



## CLIMATE CONCERN

Actor Bhumi Pednekar says there is a need to regenerate Earth instead of searching for a new planet

LEISURE P2



## FINALLY, MONSOON IN DELHI

Southwest Monsoon finally arrives in Delhi bringing respite from scorching heat two weeks behind the schedule

TWO STATES P8



## VIOLENCE SPREADS IN SA

Protesters clash with police in South Africa and looters ransack shopping malls as frustrations boil

INTERNATIONAL P10

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



It was not easy. I had to lodge several complaints anonymously before they withdrew hubby's work from home permission

## NEET-PG exam to be held September 11

**New Delhi:** The NEET Postgraduate exam will be held September 11, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya announced Tuesday. "We have decided to conduct #NEET Postgraduate exam on 11th September, 2021. My best wishes to young medical aspirants!" he tweeted. In view of the spike in COVID-19 cases, the National Eligibility Cum Entrance test (NEET)-PG which was scheduled to be held on April 18 was postponed. The decision was taken keeping the wellbeing of young medical students in mind.

## Serum to produce Sputnik vax in Sept

**New Delhi:** Serum Institute of India (SII) will start production of Sputnik vaccine at the company's facilities in September, Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) said Tuesday. As per the agreement between RDIF and SII, the parties intend to produce over 300 million doses of the vaccine in India per year. "The first batch of Sputnik vaccine is expected to be produced at SII's facilities in September," RDIF said in a statement. As part of the technical transfer process, SII has already received cell and vector samples from the Gamaleya Center. With their import approved by the DCGI, the cultivation process has begun, it added.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	52769.73 ↑ 397.04
NIFTY	15812.40 ↑ 119.80
DOLLAR	74.87 ↓ ₹0.13
EURO	88.15 ↓ ₹0.23
GOLD	₹47,950 ↑ ₹176
SILVER	₹69,300 ↓ ₹75

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	30.7°C	31.6°C
TEMP MIN	25.0°C	25.4°C
Humidity	85%	81%
Rainfall	3.5mm	17.2mm
Forecast	Light rain very likely	



Indian Army soldiers during patrolling duty at the Line of Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan border, in Poonch, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

# Centre caps prices of basic medical devices

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 13:** The government Tuesday capped the trade margins of five critical medical devices such as oximeter and digital thermometer, used extensively in the treatment and prevention of Covid-19, at 70 per cent in order to bring down prices.

The National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority (NPPA) has invoked extraordinary powers under the Paragraph 19 of DPCO, 2013, to put a cap on trade margin of five medical devices - oximeter, glucometer, BP monitor, nebulizer and digital thermometer.

"NPPA brings pulse oximeter, glucometer, BP monitor, nebulizer and digital thermometer under Trade Margin Rationalisation. Caps Margin at Distributor @70%," the drug pricing regulator said in a tweet on Tuesday.

The revised prices of the five medical devices would be effective from July 20, it added. "Existing margins range from 3% to 709% across five categories," NPPA tweeted.

With an aim of making the medical devices affordable during the evolving situation of COVID pandemic, it is felt necessary to regulate the trade margin on these medical devices, NPPA said in its order.

NPPA noted that the data collected from the manufacturers / marketers/importers pointed out that existing trade margins on the five medical devices ranged up to 709 per cent from price to distributor to MRP level.

"Now, therefore, in the exercise of the powers vested by the government of India in the Ministry of Chemicals

## EASY ON POCKET

70% margin on oximeter, glucometer, BP monitor, nebulizer and digital thermometer

The revised prices of the five medical devices would be effective from July 20

Existing trade margins range up to 709 per cent from price to distributor to MRP level

Manufacturers selling at prices higher than MRP structure shall revise prices downward



and Fertilizers, having been satisfied that in view of the extraordinary circumstances in public interest, as explained above, the government, hereby, invokes the provisions of Paragraph 19 of the DPCO, 2013 to regulate the price of these five medical devices," NPPA stated.

By invoking Paragraph 19 of DPCO, 2013, the government hereby puts a cap on trade margin of pulse oximeter, blood pressure monitoring machine, nebulizer, digital thermometer, glucometer at first point of sale of product, it added. The manufacturers of these five medical devices selling at price higher than the new MRP structure shall revise the prices downward, NPPA said.

"The manufacturers not comply-

ing with the MRP so computed..shall be liable to deposit the overcharged amount along with 15 per cent interest per annum . From the date of increase in price in addition to penalty up to 100 per cent of the overcharged amount under the provisions of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013," it stated.

The Paragraph 19 of DPCO, 2013, authorises the NPPA to control the prices of drugs that are not under the NLEM (National List of Essential Medicines) under extraordinary circumstances in public interest.

Last month, the government capped the trade margin on oxygen concentrators at 70 per cent by invoking extraordinary powers under Para 19 of the DPCO, 2013.

## Govt flags imminence of Covid third wave

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 13:** People are talking about the third wave of coronavirus as casually as a "weather update", the government said Tuesday, noting that "gross violations" of Covid-appropriate behaviour being seen in several parts of the country can nullify the gains made so far in pandemic management.

Addressing a press conference on the pandemic situation in the country, NITI Aayog Member (Health) Dr VK Paul said globally, the third wave of COVID-19 is being seen and called on people to make efforts to ensure that it does not hit India.

"The world is witnessing the third wave of COVID-19. We have to join hands to ensure that the third wave doesn't hit India," he said. "We talk about the 'third wave' as casually as a weather update. This isn't like one plans that we should go somewhere before monsoon, it is virus versus human being and it is a continuous battle.

"More than the environment, it is our behaviour that can cause the third wave. What we fail to understand is that adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour or the lack of it is what will prevent or cause any future waves," he said.

Referring to scenes in hill stations and markets like Sadar Bazaar and Janpath market in Delhi, Ranganathan street in Chennai, Vilaripatti in Tamil Nadu, Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh and Bhushi Dam in Maharashtra, Lav Agarwal, joint secretary in the health ministry, said "gross violations" of Covid-appropriate behaviour are being seen "which can nullify the gains" made so far in the management of the pandemic.

Earlier, too, the government had warned from the same platform against thronging and crowding hill stations and markets, saying the second wave was not yet over.

# ACF dies of burns; father accuses wife

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Paralakhemundi, July 13:** The mystery behind the death of an assistant conservator of forests (ACF), who succumbed to burn injuries while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Cuttack Tuesday, took a new turn with the deceased's father alleging that it was a pre-planned murder.

The deceased ACF has been identified as Soumya Ranjan Mohapatra. Hours after his death, his father and uncle came up with allegations that Soumya's death was not accidental. He was murdered in a planned manner.

"The couple was at home Monday night and later in a fire mishap Soumya suffered 90 per cent burn injuries. That his wife escaped unharmed while Soumya was 90 per cent burnt is hard to believe. It is his wife who

with the help of someone else set Soumya on fire. It should be investigated properly," they said.

Meanwhile, the deceased's wife has not given any statement before media regarding the incident as yet.

Soumya along with his wife had been staying at his government quarter since their marriage in December last year. His neighbours heard his wife screaming at about 9:30pm Monday.

They rushed to his house only to see Soumya in flames. They rescued him in half-charred state and rushed him to the district headquarters hospital. He had suffered 90 per cent burn injuries.

As his condition started deteriorating, he was shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur before being shifted to a private hospital in Cuttack.

The police have launched a probe into the case.



# State to up seats in Plus II colleges

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** With an aim to ensure smooth admission of Class X pass-out students, the state government has accorded its approval for increase in the number of seats in Plus II colleges for the academic session 2021-22.

The school and mass education (S&ME) department has invited online applications from higher secondary schools (Classes XI & XII) that want to raise seats in their respective institutions.

In a notification, S&ME additional secretary Subhashree Nanda said that the government has accorded permission for inviting online applications from Plus II Colleges for an increase in the number of seats.

Interested colleges can submit an application through the Student Academic Management System (SAMS) portal within a week. The director of higher secondary education has been directed to take necessary steps in this regard.

The move came in the wake of likely shortage of Plus II seats in the state due to the high pass percentage in matriculation examinations. The number of Class X pass-outs this year exceeded the number of avail-

able seats in Plus II.

While 6.07 lakh students have cleared the HSC, State Open School, Madhyama and Madrasa board exams this year, the state has 6,03,113 seats in higher secondary schools, ITIs, and government and private diploma institutes.

A total of 4,43,354 seats are available in 2,032 Plus-II colleges and 1,59,759 in government and private diploma institutes, and ITIs. There is a shortage of around 4,000 seats.

Out of the total strength of 4.43 lakh Plus II seats, the strength of Arts seats is 2,39,882, Science 1,40,480, Commerce 41,176, Sanskrit 11,584 and Vocational 10,232.

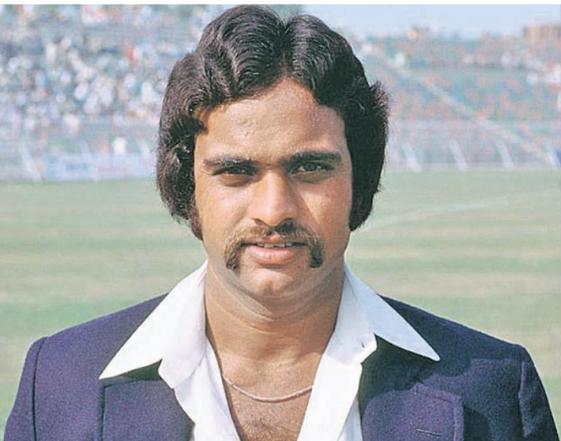
This apart, around 12,000 students from CBSE, CISCE and other boards join Plus II courses in CHSE-affiliated schools every year. Considering this, the shortage may go up to around 16,000 seats this year.

Earlier, School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash assured that all steps would be taken to accommodate all pass-out matric students.

"Keeping in mind that the students are keen on pursuing their studies in bigger colleges, steps will be taken to increase the number of seats in these colleges," Das had said.

# Life's innings over for 1983 WC hero Yashpal Sharma

HIS GUTS, GLORY AND LESS FETED INNINGS OF 1983 WC HAD BEEN OVERLOOKED BY BBC



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 13:** "I shared a strange relationship with Malcolm Marshall. The moment I would come in, he would at least hit me twice on the chest," the late Yashpal Sharma would narrate with a straight face while sipping tea at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground.

On Tuesday, as Indian cricket lost one of its gutsiest soldiers to a massive cardiac arrest, one couldn't help but remember what a nice easy-going person Yashpal was, someone who was great at having a laugh or two even if it was at his own expense.

Yashpal was like that bridge between India being a horrible ODI outfit (he was part of the 1979 World Cup where they even lost to Sri Lanka) to their transformation into world cham-

pions and the ODI revolution that happened after that in the country.

Born in Ludhiana, Yashpal was one of those quintessential domestic workhorses who rose up the ranks right from his days as a school boy cricketer (National Schools) when he scored 260. During numerous interactions with Yashpal on the sidelines of domestic games, his pride of standing up to Marshall's barrage of bouncers and 145 plus inswingers stood out.

"You know I scored that 63 at Sabina Park Test in 1983 (just before World Cup) and was last out, I came back to dressing room, opened my T-shirt and there were Malcolm ka pyaar ka nishaani (the hits he endured from Marshall's short balls). They were all great bowlers but Malcolm was special. He was scary," he would recollect.

The World Cup belonged to Yashpal

as much as it belonged to Kapil Dev, Mohinder Amarnath or Roger Binny whose performances are often highlighted more. Kapil's 175 not out at Tunbridge Wells is a part of sporting folklore, more so because the BBC didn't deem that game to be good enough to be covered live or even record highlights. Pakistan's encounter on that very day (June 18, 1983) was duly covered.

But very few people remember that it was Yashpal Sharma's 89 in India's opening World Cup game at Old Trafford against the West Indies, which the team won by 32 runs, that set the tone for things to come. "You know, I had contacted BBC a number of times to check if they have footage of that game. I was in fact ready to pay at least 5000 pounds if someone gave me a recording of that innings," he once lamented during a chat with journalists. **MORE P12**

# leisure



## HADID'S CANNES LOOK CATCHES ATTENTION

Supermodel Bella Hadid's appearance at the Cannes Film Festival 2021 has everyone talking. She arrived wearing a Schiaparelli black dress teamed with a gilded brass neckpiece shaped as human lungs. The necklace spoke about global pandemic and its impact on the respiratory organs.

## GWYNETH PALTROW REVEALS ABOUT HER BEAUTY SECRETS

Hollywood star Gwyneth Paltrow has shared her beauty secrets with the fans. "One of my closest friends is a plastic surgeon. He gave me a teeny drop of this thing called CMM, a purified anti-wrinkle injection. This is my beauty secret," she said on *The Drew Barrymore Show*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Your charismatic appeal is always ready-to-use. And today, you will possibly reap rich dividends through it. But there is always scope for improvement and you will find yourself drawn to altruism. Ganesh guarantees satisfaction in lending a helping hand to the needy.

**TAURUS**  
You will enjoy your responsibilities at the home front, says Ganesh. People whom you trusted to watch your back might let you down today. Remember, what you sow is what you reap, so do not fall short of putting in the effort required to make something fruitful.

**GEMINI**  
A favourable day to put an end to all the doubts surrounding your ability to do well, especially in the field of communication. People around you will find you incredibly charming and enchanting. You will win hearts with your verve and panache.

**CANCER**  
It is quite possible that your personal life will take precedence over your professional life. You will not be able to repress or ignore your feelings, and you should not either, says Ganesh. But you should be careful about how you express yourself in public.

**LEO**  
No matter how far you go, there is always a horizon that you desire to reach. And what holds true for all outer projections of life most certainly holds true for one's inner self as well, reminds Ganesh. Bear this in mind as you strive to improve yourself in as many ways as possible.

**VIRGO**  
Financial doldrums are headed your way today. In order to seek what you desire, expect shelling out a hefty price. You might just net those short-term goals in the evening.

**LIBRA**  
Today will be fabulous for you, especially if you are in the world of business. Long-term deals seem to be on the cards for you. If you happen to be a government officer, luck favours you today. Keep your ears and eyes open, there may be news of a possible promotion.

**SCORPIO**  
Ganesh feels that your intuitive feelings will rule your actions today. You will need to break past your stress threshold and tackle work with zeal and zest. Follow your instincts and relax to some good music when the burden of work is overwhelming. At the end of the day, it is not the thought that matters but how that thought was implemented into action.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Ganesh sees a spectacular day in store for you, especially if you are an artist. Radio jockeys will be heard and cheered for. Television anchors will receive thundering applause and golden opportunities. Go ahead – seize the day!

**CAPRICORN**  
Your extraordinary skills, passion for perfection, and an overpowering personality will inspire and motivate those around you, says Ganesh. Many will, in fact, emulate your actions, so much so that you could most likely have a fan following.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will take the road to spirituality today and give a miss to materialism. You will visit temples, other religious places, and spiritual leaders to find answers for some of your questions. It will, however, take a while for you to distinguish between mysticism and materialism, and understand that you can have the best of both worlds.

**PISCES**  
You will not take matters to heart needlessly today, and will instead calmly evaluate the bitter words of others to see if there is a grain of truth in them somewhere. This is a good practice and one that should be continued.

## BHUMI BATS FOR REVIVAL OF PLANET

Billions of rupees are pumped into finding the next planet instead of regenerating the Earth, says the 'Durgamati' actress

**Mumbai:** Actress Bhumi Pednekar took to social media Tuesday to express her concern about the impact of climate change on our planet. The actress highlights the necessity to regenerate Earth, which is heating up owing to climate change.

Bhumi, who has been vocal about climate change, tweeted Tuesday: "Climate Change is real. We have accelerated it to levels of heavy repercussions. Our planet is heating up. Flash floods, drought, forest fires, disease outbreaks, mass extinction. Instead of regenerating our planet we are putting billions into finding our next home/planet."

Commenting on the actress' tweet, netizens shared their opinion.

"The manufacturing of clothes that we wear are polluting our

water bodies. We are destroying rain forests just to make luxury apartments and also with that animal habitats also reducing. Climate change is not related with finding home over other planet. We need to expand our horizon and stop using things that are responsible for climate change," commented a user.

"Each individual needs to think how he or she can make a difference. Cannot have best of both worlds. So, are we ready to turn off our AC, use bicycle instead of car starting today?" shared another user.

## SSR fans troll Ankita

**Mumbai:** Soon after reports emerged announcing Ankita Lokhande is back to shoot for the new season of the TV show *Pavitra Rishta*, fans of Sushant Singh Rajput have reacted sharply on social media. The news has agitated



Sushant's fans who say they won't accept any other actor in the role of Manav, a character originally essayed by the late actor.

The hashtag #BoycottPavitraRishta2 has been trending on Twitter Tuesday.

Ankita Lokhande is back on the sets of the show that had made her and her rumoured ex-boyfriend Sushant Singh Rajput a household name 12 years ago. While the actress reprises her role as Archana, actor Shaheer Sheikh has been roped in to play Manav Deshmukh, the character originally played by Sushant and later by Hiten Tejwani.

Sushant's fans, however, are agitated claiming they would not watch the show, which no longer features Sushant as Manav.

## Odia singers turn Good Samaritans

Popular singers Sasmita Biswal and Sangram Mohanty have raised ₹1.2 lakh through a virtual fundraiser for the treatment of a burn victim



**Bhubaneswar:** At a time when many artistes struggle to make ends meet due to restrictions on public gatherings, singers Sasmita Biswal and Sangram Mohanty have managed to raise ₹1.2 lakh through a virtual event to help out a burn victim.

Baikuntha alias Chintu, undergoing treatment at the plastic surgery department of SCB Medical College and Hospital, had his hands and a leg amputated after accidentally coming in contact with a live wire.

The singer duo organised a show on Facebook and raised the amount

which they handed over to the family Monday.

This is not the first time they have done it. The two have been raising funds for the needy for the last three years, it was learnt.

Sangram says, "We organised the event titled *Caravan 3* after learning about the boy from social activist Pravas Acharya. It is a small amount which is not adequate to meet his medical expenses. So, others should also come forward to help out Chintu."

Earlier, actor Babushan visited the victim and assured all possible assistance to him.

## Soumik's Songs Of The Earth to be presented at COP26

The musician will join forces with Indian illustrators Anjali Kamath and Sachin Bhatt to create an animated film that aims to disrupt, provoke and challenge the unacceptable wreckage of Earth's environmental health



**India-born but London-based musician, composer and Sarod virtuoso Soumik Datta has won a British Council commission for climate change - one of 17 awardees out of**

480 proposals - for a project called *Songs Of The Earth* that will be presented in the run up to the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) at Glasgow in November.

For *Songs Of The Earth*, the musician will join forces with Indian illustrators Anjali Kamath and Sachin Bhatt - who also created the artwork for Datta's 2019 EP *Jangal* - and Earth Day Network India to create an animated film that aims to disrupt, provoke and challenge the unacceptable

wreckage of our planet's environmental health through animation and contemporary music.

The new animation film will embrace global stories, diaspora voices and debates around climate justice, weaving issues from plastic pollution to deforestation through an original story written by Soumik Datta, about the voyage of a young climate refugee.

