



## RADHIKA EXCITED

Radhika Apte said on her Instagram page that she is feeling excited and happy to be back on the shooting floor

LEISURE P2



## DEMAND REJECTED

EU rejects Wednesday the UK's demand for renewed talks on post-Brexit trade

INTERNATIONAL P10



## AWARD FOR JHINGAN

Senior India defender Sandesh Jhingan gets the AIFF men's Footballer of the Year award for 2020-21

SPORTS P12

# S&ME department orders reopening of hostels July 26

SOP ISSUED FOR STUDENTS' SAFETY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 21:** The Odisha government had earlier announced that physical classes for students will resume from July 26. In a related development Wednesday, the School and Mass Education (S&ME) department directed the institutes to reopen hostels also for students of Classes X and XII for the academic session 2021-22. Hostels had remained closed since the outbreak of the pandemic last year.

In a letter to all heads of schools, Pratap Kumar Mishra, additional secretary S&ME department said that the government has asked hostels to reopen from July 26, 2021 as classes will resume from that day. This is applicable for all schools coming under the S&ME and other department and also for private institutions.

Mishra directed that all institutes have to follow the SOPs implemented by the government. Heads of all educational institutions must ensure that students are kept at appropriate

distance and in a staggered manner. The common areas of the hostels like toilets have to be cleaned and sanitised on a regular basis. Also sufficient amount of soap and hand sanitisers must be procured by the institutes for use by the students.

Students staying in the hostel should be counseled properly about health and hygiene. Parental consent also must be obtained by the students before they come and stay in the hostel. All hostels must have a separate isolation area in case any student falls sick.

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## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



You need not praise the leader so openly to prove your loyalty. He knows it. Your name is also in Pegasus list.

## New additions to NZP lion family

**Bhubaneswar:** Lioness Bijli gave birth Wednesday to three cubs at the Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) here, authorities said. However, one of three was a stillborn cub. The lioness first delivered the stillborn at around 2.43am. The second cub was born at around 3.12am and the third one at around 3.38am. Nandankanan deputy director Sanjeet Kumar informed. Both the cubs that are alive are said to be healthy and out of danger. The mother and the cubs will be observed for 72 hours, he added.

## Advanced version of Akash missile tested

**BALASORE:** An advanced version of surface-to-air 'Akash' missile, 'Akash NG', was test fired Wednesday from launch pad -3 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur in this district at 12.44pm Wednesday. The indigenously developed medium-range nuclear-capable missile made by DRDO has a target range of 70km. The missile was test fired for the first time in January and second time in March. It has been targeted to induct the missile into the Defence Services by 2023. P9

## 25 killed in China in massive floods

**BEIJING:** At least 25 people, including 12 subway passengers, were killed when the heaviest rainfall in 1,000 years leading to massive floods hit China's central Henan province, officials informed. It prompted President Xi Jinping to deploy Wednesday the Army to rescue those trapped in inundated subways, hotels and public places. A total of 12.4 lakh people have been affected and 1,60,000 evacuated, state-run 'Global Times' reported. It also said that other than 25 dead, seven were missing. P10



**DEITIES' GOLDEN ATTIRE:** Sibling deities Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath adorned with gold ornaments on their respective chariots Wednesday at the Lions' Gate of Srimandir as part of the Suna Beshha ritual in Puri

PICS: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

## Tap water available in only 30% Odisha rural households

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 21:** Only 30 per cent rural households in Odisha have access to piped or tap water. This information was given Wednesday by Union Minister of State for Jalshakti, Prahlad Singh Patel in a written reply to a question asked by BJD RS member N Bhaskar Rao.

Odisha has approximately 85.67 lakh rural households, of which 26.12 lakh have been provided with tap water supply till July 19. It means, only 30.49 per cent rural houses in the state have access to tap water, he said.

Among the districts in Odisha, 74.07 per cent of rural households in Nuapada have supply of piped water, the highest in the state. The lowest is in Nayagarh (15.76%).

The other districts where the water supply is below 25 per cent are - Malkangiri (17.67%), Sambalpur (18.84%), Kalahandi (19.29%), Bargarh (19.42%), Sundargarh (19.65%), Rayagada (21.51%), Boudh (22.06%), Mayurbhanj (22.95%), Bolangir (24.11%) and Kandhamal (24.64%).

Jharsuguda, Koraput, Jajpur, Gajapati, Cuttack, Nabarangpur and Sonepur districts have 25 to 30 per cent tap water supply in rural areas while the coverage is 30 to 40 per cent in the districts of Deogarh, Balasore, Khurda, Keonjhar and Puri. About 40.04 per cent of rural households have tap water supply in Jagatsinghpur district while it is 40.15 per cent in Dhenkanal, 41.22 per cent in Ganjam, 47.98 per cent in Angul and 53.91 per cent in Bhadrak.

# BHIMATANGI MURDER CASE SOLVED BY COPS

Accused killed victim after rejection of marriage proposal

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 21:** The Bhimatangi murder case in the city was cracked by the police Wednesday with the accused Jagannath Pradhan confessing that he had tried to force the victim to marry her. However, when she spurned his proposal, he killed her by slitting her throat. The incident took place July 5.

Pradhan after committing the crime had tried to end his own life by consuming poison and slitting his wrists. However, he was rescued and admitted to a hospital here. Immediately after his release, he was taken in for interrogation by the police. During interrogation, he has confessed to the crime. Bhubaneswar DCP Umashankar



Dash said Wednesday.

Dash while talking to the media said the murder was pre-planned. Police arrived at such a conclusion as the suicide note by Pradhan was written four days before the crime was committed.

"Accused Pradhan entered the house in Bhimatangi with two knives, a bottle of poison, a vermillion container and chocolates at around 9.00am, July 5, after

Priyanka's husband left for office. At that time, only the victim and her son were present at the house," Dash told mediapersons.

"Pradhan then tried to persuade the woman to flee with her. However, when she refused, the two got into a heated argument. He then hid in the bathroom when the house owner knocked on the door to offer food. After he left, Pradhan came out and tried to pressurise the woman to marry her. When she refused, he slit her throat. Before consuming poison and slitting his wrists, he also made a video call to Priyanka's husband Rakesh Sahoo," Dash added.

Rakesh and Priyanka got married in 2014 and the couple has a three-year-old son. They were staying in a rented house at Bhimatangi.

## Exam dates for CBSE pvt students out

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 21:** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announced Wednesday that Classes X and XII exams for private candidates will be conducted from August 16 to September 15. Private students are those who are either repeating the exams or want to improve their marks.

The CBSE ruled out declaring results of the private candidates on the basis of an alternative assessment policy like that for regular candidates. It said neither schools

nor CBSE has any previous assessment record for these students.

"The exams will be conducted from August 16 to September 15 and results will be declared as quick as possible to avoid any difficulty to them in admission in higher education," CBSE Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj said.

Earlier in the day, a group of private candidates staged a protest outside the CBSE headquarters alleging disparity between them and regular candidates.

**Result deadline extended**

In a separate development, the

CBSE extended Wednesday the deadline for schools to prepare Class XII results to July 25, informed Bhardwaj. Earlier, the deadline was July 22.

Bhardwaj noted that the teachers involved in the result preparation process are under stress and getting panicky. "With the last date for finalising the results approaching fast, the teachers are panicky and committing mistakes and sending request to CBSE to rectify these. CBSE is well aware about the constraints and problems faced by the schools and teachers," Bhardwaj said in an official order.

# 'Game on' for 2024 elections, says Mamata

TMC SUPREMO REQUESTS ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES TO UNITE AHEAD OF THE NEXT LS POLLS



**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HAS COLLECTED ₹3.7 LAKH CRORE FROM FUEL TAXES ALONE. WHERE HAS THE MONEY GONE? IT IS BEING USED TO TAP PHONES OF MINISTERS, JUDGES AND POLITICIANS**

MAMATA BANERJEE

AGENCIES

**Kolkata, July 21:** West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee reiterated her 'Khela hobe' (Game on) slogan Wednesday while requesting opposition leaders to unite against the BJP for the 2024 general elections.

Banerjee was speaking at a virtual rally organised to observe 'Martyr's Day'. The TMC observes 'Martyr's Day' July 21 every year to commemorate the killing of 13 people in police firing on a Youth Congress rally against the then Left Front government in 1993 when the present CM was in the Congress.

"I will be in Delhi, sometime around July 27-28. The Parliament session will be on. I would request all the opposition leaders to meet on any one of these days. I will be happy if someone can organise a meeting. I will be available whenever called," Banerjee said. "There will be senior leaders like Sharad Pawar (NCP), P Chidambaram (Congress), Sanjay Raut (Shiv Sena) and many others. Let us at least start talking for a joint opposition against the BJP," Banerjee added.

