on the field during the game against Finland when supporters from the Finnish contingent broke the eerie silence. "Christian! Christian!" they chanted. Danish fans gave their own booming response that reverberated around the venue: "Eriksen! Eriksen!" Within seconds, supporters from both teams united in a huge roar when the stadium announcer said Eriksen was "stable and awake".

**BEST GOAL**  
It resembled a golf shot more than a football shot. As the ball rolled loose and just across the halfway line into Scotland's half, Czech Republic striker Patrick Schick took aim from 49.7 metres and managed to curl the ball high and from left to right, straight into the goal vacated by goalkeeper David Marshall. It was outrageous – by more than 10 metres the longest goal in the tournament's history – and sometime in the making, with Schick later saying he'd noticed Marshall coming off his line previously and was waiting for the moment.

**BIGGEST FLOP**  
When Kylian Mbappe saw his penalty pushed aside by Switzerland goalkeeper Yann Sommer to end the shootout and consign France to an round-of-16 exit, it capped an underwhelming – some might say disappointing – tournament for a player widely regarded as the new superstar of world soccer. The striker didn't score in four games at Euro 2020, which he started uncomfortably after he went public on Day 3 of the tournament about a feud with teammate Olivier Giroud. He didn't get any better.

**BIZARRE MOMENT**  
France coach Didier Deschamps was in his technical area, waiting for his team's group match against Germany to start, when he was forced to duck into his dugout and put his hands over his head as debris fell from above. A protestor for environmentalist group Greenpeace had just glided into the stadium on a parachute, lost control and struck wires for an overhead camera attached to the roof. That made him veer away from the playing area toward the stadium's main grandstand and he barely cleared the heads of spectators. Several spectators were treated for injuries in the hospital because of the falling debris.

**BIGGEST SURPRISE**  
Reaching the semifinals didn't appear beyond the Danes at the start of Euro 2020. It certainly did, however, after losses in their first two group games and with their most important player, Eriksen, out of the tournament while he recovered from cardiac arrest. How amazing it was, then, to see Denmark – thrust into the role of every neutral's favorite team – get out of its group with a 4-1 rout of Russia in an atmospheric Parken Stadium and then advance to the denouement of the tournament in London with a 4-0 win over Wales and a 2-1 victory over the Czech Republic.

**NICE TOUCHES**  
The match ball being delivered to the center circle for kickoff aboard a small remote-control car proved a neat addition to proceedings, and certainly generated excitement on social media. As did the stirring rendition of "Nessus Dorna" at the opening ceremony by Andrea Bocelli. Italian tenors and tiny cars, it appears, should be regular fixtures at every football tournament.

### AWARD WINNERS

**GOLDEN BALL** (Player of the Tournament): **Gianluigi Donnarumma**  
The Italian shot-stopper conceded only four goals in seven games and saved three penalties in the final to inspire Italy to a memorable victory

**GOLDEN BOOT** (Top scorer): **Cristiano Ronaldo**  
The all-time top-scorer in the history of the European Championships had scored five goals in four games for Portugal. However, his one assist helped him pip Czech Republic's Patrik Schick, who had also scored 5 goals

**YOUNG PLAYER OF THE TOURNAMENT:** **Pedri**  
The 18-year-old Spanish midfielder had a brilliant campaign with the La Liga star impressed heavily with his talent and skills, playing all of the Spain's matches at the competition

**STAR OF THE FINAL:** **Leonardo Bonucci**  
The veteran Italian defender, in the final, was excellent in defence, besides scoring the all-important goal for Italy in the final to push it into extra time

### CHAMPS COME HOME

Rome: Europe's football champions returned home at dawn Monday to the ecstatic cheers of Italians who spent the better part of the night honking horns, setting off fireworks and violating all sorts of coronavirus precautions to celebrate their team's 3-2 penalty shootout win over host England at Wembley Stadium. Captain Giorgio Chiellini, his fist pumping the air, and coach Roberto Mancini hoisted the trophy high over their heads as they descended from their Alitalia charter flight at Rome's Leonardo da Vinci airport. Amid cheers from airport workers, defender Leonardo Spinazzola hopped down the steps on one foot, his other one in a cast after he injured his Achilles tendon earlier in the tournament. "Grazie Azzurri," read a banner on the tarmac – a sentiment felt across the country after Italy took home their first major trophy since the 2006 World Cup. The national team was being feted officially by President Sergio Mattarella and Premier Mario Draghi later, joined by tennis player Matteo Berrettini, who had given Italians another reason for pride Sunday by reaching the Wimbledon singles final.