"I have always been inspired by nature and its infinite capacity to teach and make us dream," says Soumik, whose last EP *Jangal* was composed in response to a crisis - about the global environment.

"To be part of a global chorus of artist voices fighting for the world we live in is a great honour. *Songs Of The Earth* will be our offering which I hope reaches the hearts and minds of viewers around the world reigniting their passion for our endangered, blue and green little home," he adds.



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

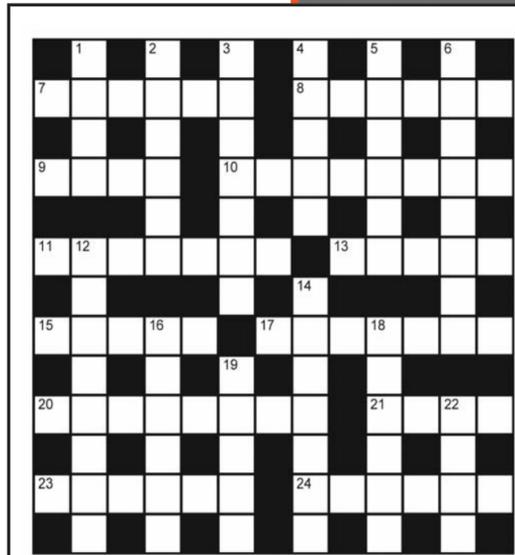


### BREVITY



### FUN post

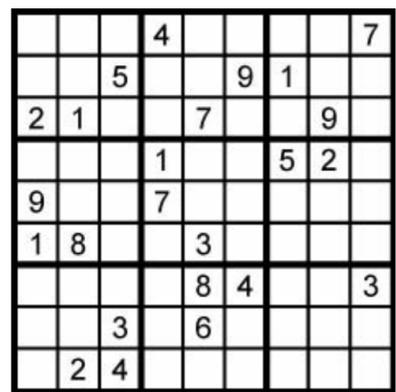
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Swiss lake
  - 8 Knife or spear, e.g.
  - 9 Wise guy
  - 10 Sink in
  - 11 Ex-soldier
  - 13 Kind of jet
  - 15 Offer one's two cents
  - 17 Mystifies
  - 20 Complains
  - 21 Garage job
  - 23 Cavort
  - 24 Egotism
- Down**
- 1 Bill of fare
  - 2 Adzuki bean, for one
  - 3 Saltwater lake between Iran and Russia
  - 4 Bunch of bees
  - 5 Black Forest cake
  - 6 Easily transported
  - 12 Napoleon and his counterparts
  - 14 Source of tapioca
  - 16 Light-footed
  - 18 Criminal offense
  - 19 After cuckoo or grandfather
  - 22 Shower alternative

### SUDOKU

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

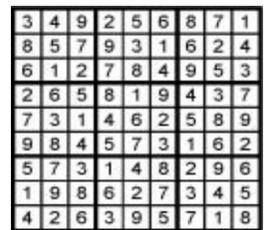


### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU



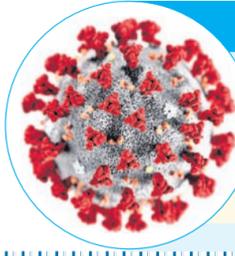
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## PAYING HOMAGE

People pay floral tributes to Karma Veer Gourishankar Ray on his birth anniversary at a park in Cuttack, Tuesday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	18,82,99,638	17,21,32,006	40,58,646
India	3,09,07,282	3,00,63,720	4,10,784
Odisha	9,43,675	9,18,041	4,730

# NHRC summons Keonjhar SP in police atrocity case

The apex rights body ordered the SP to appear before it with the action-taken report around 11am September 30

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a conditional summons to the superintendent of police (SP) of Keonjhar to appear before it September 30 this year in connection with the alleged harassment of a newly-wed woman by two police officials in the tribal-dominated district in June 2020.

The commission pronounced the order July 12 while hearing a petition filed by rights activist Himanshu Sekhar Nayak June 7, 2020.

Nayak had informed the rights body that it was around 9pm June 2 last year when Boula police outpost in-charge Kirtan Bihari Mohanta, along with a few officials, landed at Lipsa Mohanta's (name changed) place at Gahaladahi under Soso police limits in Keonjhar and asked the woman as well as her husband to come to the police outpost in connection with a case.

"As there was no female police official in the team, Lipsa declined to go to the outpost. Kirtan, however, forcefully took the couple to the outpost in a police van," the petitioner said quoting the victim's police complaint.

The activist stated that upon reaching the outpost, the newly-wed woman was abused by the outpost in-charge, adding that the hapless woman raised an alarm following which locals rushed to her help. Later, Soso inspector in-charge (IIC) Gagan Nayak reached the outpost and threatened the



BOULA POLICE OUTPOST IN-CHARGE KIRTAN BIHARI MOHANTA FORCEFULLY TOOK THE COUPLE TO THE OUTPOST IN A POLICE VAN

THE ACTIVIST STATED THAT UPON REACHING THE OUTPOST, THE NEWLY-WED WOMAN WAS ABUSED BY THE OUTPOST IN-CHARGE

THE COMMISSION TOOK COGNISANCE OF THE ISSUE AUGUST 13, 2020 AND SOUGHT AN ATR FROM THE SP WITHIN FOUR WEEKS. HOWEVER, DESPITE SEVERAL REMINDERS, THE SP DID NOT TURN UP

duo of arresting them if they disclose the issue. The couple was, however, released after they showed a marriage certificate around 11pm.

The victim highlighted the issue with the sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) June 5, 2020.

The commission took cognisance of the issue August 13, 2020 and sought an action-taken report (ATR) from the SP within four weeks. However, despite several reminders, the SP did not turn up.

Irrked over the non-compliance, the NHRC ordered the SP to appear before it with the ATR around

11am September 30. "If the commission receives the ATR at least a week before the scheduled date, the SP's personal appearance shall be dispensed with," said the commission.

However, if the SP fails to comply with the commission's order without a lawful excuse, the official will face the consequences of non-attendance laid down in Rule 10 and Rule 12 of order XVI of Civil Procedure 1908 and the commission may proceed to initiate criminal proceedings against the SP under Sections 175 and 176 of IPC 1860, the commission pointed out.

## Top court adjourns Pari hearing for Thursday



POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, July 13:** The Supreme Court will Thursday hear a petition filed by Saudamini Sahu, the mother of a 5-year-old girl who was allegedly kidnapped, raped and murdered in July last year, seeking a CBI inquiry into her daughter's death.

A two-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices AM Khanwilkar and Sanjiv Khanna Tuesday took up the case for hearing and adjourned it for Thursday.

Significantly, the mother of Pari had pleaded before the court to order an independent inquiry into the alleged rape and murder of Pari July last year in Jadupur, Nayagarh. The petitioner also sought a direction to the CBI to investigate all cases related to missing children in the state.

Pari's mother accused Babuli Nayak for the alleged murder and also contended that rampant organ smuggling is behind the murder. The petitioner also contended that the state police are treating the parents of Pari as criminals. The police are completely insensitive to the family members of Pari.

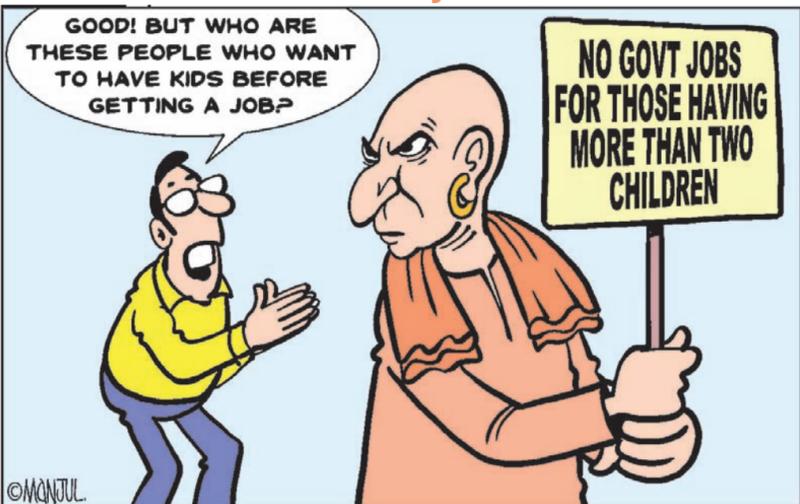
The petitioner submitted that the preliminary investigation undertaken by the police, the Crime Branch and SIT illustrates that all of them have made attempts to sabotage the investigation and attempted all kinds of subversion tactics to influence the complainant and her relatives to discard the aforesaid allegations as false and frivolous. The petitioner also contended that the SIT has not investigated the role of local inspector in-charge who was hand in glove with the accused and was shielding the real culprit and the local MLA has also not been interrogated by the SIT.

## SOJOURN AT BIRTHPLACE



Lord Jagannath and His siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra being taken to the Adapa Mandap of Srigrundicha temple in Puri from their respective chariots through Pahandi procession, Tuesday

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## RD Women's University gets UGC's 12B status

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** Rama Devi Women's University in the city here was Tuesday accorded 12B status by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

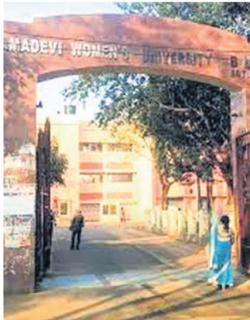
In a letter to the Registrar of Rama Devi University UGC under secretary Naresh Kumar Sharma said that the Standing Committee of the statutory body had recommended for the approval of 12B status to the varsity.

The Standing Committee gave its recommendation after receiving a report from the UGC expert committee that had visited the university for two days starting February 17 this year. The university authorities had also submitted a compliance report to the Standing Committee.

The 12B status will enable the university to get financial assistance from the UGC, sources said.

The university has been advised by the UGC to participate in NIRF ranking and get the NAAC accreditation at the earliest.

Notably, RD Women's College was upgraded into a university in 2015. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik



THE 12B STATUS WILL ENABLE THE UNIVERSITY TO GET FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM UGC

THE UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN ADVISED BY THE UGC TO PARTICIPATE IN NIRF RANKING AND GET THE NAAC ACCREDITATION AT THE EARLIEST

had announced a package of Rs 18 crore for renovation of the existing infrastructure of the varsity in February this year. He had also inaugurated a new academic block, library and hostel building of the university.

## TRANSPARENCY BID

Upload audit report on website, universities told

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** Higher Education department Tuesday directed nine universities in the state to display audit reports in their respective websites.

In a letter to Utkal University, Rama Devi Women's University, Ravenshaw University, Khallikote University, Kalahandi University, Rajendra University, Madhusudan Law University, Odisha State Open University and National Law University, Additional Secretary of Higher Education department Birendra Korkora said, "The audit report with respect to this university has not been uploaded or displayed in the university website for information of all concerned as per provision laid down under Section 23 of the Universities Act, 1989.

Therefore, you are requested to take immediate steps to comply with the provisions of the act by uploading and displaying the audit report in your website as soon as possible."

## Fares of mineral carrying trucks hiked

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** With the steep hike in diesel prices, the state government has revised freight rates for transportation of minerals in goods carriages.

Commerce and Transport Joint Secretary KC Das Tuesday asked the Collectors of six mineral-bearing districts - Angul, Jajpur, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda and Jagatsinghpur - to implement the revised freight rate. The freight rate for mineral carrying vehicles was last fixed in September 2017.

Meanwhile, the government has noticed conflicts between truck owners and industrial units. Therefore, it has asked the Transport Commissioner to revise the freight rate. Accordingly, the fare has been revised, sources said.

As per a government notification,



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

for distance above 50 km, the maximum freight rate per km per tonne (including compensation for one-way idle journey) has been fixed at Rs 8.86, Rs 6.82 and Rs 5.78 for six-wheelers (capacity 9.5 tonne), 10-wheelers (15.5 tonne) and 12-wheelers (20.5 tonne) respectively.

For one way distance up to 50 km, the transport rate is Rs 56.40 per km and Rs 1,389 per day in case of six wheelers. In case of 10-wheel-

ers, the rate as announced is Rs 78.30 per km and Rs 1,371 per day whereas for 12-wheelers, it is revised to Rs 82.50 per km along with Rs 1,800 per day. The notification has compensated the return idle journey by allowing 40 per cent extra.

Collectors of these six districts have been asked to take steps for strict implementation of the revised rates to avoid any untoward situation.

## Bol Bom Yatra banned for 2nd straight year

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** Like last year, the state government has banned the Bol Bom Yatra this year too in view of Covid-19 in the state. Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra has issued an order in this regard, Tuesday.

"In the interest of public health, the state government do hereby order that the religious activities and congregations remain prohibited and the Kaudias/Bol Bom devotees are not allowed to carry water from any religious places or any other sources and also not allowed to walk on any public road and pour water in any temples/Lord Shiva temples during the Odia month of Shraavan (July/August), 2021," the order read.

## 17 districts record deficit rainfall



Girls hold umbrellas to save themselves from rain in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** As many as 17 districts in the state have received deficit rainfall during the monsoon so far. Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said Tuesday.

The state has received 273.6mm rainfall between June 1 and July 13, which is 21 per cent less than the normal average rainfall. The highest 370.3mm rainfall has been recorded in Koraput district while the lowest 131.1mm rainfall oc-

curred in Bhadrak district. The 17 districts which recorded deficit rainfall ranging from 20 to 59 per cent during the period are: Angul, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar,

Jajpur, Bhadrak, Deogarh, Sambalpur, Sonepur, Jharsuguda, Boudh, Bolangir, Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Ganjam, Gajapati and Rayagada.

"Though 17 districts have recorded deficit rainfall, problems may arise only in four districts - Keonjhar, Jajpur, Bhadrak and Gajapati - if there will be no major rainfall activity in the next 15 days," said director of Bhubaneswar Met

Centre, HR Biswas.

Keonjhar, Jajpur, Bhadrak and Gajapati districts have recorded above 40 per cent deficit downpour till now, he said.

The remaining 13 districts have received normal rainfall during the season so far. The districts are: Sundargarh, Balasore, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Khurda, Puri, Nayagarh, Bargarh, Nuapada, Koraput and Malkangiri.

The weatherman said the state capital might see one or two spells of rain or thundershower while the maximum temperature could go up to 33 degrees Celsius.

According to MeT sources, Nayagarh recorded the highest of 54mm rainfall while Cuttack recorded rainfall of 17.2mm Tuesday.

The highest temperature 33.9 degree Celsius was recorded at Hirakud Tuesday while Phulbani recorded the lowest temperature of 19.5 degree Celsius.

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QUARRYING IN GHASIPURA

# NGT checks compensation recovery

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** The Eastern Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) sought a report on how much of the environmental damage compensation, calculated earlier by the government in Ghasipura (Keonjhar) illegal stone quarry, have been recovered.

The tribunal, in its hearing, said that the special committee formed to probe into the matter, and other agencies involved didn't apprise the tribunal about the collection of the compensation.

Earlier in 2019, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) had informed the tribunal that illegal quarry works were undertaken at Madanpur Mouza of Ghasipura Tehsil and a total of ₹7.30 crore was assessed towards environmental compensation.

"However, there is nothing on record to show whether this amount has been recovered till date or not,"



In 2019, the Central Pollution Control Board had informed the tribunal that illegal quarry works were undertaken at Madanpur Mouza of Ghasipura Tehsil

A total of ₹7.30 crore was assessed towards environmental compensation
December 18, 2020, Forest department had submitted an Action Taken Report containing a rehabilitation plan which had sought ₹2.01 crore from Keonjhar district administration

the bench comprising Justice Amit Sthalekar and expert member Saibal Dasgupta said.

The tribunal also said that the committee report failed to inform NGT on restoration and other nec-

essary works in the area post assessment.

"So far as restoration, repair, reclamation and rehabilitation work is concerned, which was required to be undertaken for ad-

joining of external damage outside the quarry caused due to illegal mining activities, the same does not find mention in the committee's report," the NGT report said.

Earlier December 18, 2020, Forest department had submitted an Action Taken Report (ATR) containing a rehabilitation plan which had sought ₹2.01 crore from Keonjhar district administration. NGT, in its hearing, said that no information on its compliance was also submitted by the state government and asked the state government to do so.

"There is nothing on record to show whether this amount has been received from the state government and whether the rehabilitation work has started/completed or not," the NGT order said.

The tribunal has granted two weeks time for the government to file affidavit and inform it about its compliance with previous NGT orders.

# BJP's power stir begins today

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** The state BJP Tuesday threatened to go for a state-wide protest from Wednesday over the issue of hiked electricity tariff and lack of subsidy to the consumers besides other issues in power woes.

Party leader Golak Mohapatra Tuesday conducted a press conference here and put forth the demands before the government. "BJP is demanding that the government must take into cognizance the plights of people due to electricity issues and also consider giving subsidy to the consumers which many other states are giving. It should also need to reduce power tariffs," he said.

He said that BJP would organize protests across the state from July 14 to July 20 over the same.

"There are many states in the country like Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and others where the electricity tariffs are very low compared to Odisha. This comes when the state is itself



The saffron party would organise protests across the state from July 14 to 20 over power tariff hike

an electricity producing state. There are many states which are not producing electricity but giving it to the consumers at far lower rates like New Delhi," he said.

He said that during Covid-19 pandemic, there were many industries which were not operating but were bound to pay the higher dues.

He also questioned the transparency regarding funds given to the state during cyclones.

"During Pani cyclone, ₹728 crore was given to the state. How have the funds been spent? The government does not want to disclose the details. There are cases where the

poor are also bombarded with inflated bills. The government had talked about free electricity to farmers of the state. Electricity is yet to reach to several farmers and where it is reaching, it is of poor quality, marred with frequent power cuts and low voltage," he said.

BJP State President Samir Mohanty, meanwhile, demanded a white paper on the issue. "We want to ask the government to put forth a white paper on the utilization of disaster management funds meant for several cyclones in the state starting from 2013 cyclone," he said.

# Repair NH-215 in 3 weeks: HC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, July 13:** Hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) highlighting the bad state of National Highway (NH) 215, the Orissa High Court (HC) Tuesday directed the Collectors of Jajpur and Keonjhar to inspect the affected road with officials of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and ensure its repair on war footing within three weeks.

A division bench of Chief Justice S Muralidhar and Justice Savitri Ratho gave the directive while hearing a PIL filed by a group of people led by Mitrabhanu Mohapatra July 6.

The PIL highlighted that the 163-km stretch between Panikoili in Jajpur and Rimuli in Keonjhar on NH-215 is in a very bad shape.

"In the 163 km stretch, toll is being collected at three places. However, a precious little is being done to mend the bad road," the PIL said.

## Reinstate Nayagarh paramedics, govt told



The Orissa High Court (HC) has directed the state government to take steps for reinstating the laid off paramedics of Nayagarh district.

The HC directed the Chief Secretary to carry out the order within three months. Justice BR

Sarangi pronounced the order while hearing a batch of petitions filed by paramedics Bikram Keshari Mataganj Singh, Swarnalata Pani and 43 others.