The West Bengal CM asserted that 'Khela Hobe' isn't over with the Assembly elections in the state. "Till 2024, there will be 'Khela hobe' in every state elections leading to the Lok Sabha polls," Banerjee asserted.

Latching on to the Pegasus snooping row, Banerjee also accused the

Modi government of trying to establish a 'surveillance state'. She also appealed to the Supreme Court to take cognizance of the snooping scandal that purportedly targeted politicians, activists, journalists and even judges using the Pegasus spyware and register a suo motto case. "People have faith only on the judiciary and not the Modi-led government. It should probe into the spying incident or else set up a SIT under it to look into the matter. Only the judiciary can save the country," Banerjee said.

"Three things make democracy - media, judiciary and the Election Commission - and Pegasus has captured all three. BJP has taken the country to darkness, we all have to come forward to take it to new light. Otherwise the people of the country will not forgive us," Banerjee pointed out.

The TMC supremo also termed the BJP as a party 'loaded with virus' that are much more dangerous than coronavirus. "The BJP-led government has been a monumental failure in handling the second wave of Covid-19. Instead of using funds to tackle Covid-19, they have used it on spying. I can't talk to any opposition leader now... democracy has been destroyed by the government. It is spending tax money on spyware instead of people's welfare," she thundered.

Banerjee thanked leaders of the Congress, NCP, SP, Shiv Sena and several other parties for joining her rally virtually from New Delhi.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	52198.51 ↓ 354.89
NIFTY	15632.10 ↓ 120.30
DOLLAR	74.95 ↓ ₹0.32
EURO	88.19 ↓ ₹0.17
GOLD	₹47,869 ↓ ₹225
SILVER	₹66,597 ↓ ₹649

WEATHER	
BHUB	CTK
MAX 30.2°C	32.6°C
MIN 24.7°C	24.0°C
Humidity 77.9%	33.6%
Rainfall 0.2mm	10mm
Forecast: Light rain very likely	

# Report opposes India's official virus death toll

NOT JUST OVER 4 LAKH, FATALITIES RANGE BETWEEN 39L AND 49L DUE TO COVID-19 IN INDIA, SAY EXPERTS

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 21:** India's excess deaths during the Covid-19 pandemic could be between 3.4 million (34 lakh) to 4.9 million (49 lakh), according to a new report which suggests millions more may have died from the SARS-CoV-2 virus than the official count. The report was released Tuesday. It is co-authored by India's former chief economic adviser Arvind Subramanian, Justin Sandefur from the US-based think-tank 'Centre for Global Development' and Abhishek Anand from Harvard University.

"Estimating Covid-19 deaths with statistical confidence may prove

elusive. But all estimates suggest that the death toll from the pandemic is likely to be an order of magnitude greater than the official count of 4,00,000," the authors said.

"True deaths are likely to be in several millions and not hundreds of thousands, making this arguably India's worst human tragedy since partition and independence," the authors added in their report. Excess deaths between January 2020 and June 2021 are between 3.4 million to 4.9 million, the report estimated.

Excess deaths are additional deaths recorded during a pandemic, as compared to a corresponding period in pre-pandemic years, and could be a potential indicator of

undercounting in India's Covid-19 toll.

India's official Covid-19 tally Wednesday was 4,18,480 (4.18 million), the third highest in the world after the US and Brazil.

The report noted that India lacks an authoritative estimate of the death toll from Covid-19. So the researchers based their estimate of excess mortality on three different data sources from the pandemic's start through June

## HIGHEST SINGLE-DAY DEATHS IN ODISHA

**BHUBANESWAR:** Odisha recorded Wednesday 69 Covid-19 fatalities, the highest so far in a single day. It took the toll in the state to 5,241, while 1,927 new cases pushed the tally to 9,59,986, a Health department official said. Odisha currently has 19,685 active cases while as many as 9,35,007 patients, including 2,341 Tuesday, have recovered from the highly infectious disease.

this year. First is the extrapolation of state-level civil registration of deaths from seven states.

This suggests 3.4 million (34 lakh) excess deaths. Second, the researchers applied international estimates of age-specific infection fatality rates (IFR) to Indian seroprevalence data. This implies a higher toll of around 40 million (40 lakh).

Third, the researchers analysed data from the Consumer Pyramid Household Survey (CPHS), a survey of over 8,00,000 individuals across all states. This yields an estimate of 4.9 million (49 lakh) excess deaths.

India is still emerging from a devastating second wave that started in March and is believed to have been driven by the more trans-

missible Delta variant. A devastating rise in infections in April and May, driven largely by the more infectious and dangerous Delta variant, overwhelmed the healthcare system and killed at least 1,70,000 people in May alone, official data show.

Several experts have cast doubts on India's official toll, blaming the way deaths are counted in India rather than deliberate misinformation. The New York Times has said the most conservative estimate of deaths in India was 6,00,000 and the worst-case scenario several times that. The government has however, dismissed those figures.

# leisure



## SHAILENE WOODLEY IS IN NO RUSH TO GET MARRIED

Big Little Lies actress Shailene Woodley, who confirmed her engagement to National Football League (NFL) star Aaron Rodgers in February, says she is in no rush to get married. "There's no wedding planning happening. There's no rush. We've got no rush," Woodley said.

## AMERICAN HORROR STORY PRODUCTION HALTED

The production of popular anthology horror television series titled *American Horror Story* has been put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The 20th Television-produced drama is paused for the next few days after a positive case, which has led a number of those involved to isolate.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You may take a holiday today to be with your family, and perhaps go to meet your relatives who live nearby. It will make your kith and kin very happy. They will be surprised and Ganesh gives you the thumbs-up.

**TAURUS**  
The planets are not well disposed towards you today, fears Ganesh. There are strong chances of crossing swords with someone, getting into a serious personal clash. Not good is come out of it. You may simply end in alienating those who are otherwise well disposed towards you.

**GEMINI**  
It is the time to indulge in luxury and entertainment. You will pay more attention to household matters and tend to your children's needs. You will be concerned about your diet and other health matters in the evening, however, these worries are only of a temporary nature, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You will be ready to understand the meaning of life. You will get new responsibilities in your job or business, which means a promotion and pay hike. You may take an instinctive decision, which you may regret later. Take a calculated and thoughtful step, says Ganesh.

**LEO**  
You will spend time with your friends. You will be helpful to your friends and colleagues. You will work hard according to your capability today. You will experience the satisfaction of a job well done at the end of the day, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Luck will be in your favour as, Ganesh says, nothing will go wrong today, and you will succeed at anything you attempt to do. In certain cases, even without expecting anything, good results will be forthcoming. Bend your back if you must, as being adaptable and flexible will get you a lot of goodwill from others.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says that those of you who are working independently or have their own business may have a good day in financial matters today. Those of you who are working professionals will find that your higher officials will be very happy with you and your abilities will be praised.

**SCORPIO**  
The income, which you had written off as bad-debts may be recovered unexpectedly in business, foresees Ganesh. Home and office, both demand your attention equally. And you are just happy that you are able to manage both the places gracefully.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You are on a creative high today. You may be painting or sketching during the first half of the day. You may even find time to go through your past possessions and treasure. And during the later half of the day, you may be busy in giving your cosy corner and home a new look, a makeover.

**CAPRICORN**  
You don't experience mood swings everyday. In fact, it is a rarity that you through tantrums. But, today it is one of those rare days. You will get irritated by the smallest of things and feel very disturbed. This will not last for long though. By the end of the day, you will feel energetic and be the first one to take any risks, says Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
Normally, it is you who delegates and call the shots, but today situation will be different. You will be overloaded with work and nobody will be able to share it with you. But, don't get disappointed, as your hard work will be paid off very well, assure Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
Your competitors will find it tough to maintain their footing against your onslaught today. You need not worry about their activities for you will come out with flying colors at the end of it all. You are not by nature ill-tempered, but you will have to encounter situations where you will be opposed needlessly and that could rouse your wrath.

# DEEPIKA ON BATTLING DEPRESSION

**Mumbai:** "Life post mental illness is a 'before and after'. I had a particular life before depression and I have a very different life after that." Deepika Padukone recently shared in a voice chat room session.

In several instances, the actress has opened up about her battle with depression and has been a huge advocate of mental health. Recently she hosted a Clubhouse session where she recollected how she broke down and her mother Ujjala Padukone realised how the way she cried was 'different' and 'it wasn't the usual boyfriend issue or stress at work'.

During the session the actress shared, "It basically started in February 2014...I felt empty, directionless and it just felt life had no meaning or purpose. I couldn't feel anything physically or emotionally. I just felt this void... I felt this for days, weeks and months until one day my family was here and they were going back home and when they were packing their bags, I was sitting in their room and suddenly broke down. That's when my mother realised for the first time that something was different. My cry was different. It wasn't the usual boyfriend issue or stress at work. She kept asking me if it was this or that. I couldn't pinpoint one specific reason. It was her experience and presence of mind that she encouraged me to seek help."