### TERM STILL ON!

**LONDON:** England manager Gareth Southgate hinted Monday that he wants to continue in charge of the national team in the 2022 World Cup, despite their penalty shootout heartache against Italy in the final of Euro 2020. Southgate said it wasn't "an appropriate time to think about anything" but added that "as I sit here today, I would want to take the team to Qatar". Southgate has led England to the semifinals of the 2018 World Cup and Nations League a year later, plus the final of the Euro 2020. "I don't want to commit to anything longer than I should and I never want to outstay my welcome. So all of those things need consideration before I even think about sitting down and talking. But as I sit here today, I would want to be taking the team to Qatar." Southgate also said that the racist social media abuse of the players who missed penalties in the final was "unforgivable".

### PRIZE MONEY AS PER EURO 2020 RANKS (TOP 5)

Team	In Euro	In INR
Italy	34 million	₹300.4 cr
England	30.25 million	₹267.4 cr
Spain	22.5 million	₹198.9 cr
Denmark	21 million	₹185.5 cr
Belgium	19 million	₹167.8 cr



# 'IT'S COMING ROME'

Donnarumma helps Italy claim Euro 2020 crown beating England via penalty shootout in the final at Wembley

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, July 12:** 'It's coming Rome' – these were the words of Italian defender Leonardo Bonucci, who struck the equaliser against England, after their triumph. He rushed towards the camera and shouted those words holding the camera mimicking the lyrics of English football fans' song 'Football's coming home' – 'It's coming home'.

With this, Italian football's redemption story is complete. England's painful half-century wait for a major title goes on. And it just had to be because of a penalty shootout.

Italy won the European Championship for the second time by beating England 3-2 on penalties Sunday. The match finished 1-1 after extra time.

Gianluigi Donnarumma dived to his left and saved the decisive spot kick by Bukayo Saka, England's third straight failure from the penalty spot in the shootout in front of its own fans at Wembley Stadium.

It was less than four years ago that the Italians plunged to the lowest moment of its football history by failing to qualify for the World Cup for the first time in six decades. Now, they are the best team in Europe and on a national-record 34-match unbeaten run under Roberto Mancini, their suave coach. England was playing in its first major



final in 55 years. It's the latest heartache in shootouts at major tournaments, after defeats in 1990, 1996, 1998, 2004, 2006 and 2012.

England went ahead in the second minute when Luke Shaw scored the fastest goal in a European Championship final. Bonucci equalised in the 67th.

Saka, a 19-year-old Londoner, was embraced by several England players after his miss. England coach Gareth Southgate hugged Jadon Sancho, who missed the previous England penalty, while Marcus Rashford – the other one to miss – walked off down the tunnel.

Sancho and Rashford had been brought on in the final minute of extra time, seemingly as specialist penalty takers.

Donnarumma was in tears as he was embraced by his teammates as they sprinted toward him from the halfway line, where they watched the second penalty shootout in a European Championship final.

They then headed to the other end of the field and ran as one, diving to the ground in front of their own fans. It was Italy's second continental title after 1968, to add to the country's four World Cups. That the match went to extra time – like three of the six European finals before it – was not unexpected, given both semifinals also went the distance and the defensive solidity of both the teams.

In fact, Italy's famously robust defense was only really opened up once in the entire

90 minutes and that resulted in Shaw's goal, a half-volley that went in off the near post from Kieran Trippier's cross.

It was Shaw's first goal for England and it prompted a fist-pump between David Beckham and Tom Cruise in the VIP box amid an explosion of joy around Wembley.

The fact that it was set up by Trippier, a full back recalled to the team as part of a change of system to a 3-4-3 for the final, would have brought extra satisfaction to Southgate. Then, England barely saw the ball for the rest of the game. Italy's midfielders dominated possession, started playing their pretty passing routines and England resorted to getting nine or even all 10 outfield players behind the ball.