According to the petitioners, the district administration of Nayagarh had issued a notice for engaging paramedical staffers March 27 last year in the wake of Covid-19 outbreak in state.

Though the administration engaged Mataganj Singh, Pani and others April 12, 2020, it retrenched them in December.

Protesting the move, they had approached the High Court seeking its intervention for their reinstatement.

The petitioners had made the Chief Secretary, Health department secretary, DMET and the director of National Health Mission as parties to the case.

The NHAI and the Collectors of Jajpur as well as Keonjhar have

been asked to file a joint compliance report with the HC by July 26.

## Pradhan reviews digital education initiatives

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, July 13:** Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Tuesday reviewed the digital education initiatives including PM e-Vidya, National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR), and Swayam among others.

**Emphasising on the importance of leveraging technology in education, Pradhan said that technology would help achieve the goals of an open, inclusive and accessible education**

Pradhan and Minister of State (MoS) for ministry of Education Annapurna Devi, MoS Rajkumar Ranjan and MoS Subhas Sarkar were briefed by the officials of the ministry about digital initiatives taken to make education accessible for all. Emphasising on the importance of leveraging technology in education, Pradhan said that technology would help achieve the goals of an open, inclusive and accessible education.

"A vibrant digital ecosystem in education will expand learning opportunities for the students, spur innovation and entrepreneurship in the education sector," Pradhan said.

The minister noted that Covid-19 pandemic necessitated a shift towards digital medium of education and assured that digital initiatives taken by the ministry to ensure continuity of education will be further strengthened and institutionalised.

# State records 1,930 new nCoV cases, 68 deaths

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** Odisha's Covid-19 tally soared to 9,43,675 Tuesday as 1,930 more people tested positive for the infection, while a record 68 fresh fatalities pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 4,730. The state had registered its previous highest single-day fatalities of 65 July 11.

The state government was forced to halt the inoculation drive in 15 of the 30 districts due to shortage of vaccines, a senior health official said.

The state now has only 3,49,930 doses of Covishield and 3,09,530 Covaxin doses. Covaxin is being administered in Bhubaneswar and Berhampur, while the rest of the state is getting Covishield doses.

The drive has been suspended in Angul, Balasore, Deogarh, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Kendrapara, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Nayagarh, Nuapada and Sambalpur districts.

Khurda district, which Bhubaneswar is a part of, recorded the highest number of fresh cases at 431, followed by Cuttack (220) and Balasore (134), an official said. As many as 1,117 new cases were registered in quarantine centres, while 813 fresh infections were detected during contact tracing. Khurda also recorded the highest number of fresh fatalities at 17, followed by Ganjam (seven), and Bargarh and Mayurbhanj (six each).

"This list does not reflect deaths occurring on a particular day. It gives details of past deaths for which the death audit process has been duly completed and the cause of death has been identified as due

## Vaccination drive for pregnant women to start July 16

The state Health department has decided to start the inoculation drive for pregnant women July 16, as scheduled earlier, with more stocks of Covid vaccine doses reaching the state.

The state Tuesday received a total of 38,760 Covaxin doses while it got a total of 3,16,470 Covishield doses Monday.

However, no further communication has been made on the next dose of the vaccination.

"We have planned to start the Covid vaccination of pregnant women from July 16 as planned earlier," Health and Family Welfare Director Bijay Panigrahi said.

"Although we do not have a large stock of vaccine doses now, whatever supply we have, we are most likely to start the special drive on time," he added.

to Covid-19," the Health Department tweeted. Fifty-three coronavirus patients have died due to comorbidities to date.

The state now has 23,492 active cases, while 9,15,400 people have recovered from the disease to date, including 2,937 Monday. Odisha has tested over 1.47 crore samples for Covid-19 thus far, including 62,410 Monday. The positivity rate stands at 6.41 per cent.

Meanwhile, the state administration has vaccinated over 10 lakh people in Bhubaneswar alone till July 12, of whom 5.43 lakh have received both doses, a civic official said.

## 24 Odisha dists run out of vax: Chidambaram

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 13:** Former Finance Minister and senior Congress leader P Chidambaram Tuesday alleged that the government's assertion of vaccinating the entire adult population by December 31 is an 'empty boast' as several states have flagged vaccine shortage.

Chidambaram claimed 24 out of 30 districts in Odisha are running out of vaccines and questioned the government's assertion of adequate vaccine supply.

"Odisha is governed by the BJD, an 'ally' of the BJP. What has the central government that dismissed complaints of vaccine shortage got to say now," Chidambaram asked.

**Vaccine shortage is a fact. Vaccine production is exaggerated. Vaccine import is a mystery. Vaccinating the entire adult population by December 2021 is an empty boast**

P CHIDAMBARAM | CONGRESS LEADER

Taking to Twitter, the former Union minister said, "Vaccine shortage is a fact. Vaccine production is exaggerated. Vaccine import is a mystery. Vaccinating the entire adult population by December 2021 is an empty boast."

He asked the new Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya to tell the people how he plans to ensure a regular, adequate and uninterrupted supply of vaccines to the states as Delhi and Odisha are facing shortage of vaccine doses.

As per the official data, so far 5.5 per cent of the total population has received both the doses of the vaccine while 22.4 per cent got only one dose.

# 'BAHUBALIS' OF PURI POWER CHARIOTS OF THE TRINITY

AGENCIES

**Puri, July 13:** Body-builder servitors from temple town Puri provided the muscle power required to pull the gigantic chariots of the Gods this time, as Covid regulations kept crowds away from participating in the process.

Usually, about 1,000 people line up to pull each of the three chariots of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra. However, Covid regulations forced the authorities to decide that only servitors would be allowed to take part in the pulling ceremony. Policemen, who had helped out last year, were asked to stay away. Instead of 3,000 human pullers, only 1,000-odd servitors were tasked with the job of pulling the three behemoths.

Traditional 'Jagaghars' or body-building centres asked its members, mostly from servitor families, to attend regular work-out sessions so that they would be fit enough to do the job of three men each.

Anil Gochikar, a well known bodybuilder who has participated in about 100 national competitions, helped arrange the training ahead of the Ratha Yatra. "Yes, most of the servitors who pulled the chariots are body builders. All of them have good bodies and muscles to pull these gigantic chariots," he said.

Usually many devotees join in the process including at times even the chief minister of the state as the task is considered an auspicious one. The unstoppable motion of the chariots, which have at times crushed the people pulling it, had led to the coining of the word 'Juggernaut' which is used to refer to a massive, unstoppable force.

"We were initially not sure whether a smaller number of people could pull the huge chariots.



ACCORDING TO JAGANNATH CULTURE RESEARCHER BHASKAR MISHRA, JAGAGHARS BECAME POPULAR AS PURI, WITH ITS RICH TEMPLES, HAD BECOME THE TARGET OF INVADERS IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

THESE WERE ESTABLISHED AROUND THE TEMPLE OF LORD JAGANNATH TO SAFEGUARD IT AND ALSO, IF NEEDED, PROTECT THE KINGDOM

IT IS SAID THAT MANY OF THE KINGS OF PURI WERE PATRONS OF THE PHYSICAL CULTURE INCLUDING WRESTLING COMPETITIONS WERE HELD INSIDE THEIR PALACES WHERE OUTSTANDING WRESTLERS WERE HONORED

However, with the blessings of the Lord, the chariots started rolling as we gave a tug. It is His wishes and not our strength," added Gochikar.

Gochikar, a vegetarian and a devout believer of Lord Jagannath, said that the servitors worked out

daily for at least two hours at Jagaghars. "It is anyway part of our tradition to do body building and physical exercises every day," he said. His brother, Damodar, was also one of the hunks who pulled the chariots.

Meanwhile, Gochikar, who has won titles like Mr Odisha a number of times and Mr India in 2012, has again become an internet sensation as pictures of him pulling the holy rope has gone viral.

According to Jagannath culture researcher Bhaskar Mishra, Jagaghars became popular as Puri, with its rich temples, had become the target for invaders in the medieval period. These were established around the temple of Lord Jagannath to safeguard the temple and also if needed protect the Kingdom.

It is said that many of the kings of Puri were patrons of physical culture including wrestling with competitions being held inside their palaces where outstanding wrestlers were honored.

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# Andhra officials visit Kotia, take stock of development



## BORDER ROW

Andhra officials Tuesday reached Neredibalsa village and held discussions with the villagers on developmental projects being implemented in the area by the neighbouring state

The Andhra officials asked the villagers about the developmental projects being implemented by Odisha government there and directed the Salur BDO to expedite the projects being implemented by the Andhra government in the area

THE VILLAGERS DREW THE ATTENTION OF THE OFFICIALS TOWARDS THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN AND URGED THE ANDHRA AUTHORITIES TO MAKE AVAILABLE DRINKING WATER, ROADS, PENSION, HEALTHCARE AND HOUSES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koraput/Pottangi, July 13:** Amid the ongoing dispute between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh over territorial rights in Kotia gram panchayat under Pottangi block in Koraput district, Andhra officials Tuesday reached Neredibalsa village and held discussions with the villagers on developmental projects being implemented in the area by the Odisha government, a report said.

The officials from Andhra Pradesh were identified as Kormanath, PO ITDA of Parabatipuram in Vijayanagaram district, Parbati, BDO of Salur block, DSP Subhash and Iram Naidu, the CI of Kotia panchayat appointed by the neighbouring state. A team of police officials also accompanied the officials during their visit.

They sought to know from the villagers about the developmental projects being implemented

by Odisha government and directed the Salur BDO and other officials to expedite various developmental works being implemented by the Andhra government in the area.

Reports said that the dispute over the territorial jurisdiction rights in Kotia panchayat has refused to abate with both the states yet to arrive at any solution. The apex court has directed both the state governments to maintain status quo in the area, but the Andhra government seems to be hell-bent on imposing its rule in the area.

The officials of the Andhra government are repeatedly violating the Supreme Court order and intruding into Kotia panchayat and trying to lure the villagers with various welfare schemes.

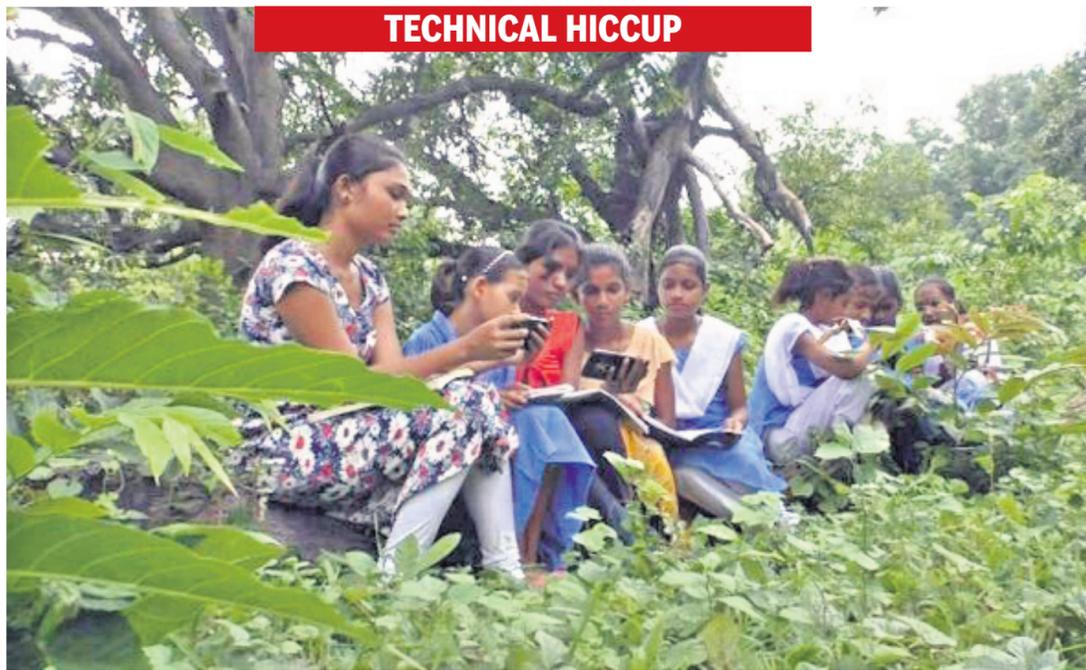
Later, the officials visited Uparsembi village and joined a meeting with the villagers on premises of a church. There they discussed with the villagers various

developmental projects that are being implemented by the Andhra government and prepared an action plan for the projects.

The villagers drew the attention of the officials towards the higher education of their children and urged the Andhra officials to make available drinking water, roads, pension, healthcare and houses under state and Centre-sponsored schemes in the area.

Meanwhile, a sankirtan-cum-ritual planned to be organised at a newly established Jagannath temple at Neredibalsa village was cancelled due to restrictions imposed by the district administration of Koraput.

The temple, known as Patitapaban temple, was recently established in the area with the aid and support provided by the former Collector Gadadhara Parida. Parida is the secretary of Koraput-based Jagannath temple, which is looked after by the Sabar Srikhetra Managing Committee.



## TECHNICAL HICCUP

Schoolchildren take online classes in a mango orchard where they are able to avail Internet network in Jharsuguda

OP PHOTO

# Cattle smuggling racket rampant in north Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bahanaga, July 13:** Cattle smuggling has been thriving in north Odisha despite repeated raids and seizures by police as well as the public. Several rackets are active in the area and have been smuggling cattle via the NH-16 on a daily basis. The animals are allegedly supplied to West Bengal and other parts of the country.

In the last few months, there have been several cases of cattle smuggling in Balasore and Bhadrak.

According to reports, a pick-up van was carrying nine heads of cattle in Khantapada area of Balasore Tuesday. Police seized the vehicle and arrested its driver.



According to police, the cattle were being supplied from Bhadrak to West Bengal via NH-16.

It may be recalled here that on several occasions in the past, cat-

tle smuggling has sparked clashes between activists working for bovine protection and mafia engaged in cattle business on this route.

June 16, a group of people had

detained a vehicle carrying cattle. This led to a clash that claimed the life of a person on this route. Following complaints from both sides, police had arrested 22 people.

Later, police arrested Suleiman Khan, the kingpin of the cattle smuggling racket, from West Bengal.

SP Sudhansu Sekhar Mishra had praised the police's efforts in containing the cattle trade. Thereafter, police have been active and trying to contain cattle smuggling in the region with various outfits demanding action against cattle smugglers.

It is often seen that cattle are transported in containers to evade the glare of people and police.

# Family feud: Woman strangles 5-yr-old son, attempts suicide

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Anandapur, July 13:** In a shocking incident, a woman strangled her five-year-old son and later attempted suicide by drinking poison at Jagannathpur under Nandipada police limits in Keonjhar, Tuesday. The incident is said to be an outcome of a family feud.

According to reports, Monalisa Pradhan had an argument with her

in-laws over some issue. Following this, an infuriated Monalisa muffled her son and drank poison. As the condition of the two was critical, Monalisa's family members rushed them to a hospital. However, doctors declared the minor as "brought dead" on arrival.

Till the time of writing this news, no police complaint was lodged. On being informed, police visited the hospital.

# Ganjam: Civil Supplies dept sits pretty on complaint redressal

While OSCSC has sent repeated reminders, minister is unhappy over the issue

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, July 13:** The Civil Supplies department in Ganjam district is flooded with complaints, but not a single complaint has been redressed till date despite repeated reminders from the Odisha State Civil Supplies Corporation (OSCSC). As a result, resentment is growing among people, a report said.

According to the report, 1,917 complaints are pending with the department. The number of complaints here are said to be much higher than those in other districts.

Given the backlog, managing director of Odisha State Civil Supplies Corporation, Biswajit Keshari Das has issued a letter July 8 to the district Civil Supplies officer, seeking quick disposal of the complaints.

Besides, another letter was sent to the Collector on the same date, insisting on the settlement of public complaints. It was alleged that the Civil Supplies department in the district has adopted a casual approach towards redressal of the complaints de-



**OSCSC issued reminders to the Civil Supplies dept Nov 24, 2020; Dec 28; Jan 28, 2021; March 8; April 28 and June 11, to settle the pending complaints**

spite reminders from the OSCSC.

As complaints are lying unattended for long, the Civil Supplies minister has expressed his unhappiness and he expressed his resentment in a letter to the district

Civil Supplies Corporation. Besides, the letter stated that public complaints regarding PDS or on other matters need to be dealt on an urgent basis in the larger interest of the people and reports thereof should be submitted to the department.

People from various parts of the district had filed their complaints online through the department's website.

It is worth mentioning here that the OSCSC had issued reminders to the Civil Supplies department several times - November 24, 2020; December 28; January 28, 2021; March 8; April 28 and June 11, in this connection.

# 101 gm brown sugar seized, 3 arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasore, July 13:** In a major breakthrough, police seized 101 grams of brown sugar worth ₹10 lakh and arrested three drug peddlers near Haripur Chhak under Sahadevkhunta police limits in Balasore Tuesday. A case has been registered against the three.

It is said that as drug peddling has been thriving in north Odisha, police and Excise department have stepped up their action against the mafia.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided



the area and arrested Sk Kallu (27) of Arada Bazaar, Prapat Mallick (32) of Padmapur and Soumya Mallick of Niali in Cuttack.

# Boudh locals up in arms against stone crusher units

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Boudh, July 13:** Stone crushing units have given rise to resentment among the people in Harbhanga block of Boudh district. Residents of Kharbhain and Baisipada in Chhataranga panchayat staged protests against the operation of stone crushers at Baisipada, Tuesday, demanding closure of the stone crushing units.

Hundreds of villagers, including women, took out a rally from Harbhanga block area and laid logs on the roads resulting in blockades on the way to the crusher units.

They also protested the move to set up another stone crusher unit in the village with government permission. Already three crusher units are operational in the area.

The villagers have been opposing the move to set up the new crusher unit for the last one month. They alleged that these crusher units have been polluting the area, thereby adversely affecting their farming activities.



"Dust emanating from stone crushers settles on farmlands and affects soil fertility. It also pollutes water bodies, causing diseases among people," they added. The villagers demanded that all the crusher units in the area should be closed down. The agitating people warned of intensifying their protest in the coming days if no action is taken by the administration to close these units.

The villagers led by Zilla Parishad member Abakash Sahu observed that operation of stone crushing units have spurred quarrying in the region and it is also taking a heavy

toll on the greenery as trees are being felled to make space for quarries.

Even blasting undertaken to break the stones has been damaging their houses. A delegation of agitators met Sub-Collector Ashwini Kumar Meher and Harbhanga tehsildar Sashibhusan Mishra over the issue, but the meeting was inconclusive. On the other hand, the tehsildar said that villagers failed to prove their allegations against stone crushing units. "The issue of pollution due to blasts in stone quarries will be investigated and action will be taken accordingly," he added.

# 5 killed in lightning

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada/ Kamakhyanagar, July 13:** As many as five people, including three children, and 18 goats were killed in separate incidents of lightning in Mayurbhanj and Dhenkanal districts, Tuesday.

In the first incident, lightning struck three minors, including a girl, while they were grazing goats at Baghuasala village under Chandua police limits in Mayurbhanj district. All the three children, who had taken shelter under a tree when it started raining, and 18 goats were killed in the lightning.