On a closing note, Deepika shared, "I keep saying that there's not a day that goes by without me thinking about my mental health. To ensure I don't go back into that space, it's very important for me to focus on the quality of my sleep, nutrition, hydration, exercise, how I process stress and my thoughts and mindfulness. These are the things I have to do on a daily basis not because they are fancy words or it's cool to do this but I won't be able to survive if I don't do all these things."



# Theatre stalwart Urmil Kumar Thapliyal dies

**Lucknow:** Renowned theatre director, satirist and eminent columnist Urmil Kumar Thapliyal passed away after a prolonged illness. He was 78.

His family said that Thapliyal was suffering from intestinal cancer and had been in and out of medical facilities for some time now. He returned home on July 17 after being discharged from the hospital, but breathed his last at his residence Tuesday late evening.

He is survived by his wife Bina Thapliyal, 70, son Ritesh Thapliyal, daughter Ritun Mishra and son-in-law Satyendra Mishra.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has condoled the death of the well-known theatre artiste and litterateur. In his condolence message, the Chief Minister said that Thapliyal enriched the world of theatre and literature with his talent.

"It is difficult to compensate for the loss caused to the art and literary world by the death of Urmil Kumar Thapliyal," he said in a statement.



# Radhika excited to resume work

**Mumbai:** Actress Radhika Apte is finally back to Mumbai after spending months away from the country during the COVID-19 outbreak. She has now joined the league of celebs who have resumed work after the second wave of COVID-19.

She took to her Instagram handle and dropped a happy picture from the film sets. In the picture, Radhika is seen in a black t-shirt with glasses. Her wide smile speaks volumes about her excitement to start shooting again. Without revealing further detail about the next project she is working on, she captioned the picture, "Happy to be back on the film set #loveforfilming #happyplace".

Earlier, Radhika was in London for a couple of months due to the lockdown. Recalling how the last year has been for her, Radhika said, "I think the only tough thing was that I didn't see my parents for a very long time."



# Ishaan, Janhvi get nostalgic as Dhadak turns 3

**Mumbai:** Ishaan Khatter and Janhvi Kapoor's film *Dhadak* released three years ago on this day, and the actors took to Instagram to share memories of the film.

"#Dhadak. Always special. For the people, the memories, the lessons and all of the love," wrote Janhvi, who made her

debut with the film. "3 years of dhadak!!! Will remain a special one for all of us who worked on it. And to the fans, thank you for all the love that pours in still for the film. I see you all," wrote Ishaan.

Both actors posted behind the scene pictures from the set of the film, too. Fans commented

with congratulatory messages.

*Dhadak* was re-released in 2018, written and directed by Shashank Khaitan. The film a remake of the 2016 Marathi blockbuster *Sairat*, fared below expectation at the Bollywood box office.



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

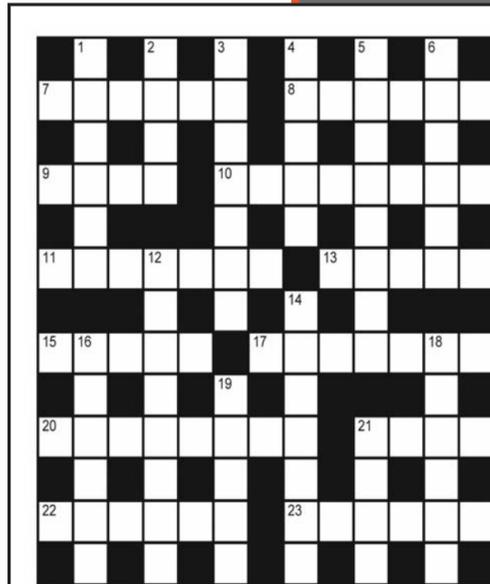


### BREVITY



### FUN post

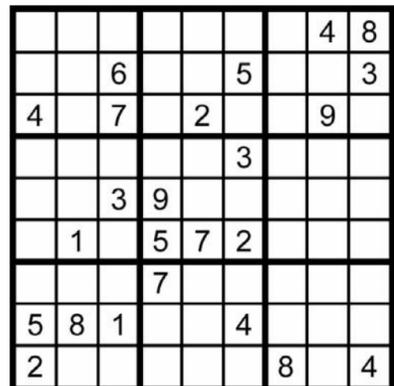
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Vision problem
  - 8 Écarté relative
  - 9 Water hole
  - 10 Embarrassed (3-5)
  - 11 Wrap up
  - 13 Jungle vine
  - 15 Express
  - 17 Parsley, maybe
  - 20 Plea
  - 21 Small boat
  - 22 Damon, to Pythias
  - 23 Belt down a few
  - Down**
  - 1 Man of affairs
  - 2 Potato
  - 3 Centurion was one
  - 4 Squalid
  - 5 Special time
  - 6 Encourage (4,2)
  - 12 Cafes and chopouses
  - 14 Long-horned grasshopper
  - 16 Arctic plain
  - 18 Garden plants
  - 19 Tasteless and loud
  - 21 Balance sheet item

### 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.

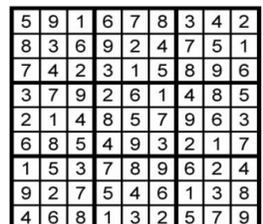


### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU

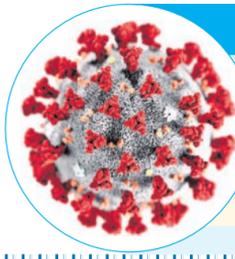


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



## STRAY CATTLE MENACE

Commuters face inconveniences due to stray cattle at Dargha Bazar in Cuttack, Wednesday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	19,24,87,697	17,50,98,997	41,37,380
India	3,12,16,337	3,03,90,687	4,18,480
Odisha	9,59,986	9,36,950	5,241

# Suna Besha sans devotees for 2nd year in row

PNN/AGENCIES

**Puri, July 21:** The divine siblings of Srimandir – Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath – were adorned with over 200 kg of gold ornaments as part of the Suna Besha ritual Wednesday in the absence of devotees due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The deities were adorned with the jewellery on their respective chariots at the Lions' Gate of the 12th century shrine a day after the return car festival or Bahuda Yatra. The Suna Besha ritual is conducted on Ashadha Shukla Ekdashi Tithi or the 11th bright fortnight in the Hindu month of Asadha.

However, devotees missed the rare opportunity to witness the golden attire of the deities ensclosed on three majestic wooden chariots for the second consecutive year due to the raging pandemic.

The district administration withdrew the shutdown and curfew from the entire town barring a few places near the temple and its Lions' Gate, where the three chariots were parked for the ritual.

It barred congregation on the Grand Road close to the temple and arranged live telecast of the ritual. Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief Krishan Kumar had appealed to the people to refrain from thronging the road and urged them to watch the proceedings on the television. All hotels, lodges and guest-houses on both sides of the Grand Road were shut as a preventive measure to avoid gathering of



Servitors bringing gold ornaments from the Ratna Bhandar of Srimandir for Suna Besha ritual, Wednesday

people.

"The shutdown and curfew in some areas will remain in force till 6am of July 24 in view of Adharapana ritual July 22 and Niladri Bijje ritual of the deities the next day," a senior official said quoting a notification issued by the administration.

Both the Rath Yatra of July 12 and Bahuda Yatra of July 20 were conducted in the absence of devotees.

Only servitors, officials and police personnel who tested negative for the infection were allowed to participate in the event.

Suna Besha, also called 'Rajadhiraja Besha' or 'Badatadhua Besha' is performed at least five times a year. It is conducted four times inside the 12th-century shrine when the deities are seated on the Ratna Simhasana, and once on the chariots during the annual

Car Festival.

"Suna Besha is conducted inside the temple on the occasion of Dussehra, Kartik Purnima, Pausa Purnima and Dola Purnima. The Trinity is adorned with around 200 kg of gold ornaments from head to toe during the ritual," a senior servitor said.

As per temple records, the ritual started in 1460 when the then king Kapilendra Dev brought large

amounts of gold jewellery from a neighbouring southern kingdom after conquering it. He donated all the ornaments to the temple, following which the ritual commenced. The jewellery is stored at the temple's treasury called the 'Ratna Bhandar'.

Servitors take around 90 minutes to decorate the deities with golden attire that includes Sri Hasta (gold hand), Sri Payara (gold feet), Sri Mukuta (big gold crown), Sri Mayur Chandrika (gold peacock feather for Lord Jagannath), Sri Mala (necklaces), and Sri Chita (third eye of Lords) among others.