It was reminiscent of the 2018 World Cup semifinals, when England also scored early against Croatia then spent most of the game chasing its opponent's midfield.

Initially the Italians could only muster long-range efforts but the equalizer arrived from much closer in. A right-wing corner was flicked on at the near post, Marco Verratti had a stooping header tipped onto the post by Pickford, and Bonucci put the ball in from close range.

Still, England managed to hold on for extra time and actually had the better of the final stages. Just not the shootout, again.

# 'Stay away from social media' Bhuvi backs India youngsters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 12:** Former coach Harendra Singh has advised the Tokyo-bound Indian men's hockey team to stay away from social media to avoid distraction and wants the players to remember the sacrifices they made during the COVID-19 pandemic in their bid to finish on the podium at the forthcoming Olympics.

Several members of the Tokyo-bound men's hockey squad, including Mandeep Singh, vice-captain Harmanpreet Singh, Gurjant Singh, Nilkanata Sharma and Sumit were part of the 2016 Junior World Cup-winning side, which was coached by Harendra.

"This time the competition in the Olympics would be different and tougher due to the pandemic. I would suggest them to stay away from social media and stay focussed.

"They must not forget that they have worked very hard for the Olympics. They have made sacrifices during COVID times and now it is the time to show what they are capable of. It has been a long due



now," Harendra, who is currently coach of the USA men's team, Bhasha told this agency.

The Tokyo Games will be held from July 23 to August under extraordinary circumstances in view of the raging COVID-19 pandemic.

With the organisers barring spectators from attending the Tokyo

Olympics due to the pandemic, Harendra feels it won't be easy for the teams.

"It will not be easy to play in empty stadiums. But at the same time it will ease out pressure from young players who are making a debut in the Games. India will be benefitted as we have many debu-

tants in the team," he said.

Harendra, who was also the coach of the senior India team from 2017-18, said India's first target should be a place in the quarterfinals.

"Without thinking about medal right now, they should focus on quarterfinal first. For me it is the most important point. It is more important than semifinal or final."

Harendra has also lauded the efforts of players and coaches in making this team a formidable unit. "Indian hockey is going in the right direction and every coach has contributed to it. It is the most formidable team since 2000 and I am sure that this team can win a medal in Tokyo. We have been waiting for over 4 decades now."

"These boys have tasted success at the junior level and they can emulate that at the highest level now. This team is a good mix of juniors and seniors and for the first time each and every player is capable of playing at any position," he said. "During COVID times they have stayed together most of the time which resulted in team bonding."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, July 12:** Six uncapped players in the squad might make it seem that India have come with an inexperienced group for the white-ball series against Sri Lanka but tour vice-captain Bhuvneshwar Kumar says it is not the case as the entire lot has the requisite confidence thanks to IPL.

With major stars like skipper Virat Kohli and his limited-overs deputy Rohit Sharma in England for an upcoming Test series, the Indian team for series against Sri Lanka is being led by opener Shikhar Dhawan and features half a dozen uncapped players.

Many of them impressed in the suspended IPL and have been rewarded with their maiden India call-up. They include Devdutt Padikkal, pacer Chetan Sakaria, Nitish Rana, Krishnappa Gowtham, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Varun Chakravarty.

"We have good players and they have experience of IPL, they are young but they have experience of IPL, playing T20 for so many years and they have done well for their



teams," Bhuvneshwar said on the Star Sport show 'Follow the Blues.' "So, it will be beneficial for the

team that they will carry the confidence of IPL and they are young and talented, there is a good mix with the experienced players and this will be a good tour.

"Young players who have come for their first tour and came after doing well in IPL so if they do well here then it will be great for their confidence," he added.

The senior pacer had suffered a thigh muscle injury during last year's IPL which ruled him out of the league as well as the tour of Australia.

The bowler made a return to the national squad after a long injury lay-off in the limited-overs home series against England in March. He said playing domestic cricket helped him stay motivated.

The India-Sri Lanka series, which was originally slated to begin with the three ODIs July 13, had to be rescheduled after the home team's batting coach Grant Flower and data analyst GT Niroshan tested positive for the dreaded virus on their return from the UK tour.

The engagement, which comprises three ODIs and as many T20Is, will now start from July 18.