The deceased children were identified as Bablu Naik (16), Sujit Naik (14) and Barsha Naik (12) from the area. A woman Anupama Biswal, 48, in Badamachana village under Suliapada police limits in Mayurbhanj was also killed in lightning while she was relieving herself outside.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, JEYPORE**  
AT/PO: JEYPORE, DIST.: KORAPUT  
PHONE NO.: 06854-231104, e-mail- mijeyepore@yahoo.co.in  
**e-Procurement Notice**  
**BID IDENTIFICATION NO. MIDJEY 03/2021-22**  
No.1138 Date 30.6.21

No.A-289:- The Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Jeypore on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate bid in Single Cover System in ONLINE MODE bid documents consisting of work, estimated cost, cost of tender paper, EMD, time of completion, class of contractor, the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.

- Name of the work: Construction of Distribution system & Imp. to MIPs.
- No. of works: 11 Nos.
- Estimated cost: Approximately Rs.8.93 lakhs to 49.40 lakhs.
- Period of completion: 3 (Three) & 5 (Five) calendar months.
- Date and time of availability of bid documents in the portal: From 10.00 hours of 14.07.2021 to 17.00 hours of 28.07.2021.
- Last date / time for receipt of bids in the portal: 17.00 hours of 28.07.2021.
- Date of opening of bid: 11.00 hours on 29.7.2021.
- The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only.
- Name of the Officer inviting bid: Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Jeypore.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.

Sd./- Executive Engineer, MI Division, Jeypore  
OIPR-32374/11/0001/2122

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
P.H. DIVISION, KORAPUT**  
Tel./Fax: 06852-20740,  
e-mail- eephrp@nic.in, eephrp@gmail.com  
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e" Procurement Notice  
**e-Procurement Notice for 2021-22**  
**Bid Identification No. EE, P.H. KTP-03 of 2021-22 Dt.06.07.2021**  
No.C-567:-

1. No. of the works	1 No.
2. Estimated cost	Rs.23.00 lakhs (Approx.)
3. Period of completion	3 months
4. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal	From 11.00 A.M. of 16.07.2021 to 05.00 P.M. of 26.07.2021
5. Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal	05.00 P.M. of 26.07.2021
6. Date & time of opening of bids	11.00 A.M. of 27.07.2021
7. Name and address of the Officer inviting bid	Executive Engineer, P.H. Division, Koraput

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "<https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>".

Sd./- (Er. Sarbeswar Jena), Executive Engineer, P.H. Division, Koraput  
OIPR-13008/11/0003/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BHUBANESWAR**  
Ph.No.- 0674-2301787, Fax No.- 0674-2300965, E-mail I.D.- eerw\_bbsr@yahoo.co.in  
No.: Tender- Online-BBSR Divn.-07 Date: 07.07.2021  
**e-Procurement NOTICE**  
No.O-430:-

- Name of the work: Repair of road works.
- Total No. of Roads: 1 No.
- Class of contractor: (a) Estimated cost more than Rs.40.00 lakhs & not exceeding to Rs.1.50 crore: 'A' & 'B' Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licencing authorities. (b) Estimated cost more than Rs.20.00 lakhs & not exceeding to Rs.40.00 lakhs: 'B' & 'C' Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licencing authorities. (c) Estimated cost not exceeding to Rs.20.00 lakhs: 'C' & 'D' Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licencing authorities.
- Estimated cost of individual projects: Rs.20.00 lakhs.
- Time for completion: 2 (Two) calendar months.
- Other details:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender online for bidding		Date & time of opening of tender
		From	To	
1	2	3	4	5
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Bhubaneswar	Tender Online-BBSR Divn.-07	15.07.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	26.07.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.	27.07.2021 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in)

Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rural Works Divn., BBSR  
OIPR-25066/11/0004/2122

FOCUS ENTREPREURSHIP

# GOVT IN BUSINESS



**It needs to be understood that governance is different from business management. The skills that make an excellent administrator are not necessarily the same as that of a successful CEO. Recognising this and building up a cadre of professional managers is necessary**

oppressed population, while raising direct taxes beyond a point on a shrinking taxable population becomes infeasible. The only solution then would be for the government to become a revenue generator itself. And the way to do that would be through rethinking the concept of PSUs by inculcating a private sector mindset and reimagining the way they are managed. Monetising assets, not by selling them off but by making them profitable needs to be the policy.

It is time that value addition is professionalised and taken up on mission mode. For example, the government has ownership of all the minerals in the country, and while iron ore is priced between Rs 6,500 to Rs 8,000 per tonne, when converted to steel, it can be sold at 10 times that amount. So instead of selling off NINL, whose value ironically is primarily dependent upon the mine leases it has, the government could give itself the same advantages it is offering potential purchasers and turn it around with a team of professionals drawn from the private sector.

Linking remuneration and job security with performance, creating a sense of long term ownership through equity stakes, focussing on profit maximisation instead of job creation are some of the things that could be done to bring a sense of accountability and deliver the same level of efficiency and productivity found in the private sector.

More importantly, it needs to be understood that governance is different from business management. The skills that make an excellent administrator are not necessarily the same as that of a successful CEO. Recognising this and building up a cadre of professional managers is necessary.

And the time to do all this is now, so that in 10 years' time, when the effects of technology as well as changing demographics will have manifested themselves, we will be ready to face the challenges that will confront us then.

*The writer is an alumnus of XIMB, an IT entrepreneur and a startup mentor. Views are personal.*

remely deep pockets - like Jio in the Indian telecom sector.

Now, in an ironic twist of events, the survival and growth of enterprises is dependent once again on capital - obscenely large amounts of it. Take any recent success story in the Indian startup ecosystem - Byju's, Ola, Flipkart, OYO, or any other successful startup. While they may have begun with an innovative idea that either opened up a new and better way of doing things, or increased the size of existing markets, they have wound up being dependent upon massive capital infusions to survive the onslaught of competitive forces.

Capital is used to either force competition out of business through disruptive discounts, or by simply buying them out.

This naturally severely inhibits ventures without access to matching levels of capital, and in the long run, could lead to a repeat of the seventies and eighties when deep pockets cornered all business opportunities.

Large size and availability of capital will naturally lead the organisations to optimisation of processes and increasing efficiencies in all their activities. The

way to do this is through use of technology - Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, something smaller companies cannot afford, at least in the scale the larger ones can. This increased automation exponentially improves the company's performance and profitability. One of the ways is by drastically reducing employee costs through reduced requirements in the medium to long term.

There will be an increase in the requirement of highly skilled personnel and they will earn astronomical sums, but for every one such employee, there could be a loss of jobs for thousands of others. And this is not just blue collar jobs that are at stake - a thirty-person company providing AI-based HR solutions can wipe out thousands of HR jobs - not just in the country but globally.

When small businesses become unviable or severely limited in growth potential and jobs begin to disappear, the only option left for survival is dependence on the government. For the government to be able to face this challenge, it needs to be able to generate massive amounts of revenue.

Raising indirect taxes ultimately puts the burden on the already

One of the most frequently asked questions that startup founders face from investors is - what would you do if Google decided to do what you are planning to do?

This is a trick question, for the purpose of the question is actually to see how the founders react when faced with insurmountable odds. Nowadays however, the answer has become easy - build up enough value so that when Google enters this domain, they would find it advantageous to buy us out.

The implications however are very disturbing for they indicate that now, the criteria for success and growth is no longer a brilliant concept or even excellent implementation - it belongs to those who have the deepest pockets.

In India, from Independence till the liberalisation in 1990, business success was linked to contacts in government, which in turn mostly depended on the capital one had. Thus it was the large industrialists who grew larger and the small and medium ones had to be content with what they had. The spirit of entrepreneurship was frowned upon and young people from non-business backgrounds starting ventures of their own was a rare phenomenon, confined mostly to those who could not obtain a job.

Post-liberalisation, there was an upsurge in the animal instincts of the youths as they ventured into the private sector - both as employees as well as job creators. This has reached its peak now as the startup frenzy draws thousands of youngsters to ideate and put serious efforts into implementing their ideas.

One other question that these entrepreneurs face is "what is your moat?" Like in a fortress, a moat is something that helps prevent competitors from entering into the entrepreneurs' domain and harming their businesses by eating into their revenue and market share. This moat could be a very strong Intellectual Property ownership of an excellent product - like the algorithm of the Google search engine, huge entry barriers - capital or regulatory requirements for example, or ex-



Chandra Shekhar Chitralla

**WHEN SMALL BUSINESSES BECOME UNVIALE OR SEVERELY LIMITED IN GROWTH POTENTIAL AND JOBS BEGIN TO DISAPPEAR, THE ONLY OPTION LEFT FOR SURVIVAL IS DEPENDENCE ON THE GOVERNMENT**

## CBI after Biden

Former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan was arrested in an espionage case in 1994. This old matter has suddenly come to surface again when the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) opposed the bail pleas of two retired Kerala police officers last week. Opposing their bail, the CBI now claims that Nambi was falsely implicated in a concocted case by these two, thereby delaying the development of India's cryogenic technology. While informing the Kerala High Court that the two retired officers had played an active role and concocted an espionage case, the CBI has tried to bring in a global ramification and justify a very unjustifiable act of the government of India.

It is said that a panel was formed in the 1990s which studied the developments regarding the Nambi case for almost two and a half years. It was only after the report was received that the scientist was arrested along with the then ISRO Deputy Director D Sasikumaran and Fousiya Hasan, a Maldivian national. The CBI, in its probe back then, had held 16 other police officials, including Intelligence Bureau officers in Kerala responsible for the illegal arrests. The present act of opposing the bail by the CBI, however, has been deliberately much publicised.

The CBI now claims that there was an international involvement in the fabrication of the case against Nambi Narayanan and his then deputy. It is said that India was trying to get the cryogenic technology from the Russian Space Agency Glavkosmos. This technology would have been helpful in sending heavy satellites into deeper space. The CBI's story now takes an interesting turn. It is now being told that Joe Biden, who was then a Democratic Party senator during Republican George Bush Senior's Presidency, turned out to be the biggest saboteur of India's ambitious space programme. He supposedly opposed the Russia-India agreement for supply of two cryogenic engines to India.

Dragging in the name of Joe Biden in this old case and some Indian media claiming that CBI is on its way to prove that Nambi's sacking and arrest was a Biden-led conspiracy against India weaves a new narrative to justify a huge diplomatic faux pas committed by the Indian leadership. The 1990s senator Joe Biden has, in the meanwhile, become the President of the United States of America, defeating Donald Trump with one of the largest winning margins in American Presidential election history. With this in the background, Indians may wonder why has the CBI set out on such a dangerous path of collision with the US President. Most Indians are very aware of the investigative prowess of the CBI. When the efficacy within the country is so very clouded, it is impossible to imagine how an international investigation of such a monumental nature can be handled by this outfit.

Hark back to the recent history of Donald Trump's campaign. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's supporters and the Indian embassy had organised a massive meeting titled 'Howdy Modi' at Dallas, Texas. Trump had also been invited to that event. In his address to the Indian diaspora, PM Modi himself had endorsed Trump's reelection by chanting 'Ab ki Baar Trump Sarkar'. Obviously, time proved that utterance to be a grave diplomatic error on the part of India. Added to this came the hesitancy demonstrated by India in congratulating new President Joe Biden after his win. While Russia and China purposefully delayed their congratulatory messages, India's leadership seemed dazed and could not comprehend the changed US political scenario. Now, the effort has probably begun using the CBI to prove a point to the domestic news consumer. Word is being spread that Joe Biden was indeed a long-time enemy of India's interests. India's leadership is most likely playing the nationalistic card of having taken the risk to bravely stand up and campaign against someone known for his inimical attitude towards India.

It may be noted that Joe Biden was just an opposition senator in the 1990s. It seems doubtful whether he could have influenced an Indo-Russian treaty while he was not in power. On the other hand, let us hypothetically assume Joe Biden was indeed instrumental in thwarting India's space ambitions by destroying the Indo-Russian tradeoff. Let us also assume the CBI succeeds in proving his finger was truly in that pie. That may only go to prove Biden's love for America and his mettle as an individual politician. It may even bolster his image as a patriot in his country. While not damaging Joe Biden in any which manner, this could put India as a country personally vindictive towards the present US President. India can easily afford enmity with Pakistan. But the US is a whole different deal.

WISDOM CORNER

- “The world is indeed a mixture of truth and make-believe. Discard the make-believe and take the truth.” **RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHANSA**
- “Let us not pray to be sheltered from dangers but to be fearless when facing them.” **RABINDRANATH TAGORE**
- “Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.” **MAHATMA GANDHI**

WORDSWORTH

Olitory

If it would be overly grand to refer to our vegetable patches as kitchen gardens, how much more so it would be to use olitory to describe them or their products. It is from Latin (h)olitorius, belonging to a kitchen gardener or vegetables, which in turn is from olus for a potherb or vegetable. The latter is the source of oleraceous, pertaining to a potherb or other vegetable used in cookery, and to olericulture for the process of growing them. All these are pretty much defunct, though words from the same Latin root occasionally turn up as part of the botanical names of useful plants, the best known being Brassica oleracea, whose varieties include cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower. It appeared in The Art of Living in Australia by Philip E Muskett, published in 1894. In regretting the paucity of market gardens in that country, he noted that “there is not much reason for congratulation from an olitory point of view” and says “If the potato and the cabbage were taken away, Australia would be almost bereft of vegetables.”

Ombre

Every period has had its fashionable card games. From the middle of the seventeenth century, everyone in English society wanted to play ombre. Its heyday began immediately after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, since Charles II and his courtiers brought it back with them from France. However, ombre was originally Spanish, and the name is a corruption of hombre, man, because the person leading the game was “the man” who had to be beaten. (The name was usually pronounced like “omber”, though some said it like “ombray” to be nearer the original Spanish.) It was popular for generations in Europe and is still played in some countries, so it has had many other names as well. Ombre stayed in fashion into the eighteenth century and was immortalised in Alexander Pope's poem The Rape of the Lock of 1714, in which a game of ombre is described in detail. It was a bidding game for three players using a standard pack of 52 cards but with the 8s, 9s, and 10s removed to simulate the 40-card pack used in Spain. The rules were complicated, with many oddities, and full of strange foreign terms: Codillio, Repuesto, Voll, Gagno, Spadillio, Basto. The person who lost a hand was said to be beasted and so an early English alternative name was beast. Women took to it with especial pleasure, though an anonymous letter writer to the Spectator in August 1711, said accusingly that it often brought out the worst in them: “I have observed Ladies, who in all other respects are Gentle, Good-humoured, and the very Pinks of good Breeding; who as soon as the Ombre Table is called for, and set down to their Business, are immediately Transmigrated into the veriest Wasps in Nature.” Or is this the plaint of a bad loser?

IN JEST THIS

## Familiar & strange: The food we eat



Melvin Durai

**A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE APPARENTLY FIND IT ENTERTAINING TO WATCH FOOD BEING CONSUMED**

Isak Munda, a 35-year-old man from Bubupali village in western Odisha, is a former labourer who now makes his living through YouTube. He uploads videos using his cellphone and downloads thousands of rupees into his bank account.

“I make videos about life in my poor household and village, showing what and how we eat,” Munda told News 18.

His YouTube channel, which has about 7.5 lakh subscribers, is called “Isak Munda eating.”

His parents must be so proud: “Look, our son is eating on YouTube!”

Munda's first video, which has more than seven lakh views, is titled “rice and Indian sambar fast eating.” The video shows Munda eating a meal so fast, he must have set an unofficial Guinness World Record for “fastest human being to put away a plate of rice, sambar, leafy vegetables, green chillies and raw tomato.”

A large number of people apparently find it entertaining to watch food being consumed. I'm not surprised when it's a video titled “Crocodile eats zebra” or “Raccoon eats pizza,” but I didn't

think the same curiosity would apply to “Man eats rice and sambar.”

But maybe that's because I've already seen many people eat rice and sambar. I've already recorded seven lakh views within my own family.

None of my immediate family members eat as quickly as Munda, and that's one reason he has managed to capture so much interest. Another reason is that India—not to mention the entire world—has so many different foods and eating habits. What's familiar and comforting to one person is strange to another. My wife, for example, enjoys a bitter gourd dish that would be considered the perfect food, in many parts of the world, to punish prisoners.

For some YouTube users, just the fact that Munda is thoroughly enjoying a vegetarian meal is odd. Indeed, one of them left this comment on his “rice and sambar” video: “Wish someday he will have his meal full of meat on his plate.”

But wishing meat on his plate might be wishing doom on him. His religious beliefs might forbid him from eating meat.

According to a new survey by the



A screen grab of Isak Munda's video

Washington, DC-based Pew Research Center, 81 per cent of adults in India restrict their meat consumption in some way. This includes people who consider themselves fully vegetarian (39 per cent), as well as those who do not eat certain meats or avoid eating meat on certain days.

What amazes me about this finding, derived from a face-to-face survey of 29,999 Indian adults, is that almost one-fifth of Indians apparently do not have any meat restrictions. They'll eat anything: frog, snake, even alligator.

Actually, they probably weren't thinking of such meats when they were surveyed. They were thinking of chicken, pork, mutton and beef.

Chicken is probably the most widely consumed meat in India, but if you have Christian guests in your home and they decline to eat butter chicken, don't assume that it's because of the butter. According to the survey, 10 per cent of Christians in India abstain from meat. Joining them as vegetarians are eight per cent of Muslims, 25 per cent of Buddhists, 44 per cent of Hindus, 59 per cent of Sikhs and 92 per cent of Jains. (Eight percent of Muslims are apparently doing what eight per cent of Jains should be doing.)

The majority of Hindus (83 per cent) and Muslims (67 per cent) are either vegetarian or restrict their meat consumption in some way. That isn't surprising, considering their religious beliefs. In fact, the survey found that 72 per cent of Hindus say that if you eat beef, you can't be Hindu, but only 49 per cent say that you need to believe in God to be Hindu. Among Muslims, 77 per cent say that you can't be Muslim if you eat pork, but only 60 per cent say that you have to believe in God.

Good news, vegetarian atheists! You can be Hindu or Muslim. The choice is yours.

Wrong population policy

**Sir,** The draft of the proposed population control Bill released by the Uttar Pradesh State Law Commission promotes a two-child policy. Violation of the two-child policy would mean people will be debarred from contesting local body elections, applying for government jobs or receiving government subsidies. Public servants who adopt the norm will be provided with incentives. It is a fact that population of India is growing and it will continue for the next couple of decades. However, the country-level total fertility rate (TFR) is 2.23. It is not hugely above the desired level of 2.1. If this level is achieved, population will stabilise in the long run. It is relieving to learn that 20 states/UTs have achieved this and another five have reached the level below 2.2. As a matter of fact, there won't be a population explosion in the country. So the states with very high population such as Bihar, UP, MP, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh must focus on social development instead of strict population control measures. If the two-child norm becomes a policy, it will have far-reaching consequences. A lot of women would be forced to go for unsafe and illegal abortions. Apart from this, the policy is likely to lead to gender imbalances. Neglect and death of female infants, pre-natal sex determination, abortion of female foetus and adoption would rise if the two-child norm becomes a policy.