The gold ornaments are repaired using raw gold donated by devotees and are refurbished every year before the event, the priest said.

The deities would be offered 'Adharapana' (sweet water) on the chariots Thursday, and 'Niladri Bijje' (return to the temple) will take place July 23, following which they will again be seated on the Ratna Simhasana or the bejewelled throne.

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A SENIOR SERVITOR

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# Centre says 'no' to coal royalty hike

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 21:** The Centre has said that it is not going to increase the coal royalty for which the Odisha government is fighting for a long time.

In a written reply to a question of BJD MP Prasanna Acharya in the Upper House of Parliament, Union Coal and Mines Minister Pralhad Joshi said the Centre had constituted a study group in July 2014 for the purpose of examining the issue of revision of present royalty rates on coal and lignite.

**Union Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi said that there is no mandatory provision in the Act to revise the royalty rates in every three years**

"The study group decides the formula after considering various factors. The study group had submitted its report suggesting no change in the royalty rates. The suggestion of the group was accepted by the Union government," he said.

The minister also informed Acharya that there is no mandatory provision in the act to revise the rates of royalty every three



years. He further said that the state government has received Rs 1855.11 crore coal royalty during the last financial year.

At present, the rate of royalty on coal is 14 per cent in all states except West Bengal. In West Bengal, the rates are fixed and range from Rs 7 to Rs 2.5 per tonne.

The rate of royalty has not been revised since May 10, 2012. The state government has been fighting for revision of coal royalty since the Modi government came to power at the Centre. However, the Union government is not paying heed to the plea of Odisha.

# BJP rakes up PMAY 'scam' in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, July 21:** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Wednesday criticised the Odisha government for its alleged failure on every front like health, employment and education, and also alleged irregularities under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin) in the state.

BJP MP Basanta Panda, while talking to media in the national capital, alleged that the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) government had allotted around 12 lakh houses under PMAY-G to ineligible people in Odisha. He claimed that around Rs 12,000 crore was misutilised under the PMAY for personal gains by the BJD government in the state.

"We are now facing a pandemic and it is the duty of the state government to provide better medical facilities to the people. But, the Odisha government has failed to do so. The ministers and officials in the state have locked themselves in their houses and they do not listen to the grievances of the people," said the Kalahandi MP.

The parliamentarian also alleged that the state government could not provide employment to the migrant workers who returned to their native places due to the outbreak of Covid-19 and subsequent nationwide lockdowns. He also criticised

## State failed in implementing central schemes, says BJP

**BHUBANESWAR:** The Odisha unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Wednesday alleged that the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) government in state has failed to implement several central schemes properly.

Addressing a press conference here, BJP leader Prithiviraj Harichandan claimed that the state government often sends letters to the Centre on various issues even though it has failed to implement various central schemes successfully in Odisha.

"The Chief Minister writing letters to the Centre on various issues is nothing but publicity stunt. I want to ask the state government as to why it has failed to implement several central schemes in Odisha. The state government should focus on improving the lives of people, rather

than writing letters," he said.

"The state government has never fared well in the welfare of the tribal communities even though the Forest Rights Act was passed by the Parliament around 15 years ago. There are a large number of poor and eligible people to be included under various central government schemes including housing and Public Distribution System (PDS). Many needy people are yet to get government assistance," he claimed.

The BJP leader claimed that the major share of assistance given to the MSME sector in the state during the pandemic was from the Centre. "The announcement of assistance by the state government for the MSME sector is on paper only," he said.

the state government for not allowing the farmers of Odisha to get benefits under the PM-Kisan scheme. Panda said that the BJP

MPs will raise all these issues in the Parliament and the party will hold protests in Odisha against the BJD government.

## Thrust on containment zones to curb Covid-19

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 21:** While Capital city's daily caseload remains around 300, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has declared more number of containment zones citing enhanced micromanagement to control the spread of the virus.

As per BMC sources, the city had only three containment zones until July 1 but it has increased to more than 20 this week. Out of these, 15 were issued Monday, the highest in a day so far which included several residential areas and complexes in the state capital.

"We are focusing on curbing the spread of virus by observing and containing any clusters emerging from an area. For instance, about 16 positive cases were detected in quick session from a residential complex in Rasulgah. Thus we declared the area as a containment zone and restricted people from entry and exit to building," said a BMC official.

Meanwhile, the city's positivity rate has remained over 3.5 per cent with about 330 cases being recorded daily on an average. Sources at the BMC said that more containment zones may come up which will aim to reduce the spread especially in wake of a third wave.

# CAPITAL CITY SEES 13-FOLD SURGE IN DENGUE CASES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 21:** The Capital city has witnessed a 13-fold rise in dengue cases during last three weeks taking the total number of cases to 235, with about 17 new cases detected Wednesday.

As per Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) sources the civic body had only 17 cases until July 7, but there has been a steep rise in the vector-borne disease as about 15-20 cases are being detected every day. While the cases are being reported from different part of the city, a large number of cases are being detected in slum pockets of Niladri Vihar and Sailshree Vihar.

"About 50 cases have been reported from Niladri Vihar followed by 28 from Sailshree Vihar. Many cases have also been reported from Chandrasekharpur, Unit VIII, Kalpana Square and other localities in the city. Most of these cases have been observed in slum areas where stagnant water has been source of breeding of Aedes mosquito," a BMC official said.



The official also added the civic body has deployed three teams which have destroyed more than 800 breeding sources found during surveillance. He mentioned that the teams have intensified awareness among people to use mosquito repellents, eliminate stagnant water, cover open water containers and use long-lasting insecticidal nets while sleeping.

Meanwhile, Additional District

Urban Primary Health Officer (ADUPHO) Antaryami Mishra said that the cumulative cases are recorded from January and a dip in cases will follow. "Most of these patients have recovered and we are monitoring the active cases. However, anyone having symptoms of fever and body ache can get himself/herself tested for free at Capital Hospital, RMRC and AIIMS," he added.

# Monsoon may amplify allergies, asthma: Experts

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 21:** With an active monsoon and lack of regular sunlight, experts dealing with cases of allergy and pulmonary health have warned of outbreak of several sporadic health issues like allergies and asthma.

The experts attributed the lack of sunlight, growth of fungus and other germs in the surroundings as prime reasons behind escalation of these kinds of health hazards during the rains besides threat from common cold.

Debasis Behera, Pulmonologist from Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), said that lack of sunlight obstructs natural absorption of Vitamin D which further triggers allergic reactions and pulmonary health issues like asthma. He also admitted that during monsoon season the cases of asthma often rise.

"Asthma is a chronic health issue affecting air passages to the lungs. The patients often see inflammation in their air passages. Several common symptoms like wheezing, coughing and breathing difficulties mark the disease. Prevention and expert advice can help in better

## RAIN & HEALTH HAZARDS



Lack of sunlight obstructs natural absorption of Vitamin D which may further trigger allergic reactions and pulmonary health issues like asthma

Experts claimed that rise in count of dust mites present on the floors during monsoons can aggravate asthma and allergy among vulnerable people

One common method to prevent triggering of asthma and allergy is to avoid the allergens like dusts in everyday life

could be one of the best ways to avoid such conditions naturally," he said.

According to medical experts, asthma, despite its considerable prevalence, remains one of the poorly controlled diseases in the country. Pulmonologists advise the asthma patient to use specialised inhalers containing steroids (in mild quantity), which goes directly into the lungs and gives relief to the patient.

management of the disease," he said.

Other health professionals claimed that some preventive measures can help in managing the issues better. Manoj Lath, ENT (ear, nose & throat) expert, claimed that using masks and avoiding exposure to allergens could also help in this regard.

Experts claimed that rise in count of dust mites present on the floors during monsoons can aggravate asthma and allergy among vulnerable people.

"One common method to prevent triggering of asthma and allergy is to avoid the allergens like dusts in everyday life. Using masks while cleaning and dusting

## PANDEMIC BLOW TO EID



People offer prayers on the roof of a building in Unit-IV area of Bhubaneswar on the occasion of Eid-ul-Zuha, Wednesday, as mosques across the city remained shut due to the Covid-19 restrictions



A pregnant woman takes vaccine against Covid-19 in Unit IV area of Bhubaneswar, Wednesday. A total of 92 expectant mothers got the shot on the first day of the drive in the Capital city

# Very heavy rain to lash 7 dists today

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 21:** The regional office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Wednesday said that heavy to very heavy rain is likely to lash many parts of the coastal state Thursday. According to the weatherman, heavy to very heavy rain is likely to lash seven districts Thursday. "Heavy to very heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Cuttack, Sambalpur and Deogarh," IMD warned. On the other hand, one or two places in Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Angul, Keonjhar, Koraput, Malkangiri and Sundargarh would experience

## ACTIVE MONSOON



The highest rainfall was recorded in Khurda district which saw 68.4mm of downpour followed by Dhenkanal which experienced 56.2 mm of rain

Heavy to very heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places in Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Cuttack, Sambalpur and Deogarh districts. Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Angul, Keonjhar, Koraput, Malkangiri and Sundargarh would also see heavy rainfall Thursday

heavy rainfall Thursday, it said, adding that light to moderate rain or thundershower could also be seen in different parts of the state. The department further said that at least seven districts would

witness heavy to very heavy rain Friday. "Heavy to very heavy rain is very likely to lash one or two places in Angul, Boudh, Sambalpur, Bolangir, Bargarh, Kalahandi and Sonepur. This apart, a few locali-

ties in Kandhamal, Nuapada, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Nayagarh, Jajpur, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur are most likely to witness heavy rainfall Friday," the IMD said, adding that heavy rainfall could be seen in Odisha till July 26. The weatherman said that the Capital city Bhubaneswar is most likely to experience rain or thundershower Thursday. The maximum temperature could go up to 31 degrees Celsius in the Capital city. The maximum rainfall in the state has been recorded in its coastal districts. The highest rainfall was recorded in Khurda district which saw 68.4mm of downpour followed by Dhenkanal which experienced 56.2 mm of rain.

# Pradhan: MERU to open up new opportunities

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, July 21:** Union Education and Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Wednesday emphasised on the Union government's commitment to transform India's education sector by bringing it at par with global standards. Pradhan was addressing the World Universities Summit organised by OP Jindal Global University. The theme of the summit was 'Universities of the Future: Building Institutional Resilience, Social Responsibility and Community Impact'. He said that the New National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 has heralded a new imagination for the Indian higher education system. It outlines the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make an Aatmanirbhar Bharat. He said that the Multidisciplinary Education and Research University (MERU) will open up new opportunities for India's youth. MERU will promote inter-disciplinary research and make India a global hub of Research and Development, he further added.

## MS Law Univ to hire retired staff

**Bhubaneswar:** The Higher Education department directed the Registrar of Madhusudan Law University in Cuttack for engagement of retired government servants at the university. In a letter to the Registrar Birendra Kumar, HE department additional secretary said that the government has been pleased to allow engagement of retired government servants for day-to-day work at Madhusudan Law University for a period of one year or till joining of regular non-teaching staffers.

## State confirms record 69 nCoV deaths

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, July 21:** The state Wednesday recorded 69 Covid-19 fatalities, the highest so far in a single day, taking the toll to 5,241, while 1,927 fresh cases in the last 24 hours pushed the tally to 9,59,986, a Health department official said. The coastal state currently has 19,685 active cases while as many as 9,35,007 patients, including 2,341 Tuesday, have recovered from the highly infectious disease. Khurda district, of which the state Capital Bhubaneswar is a part, alone accounted for 22 fresh fatalities, followed by Sundargarh at 10, Bargarh at seven, Angul at six, Keonjhar at five.



Over 1.52 crore sample tests have been conducted so far, including 72,061 in the past 24 hours. Odisha's positivity rate stands at 6.28 per cent.

- Khurda district alone accounted for 22 fresh fatalities, followed by Sundargarh at 10, Bargarh at seven, Angul at six, Keonjhar at five
- Khurda registered 498 new infections, followed by Cuttack at 248, Jajpur at 123, Balasore at 111 and Puri at 103, the official said
- Over 1.52 crore sample tests have been conducted so far, including 72,061 in the past 24 hours

## 3,609 EWS students to be enrolled in private schools

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 21:** The district education officers (DEOs) of the state have chosen 3,609 students belonging to economically weaker sections (EWS) category for admissions in private schools. These students were selected through a lottery system to maintain transparency in the admission process. The parents and guardians of the eligible children had visited the portal and registered for admission of their wards in several private schools. More than 5,970 applications had been received through RTE Paradarshi portal. The DEOs checked the registration process and eligibility of the students from EWS category by verifying the documents and selected 3,839 students. Subsequently, 3,609

students were finally chosen for admissions in private schools through a lottery system. The admissions of the first lot of students will be held from July 23 to 31. After that the process for the second selection of the students will be held between August 1 and 10. For second round, the students can register their names by logging in to www.rteparadarshiportal.odisha.gov.in. School and Mass Education Minister Samir Dash had in February this year launched the online portal, RTE Paradarshi, for the admission of EWS category students in private schools. As per rules, private schools which have obtained certificate of recognition from the state will have to register themselves in the portal and ensure 25 per cent reservation of seats for EWS students.

## DAV students shine in NTSE

**Bhubaneswar:** Students of Unit VIII DAV have brought laurels for the school by qualifying the final round of National Talent Search Examination (NTSE) 2020-21. Five students of the DAV Public School here - Pratyush Kumar Das, Abhinav Lenka, Ashirbad Parichha, Shmaran Shivam and Swaraj Mishra - are among the 2,000 students who have qualified the exam from all over India. Similarly, for the year 2021-22, out of 273 students from Odisha who qualified the first round of NTSE, 16 are from Unit VIII DAV. The school authorities congratulated the students for their exemplary success.

## Ensure rehab of Jajpur tribal boy right away: NHRC to Collectors

The 9-year-old tribal boy from Jajpur was forced to graze pigs in Kendrapara to pay off father's debts

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 21:** Expressing concern over a 9-year-old tribal boy of Jajpur allegedly working as a bonded labourer in Kendrapara, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the magistrates of both the districts to check the veracity of the accusation and ensure immediate measures for his rehabilitation.

pigs and stay with the animals for months under acute unhygienic conditions. This violates a host of rights of the minor tribal boy, including the right to life," Das said in his petition, requesting the commission's intervention in the issue. Taking cognisance of the issue, the NHRC, through its two orders—May 15 and November 4 last year—sought an action-taken report (ATR) from the Kendrapara Collector, but

### The Collectors were asked to file reports regarding rehabilitation of the minor as per Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer, 2016



The apex rights body has asked the District Magistrates (DMs) to file reports regarding the rehabilitation as per Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer, 2016 and payment of interim financial assistance to the victim within four weeks. "In case of failure, the commission would be forced to issue coercive measures under Section 13 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993," the NHRC said in its July 20 order while hearing a plea filed by rights activist Dillip Kumar Das. The petitioner had May 5, 2020 informed the commission that the minor tribal boy was working in conditions of servitude for around two years in order to pay off a debt in Kendrapara. "A moneylender of Daleipata in Mahakalpada block of Kendrapara has engaged Rabi (name changed) as a bonded child labourer for the last two years in a bid to recover Rs 10,000 taken by the minor's father. The tribal boy was forced to graze

to no avail. This prompted the rights body to issue a conditional summons to the Kendrapara Collector April 24, 2021. The Kendrapara Collector, however, submitted a report to the commission June 25, 2021. The Collector informed the NHRC that a case (55) has been registered in connection with the incident May 1, 2020 under Sections 363 (kidnapping), 374 (unlawful compulsory labour), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) of the Indian Penal Code apart from 14 of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 with Mahakalpara police against Raju Gedi and Bhramar Patra. "The accused have surrendered before a local court and were released on bail. As the child belongs to Jajpur, he was repatriated to Child Welfare Committee of the district June 18, 2020," the Kendrapara Collector's report said.

## PICTURE OF NEGLECT



Unhygienic atmosphere near drinking water stand posts at several localities in Cuttack raises health concerns as the Silver City had witnessed the outbreak of jaundice a few years ago

## CLASSIFIED

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By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Bargarh, I, Kakarla Katan Dora, S/o- K. Satyanarayan do hereby declare that the Original Sale Deed bearing No. 1640, executed between Mr: Raghuveer Jaiswal and Kakarla Katan Dora, Dt.18.06.1984 towards sale of the land bearing Plot No.-786, Khata No.-389, Plot Area-A0.820 Decimal, Kisam-Aa-Pa, has been lost during transit. I am not liable for any abuse of this said document in future. Any discrepancy should be informed to Advocate Aswini Kumar Debata, Mob. 9437158519.

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### PENDING DUES



Workers engaged by contractors at IOCL in Paradip staging protests for clearance of their pending wages, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

### Chhatrapur scores poorly in MGNREGS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, July 21: The state government has laid stress on proper implementation of rural job scheme MGNREGS to ensure earning for the rural folks at the Covid-troubled times. But, the Chhatrapur block has allegedly failed to create workdays for the job card holders as per daily target.

According to reports, the government has set a target to create 10,000 workdays every day, but the block administration has managed to create only 4,000 workdays.

It was also learnt that 25,363 families in the block have been enrolled under MGNREGS while 8,918 families have been provided work.