Venu GS, KOLLAM

Fuel on fire

**Sir,** This is in reference to “Petrol costlier, diesel rate cut,” Orissa Post, July 13. The price of petrol has crossed Rs 100/litre in the entire country. Although, the average price of Brent crude has increased, domestic taxes especially the ones imposed by the Union government are also to blame. Crude prices have risen significantly, leading to a sharp spike in prices, pushing inflation and economic distress. With the prevailing uncertainty in the OPEC+ deal on increasing crude production and surging demand in advanced economies, oil prices are expected to remain high, even rise further. So, unless the government decides to bring down taxes, there will be even higher retail prices, surging inflation and greater economic hardship. The government's current fiscal approach is tantamount to a negative fiscal stimulus, as high petroleum prices are squeezing household budgets. This will generate headwinds for both future growth and tax collections. Thus cutting taxes on petrol-diesel to bring down prices at the moment is not just good politics, it is good economics as well.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

**NON-PAYMENT OF DUES FROM PADDY SALE**

# SC to hear PIL on farmer, son's death



Jai Kishan Adima Krushak Rakshya Sangathan (JKAKRS) had also lodged a complaint with the National Human Rights Commission. The survivors of the deceased received the payment June 5 after the NHRC intervened in the matter

Ashok Pradhan, JKAKRS convener, alleged that the government officials are involved in corruption and demanded departmental proceedings against the wrongdoers

Dileshwar had undertaken paddy cultivation on five acres owned by him. He had registered the name of his son with the local self-help group (SHG) for paddy procurement for the 2020 Kharif season

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, July 13:** The Supreme Court has suo motu registered a public interest litigation over the deaths of a man and his son, both farmers, due to illness as they failed to avail timely treatment owing to non-payment of the sum due to them from paddy sale, a report said.

The deceased farmers were identified as Dileshwar Patel and his son Sunil Patel in this district. The apex court registered the case (55761/SCL/PIL/2021) and admitted it for hearing following a complaint filed by a farmers' outfit Jai Kishan Adima Krushak Rakshya Sangathan.

The outfit had also lodged a complaint with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The survivors of the deceased received the payment June 5 after the NHRC intervened in the matter.

Subsequently, 22 farmers also received their payment.

The matter came to the fore after the apex court registry issued a notice to Jogabihari Parida, the convener of the outfit. Parida welcomed the decision of the apex court in admitting the complaint as a case and issuing notice for hearing. Ashok Pradhan, convener of Paschim Odisha Krushak Sangathan, alleged that the government officials are involved in corruption in paddy procurement and demanded departmental proceedings against the wrongdoers. He said that since the Supreme Court will hear the case now, a proper probe will nail the officials involved in wrongdoing.

It is alleged that the faulty policy of the state government on paddy procurement and the negligence of the district adminis-

tration in making timely payments to the farmers cost the lives of Dileshwar and his son.

Reports said that Dileshwar had undertaken paddy cultivation on five acres owned by him. He had registered the name of his son with the local self-help group (SHG) for paddy procurement for the 2020 Kharif season. Sunil was issued a token having ID-1005 for sale of 66.22 quintals of paddy.

The father-son duo sold their paddy at the mandi but failed to receive their payment for the sale. Later, Dileshwar tested positive for Covid-19 and died within a few days of being infected. His son Sunil died 10 days later. The farmers' outfit alleged that the two failed to avail timely treatment due to lack of money as they had not been paid the amount due to them for paddy sale.

**AGAINST PRICE HIKE**



Congress activists take a bullock cart ride during a protest against the hike in petrol and diesel prices in Sambalpur, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

## 2.5 years on, new bus stand in Bargarh town lies unused

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, July 13:** Two-and-a-half years have passed since the new private bus stand built at a cost of ₹5.5 crore by the side of Bargarh-Bheden Canal Road here was inaugurated, but it is yet to become operational.

Alleging faults in the planning and construction of the new bus stand, bus owners continue to operate from the old bus stand.

Every day around 300 buses ply from Bargarh private bus stand to different destinations. As a result, hundreds of people depend on this bus stand.

Keeping this in view, Bargarh Municipality got a new private bus stand constructed spending ₹5,50,00,000. The new bus stand has some new facilities as well, but it is yet to be made functional.

Lying unused for a long period now, the facility has become a shelter for stray cattle and goats. After sunset, people hesitate to go to the new bus stand site, as it turns into an 'adda' for anti-social elements.

Expressing his concern over the development, Bargarh town resident Pradeep Kumar Mohanty said it is unfortunate that a newly-built bus stand is lying unused for two-and-a-half years. While commuters are facing hardships at the old bus stand, anti-social elements are using the new building as their safe haven. "For the betterment of the people, the facility should be made functional at the earliest," he observed.

When asked for his comment, former municipality chairman Prashant Behera said the new

bus stand has been constructed for the benefit of commuters. At the same time, it will help poor people earn their livelihood from the place. The facility has been built at a cost of ₹5,50,00,000. While the lion's share of the project cost, i.e. ₹5,00,00,000 was spent by the municipality, the remaining ₹50,00,000 was received from the state government. It is matter of great concern that nothing has been done so far to make the bus stand operational.

Stating why the private bus owners' association is not in favour of operating buses from the new bus stand, chief advisor, Bargarh Private Bus Owners' Association, Debabrata Mishra said, "At the very beginning, we had noticed some faults in the structural design of the bus stand. Then the association had refused to keep their buses or ply the vehicles from there. The association has given a proposal to the municipality to get the faults mended. The municipality has also agreed to implement the proposals."

Speaking on the issue, Bargarh MLA Debesh Acharya said that he has been holding discussions with the Bargarh Private Bus Owners' Association. "I hope the new bus stand will start functioning soon," he said.

According to a source, since the municipality has agreed to implement the proposals of the association, the later has decided to start operating their buses from the new bus stand. Chances are high that buses may start moving from the new bus stand from July 20, the source added.

## People suffer as ₹3-crore bridge project hangs fire

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Langaleswar, July 13:** In the absence of a bridge across Ubidubi river, thousands of people living in the riparian villages of Silang area in Balasore have been suffering commuting woes. Their problem worsens every monsoon when they get stranded due to flooded river, a report said.

Given the plight of the people, the Rural Development department has allocated a sum of ₹3 crore for construction of a bridge near Sahughat at Alameda village.

Ubidubi river flows through Alameda panchayat. However, people of villages like Sartha, Kasaphala, Saudi, Balanga and Panchupalli literally wade through the river to go to the other side. Country boats are the only means of communication.

"Ferrying in creaky boats is dangerous. Our plight will only be over after the bridge work is completed," local said.

They resented that construction work of the bridge was taken up two years ago, but its progress is tardy. They have blamed the slow pace of the work on the contractor.

Reports said that a pillar of the under-construction bridge sunk due to faulty work. The contractor took one-and-a-half years to straighten the sunken pillar, villagers pointed out.

It was learnt that the contractor signed an agreement with the rural development department to com-



**Given the plight of the people, the RD department has allocated a sum of ₹3 crore for construction of a bridge near Sahughat at Alameda village**

plete the bridge construction within three years. "Till date, only 10 per cent of the bridge work has been completed. Only a year is left before the deadline. In view of the slow

pace of the work, it is impossible to meet the deadline," the villagers added.

Though the Rural development has been repeatedly insisting on hastening the pace of the work, the contractor is neglecting the work, locals lamented.

Umashankar Behera, an engineer of the Rural Development department, explained that the work is getting delayed after a pillar sank. The delay may lead to cost overrun and the work may take another year to be completed, he added.

**BATTLING COVID IN GANJAM**

## 'Violation of norms may prove to be disastrous'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, July 13:** Even as the daily Covid infection tally has come down to 20 in Ganjam district, a slight negligence on part of the people may prove disastrous for the district, a report said.

Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange sounded a caution while stating that all safety measures must be followed to keep the virus at bay. Kulange said this while attending a review meeting with officials on Covid situation in the district through video conference.

The Collector warned of severe consequences if people do not abide by the Covid norms imposed in the state. He urged people to follow the Covid norms and keep the disease at bay.

Reports said that the number of daily Covid infections in the district has come down to 20, while 2,000 people are tested daily to ascertain the spread of infections.

A mega vaccination campaign is also underway in the district to battle the possible third wave of the pandemic. The vaccination programme often gets hit by vaccine shortage, but the district health officials are trying to overcome the problem by making micro-plans and dispatching vaccines to various places.

The district administration is laying special stress on vaccination of shopkeepers and a special drive is being undertaken to vaccinate the roadside vegetable ven-



dors. Kulange said the district administration had implemented its 'panchastuti' programme to stem the spread of infection and it has served its purpose. Besides, increase in the number of tests, identification of super-spreaders, contact-tracing and steps like thermal screenings in market areas need to be followed stringently.

The officials were asked to spend half of their office time on the field and stress on implementation of 'Mo Gaon Re Tehsil' programme in all villages for at least three months. Stating that a drop in temperature and humidity has given rise to flu-related ailments, he said that in such scenario, violation of norms can prove to be disastrous.

Ganjam district, which registered its first infection in May this year, was a Covid hotspot for several months till cases started to come down last month. However, violation of norms by people has emerged as a cause of concern for the authorities. People at many places are seen not wearing masks and moving freely at public places without abiding by social distancing norms. This has become a cause of concern for the district administration and policy planners.

**FOR GREEN EARTH**



Youths undertake a plantation drive at a village in Bargarh district

OP PHOTO

## This revenue village is in real time wrap

**DESPITE BEING A REVENUE VILLAGE, KHAIRASAH I IN DHENKANAL DISTRICT IS DEPRIVED OF A PUCCA ROAD, EDUCATION, HEALTH, DRINKING WATER AND ELECTRICITY**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, July 13:** A tiny revenue village, Khairasahi in Kottam panchayat under the industry-rich Odapada block in Dhenkanal district is in real time wrap. It seems development makes a detour of this village. A pucca road, education, health, drinking water and electricity all continue to be in the wish list of the villagers for over seven decades.

The village is located only three kilometres from Purunakatak-Sambalpur road and five kilometres from sadar panchayat. It is inhabited by 50-odd families. According to local villagers, they have been deprived of basic minimum facilities despite a host of welfare schemes launched by both Central and state governments.

"The people's representatives visit us only when elections are round the corner. Thereafter, they come to our village once in a blue moon. We have not received any help from government yet. With no pucca road, the mud path that goes out of the village looks like a slushy field in the rainy season,



making it difficult even for motorcycle riders to commute. We can never think of getting an ambulance at our doorstep," they maintained, suggesting their pent up dissatisfaction.

In case of emergency, the villagers have to carry patients and pregnant women on cots and in slings. To reach the point from where they can get motorable roads they have to wade through the Sapua river.

There is a lone tube-well in the

village, but it is defunct most of the times. As a result, the villagers are forced to consume polluted river water. Similarly, the Anganwadi centre, which is six kilometres from the village, is of no use for their children.

The villagers alleged that their repeated pleas are falling on deaf ears of the district administration officials and people's representatives.

"Despite being a revenue village, we are not fortunate enough

to get a pucca road. If panchayat and district administration officials take steps in this regard, we will be immensely benefitted," said local resident Prabhat Mohapatra.

Kottam panchayat sarpanch Chinmayee Biswal admitted it that the village is faced with several problems. "I will discuss the issues with the block authorities and I hope steps will soon be taken to construct a pucca road under MGN-REGS in the village," she added.

Aam Aadmi Party's district convener Pankaj Kumar Nayak said a team of party representatives had visited Khairasahi Sunday and had an interaction with the villagers.

"The party will take up the villagers' problems with the district administration," he informed.

When contacted, block development officer (BDO), Dasarathy Jena said, "We need an action plan from the panchayat on constructing a pucca road. Once received, an estimate will be prepared and the same would be sent to the DRDA for approval. As we receive DRDA's nod, the villagers will get a road," he added.

# We have every right to start construction: CM

## MEKEDATU PROJECT



Mekedatu is a multipurpose (drinking and power) project, which involves building a balancing reservoir near Kanakapura in Ramanagara district

plementing Mekedatu and other irrigation projects in the state.

I don't want to discuss Tamil Nadu or any other state. We have got every right and we are going to start the work, Yediyurappa said in response to a question on Tamil Nadu's objection to the Mekedatu project.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, he said detailed discussions took place on irrigation projects in the state, including Mekedatu.

Shekhawat assured the state that all issues with regard to providing clearances from the Centre for implementation of the projects would be resolved, the Chief Minister said.

The discussions were on the gazette notification of the Krishna tribunal award, Environment Ministry clearance for the Mekedatu project, Upper Krishna Project, Kalasa-Banduri Nala Project, implementation of Yettinahole project, among others.

Shekhawat said all irrigation

projects relating to Karnataka were discussed in the meeting with the CM and Ministers and the progress of Jal Jeevan Mission progress was also reviewed.

I have assured the state of Karnataka and CM to look into projects which are pending, specially the Mekedatu project.

I have assured that we will look deep into the issues pertaining to Karnataka. We will organise a meeting in Delhi, after having studied all these things.

I assure that justice will be given to the state of Karnataka, he added.

State Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said the CM apprised the Union Minister about the Mekedatu issue and urged him to expedite clearances pending before the union government.

The Detailed Project Report has been submitted to the Central Water Commission and it has been referred to the Cauvery Monitoring Committee. The union minister is aware of the whole issue and has promised to look into and give justice to Karnataka, he said.

Karnataka's assertion comes a day after the all-party meeting called by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin flayed attempts by Karnataka to build the dam at Mekedatu and urged the union government to not accord sanction for the proposal.

Karnataka has maintained that the project within its territory will benefit both states as the surplus water stored can be managed between the two during the distress year, and its implementation will in no way affect the interests of Tamil Nadu's farming communities, as there will be no impact on its share of water.

Also, according to Tamil Nadu, as per the Supreme Court verdict, no construction across Cauvery should be taken up without consulting the lower riparian states.

# Delhi's wait for monsoon ends

MOST DELAYED IN 19 YEARS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 13:** The much-awaited Southwest Monsoon finally arrived in Delhi Tuesday morning bringing respite from scorching summer temperatures; with weather officials saying the onset has been over two weeks behind the schedule, making it the most delayed in 19 years.

In 2002, the monsoon had covered Delhi July 19.

The monsoon has arrived in Delhi, senior IMD scientist K Jenamani said after a spell of rains drenched parts of south Delhi Tuesday morning.

Other parts of the city also recorded rains during the day with people reporting waterlogging and traffic snarls in some areas.

The monsoon advanced over Delhi July 13 against the normal date of June 27, the IMD said.

With this, the monsoon has covered the entire country.

Southwest monsoon has further advanced into remaining parts of the country including Delhi, remaining parts of Uttar Pradesh,

## Rain brings with it commuter woes

The long-awaited monsoon arrived in the national capital Tuesday bringing with it waterlogged roads, traffic snarls in parts of the city and the familiar sight of snaking lines of vehicles stuck for interminable minutes. Many office-goers reported late for office and several people posted their plight through videos and photographs on social media, some seeking help from police. There was heavy traffic at Dhaula Kuan with commuters complaining of being stuck for almost 90 minutes, Azadpur and at the Delhi Cantt and Kalindi Kunj flyovers among other places.



Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. Thus, the Southwest Monsoon has covered entire country July 13, against the normal date of July 8,

the IMD said. The IMD said that between 8.30 am July 12 to 8.30 am July 13, the weather stations at Safdarjung recorded 2.5 cm rainfall,

## IMD criticised for wrong predictions

The South-West monsoon arrived in Delhi-NCR after India Meteorological Department's (IMD) several predictions made in the last 15 days went wrong. Due to the delay in the arrival of the monsoon, the MET Department had to face criticism. Madhwan Rajeevan, responding to criticism on its wrong prediction July 11, had said, "We just don't download someone's model forecast to provide users. We have one of the best end-to-end forecasting systems, thanks to the Monsoon Mission. Trust us, we are one of the best and we will keep improving. Our forecasts sometimes can go wrong." This year, the rains were first predicted to make a record early march across the country, initially predicted to hit Delhi by June 13-15. But in the latter half of the month, the progress slowed down before it eventually stalled and entered a three-week break phase. The Monsoon had reached almost all parts of the country but had stayed away from Delhi, Haryana, parts of west Uttar Pradesh and west Rajasthan. The weather forecasting agency had predicted that monsoon is expected to cover these parts by June -- a little less than a month back but that did not happen. K Jenamani, a senior scientist at IMD has said they will study why the arrival of monsoon was delayed in Delhi despite favourable conditions.

Palam 2.4 cm and Lodhi Road 0.9 cm.

Normally, monsoon reaches Delhi by June 27 and covers the entire country by July 8. Last year, the wind system had reached the capital June 25 and covered the entire country by June 29.

This year, the monsoon covered its last outposts -- Jaisalmer and Ganganagar in Rajasthan July 12. Usually, monsoon covers these two districts July 8, nearly nine days after it hits Delhi. However, this year has been different.

# SW Rlys begins development of heritage stations in K'taka



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, July 13:** South-Western Railway, Bangalore Division has begun to give shape to its grand plan of developing four of the oldest railway stations surrounding Bangalore as heritage stations.

Ashok Kumar Verma, Divisional Railway Manager, Bangalore, laid foundation stone for restoration of Doddajala Station as Heritage Railway Station, as part of the grand plan.

The Division had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage) Feb 25 in this regard.

The MoU seeks to restore and preserve Heritage Railway stations at Doddajala, Devanahalli, Avathihalli and Nandi Halt based on different themes related to history and culture.

An Art centre-cum-cultural centre-cum conventional centre will be developed at Doddajala, while at Devanahalli, Interpretation Centre for monuments and history and cafe or snack counter will be set up.

A Silk Museum and Resource Centre along with a park, with appropriate tree plantation and landscaping will be made at Avathihalli, a Rail Museum, Cafe, Restaurant, Cultural performance Centre, Pop-up weekend crafts Markets, Interpretation Centre, Open Air Theater and Amphitheater will be provided at Nandi Halt Station.

This is region's one of the oldest railway lines. These buildings are quaint examples of colonial style architecture located in picturesque stretches. The line, in meter gauge, became operational in August 1915.

The works will be undertaken in two stages. In the first stage, INTACH will undertake the renovation, restoration and preservation of the station buildings in consultation with railways and identify the partners under CSR for funding the initiative.

In the second stage, ways and means of sustainable maintenance of preserved and restored buildings will be developed by creating additional amenities at the stations and surroundings.

This is the first initiative in south western railway where the restoration project is being taken up under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The Bangalore Division of South Western Railway has chalked out plans to restore and preserve its station buildings in order to enhance their heritage value, the foundation stone ceremony was held at Doddajala station July 12.

# 'Children coming to hosps with post-Covid symptoms'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 13:** Not only adults but also children who have battled Covid are coming to hospitals in the city with post-coronavirus symptoms like gastric issues, headaches, brain fogging, shortness of breath, doctors at private hospitals here said.

Apart from complaints of MISC (multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children), experts are also seeing children, who had mild Covid, coming to them with delayed recovery.