The poor performance has disappointed the Collector who has served show cause on the BDO.

According to information available from the district administration, nearly 70,000 people of the families with job cards are eagerly waiting for work while only 12,809 of them have been provided work.



Till Tuesday the administration has been able to create 4,93,728 workdays.

Under the MGNREGS, each job card holder is entitled to get 100 workdays while only 359 families in the block have got 100 workdays. 14 differently-abled persons have been provided work.

It was learnt that many projects have been left half-way while scores of other projects are a non-starter. Meanwhile, work of 439 projects has been completed. Work of 1,676 projects is at different stages while 2,167 projects are yet to take off in the block. As a result, lakhs of rupees sanctioned for these projects are lying idle.

As Covid-induced situation has made life of rural folks miserable, various quarters have demanded that the administration take proactive steps for expeditious execution of the projects under the rural job scheme so as to alleviate the financial sufferings of people.

### ACF'S DEATH MYSTERY

## Bidya's handwritten note throws light on strained ties

Bidyabharati clarified that the note had nothing to do with Soumya's death saying, "I had written it after knowing about his extramarital affair, in order to express my sorrow"

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, July 21: A note earlier handwritten by Bidyabharati Panda, the wife of deceased Paralakhemundi assistant conservator of forest (ACF) Soumya Ranjan Mohapatra, surfaced Wednesday revealing that the couple had a strained relationship.

According to a member of the investigating team, police have seized the note which was written in a diary from the ACF's residence in Paralakhemundi town of Gajapati district.

"I hate you (Soumya) the most in the world. I hate this man. Even hate to combine my name with his. I spoiled my life for all my stupid decisions," the note previously written by Bidyabharati read.

On the other hand, Bidyabharati clarified that the note had nothing to do with Soumya's death saying, "I had written it after knowing about his extramarital affair, in order to express my sorrow. The letter has no relevance with his death."

As the probe is still underway, the police team investigating the alleged murder case is yet to arrive at any conclusion. However, the revelation Wednesday morning has made the case murkier.

"He always used earphones for telephonic conversation. But I could hear a woman's voice from the other end. I had also asked him why he was not being intimate



FILE PHOTO



Refuting all the allegations her in-laws have levelled against her, Bidyabharati said that she had never visited Gajapati DFO's residence after the said dispute with her husband.

Notably, Soumya suffered serious burn injuries at his official residence in Paralakhemundi where his wife was also present July 11 night. He had suffered 90 per cent burn injuries and succumbed July 13 while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Cuttack.

Police have registered a murder case against three accused persons namely Soumya's wife Bidyabharati Panda, Paralakhemundi divisional forest officer (DFO) Sangram Keshari Behera and a cook who was present at the house on the intervening day.

### Man 'kills' wife over family feud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, July 21: A man from Iswarpur village under Mangalpur police limits in Jajpur district allegedly killed his wife over a family feud late Tuesday night, a police source informed Wednesday.

The deceased woman was identified as Binapani Das and the accused husband as Arun Kumar Das. An altercation erupted between the husband and wife over some issues. Later, the heated argument took an ugly turn when Arun attacked his wife with a grinding stone. Binapani succumbed on the spot.

Some neighbours heard the woman screaming for help and they immediately rushed to the spot. The locals found her lying on the floor in a pool of blood. Before Binapani could be rescued, she had succumbed to grievous injuries, the senior official said.

### Youth beats minor girl to death, attempts suicide

POST NEWS NETWORK

Champua, July 21: A youth allegedly beat a minor girl to death with a wooden object at Raghuali under Champua police limits in Keonjhar district Wednesday. Later, the accused tried to commit suicide. He was rescued and hospitalised.

According to reports, Shantilata Oram, a resident of the village, after losing her husband a few months ago, stayed with Kailash Sitari, a youth of the same village, as a live-in partner. Her minor daughter was there. The minor girl often used to talk to someone over phone which was being opposed by Kailash.

Tuesday, Kailash was infuriated when he saw the girl talking over phone. In a fit of rage, he beat her with a wooden plank, leading to her death on the spot. Later, Kailash tried to hang himself with a saree. He was rescued immediately by Shantilata and rushed to a hospital.

On being informed about the incident, SDPO Ramray Murmu and IIC Gagan Bihari Nayak rushed to the spot and seized the body for post mortem. They started an investigation into the matter.

## STF seizes leopard hide in Boudh, poacher arrested



POST NEWS NETWORK

Boudh, July 21: The special task force (STF) of Odisha Crime Branch seized a leopard hide following the raid on a house in Manamunda area of Boudh district. The STF officials have arrested a poacher in this connection, a source informed Wednesday.

Acting on a tip-off that the accused had been negotiating with

a party to sell the hide, the STF team conducted a raid against the wildlife poacher near Kapasira village under Manamunda police limits in the district.

The arrested was identified as Hara Rana of Ghuchingi village under Kantamal police limits in the district.

Following a thorough search, a country made single-barrel muzzle loading (SBML) gun, 12 rounds of

live bullets, 25 small empty cases, two plastic containers filled with gun powder and several other incriminating instruments were also seized from his possession.

As Rana could not produce any valid document in support of his possessing the leopard hide, firearm and ammunitions, the accused was arrested. The STF team has registered a case in this connection under various sections of IPC and Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

The seized leopard hide will be sent to Wild Life Institute of India in Deharadun for chemical examination. Police have launched a probe which is underway, an official of Manamunda police station said.

Notably, during a special drive carried out in the last one year against wildlife criminals, the STF has seized as many as 15 tiger hides, nine elephant tusks, two deer skins, three live pangolins and over 10 kilogram of pangolin scales, apart from arresting 28 criminals.

## Tax on bus services to be waived in August: Transport minister

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhanjanagar, July 21: The transport department has suffered maximum losses due to Covid pandemic, a report said. The impact of the pandemic has been the harshest on bus owners and their staff for which a proposal has been mooted to waive tax on passenger bus services by the state government by August or September.

This was stated here by State Planning and Convergence, Commerce and Transport Minister, Padmanabh Behera while inaugurating the regional transport office at College Road in Ganjam district, Wednesday. Minister for Forest, Environment, Climate Change and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Bikram Keshari Arukh was the chief guest on this occasion.



Behera said the transport department has borne the brunt of the pandemic and its impact has

been felt by bus owners and their staff. Discussions are underway with the department officials to

### AILING SECTOR

THE MINISTER SAID THE RATE OF ROAD ACCIDENTS IN THE STATE HAS DECLINED DUE TO AN INCREASE IN AWARENESS AMONG PEOPLE ON ROAD SAFETY. STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO FURTHER REDUCE THE RATE OF ROAD ACCIDENTS IN COMING DAYS, HE SAID

WITH AN AIM TO PROVIDE CONNECTIVITY TO ALL PARTS OF THE STATE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS PLANNED TO CONSTRUCT A BUS STAND IN EVERY BLOCK HEADQUARTERS FOR WHICH ₹100 CRORE HAS BEEN EARMARKED IN THE BUDGET

term loans to repair their vehicles.

There are 33 RTO offices in the state along with Bhanjanagar. He said the rate of road accidents in the state has declined due to an increase in awareness among people on road safety. Steps are being taken to further reduce the rate of road accidents in coming days, he added.

With an aim to provide connectivity to all parts of the state, the government has planned to construct a bus stand in every block headquarters for which ₹100 crore has been earmarked in the budget.

However, the project has failed to take off due to delay in identification and acquisition of land. A new bus-stand will be constructed in Jagannathprasad area. Works on the bus stand will start within a fortnight of

identification of the land for the project. Behera said this while drawing the attention of the forest minister in the function.

Arukh said development has been taking place in the state due to personal efforts of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

He said more developmental work has to be undertaken in Bhanjanagar for which he sought the cooperation of one and all.

Bhagirathi Nayak, regional transport officer, presided over the meeting while sub-collector Rajendra Minz, Ramesh Swain, executive engineer of the works department joined as the guest of honour. Assistant engineer of the works department, Gopabandhu Mohapatra, president and Bipra Charan Barik, secretary of Ghumusara Bus Owners' Association attended the function.

## SMC to engage women in waste collection vans



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, July 21: The state government is laying a lot of stress on women empowerment for which it has formed the Mission Shakti department. The department focuses on providing livelihood opportunities to women in order to make them self-reliant.

Taking a leaf out of this, authorities of the Sambalpur Municipal Corporation (SMC)

have decided to engage women as drivers and loaders of garbage collection vans. They will be recruited through a selection process which has been underway. These women drivers will drive the battery operated vehicles recently purchased by the civic body to transport waste materials in the town.

These vehicles are eco-friendly because of low pollution emission. They require less maintenance. Moreover, these vehicles being small in size can move eas-

ily in the lanes and by-lanes of the town and adjoining areas of Burla and Hirakud. This was stated here by Subhankar Mohanty, enforcement officer of the Sambalpur Municipal Corporation.

He said the civic body has placed order for purchase of 55 battery-operated vehicles, but 14 vehicles have been received in the first phase. These vehicles will be deployed in Burla and Hirakud areas in the first phase where the waste generated by the households will be collected separately to transport them to dumping yards. Later, the scheme will be implemented in rest of the wards, he said.

A total of 110 women will be engaged in 55 vehicles. One of the women will work as a driver while the other will work as a loader. The civic body will ensure driving licenses and other facilities to these women.

### GREEN DRIVE



BJD workers carrying out a plantation drive at Saudi panchayat in Balasore Wednesday

OP PHOTO

FOCUS INFRASTRUCTURE

# COSTLY BUILDING MISTAKES



**Built infrastructure projects are important long-term public assets for a country. Unless appropriately built to last long, remain safe, and function as intended, they can be a huge liability**

Within two months of its long-delayed opening, the Khandagiri flyover in Bhubaneswar seems to have developed defects in its expansion joints requiring urgent repairs. Expansion joints are a critical component of any bridge. They help connect the different spans while providing for movement due to temperature effects. If not correctly designed and constructed, they become a permanent source of many headaches for maintenance engineers as well as commuters. Drive on any stretch of highway in India, and you can easily feel the bumps when you pass over an expansion joint on a bridge or even a simple construction joint on the concrete pavement. Sometimes, when poorly maintained or damaged, these joints can cause a vehicle at high speed to almost fly off and can cause serious accidents. Once driving from Kolkata to Bhubaneswar a couple of years ago, I could hardly sit in peace while keeping an eye on the driver, who missed slowing down enough on several occasions and caused quite a bit of discomfort.

Expansion joints are also locations for moisture and harmful agents such as deicing salt (used in cold regions to melt snow) to enter the concrete and cause corrosion of steel reinforcement that results in spalling. Such damaged concrete can be a serious risk to the travelling public as chunks of it can come loose and fall off from a height, as was the case some time back at the Rasulgarh flyover in Bhubaneswar. As the monsoon months come along every year, the building defects become glaring and often cause major accidents, resulting in significant loss of life and property. Climate change due to global warming has made rain patterns unpredictable. Recently severe flash flooding has caused havoc in many parts of the world, including Germany, Mumbai, and Himachal Pradesh. An unprecedented building collapse took place in Miami, Florida, in the USA last month. A portion

of the upscale seafloor Champlain Towers - a 40-year-old 12-story building, containing 55 apartments collapsed at night while most residents were indoors sleeping. The rest of the building had to be demolished later after the search and rescue operation for almost 150 people trapped in the debris had to be called off. This incident was unprecedented in the US, where the last functional building to collapse without any natural or manmade causes such as earthquake, tornado or bomb blast was in the 1970s. While extensive investigations are ongoing, many details are emerging pointing to delayed structural repair and maintenance, possible design defects and impact of sea-level rise and soil erosion affecting the foundation.

Hong Kong is world-renowned for its world-class built infrastructure, including the largest concentration of skyscrapers in the world. It boasts of over 9,000 high-rise buildings, of which over 4,000 are skyscrapers standing taller than 100 m (328 ft). In a rare incident reported last week, a reputed developer, New World, revealed that a substantial portion of an under-construction 57-story apart-

ment block would be demolished due to what would seem like an elementary blunder - use of M40 grade concrete in place of M80 grade! The grade indicates the compressive strength of concrete and is a critical property that affects structural safety and serviceability. It means the concrete used was half the strength (40 MPa) compared to what was specified (80 MPa). Undetected, it would have set up the building for a likely collapse similar to the building in Miami. Wireless sensor-based technology for the measurement of the temperature of concrete with time is now available to know the future strength of concrete without waiting for full 28 days as is the norm. Surprisingly, the same was not in use in such an important project. It would have avoided much of the demolition costing billions in lost time, work and brand value.

While working on relatively small projects in Bhubaneswar, I was shocked at the lack of quality standards in the most reputed material testing laboratories in the city. The concrete cube strength test is a simple yet crucial tool for quality control, and it seemed one

could manipulate the test results at will! Many of our construction project accidents like the collapse of bridges under construction or the structure connecting the airport buildings can be related to such a lax approach to quality control and the underlying corruption.

Expansion joints in reinforced concrete bridges are a topic of ongoing research. Professor Victor C. Li of the University of Michigan invented the Engineered Cementitious Composites or ECC popularly known as 'bendable concrete' - a fibre reinforced cement-based composite in the 1990s. The material can absorb tensile stress due to the expansion and contraction of deck slabs due to its superior cracking characteristics. A link slab made using this material can replace the expansion joint, thus eliminating the need for frequent repair and maintenance. This technique has been proven in applications in the USA and recently used on a massive scale across the highway network in China, both on bridges and concrete pavements used in highways that also need expansion joints.

Built infrastructure projects are important long-term public assets for a country. Unless appropriately built to last long, remain safe, and function as intended, they can be a huge liability. The original investment is often wasted, while the frequent repairs and maintenance costs also drain the public exchequer. As an individual, we build a house for ourselves by taking utmost care to ensure that our hard-earned money is used diligently to give a lifelong return on the investment. Public infrastructure projects must also be similarly built to the highest possible standards to add to the nation's prosperity and wealth while serving the public safely and sustainably.

*The writer is a civil engineer, academician and technologist with a strong interest in the sustainability of the built environment. He is currently working in Hong Kong.*



Dhanada K Mishra

**AS THE MONSOON MONTHS COME ALONG EVERY YEAR, THE BUILDING DEFECTS BECOME GLARING AND OFTEN CAUSE MAJOR ACCIDENTS, RESULTING IN SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY**



Juan Manuel Santos

**By the end of 2020, almost 100 million people faced severe food insecurity as a result of conflict - up from 77 million in 2019. This is a damning indictment of collective failure, especially by the UNSC's five permanent members**

To stand for the Truth in all circumstances, to declare it if necessary in the teeth of the worst opposition and to be ready to all you can for its sake, is the definition of heroism.

THE MOTHER



## UNSC's Let-down

In Paradise Lost, the English poet John Milton encapsulates a fundamental truth about the struggle to end a violent conflict and establish a sustainable peace: "Who overcomes by force, Hath overcome but half his foe." This insight was crucial to my own understanding of how to chart a way to end Colombia's long and costly civil war, and it is acutely relevant to our shared global challenges today.

To build peace, leaders need to foster hope and anchor policies in empathy, solidarity, and a long-term vision of the common good. This is precisely the approach we must take now to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic and build a more resilient world that can better withstand future shocks and crises.

Humanity's collective experience of Covid-19 has reminded us all how precious, fragile, and intertwined life can be. Each person's existence on this planet is inextricably connected with that of our brothers, sisters, and neighbours, as well as with our forebears and unborn generations. As we begin to map a post-pandemic recovery, recognising our shared destiny makes it critical that we draw inspiration from the legacy of previous successful leaders.

In this regard, there is no better model than Nelson Mandela, a man of immense courage and determination who defied a particularly evil system of racial oppression and became the greatest peacemaker of his generation. Mandela endured nearly three decades of imprisonment, led his people to freedom, and built a resilient, multiracial democracy in South Africa that endures to this day.

Mandela's abiding humility and his iron faith in democracy helped lay the foundations of modern South Africa. These qualities also resonated globally, because Mandela always placed the African National Congress' liberation struggle in the context of the wider international fight against colonialism, racism, and discrimination.

This affirmation of our common humanity lay at the heart of Mandela's decision to found The Elders, the group of independent global leaders of which I am a member. In his speech at the organisation's launch in Johannesburg in July 2007, Mandela charged the group with a specific mandate: "Support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict, and inspire hope where there is despair."

Today more than ever, we must recommit to this approach in the face of the pandemic, as well as even greater existential threats such as climate change and nuclear weapons. We urgently need an explicit recognition by global leaders that solidarity matters, and that they must act decisively to defend and rejuvenate multilateralism.

This ambition and sense of hope is essential. One sobering example of its absence is the underwhelming collective reaction to the March 2020 call by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres for a 'global ceasefire' in response to Covid-19. True, Guterres' appeal was compelling, and the UN estimated that warring parties in 11 countries had heeded it by early April last year. But the UN Security Council (UNSC) took more than three months to pass a resolution endorsing Guterres' appeal. And too many conflicts continued unabated throughout 2020 and still rage today.

The toll on human life, particularly among unarmed civilians, has been devastating. By mid-2020, violent conflicts had contributed to a rise in the number of forcibly displaced people, to nearly 80 million. And by the end of 2020, almost 100 million people faced severe food insecurity as a result of conflict - up from 77 million in 2019.