Dr Rahul Nagpal, Director, Pediatrics, Fortis Hospital Vasant Kunj said, "Fortunately, children did not have very severe Covid. We got a handful of patients who had congenital heart disease, some



kidney disorders, severe asthma or obesity who required hospitalisation."

Post-Covid we are seeing multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children. It happens in one to two per cent of cases, but that is also a huge number. With proper drugs and identification, it can be cured. Then there are lots of patients

with diarrhoea, fatigue, body ache, digestive issues, he said.

The senior doctor said that some of the adolescents are coming with headaches, which might be the start of migraine in them. But it needs to be studied more. Since it has happened after Covid, it is felt that it is because of the infection, but it needs to be investigated.

Dr Shuchin Bajaj, Founder-Director, Ujala Cygnus Group of Hospitals said that children are facing the issue of brain fogging and are unable to remember what they studied.

They do not have much energy left, are stressed, anxious. Parents might confuse brain fogging with children trying to make excuses to not study or attend online classes but these are real symptoms, he said.

# Gram panchayat libraries to be turned into digital classrooms

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, July 13:** The Karnataka government in an attempt to reach out to the children who are not able to take online classes and do not have access to television is contemplating turning Gram Panchayat libraries into digital classrooms.

Education Minister S Suresh Kumar had already held meetings with educational experts and advisor to the government of Karnataka on academics Prof Dore Swamy and Prashanth Prakash, who is advisor to the Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa in this regard for faster implementation of the project.

It has become imperative for the government to reach out to the children through digital formats such as online classes in a new environment after Covid Crisis. Hence,

necessary action will be taken to provide education to the left out children using libraries of Gram Panchayats in the state, said Minister Suresh Kumar.

It is being planned to utilise 5,766 Gram Panchayat libraries across the state by installing devices for educational purposes. Those children who cannot afford to have mobiles or television to attend classes could be included by this measure. Talks are on with the Rural Development and Panchayath Raj department officers, Minister Suresh Kumar explained.

It came to light in a survey conducted by the Department of Public Instruction that as many as 31 lakh students out of 93 lakh students studying SSLC do not have a smartphone. The survey also revealed that there was no television or radio in the houses of 8 lakh children.

## COME WINTER, SUMMER AND NOW RAIN

# Protesting farmers brace for monsoons at Delhi borders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 13:** With metal reinforced roofs for "tents", battery powered lights and cleaning drives to ensure there is no stagnation of water around their temporary homes, the doughty band of farmers camping at Delhi's borders are busy getting ready for the monsoons.

Rains spell relief from the sweltering heat but also lead to huge problems, farmer leaders said Tuesday as the first monsoon showers fell over the national capital and its surrounding areas.

From keeping ration stocks dry and tackling waterlogging to ward off diseases to preventing electricity related mishaps and ensuring power supply in case of any outage, the challenges are aplenty at the Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur sites where thousands of farmers have been camping for seven months to protest the centre's new farm laws.

"It is true the rains will bring us some relief from the heat, but the

monsoon has its own set of problems. Tents get uprooted. The rains result in stagnant water, which in turn lead to the breeding of disease-causing mosquitoes," said farmer leader Avtar Mehma.

One of the first measures to brave the rains was to strengthen the structures that have been their homes.

Mehma added that their "simple tents" have been transformed into "pucca structures" with iron roofs. These structures will protect the protestors as well as their ration stocks from the rains.

The recent death of a 46-year-old farmer who was electrocuted at the Tikri border has raised anxiety levels.

Monsoon rains also bring with them frequent power cuts, even in the best parts of the city, and these temporary townships on highways are no exceptions.

Mehma added that while waterlogging in some areas is unavoidable in this season, volunteers have been deployed to try and stop water from stagnating

and to fumigate the protest sites to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes and other insects.

They braved the bone-chilling winter, the hot summer and the monsoons are further par for the course, the farmers said.

The Ghazipur border, for instance, where around 4,000 to 5,000 protestors have been camping under the banner of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) led by Rakesh Tikait, is buzzing with activity.

The protestors, occupying a road

stretch on a flyway on the Delhi-Meerut expressway and under it at the UP Gate, are procuring potable water from Ghaziabad through tankers every day. The local administration has also largely been helpful, he added.

As they settle in deeper into their 'protest routine', the farmers say they will not succumb to any pressure, natural or man-made. They are now gearing up for a fresh round of demonstrations outside Parliament through the monsoon session, following which they will be rallying in huge numbers in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

The farmers have been protesting at Delhi borders against the three farm laws, which they fear will do away with the minimum support price (MSP) system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporations.

Over 10 rounds of talks with the government, which has been projecting the laws as major agricultural reforms, have failed to break the deadlock between the two parties, resulting in the agitation continuing.



# national

## of the day quote

The draft population control bill has raised questions about the Uttar Pradesh government's intentions as people believe it lacks seriousness and has more to do with the ruling BJP's electoral interests

MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

Our opposition AAP has always recognised my vision & work for Punjab. Be it Before 2017- Beadbi, Drugs, Farmers Issues, Corruption & Power Crisis faced by People of Punjab raised by me or today as I present Punjab Model It is clear they know - who is really fighting for Punjab

NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU | CONGRESS MLA

For the first time in three-four months we have reached zero deaths. I congratulate our medical staff who worked tirelessly. We should maintain this

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Dalit thrashed by upper caste men

**Firozabad (UP):** In a shocking incident, a Dalit youth was allegedly beaten up by upper caste men when he tried to stop one of them from rashly driving a tractor in an inebriated condition in Uttar Pradesh's Firozabad district. A video clip of the incident went viral on social media Monday after which the Sirsaganj police registered an FIR against four persons -- Virendra, Uday, Shivam and Satyam.

### Major train mishap averted

**Patna:** A major train accident was averted due to the alertness and swift action of a train driver in Bihar's Katihar district Tuesday. The Kolkata-Radhikapur Express train was returning to Kolkata. As it crossed a railway bridge on the Nagar river just before the Barsoi Junction, a youth riding a bike came on the same track. An eyewitness said the youth was trying to cross the river through the rail bridge. At the same time, the Kolkata-Radhikapur Express came from the opposite direction.

### Royal Bengal Tiger found dead

**Guwahati:** Another carcass of an adult Royal Bengal Tiger was recovered in Assam's world-famous Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve Tuesday, taking to four the number of big cats found dead there in the past five months, officials said. Park officials said that the 10-day old carcass of the tiger (sex not identified) was found near Laudubi area under the Kaziranga Range.

### Three of family stabbed to death

**Patna:** Three persons of a family were stabbed to death in Bihar's Rohtas district Tuesday evening, police said. The deceased were identified as Vijay Singh and his two sons, Kaju Singh and Dipak Singh. The incident occurred in Khudraw village under Darihat police station.

### Naxal killed

**Bijapur:** A Naxal was killed and a CRPF jawan sustained a bullet injury in an encounter between security forces and ultras in a forest of Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Tuesday, police said. A resident of a nearby village was also found injured at the encounter site, an official said.



There is no doubt that in Africa, as in other parts of the world, the Covid pandemic has created a new awareness and demand on the public health side

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

## UTTARAKHAND GOVT CANCELS KANWAR YATRA

The Uttarakhand government Tuesday cancelled the Kanwar Yatra in view of the looming threat of a third wave of Covid-19



## 'NO COMPROMISE ON COVID NORMS'

# PM concerned over big crowds

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 13:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday expressed concern over people crowding at hill stations and markets without wearing masks or observing social distancing norms, as he urged all to guard against complacency to prevent a third wave of the coronavirus spread.

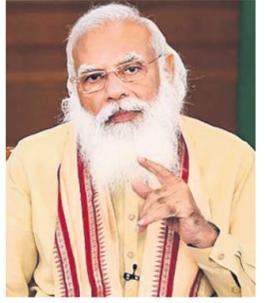
He asked the people to shun the argument that they "want to enjoy before the third wave of coronavirus" and stressed that there should be no compromise in following Covid-19 protocols.

"It is true that tourism, trade and business have been greatly affected due to the coronavirus. But today I will say with great emphasis that having huge crowds in hill stations, markets without masks and not following Covid protocols is a matter of concern and is not right," Modi said during an interaction with chief ministers of eight North-Eastern states through video conferencing.

The third wave can be prevented by remaining cautious and strictly following all protocols, he said and emphasised that the vaccination drive needs to be continuously ramped.

Modi said the Covid-19 situation was worrisome in some districts of the Northeastern region and urged the chief ministers to stay alert and act fast to check the further spread of the virus.

The health ministry has also flagged concerns over a surge in coronavirus cases in the Northeast states in the past few days and central teams have been deputed to seven states from that region -- Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura -- to sup-



port them in Covid-19 management. The prime minister said stricter steps were needed at the micro-level to check the virus spread and called for greater emphasis on micro-containment zones. During the interaction, the chief ministers discussed the issue of vaccine hesitancy and measures being taken to overcome it.

While Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told Prime Minister Modi that his government is trying to increase the vaccination rate in the tea garden areas of the state, which have wit-

nessed a spurt in Covid-19 cases, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu sought an increase in the supply of Covid-19 vaccines to the state.

The CMs gave an assurance of taking timely action to bring down the positivity rate as well as the number of cases in their respective states. Prime Minister Modi will interact with the chief ministers of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, Maharashtra and Kerala July 16 to discuss the Covid-19 situation in these states.

These are among the states where the infection numbers have seen an increase in several districts or have not in general seen a dip, unlike most other states. Noting the fast mutating nature of the coronavirus, Modi advised strict monitoring of the changes and keeping track of all variants. Experts are studying the mutations and their impact and in such a scenario, prevention and treatment are critical, he said.

Modi emphasised that the utility of physical distancing, masks, vaccines is clear and the path of testing, tracking and treatment is a proven strategy.



## India's 1st nCoV patient tests +ve

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thrissur, Kerala, July 13:** A woman medic, who was India's first Covid-19 patient, has tested positive again for the virus, health authorities said in Kerala's Thrissur today.

"She is reinfected with Covid-19. Her RT-PCR is positive, antigen is negative. She is asymptomatic," Thrissur District Medical Officer Dr KJ Reena told news agency Press Trust of India.

"Her samples were tested as she was prepared to go to New Delhi for study purposes. Then the RT-PCR result turned out to be positive," she told Press Trust of India. The woman is currently at home and "she is OK," the doctor said. It was January 30, 2020 that the third year medical student from Wuhan university tested positive for Covid-19, becoming India's first Covid-19 patient, days after she had returned home following semester holidays.

## Rahul meets Prashant ahead of likely rejig in Punjab

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 13:** Ahead of a likely organisational and government reshuffle in Punjab, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Tuesday met poll strategist Prashant Kishor at his residence.

Other party leaders like Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, AICC general secretary Punjab-in-charge Harish Rawat and KC Venugopal were also present during the meeting where they are learnt to have discussed the party's overhaul in Punjab and efforts to end factionalism in the state unit ahead of assembly elections. Kishor had earlier met Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh



on the impending changes in the Punjab Congress.

Amarinder Singh and Navjot Singh Sidhu, who have been at loggerheads, have made a number of public statements against each other in recent months. Amid the tiff, the Gandhis have met the Punjab chief minister and Sidhu separately.

There was no official word on what was discussed at the meeting with Kishor which lasted about an hour, but sources said the new Punjab Congress body would be announced in the next few days and the discussions were focused on it.

There have been hectic deliberations over the past few days over

the likely changes in the Punjab government and the party's state unit.

Both Sidhu and Amarinder Singh have also met the three-member AICC panel headed by Mallikarjun Kharge.

The panel had earlier submitted its report to the Congress chief with its recommendations.

The CM had then said any decision taken by Congress chief Sonia Gandhi would be acceptable to him and the party.

The role for Sidhu in the organisation has remained a sticking point from the beginning as he is keen on the post of PCC chief, which is not acceptable to the chief minister, according to party sources.

## Southwest Monsoon covers entire country

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 13:** After advancing over Delhi-NCR, the Southwest Monsoon covered the entire country Tuesday after a delay of five days, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

The Southwest Monsoon usually covers the entire country July 8. The earlier normal date for the monsoon to cover the entire country was July 15. Last year, the IMD revised its onset date for several areas. It is also one of the usual instances when monsoon has covered the national capital in the end. The monsoon covered its last outposts - the desert town of Jaisalmer and Ganganagar in Rajasthan - Monday but evaded Delhi. It covered Barmer, another desert district in Rajasthan some two weeks before its normal onset date. "In association with the continued prevalence of moist easterly winds from the Bay of Bengal in the lower levels since past four days, enhanced cloud cover and scattered to fairly widespread rainfall, the Southwest Monsoon has further advanced into remaining parts of the country including Delhi, remaining parts of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan," the IMD said.

## HC directs activist to delete tweets against minister Puri's wife

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 13:** The Delhi High Court Tuesday restrained activist Saket Gokhale from posting defamatory or scandalous tweets against former diplomat Lakshmi Murdeshwar Puri or her husband, Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, observing that reputations nurtured over years of selfless service and toil may crumble with a thoughtless barb.

In an interim order, the high court directed Gokhale to immediately delete from his Twitter account all tweets against Puri, saying the damage that she and her husband have suffered is appar-



ent but it is one of the unavoidable pitfalls of access to social media platforms.

Justice C Hari Shankar also said

if Gokhale fails to comply with the directions within 24 hours of the order, Twitter shall take down the tweets made against Puri, former

Assistant Secretary-General at the United Nations. Gokhale, in his tweets on June 13 and 26 made reference to certain property purchased by Puri in Switzerland and also referred to her husband. The court passed the order on a defamation suit filed by Lakshmi Puri seeking Rs 5 crore damages from Gokhale, also a freelance journalist, and a direction that he deletes the tweets. "It is an unfortunate truism, of human nature - which forms subject matter of philosophical debate since ages - that we prefer brickbats to bouquets. Criticism always makes for better press than praise, and the more vitriolic the criticism, the better,"

the court said in its 22-page verdict.

The exponential fashion in which social media platforms have evolved, has provided fertile soil for the growth and mushrooming of this unfortunate human tendency, it said. The court said reputations, nourished and nurtured over years of selfless service and toil, may crumble in an instant; one thoughtless barb is sufficient.

It said in the age of social media, desecration of the reputation of a public figure has become a child's play and all that is needed is the opening of a social media account and posting messages. Thousands of responses are received and in the process the reputation of the man,

who is targeted, becomes mud, it said. It added that senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing Puri, has pointed out that till the date of filing of the suit, the tweets posted by Gokhale had been "liked" by more than 26,270 users and "re-tweeted" by over 8,280 users.

The responding tweets by members of Gokhale's target audience are in very poor taste, containing abuses, allegations and opprobrious epithets against the couple, it said. Considering the false representations contained in the tweets, the court said it required "immediate peremptory orders", without awaiting a formal response from Gokhale.

## STRICT VIGIL



An Indian Army soldier during patrolling duty at the Line of Control (LOC) between India and Pakistan in Poonch. PTI PHOTO

## Take up our demands in Parl before any other business: SKM

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 13:** The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) Tuesday said that it will press the opposition parties to ensure that the farmers' demands on the three new agri laws and MSP are addressed in Parliament before any other business is transacted during the upcoming Monsoon session.

The umbrella body of over 40 farmer unions that is spearheading the agitation for the scrapping of the central agri laws said the preparation for their planned protests at the Parliament from July 22 is in full swing.

"Farmers and leaders from Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and even from distant states like West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka are arriving at the borders of Delhi to participate in the protest. "As planned by SKM, the protest will

be planned and executed methodically and peacefully with 200 farmers participating in the protest every day," it said.

The SKM said that any attempt to stop the farmers from protesting "will be illegal and unconstitutional". The amalgam said it will issue letters to all the opposition MPs of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha July 17 as a precursor to the protest July 22, "demanding that they raise the demands of the farmers in Parliament and ensure that these demands are discussed and met before any other business is transacted in Parliament," it said.

Farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at Delhi's borders for over seven months. They are demanding a rollback of the three contentious agri laws and also seeking a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP).

## PNB SCAM CHOKSI'S CLOSE AIDE GETS BAIL

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, July 13:** A trial court here has granted bail to Dhanesh Vrajlal Sheth, the managing director of three firms accused in the multi-crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud case and a close aide of fugitive businessman Mehul Choksi.

Sheth's lawyer Vijay Aggarwal argued during the case hearing Monday that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) was trying to "fire from the shoulder of the judge".

He said that in this matter a supplementary charge sheet was filed by the CBI, summons were issued by the court and cognizance was taken June 15 this year.

He argued that summons were also issued by the court to Sheth, managing director of Nakshatra Brands Ltd. and pursuant to such summons he appeared and filed bail application before the court.

Aggarwal vehemently argued that the investigation was completed in the present case and a charge sheet has been filed without the arrest of the accused person, which depicts that there was no need for custodial interrogation of Sheth. Aggarwal also brought light to the fact that a company cannot be represented till an application under section 305 CrPc is not filed. He emphasised that 'it has been three years since the accused persons have not been arrested, and now the CBI is trying to fire from the shoulder of the judge'. Aggarwal said that the judge granted bail to the accused person on a surety of Rs one lakh.



# international

## of the day quote

Given the progress that has been made, we can say that we are close to the conclusion of the Vienna talks. The weight of resolved issues outweighs that of the unresolved issues

SAEED KHATIBZADEH | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN, IRAN

If Americans with more than 100,000 troops have not been able to achieve anything inside Afghanistan over the past 20 years, what results are they going to achieve with a significantly smaller presence outside Afghanistan within Central Asia

SERGEI LAVROV | FOREIGN MINISTER, RUSSIA

Immigration has long contributed socially, culturally and economically to New Zealand. It can be an important source of skilled labor and new ideas. It is the right time for an immigration reset

GRANT ROBERTSON | DEPUTY PM, NZ

## SHORT TAKES

### BHIM-UPI services started in Bhutan

New Delhi: As part of the plans to extend its digital footprint in the neighbouring countries, India Tuesday launched the BHIM-UPI-led services in Bhutan. The launch was carried out virtually by Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, and the Finance Minister of Bhutan, Lyonpo Namgyal Tshering. Speaking on the occasion, Sitharaman said that the services have been started in Bhutan under India's neighbourhood first policy and the country is proud and happy to share them with its valued neighbour.

### Ever Given leaves Egyptian waters

Ismailia: The Ever Given container ship that had blocked the Suez Canal in March left Egyptian waters at 4 am local time following inspections at Port Said, a canal source said Tuesday, according to news agency Reuters. Ship tracker MarineTraffic showed the Ever Given to be underway in the Mediterranean Sea north of the Egyptian coast. The container ship resumes its voyage to Rotterdam 112 days after becoming wedged across a southern section of the Egyptian waterway for nearly a week and disrupting global trade.

### Ex-Jordan FinMin jailed for 15 years

Amman: Bassem Awadallah, Jordan's former Finance Minister and royal court chief, as well as royal family member Sharif Hassan Ben Zeid have been sentenced to 15 years in prison for inciting acts against the crown, the state-run Petra news agency reported. The sentencing Monday came after Awadallah and Ben Zeid were accused of inciting against King Abdullah II and seeking to create chaos in the country, reports Xinhua news agency.

### Taliban warns Turkey over Kabul airport

Kabul: The Taliban warned Turkey Tuesday against possible plans to keep some troops in Afghanistan to run and guard Kabul's main airport after the withdrawal of foreign troops, calling the strategy "reprehensible" and warning of "consequences". Ankara, which has offered to run and guard the airport in the capital after NATO's withdrawal, has been in talks with allies, namely the US, on aspects of financial, political and logistical support.



After ten weeks of declines, deaths are increasing again. The Delta variant is ripping around the world at a scorching pace, driving a new spike in cases and deaths

TEDEOS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHO

## US OKAYS BLUE ORIGIN LICENSE FOR HUMAN SPACE TRAVEL

The Federal Aviation Administration said Monday that it approved a Blue Origin license to carry humans into space ahead of Bezos flight. Billionaire Jeff Bezos is set to fly to the edge of space on Blue Origin's maiden crewed voyage July 20



# More unmarked graves found near Canadian school

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ottawa, July 13: More than 160 unmarked graves have been found near a former indigenous residential school in Canada's British Columbia province, according to a media report.

The Penelakut Tribe found the "undocumented and unmarked" graves around the Kuper Island Industrial School operated from 1890 until 1975 on the Penelakut Island, formerly known as the Kuper

Island, where many horrors have already been documented, Xinhua news agency quoted the CTV report as saying Monday night.

The report however, did not specify how the graves were found. June 30, the indigenous community Aq'am announced the discovery of the remains of 182 people in unmarked graves around a former indigenous residential school near the town of Cranbrook in British Columbia.

June 24, the Cowessess First



It is the fourth discovery of unmarked graves near indigenous residential schools in the country

Nation, an indigenous group in Saskatchewan province, announced a preliminary discovery of 751 unmarked graves near a former indigenous residential school. May 28, the remains of 215 indigenous children were discovered

in unmarked graves near the Kamloops Indian Residential School, also in British Columbia. Survivors of Canada's indigenous residential schools said the findings were just the tip of the iceberg, renewing their feelings of grief and trauma.

An estimated 150,000 indigenous children across Canada were reportedly removed from their homes and forced to attend residential schools between the 1890 and as recently as 1996.

# SA sees worst unrest in yrs

The violence was triggered by the jailing of former President Jacob Zuma, but the situation has evolved into an outpouring of anger over persistent poverty and inequality



AGENCIES

Johannesburg, July 13: Protesters clashed with police in several areas of South Africa and looters ransacked shopping malls Tuesday as frustrations over poverty and inequality boiled over into severe protests.

Security officials said the government was working to ensure the violence and looting did not spread further, but they stopped short of declaring a state of emergency.

"No amount of unhappiness or personal circumstances from our

people gives the right to anyone to loot, vandalise and do as they please and break the law," Police Minister Bheki Cele told a news conference.

Troops were moving in to flash-points Tuesday as outnumbered police seemed helpless to prevent attacks and looting on businesses in Zuma's home province KwaZulu-Natal and in Gauteng province, where the country's biggest city, Johannesburg, is located. Columns of armoured personnel carriers rolled down highways.

Shops, petrol stations and government buildings have been forced

## Death toll mounts to 32

A further 22 people have died during unrest raging in South Africa, a provincial official said Tuesday, taking the national death count from days of violence to 32. President Cyril Ramaphosa Monday deployed troops to help police halt the violence and looting sparked by the jailing of ex-president Jacob Zuma. The violence has so far been confined to the two most populous provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, which houses the economic hub of Johannesburg.

to close. Looters carried off items ranging from beer and foodstuffs to household appliances, footage showed, and at least one shopping mall was completely trashed.

On the streets, protesters hurled stones and police who responded with rubber bullets, witnesses said.

Cele said 757 people had been arrested so far. He said the government would act to prevent it from spreading further and warned that people would not be allowed "to make a mockery of our democratic state".

Defence Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula said she did not think a state of emergency should be imposed yet.



Commuters cross a street during office hours ahead of the 2020 Summer Olympics, Tuesday, in Tokyo

PTI PHOTO

## GUILLAIN BARRE SYNDROME

# 'J&J' vax linked to rare neurological disorder

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, July 13: The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) added a new warning on the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine, saying the jab has been linked to a serious but rare side effect called Guillain-Barre syndrome.

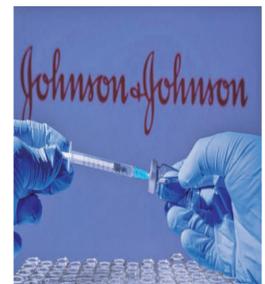
Guillain Barre syndrome is a neurological disorder in which the body's immune system damages nerve cells, causing muscle weakness and sometimes paralysis, Xinhua news agency reported citing the FDA as saying.

The syndrome has occurred in some people who have received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, the FDA in a letter Monday.

In most of these people, symptoms began within 42 days following injections of the vaccine, it added.

The chance of having this occur is very low, the agency said.

About 100 preliminary reports of Guillain-Barre syndrome have been detected in vaccine recipients after the administration of 12.8 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson jab in the US, said the Centers for Disease Control and



Prevention (CDC).

Of these reports, 95 were serious and required hospitalization, and one had died.

The cases have largely been reported about two weeks after vaccination and mostly in men, many aged 50 and older, according to the CDC.

Johnson & Johnson said Monday it has been in discussions with the FDA and other regulators about rare cases of Guillain-Barre syndrome.

The chance of having this occur is very low, and the rate of reported cases exceeds the background rate by a small degree, the company said in a statement.

# Oli accuses SC of passing verdict in favour of Oppn

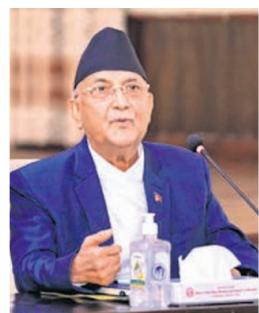
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, July 13: A defiant Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli Tuesday accused the Supreme Court of "deliberately" passing a verdict in favour of the Opposition parties and said the judgement will have a "long-term impact" on the multi-party parliamentary system in the country.

Addressing the nation, 69-year old Oli also underlined that despite being "the people's choice", he is resigning from the post as the apex court has given an order to appoint Nepali Congress chief and Opposition leader Sher Bahadur Deuba as the Prime Minister in his place.

"It is the duty of players to play the game. The referee is there to maintain fair play, not to help any one team to win," Oli said speaking in Nepali language.

Stating that his party will implement the apex court verdict, Oli insisted that it is sure to destroy the party system and multi-party democracy.



It is the duty of players to play the game. The referee is there to maintain fair play, not to help any one team to win

K P SHARMA OLI | EX-PM, NEPAL

# Iraq Covid hosp fire claims 92

AGENCIES

Nassiriya, July 13: The death toll from a fire that tore through a Coronavirus hospital in southern Iraq rose to 92, health officials said Tuesday, as authorities faced accusations of negligence from grieving relatives and a doctor who works there.

More than 100 people - patients and visitors - were injured in the blaze Monday night in Nassiriya, officials said.

Rescue teams were using a heavy crane to remove the charred and melted remains of the part of the city's al-Hussain hospital where Covid-19 patients were being treated, as relatives gathered nearby.

A medic at the hospital, who declined to give his name and whose shift ended a few hours before the fire broke out, said the absence of basic safety measures meant it was an accident in the making.

"The hospital lacks a fire sprinkler system or even a simple fire alarm," he told Reuters.



"We complained many times over the past three months that a tragedy could happen any moment from a cigarette stub but every time we get the same answer from health officials: 'we don't have enough money'."

Health and civil defence managers in the city and the hospital's manager had been suspended and arrested Monday on the orders of Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, his office said.

# Pak to drop 350 cases related to temple burning

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Peshawar, July 13: Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government Tuesday said that criminal cases against 350 people accused of burning down a temple last year will be withdrawn, claiming that the minority Hindu community has pardoned them.

According to the interior department sources of the province, members of the Hindu community decided to pardon the accused persons in a jirga constituted by the government to settle the matter.

A jirga is a traditional assembly of elders to make decisions by consensus.

They said that the government had constituted the jirga which amicably resolved all the issues that created an unrest between the local Muslim and Hindu communities in the area.

# Facial recognition tech fights Covid in Chinese city

SURVEILLANCE HAS BEEN WIDELY USED TO COMBAT COVID-19 IN CHINA, WHICH WAS THE FIRST COUNTRY TO ADOPT A QR CODE SYSTEM TO LOG TEST RESULTS AND TRACK CONTACTS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Beijing, July 13: Facial recognition tech linked to personal health codes has been rolled out in a Chinese city bordering Myanmar as authorities seek to squash a coronavirus outbreak.

China is one of the world's most surveilled countries, with the government rushing to install more than 200 million CCTV cameras to "cover all public spaces" in the past five years.

But this is the first publicly reported instance of facial recognition being used to track a person's movements and health status as they enter and exit residential areas, supermarkets, transport hubs and other public places.

"Everyone who comes in and out needs to have their (health)



code and face scanned to pass," said officials in Ruili, in Yunnan province. Ruili discovered 155 cases

over the past week in one of the worst virus flareups in recent months to hit China, according to

data published Tuesday.

"Security tools such as facial recognition cameras, smart door locks and road barriers (run by police or community volunteers) have been put in place in key areas," local authorities said in a statement.

The scanners can also check the temperatures of individuals, China National Radio reported.

There are no details on how long the database will hold records or whether officials will shut down the system, which is monitored by the city's pandemic prevention task force, once the outbreak is contained.

## Privacy Concerns

China has adopted a zero-risk approach to Coronavirus clusters.

It has largely curbed the spread of the disease since it first emerged

in the central city of Wuhan in late 2019, with tough border controls, mass testing, lockdowns and tie-ups with big tech for tracking.

But the slew of new health monitoring apps has also raised privacy concerns.

A widely used app tracking travel history and virus tests developed by Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba shared data with the police, according to a New York Times investigation in January.

At the height of the pandemic, police in major cities wore helmets equipped with facial recognition and infrared cameras that gauged pedestrians' temperature.

Rights groups have criticised China's omnipresent surveillance net, saying it is used to silence dissent and target minority ethnic groups.



**Innovations and startup efforts in FMCG last mile distribution are changing the sales and distribution landscape. Recent shifts in consumer behaviour has opened up multiple opportunities to scale and transform how we do business**

**NISABA GODREJ | CHAIRPERSON AND MD, GODREJ CONSUMER PRODUCTS**

## MUSK BUYS A \$250K TICKET

SpaceX and Tesla CEO Elon Musk has bought a \$250,000 ticket to space from fellow billionaire Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic. The Wall Street Journal reports that Musk had bought a ticket for his space ride before Branson touched the edge of space Sunday



## of the day quote

The plants in Haryana will continue to work in full capacity. Employment will remain full, there's no change in employment. No production is going away from Gurugram. If this (Dzire) goes away some other model will be made here. It's a rationalisation of how to make different models in the most efficient manner



**RC BHARGAVA | CHAIRMAN, MARUTI SUZUKI INDIA**

The recent surge in inflation outside Europe is driven by short-term demand and supply factors related to the pandemic, which is still constraining business activity in many regions despite the vaccines' success in cutting death rates. We expect inflation to return towards policy targets by 2022



**ARUN SINGH | GLOBAL CHIEF ECONOMIST, DUN & BRADSTREET**

Housing properties have become very affordable because of historically low interest rates on home loans and fairly stable property prices over the last 5-6 years. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has made us realise how important it is to own a house and that too of a certain size conducive for remote work



**MANI RANGARAJAN | GROUP COO, HOUSING.COM, MAKAAN.COM AND PROPTIGER**

## SHORT TAKES

### NTPC to set up largest solar park

**New Delhi:** State-owned NTPC Tuesday said it will set up country's single largest solar park at Rann of Kutch in Khavada, Gujarat following the go-ahead from the government. The 4,750 MW renewable energy park at Rann of Kutch will be set up by NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd, the power giant said. "NTPC REL, a 100% subsidiary of NTPC, has received the go-ahead from MNRE to set up 4,750 MW renewable energy park at Rann of Kutch," it said.

### Zomato IPO opens today

**New Delhi:** Food delivery platform Zomato's ₹9,375 crore IPO, India's biggest this year, will open today amid buzz of a strong response from global institutional investors. The IPO will be open for subscription till July 16. At ₹72-76 per share price band, the company aims to raise ₹9,375 crore through the offer. Zomato backed by Jack Ma's Ant Group will be among the first from a long list of Indian unicorn startups to launch an IPO.

### Adani group takes over MIAL

**Gandhinagar:** The Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL), a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Limited, has taken over the management control of Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL), India's second busiest airport by both passenger and cargo traffic, from the GVK Group following a board meeting of MIAL held Tuesday, as per a statement issued by the Adani Enterprises.

### EU prolongs eco sanctions

**Moscow:** The Council of the European Union (EU) has announced its decision to prolong sanctions against Russia by an additional six months over delays to implement agreements. The Council Monday, said that EU leaders have unanimously decided to roll over the economic sanctions in place against Russia over its failure to fully implement the Minsk agreements on the settlement of the Donbas conflict.

# OPPO bets big on AI-driven 6G networks in next decade

**Mobile communication technology evolves in decade-long periods, and standardisation of the next generation of communication technology is expected to begin in 2025, with commercial implementation following in around 2035**

**HENRY TANG | CHIEF 5G SCIENTIST, OPPO**



6G networks self-optimize and dynamically administrate themselves. The 6G technology will fundamentally revolutionise how AI infers, learns, interacts, and is applied, making the technology and its benefits available to all, according to a 6G white paper released by the OPPO Research Institute. "Mobile communication technology evolves in decade-long pe-

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 13:** As 5G technology slowly but steadily spreads across the world, smartphone brand OPPO Tuesday released its 6G strategy, saying that artificial intelligence (AI) will act as a new dimension to the next generation of communication networks, helping

riods, and standardisation of the next generation of communication technology is expected to begin in 2025, with commercial implementation following in around 2035," said Henry Tang, OPPO's Chief 5G Scientist. "Looking towards 2035, OPPO expects the number of intelligent agents in the world to far exceed the number of humans. Therefore, the

next generation of communication technology, 6G, should be able to serve the needs not only of people but of all forms of intelligence and their various interactions," he elaborated.

OPPO has established a pre-research team to conduct preliminary research on 6G service and technology requirements, key technologies and system features.

Empowered by 6G, smart devices will become important participants and users of AI, downloading and deploying AI algorithms at different application levels to create new immersive experiences while also constantly collecting data to feed more advanced AI models.

For example, in the case of autonomous vehicles, 6G networks will be able to assign the most appropriate AI algorithm and the optimal communication connection based on the location of the vehicle and the

current physical environment.

The vehicle will be able to immediately download and run AI algorithms that have been trained by countless other vehicles and devices, allowing the vehicle to provide the safest and most comfortable journey for the passenger.

Under the proposed network, 6G devices will be allocated to an AI domain-based on the location and requirements of the device.

This AI domain will then issue the most suitable AI algorithm and task needed to deliver the desired services while providing the most optimal communication connection to carry out the relevant tasks.

"Unlike 4G and 5G networks, the AI used for inferring and decision making in 6G networks will be organically integrated on the device side and the network side, with the device assuming a more important role," the OPPO research team said.

## France fines Google \$593 million over copyright row



**News publishers APIG, SEPM and AFP accuse the tech giant of having failed to open talks in good faith with them to find common ground for the remuneration of news content online**

REUTERS

**Paris, July 13:** France's antitrust watchdog slapped a 500 million euro (\$593 million) fine on Alphabet's Google Tuesday for failing to comply fully with temporary orders it had given in a row with the country's news publishers.

The US tech giant must within the next two months come up with proposals on how it would compensate news agencies and other publishers for the use of their news. If it does not do that, it would face additional fines of up to 900,000 euros per day.

News publishers APIG, SEPM and AFP accuse the tech giant of having failed to open talks in good faith with them to find common ground for the remuneration of news content online, under a recent EU directive that creates so-called "neighbouring rights".

The case in itself focused on whether Google breached temporary orders issued by the antitrust authority, which demanded such talks take place within three months with any news publishers that ask for them.

APIG, which represents most major print news publishers (Le Figaro, Le Monde etc.), remains one of the plaintiffs, in spite of having signed a framework agreement, since it has been put on hold pending antitrust decision, sources have told Reuters.

## 'Operationalise coal blocks to recover state's economy'



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** A leading industry body has urged the state government to expedite the operationalisation of coal mining blocks in Odisha for an overall socio-economic development.

In a letter to the Chief Secretary and Chief Development Commissioner of Odisha, a leading industry body urged that to ensure smooth and fast execution of the operationalisation of the coal mining blocks, a dedicated cell should be established by the state government under the purview of the chief minister's office (CMO).

The letter highlighted, how, since 2015, a total of 12 coal mines have been allocated and auctioned in Odisha. They have a production capacity of 97 million ton per annum and will generate revenue of over ₹7,000 crore per annum for the state exchequer, creating over 1 lakh direct and indirect local jobs.

However, of these 12 coal mines, not a single private sector mine has been able to start production due to delay in land acquisition and statutory approvals. They remain idle from contributing to the economic growth of the state.

Requesting government's intervention at the earliest, the industry body suggested a fortnightly review mechanism of a dedicated cell under the commandship of the CMO to grant all permissions required to expedite the land acquisition and statutory approvals to start the mine production at the earliest.

## CANARA BANK ED VISITS CITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** Canara Bank, Executive Director, A Manimekhalai paid a visit to the city July 12. During her visit, she unveiled 'Open Learning Systems', a childcare society, dedicated towards upliftment and empowerment of the deprived and vulnerable children of the society.

The organisation provides shelter, education, counselling, vocational training and empowers the children to lead a dignified life in the society. Under Canara Bank's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme, Manimekhalai handed over five steel almirahs and five ceiling fans to the organisation.

This noble activity was highly appreciated by the beneficiaries. During her visit, she also inaugurated the newly opened Central Processing Hub (CPH) in the presence of General Manager MG Pandit, GA Wing, General Manager BL Meena, Circle Office, Bhubaneswar.



## S&P affirms India's rating at 'BBB-'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 13:** S&P Global Ratings Tuesday affirmed India's sovereign rating at the lowest investment grade of 'BBB-' for the 14th year in a row with a stable outlook, and said that the country's strong external settings will act as a buffer against financial strains despite elevated government funding needs over the next 24 months.

The sovereign credit ratings on India reflect the economy's above-average long-term real GDP growth, sound external profile, and evolving monetary settings, S&P Global Ratings stated.

"India's democratic institutions promote policy stability and compromise, and also underpin the ratings. These strengths are balanced against vulnerabilities stemming from the country's low per capita income and weak fiscal settings, including consistently elevated general government deficits and indebtedness," it said in a statement.

S&P Global Ratings has forecast economic activity in India to begin to normalise throughout the remainder of fiscal 2022, resulting in real GDP growth of about 9.5 per cent. A significant proportion of this rebound will be due to the very weak base in the prior fiscal year, when the economy contracted



**S&P Global Ratings has forecast economic activity in India to begin to normalise throughout the remainder of fiscal 2022, resulting in real GDP growth of about 9.5%**

by a record 7.3 per cent.

India's fiscal settings are weak, and deficits will remain elevated over the coming years even as the government undertakes some consolidation. The country's strong external settings help buffer the risks associated with the government's high deficits and debt stock, S&P said while affirming 'BBB-' long-term and 'A-3' short-term unsolicited foreign and local currency sovereign ratings on India.

"The stable outlook reflects our expectation that India's economy will recover following the resolution of the pandemic," it added.

## TRAI REPORT

# 22% in state have no access to mobile network

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** The mobile subscribers' base reached about 3.45 crore in April this year, as per the latest telecom subscriber data released by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). According to the TRAI report, over 1.51 lakh new subscribers were added in the state in April, though it was lower than in March. The total net mobile subscription was over 3.33 lakh in March.

Moreover, eight states have less tele-density than the all-India average tele-density at the end of April, 2021. "Odisha still figure among the bottom five states/telecom circles with tele-density far



below the national average. Around 22% people in the state still have no access to mobile network. Odisha's tele-density is 78.79% at the end of April, 2021," said TRAI's report.

Service area in Delhi-NCR has the maximum tele-density of 281.65% and the Bihar service area has the minimum tele-density of 53.60% at the end of same month.

TRAI's mobile subscription data said that Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel were the only operators to

add new subscribers in the state in April, 2021. Jio added 2.69 lakh new mobile subscribers, the highest in state in the same month while Airtel added just 16,513 subscribers.

On the other hand, BSNL lost 84,640 subscribers in April, followed by Vodafone Idea (Vi) which lost 49,707 subscribers during the same period, revealed the data published by TRAI.

With this addition, Jio achieved over 42% CMS (Customer Market Share) in Odisha, having nearly 1.46 crore total mobile subscribers. But Airtel saw a drop in CMS from 32.55% to 32.45%. Similarly, Vi lost its market share to 6.7% while BSNL's market share stood at 18.5% in Odisha.

# WFH fuelling cyber attacks, says global financial watchdog

REUTERS

**London, July 13:** Financial firms may need to bolster their defences in the face of rocketing cyber attacks after employees began working from home, the Financial Stability Board (FSB) said Tuesday.

The FSB, which coordinates financial rules for the G20 group of nations, said remote working since economies went into lockdown to fight Covid-19 opened up new possibilities for cyber attacks. Working from home (WFH) is expected to stay in some form across the financial services industry and beyond.

"Most cyber frameworks did not envisage a scenario of near-universal remote working and the exploitation of such a situation by cyber threat actors," the FSB said

in a report to G20 ministers and central banks.

The report is a first take on lessons learned from the pandemic's impact on financial stability.

Covid-19 was the first major test of tougher financial rules put in place after the 2008 global financial crisis and most parts of the system coped well, the FSB said.

Lockdown restrictions are easing but financial firms have told employees they will be allowed to work from home several days a week permanently, and the rest of the time in the office.

Cyber activities such as phishing, malware and ransomware grew from fewer than 5,000 per week in February 2020 to more than 2,00,000 per week in late April

The FSB, which coordinates financial rules for the G20 group of nations, said remote working since economies went into lockdown to fight Covid-19 opened up new possibilities for cyber attacks

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# AIMING FOR SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

## Odisha hockey superstar Amit Rohidas focuses on helping India win a medal at Tokyo Olympics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, July 13:** It took him 12 years to realise his Olympic dream and India defender Amit Rohidas says he is now just focussing on helping the men's hockey team return with a medal from the upcoming Tokyo Games.

"It has taken me 12 years to reach here. I am extremely delighted to be part of the Olympic squad, one of my biggest dreams has been fulfilled now," said Rohidas in a release issued by Hockey India.

"I am thankful to every coach who helped me groom as a hockey player. My sole focus is to have a successful campaign at the upcoming Tokyo Olympics and the recent successful tours have definitely

been a boost for the team's confidence."

The 28-year-old defender, who has played 97 matches for the national side, hails from the same village in Sundargarh (in Odisha) where three-time Olympian and former India captain Dilip Tirkey was also born.

"He (Dilip Tirkey) has inspired many from my village to look at hockey as an engine of change. From where I belong, hockey is not only a sporting discipline but a vehicle for socio-economic growth. I have become the first non-tribal hockey Olympian from Odisha."

Rohidas made his India debut at the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup 2013 in Malaysia. He was also part of the team that won the silver medal at

the 2013 Asia Cup. He was the vice-captain of the junior national team for the 2013 men's World Cup in New Delhi.

"My first big break came in 2009, when I was selected for the U-18 Asia Cup, and bagged the Best Player of the Tournament award for my seven goals," he said.

"Then, I featured in the silver medal-winning Indian team of Sultan of Johor Cup in 2013. I was then finally promoted to the senior team.

"Soon after, I was named as Manpreet Singh's deputy for the FIH Junior Men's World Cup held in Delhi, where we couldn't do well, and I felt like everything was over for me."

Rohidas cemented his place in the senior national team after impressing with his defensive duties

in the 2017 Hockey India League. He made his comeback to the national side on the Belgium tour and since then he has been an integral part of the team.

"I got a chance to feature in the Hockey India League, alongside legendary players like Moritz Fuertes, Ashley Jackson, and Austin Smith. I started my club career in 2013 with Ranchi Rhinos, which won the title that year, and I was a part of Kalinga Lancers that became Champions in 2017.

"After a good campaign at Hockey India League, I finally made my comeback in 2017 with the Belgian tour; and ever since, be it the World Cup, the Asian Games or the Commonwealth Games, I haven't looked back."

# INDIA MOURNS YASHPAL'S DEATH

India's cricket fraternity was in shock and disbelief as it mourned the death of 1983 World Cup hero Yashpal Sharma, paying glowing tributes to the former batsman, who died Tuesday after suffering a massive cardiac arrest at the age of 66, with his teammates from that historic triumph breaking down while remembering him

**KAPIL DEV:** I won't be able to speak

**DILIP VENGSAKAR:** It is unbelievable. He was the fittest among all of us. I had asked him that day when we met how about his routine. He was a vegetarian, teetotaler, used to have soup for his dinner and very particular about his morning walks. I am just shocked

**BALWINDER SINGH SANDHU:** Shocking, this is the worst news that I have received. It is like... '83 team is like a family, one of our family members is no more, it is so shocking. We had three tours together and there are a lot of memories, which I cannot speak right now. I am so saddened by this news

**KRIS SRIKANTH:** He was one of the main heroes who helped us lift the 1983 World Cup. I have great memories of playing with him. My condolences to his family. As a co-selector in picking the team for the 2011 World Cup, Yashpal played a key role

**KIRTI AZAD:** He told me that day we met that I had lost weight. We had a great reunion. I remember the very first game in the 1983 world Cup playing the mighty Windies with that quartet of fast bowlers, he set the agenda and we won that game. Nowadays people say (Ravindra) Jadeja hits stumps regularly but so did Yashpal. He was a live wire on the field

**SURENDRA BHAVE:** You don't associate anyone as a good talent search man, but Yashpal had his own reading of the game and he spotted talent very quickly and he was good at that. He wouldn't mind travelling extensively to see first-class cricket

**ANURAG THAKUR:** Saddened by the passing away of ace cricketer & 1983 World Cup winning member Sh Yashpal Sharma. He had an illustrious career & was India's second-highest run getter at the 1983 World Cup. He was also an umpire and national selector. His contribution won't be forgotten

**SACHIN TENDULKAR:** Shocked and deeply

pained by the demise of Yashpal Sharma ji. Have fond memories of watching him bat during the 1983 World Cup. His contribution to Indian cricket shall always be remembered. My sincere condolences to the entire Sharma family

**JAY SHAH:** Shocked and pained to learn about the sudden demise of Shri Yashpal Sharma. He will always be remembered for his knock of 89 runs against West Indies, which provided impetus to India's world cup journey in 1983 and his overall contribution for Team India

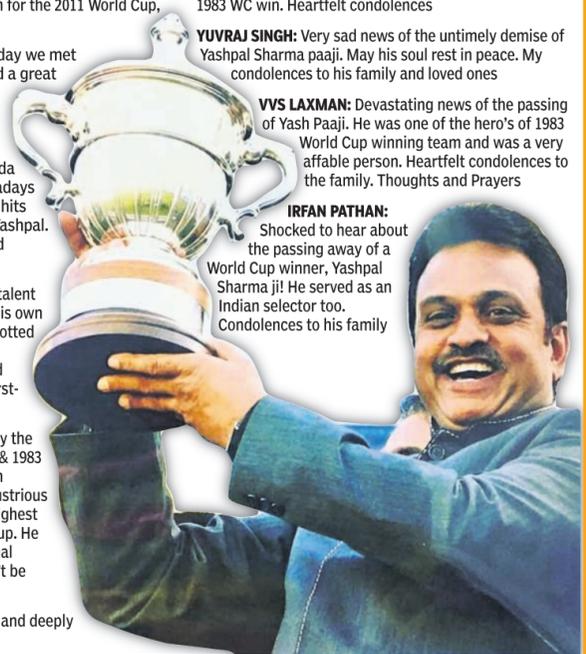
**ANIL KUMBLE:** Shocking to hear about the passing of Yashpal Sharma. One of the heroes of our first World Cup win. Condolences to his family and friends

**VIRENDER SEHWAG:** So sorry to hear about Yashpal Sharma Paaji's passing away, one of the heroes of our 1983 WC win. Heartfelt condolences

**YUVRAJ SINGH:** Very sad news of the untimely demise of Yashpal Sharma paaji. May his soul rest in peace. My condolences to his family and loved ones

**VVS LAXMAN:** Devastating news of the passing of Yash Paaji. He was one of the hero's of 1983 World Cup winning team and was a very affable person. Heartfelt condolences to the family. Thoughts and Prayers

**IRFAN PATHAN:** Shocked to hear about the passing away of a World Cup winner, Yashpal Sharma ji! He served as an Indian selector too. Condolences to his family



## Praggnanandhaa, Nihal Sarin, Iniyan in round 2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sochi (Russia), July 13:** India's young stars R Praggnanandhaa, Nihal Sarin and P Iniyan advanced to the second round of the men's event in the FIDE World Cup chess tournament here Tuesday.

Teen prodigy and Grandmaster Praggnanandhaa outwitted Paulo Bersamina (the Philippines) 1.5-0.5 with a draw in the second game after having won the opening game of the two-game mini match on Monday. The 15-year old Chennai lad will take on Gabriel Sargissian (Armenia) in the second round.

Birthday boy Nihal Sarin drew the second game against IM Arthur Ssegwanyi of Uganda to secure a 1.5-0.5 win in round one. The Indian will now take on Sanan Sjugirov of Russia in round two.

Iniyan overcame the challenge of higher-rated Swiss player Sebastian Bogner 1.5-0.5 to secure a spot in the second round, where he will meet Evgeny Tomashevsky.

Also advancing were GM Aravindh Chithambaram VR, a 2-0 winner over Michael Concio Jr and the experienced B Adhiban who

beat Chilesto Chipanga of Malawi.

The winners join Vidit Santosh Gujrathi and P Harikrishna, who received first-round byes, in the second round.

Talented, young GM D Gukesh, whose two-game mini-match against Poland's Pawel Teclaf ended in a 1-1 draw, will play in a tie-breaker on Wednesday to determine the winner.

Meanwhile in the women's event, Padmini Rout and R Vaishali joined compatriot Bhakti Kulkarni in the second round. While Rout outplayed Azerbaijan's Ulviyya Fatsaliyeva, Vaishali defeated Zhou Qiyu (Canada). Both won by 2-0 margins.

Rout will meet Sarasadat Khademalsharieh, while Vaishali, sister of Praggnanandhaa, runs into Bela Khotenashvili (Georgia) in round two.

Kulkarni had got a walkover from Russian opponent Anastasya Paramzina Monday. D Harika will be joining them in the second round, courtesy a bye in the first round.

Matches in the FIDE World Cup are being played in the classical format.

## Konrad triumphs Stage 16



AGENCIES

**Paris, July 13:** Katrick Konrad claimed Tuesday the biggest win of his career on stage 16 of the Tour de France, celebrating a Pyrenean breakthrough triumph after riding solo for 35 kilometres.

The Bora-Hansgrohe rider prevailed from the day's breakaway to beat Italian champion Sonny

Colbrelli and Australian Michael Matthews, who were second and third, respectively.

The Austrian champion was an aggressive presence in a break that only formed around the halfway mark, first bridging from a chase group to a leading trio on the Col de la Core before going solo on the Col de Portet d'Aspet.

David Gaudu (Groupama-FDJ)

and Sonny Colbrelli (Bahrain Victorious) rode clear from the chase group on the Portet d'Aspet and were just 20 seconds in arrears at the summit. However, that doubled on the wet and treacherous descent, where Fabio Casartelli lost his life on the 1995 Tour but where there were thankfully no crashes Tuesday.

Konrad still had plenty to do as the road flattened out in the final 20km, not least the Cote d'Aspret-Sarrat, the fourth climb of the day and a sting in the tail at 8.4 per cent over 800 metres.

Gaudu, who'd slotted back into a larger chase group, launched another acceleration there but it was in vain and Konrad safely negotiated the final few wet kilometres to raise his arms in Saint-Gaudens.

Colbrelli got the better of Michael Matthews (BikeExchange) in the sprint for second place, neither taking top honours but both making inroads on green jersey Mark Cavendish in the points classification.

Despite a frantic and fluid first half of the stage, it turned into a quiet day for the general classification contenders, as race leader Tadej Pogacar's UAE Emirates teammates led the peloton home more than 12 minutes in arrears.

## Indian sailors land in Tokyo for Olympics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Tokyo, July 13:** The Indian sailing team Tuesday became the first from the country's contingent to arrive here for the Olympics which begins July 23.

The pictures of the Indian sailing team comprising Varun Thakkar, Ganapathy Chengappa, Vishnu Saravanan and Nethra Kumaran and their coaches arriving at the Haneda airport were put up by Sports Authority of India.

Nethra Kumaran will compete in the laser radial event, Vishnu Saravanan in laser standard class and the pair of Varun Thakkar and Ganapathy Chengappa in 49er class. The sailing event starts July 25.

For the first time in history, a record four sailors will represent India at the Games. This is also the first time that the country will field sailors in three events.

Prior to their departure for Tokyo Monday, the sailors had been training in different countries across Europe, which were funded by the government's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)

### Games Village opens

**TOKYO:** The Olympics Village opened Tuesday under a state of emergency just ahead of the start of the Olympics July 23. Athletes will be tested daily in the village, after being tested at least twice before leaving home, and again upon arrival. They will also be required to wear masks in the village - even if they are vaccinated - and be reminded constantly with signage about social distancing, washing hands and ventilating room areas. About 11,000 athletes are expected for the Olympics and 4,400 for the Paralympics, which commences August 24.

While Nethra was training in Spain, the duo of Thakkar and Ganapathy were preparing for the Games in Portugal. Saravanan was in Malta for his preparations.

India had competed in only one event in the previous editions while two sailors represented the country on four occasions.

Nethra was the first to make the cut as she became the first Indian woman sailor to qualify for the Games in laser radial class.

# Euro 2020 created strong reputation despite many challenges

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Geneva, July 13:** Delayed one year by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 European Championship is in the history and financial books after being among the most difficult soccer tournaments ever organized.

An event planned within strict health rules, that survived a near-tragedy involving a hugely popular player, Denmark's Christian Eriksen, on just the second day, and ended with fan violence at the final, has been hailed a success.

The quality of play and emotional power of football to create shared experiences between fans and nations should ensure Euro 2020 is an enduring positive memory.

The vision sold by UEFA leaders in 2012 was a celebration of European soccer with fans crisscrossing 13 host countries on low-cost flights to watch games in

packed stadiums.

The reality was 24 national teams emerging from their (mostly) biosecure bubbles to play in 11 cities for routinely fewer than 12,000 fans, and few if any of those able to travel internationally.

Yet, this was a victory in a pandemic that trashed the plans of sports organizers worldwide. "I will remember it as the beginning of normality and the return of fans," UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin told British broadcaster BBC last week.

Fans did indeed return, and to a degree that frightened some observing the Italy-England final Sunday in London. The official attendance of 67,173 was likely not the true total at 90,000-capacity Wembley Stadium.

Hundreds of ticketless England fans broke through security barriers — and were fought by other English fans — to see their team's first tournament final for 55 years.

Virus-respecting protocols also were widely ignored at the stadium and in heavy-drinking gatherings in the city.

And when Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma saved teenager Bukayo Saka's penalty to decide the shootout late Sunday night, it marked when European soccer's calendar cleared the congestion created by those three months lost last year.

It also ensured UEFA's commercial revenues for the tournament, expected to be around 2 billion euros (USD 2.4 billion), that helps fund developing soccer at all levels across 55 member countries.

Here's a look back at an unusual tournament:

**TACKLING THE VIRUS**  
A serious virus outbreak in any team was UEFA's biggest concern. A special rule let games

be postponed up to 48 hours if replacements were needed for infected or

quarantined players. Strict protocols helped limit positive cases to a few scattered across several teams early in the tournament.

Spain's key midfielder, Sergio Busquets, missed his first two drawn games, then improved with him to reach the semifinals. Sweden thrived until winger Dejan Kulusevski was ready, though Scotland suffered losing Billy Gilmour for a decisive game against Croatia.

**MAGIC MONDAY**  
The date June 28, 2021 was an instant tournament classic. Back-to-back round of 16 games delivered a slew of goals, wild shifts in momentum, and late two-goal comebacks by the underdogs to set up extra time poised at 3-3.

Spain's 5-3 win over Croatia was settled amid frenzied attacking in both directions, then

Switzerland stunned world champion France in a shootout ended when Kylian Mbappe's kick was saved by Yann Sommer.

**VAR REVIVED**  
The video review system is far from loved in Europe's top leagues. Marginal offside calls and penalties awarded after lengthy delays infuriated as many as those who welcomed the technology.

UEFA's team of Euro 2020 officials excelled with clearer and faster decisions. It should lead to a reset next season of inconsistent interpretations of soccer laws, especially for handball.

The most controversial decision was giving England a penalty for Raheem Sterling's fall that was decisive to beat Denmark in the semifinals.

**MORE PLAY, MORE GOALS**  
Euro 2020 saw fewer fouls and more active playing time than in pre-

vious tournaments, with players praised by UEFA for their positive attitude.

Perhaps that helped the teams score 142 goals at an average of 2.79 goals per game — most since the finals tournament format expanded in 1980.

**NATIONAL TEAM LOVE**  
Euro 2020 reconnected many fans' emotions to national teams after a solid year of post-confinement football dominated by club competitions.

Euro 2020 showed fans' passion especially in Denmark, Italy and Hungary, plus England and Switzerland where the national teams were not always so loved.

Hungary and England fans were also the worst behaved with a combined charge sheet of anti-gay banners, hostility to players taking a knee in support of racial justice, and booing rival teams' national anthems.