This is a damning indictment of collective failure, especially by the UNSC's five permanent members. But we must understand the UNSC's near-paralysis in the wider context of the many global leadership failures laid bare by Covid-19. These include insufficient coordination and information-sharing to contain the pandemic, inadequate collaboration by the G20 to protect the global economy, a dearth of financial assistance to support the Global South, and the moral catastrophe of 'vaccine apartheid.'

Contemplating this litany of challenges and disappointments, it is easy to be overwhelmed by pessimism. But resigning ourselves to failure is not only an indulgence of the world's privileged, who do not have to endure the pain and loss of war, but also a betrayal of its victims. Hope persists, and so must our determination.

As for me, I am hopeful and determined that we will recover from the pandemic in a way that affirms the words of my compatriot, the great writer and Nobel laureate Gabriel Garcia Márquez: "Neither floods nor plagues, famines nor cataclysms, nor even the eternal wars of century upon century, have been able to subdue the persistent advantage of life over death." In that spirit, we must then get on with the life-affirming task of building peace.

*The writer, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, is a former President of Colombia.*

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### WISDOM CORNER

**If you're not making mistakes, then you're not doing anything. I'm positive that a doer makes mistakes.** JOHN WOODEN

**I always like to look on the optimistic side of life, but I am realistic enough to know that life is a complex matter.** WALT DISNEY

**People deal too much with the negative, with what is wrong. Why not try and see positive things, to just touch those things and make them bloom?** THICH NHAT HANH

### WORDSWORTH

#### On the wagon

There are several stories about its origin. Perhaps the most common one says it derives from prisoners who were on their way to jail on the back of a wagon. They were allowed one last drink in the local pub before the enforced temperance inside. A variation refers to condemned prisoners on the way from Newgate Prison to be hanged at Tyburn being allowed to stop at a hostelry to have a last drink before being put back on the wagon for the final part of their journey to execution. Hardly so. A young American was a little nearer when he wrote that, "My teacher says it was during the temperance movement when men would parade around town on a wagon to show they've conquered their demons." Since the Salvation Army is very keen on temperance, it isn't surprising that the phrase has several times been attributed to them. An American Sally Army website says firmly that: "Former National Commander Evangeline Booth - founder William Booth's daughter - drove a hay wagon through the streets of New York to encourage alcoholics on board for a ride back to The Salvation Army. Hence, alcoholics in recovery were said to be 'on the wagon'". The source seems impeccable, but the Sally Army is, alas, perpetrating another version of the same folk etymology. However, the saying is indeed originally American and it is associated with wagons, of a sort. The original form, which dates from the early years of the twentieth century, was to be on the water-wagon, implying that the speaker was drinking water rather than alcohol and so was an abstainer, at least for the time being.

### SPECTRUM SOCIETY

## The Covid crisis we don't see



Lekha Rattanan

**THERE IS NO OFFICIAL COUNT OF THIS TRAGEDY PLAYING OUT IN PARALLEL, PAINFULLY AND SILENTLY, LEAVING FAMILIES TO MANAGE WHAT ESSENTIALLY IS A DESOLATE, HOPELESS SITUATION**

The official death count due to Covid-19 in India stood at over 400,000 around mid-July. It is widely understood and accepted that the actual death toll is many times that figure. Yet, these numbers do not count the deaths of despair caused by a host of factors that are not directly due to Covid-19 but are indirectly a result of the pandemic - like suicides, depression, anxiety, and the devastation and deprivation of families whose lives have been upturned. There is no official count of this tragedy playing out in parallel, painfully and silently, leaving families to manage what essentially is a desolate, hopeless situation. As Covid-19 numbers come under control, as vaccinations pick up and as the health system prepares for a possible third wave, the government will have to begin to turn its attention to providing support and relief to those suffering in silence. This may well be the silent majority of Covid-related victims, a group that needs a helping hand but is too weak to even ask for it.

Consider the case of Reshma Matthew Trenchil, a journalist, who jumped from the 12th floor of her rented suburban Mumbai high rise in June, taking her seven-year-old son with her on Father's Day.

Her husband died of Covid nearly a month before that, as he contracted the disease tending to his parents, both of whom died in Varanasi while on a pilgrimage. Reshma was left alone in a nuclear family system with no one she could turn to or depend on for support in Mumbai, where they had moved from Bangalore recently.

This is a silent crisis that is already here and growing. Research by US-based institutions has shown that alongside the thousands of deaths from Covid-19, there is a growing epidemic of 'deaths of despair' due to the pandemic. As many as 75,000 more people will die from drug or alcohol misuse and suicide, according to new research released by the California-based Well Being Trust. The report from WBT notes that "if the country fails to invest in solutions that can help heal the nation's isolation, pain, and suffering, the collective impact of Covid-19 will be even more devastating." The three factors cited as 'already at work' in exacerbating deaths of despair in America are not uncommon here: unprecedented economic failure paired with massive unemployment, mandated months of social isolation and possible residual isolation for years.

Many Indian nuclear families

of three and four members have virtually collapsed after losing their mainstay, especially those who have moved to new cities or are estranged from their relatives after disputes or inter-faith marriages. Many have suffered traumatic experiences as they could not be with their loved ones in their dying moments.

There is also the case of many families coming to terms with a lifestyle that is considered the norm - high EMIs and maintenance charges for houses and cars that signal success and achievement in an age of consumerism. Now, this high-expense living is coming to terms with realities as loans come calling and self-esteem is sacrificed at the altar of recovery agents and processes. Take the case of the Shetty family in Gurugram, where the man committed suicide, followed by his wife and a daughter a fortnight later as debts piled up. The suicide note, according to reports, requested that their home and car loans be waived.

An online survey in May covering some 8,000 respondents reported that 61 per cent of Indians were feeling angry, upset, depressed or worried as the second wave of Covid-19 hit.

For those who are alone, and working in different cities, cut off

or estranged from their families, the pandemic and lockdown have exacerbated a problem that has been brewing slowly as some social changes entered the Indian family system and culture with the liberalisation of the 1990s. This is when aspirations rose, EMIs multiplied, and the joint family was given a jolt. Today, there are more than a 100 million Indians over the age of 60, according to the 2011 Census. These 'senior citizens' who once headed, guided and held together the joint family of the past now face an uncertain future themselves as the Indian family has been changing.

Looked at from this perspective, the pandemic may be etching some new fault lines in the Indian social structure. Will 'work from home' reverse the trend of nuclear families? What impact will it have on the culture of instant food, instant cash and instant gratification that the new generation has grown on? While these trends build and take root and are watched by marketers, it is time for the government to wake up to the unseen crisis that is brewing and will hit a new high as Covid-19 itself wanes.

*The writer is the Managing Editor of The Billion Press.*

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#### Implement with care

Sir, Government decisions may not always be popular. Unpopular decisions of a government may not be bad every time. Similarly, popular decisions may not be in accordance with the laws of the state. Uttar Pradesh, the most-populous state in India, is set to carve a new path towards population control going by the ambitious plan of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The state's birth rate - the total number of live births per 1000 population in a given period of time - and the fertility rate - average number of children that would be born to a woman in her reproductive age - are high though some studies say the latter is on a declining trend. The Yogi Adityanath government has introduced the Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilisation and Welfare) Bill 2021 to take stock of the burgeoning population in the state and go for measures to control it. The gist of the Bill is to limit the family size by both incentive and punishment. The CM has said that the Bill is aimed at stabilising the state's population leading to sustainable development and equitable distribution though apprehensions in some sections of the society about it being targeted against a particular community has to be taken care of with empathy. The success of the Bill, on becoming a law, will depend on an extremely meticulous execution, a thorough follow-up, and, of course, not taking recourse to any type of vendetta politics. The China example has to be recalled; it cannot be relied on. Also, the Uttar Pradesh government needs to be complemented for incorporating salient sub-features, like the introduction of a compulsory subject on population control in secondary schools, while drafting the broad population control Bill.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA (MAHARASHTRA)

#### Sorry state

Sir, This is in reference to "Sorry state of affairs: SC" published in Orissa POST July 21. The Supreme Court was right in criticising the Kerala government for relaxing lockdown measures for three days in view of Bakrid. Over 30 per cent of the active Covid-19 cases in the country are reported from Kerala, a state which is home to less than 3 per cent of India's population. Active cases are coming down in all states except Kerala, where it has gone up over the last 22 days. Public health should be the priority for the state government.

Gopal Mittal, BHUBANESWAR

## 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, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

# Bargarh farmers fret over urea shortage

RAMPANT BLACK MARKETING OF THE FERTILISER IN THE DISTRICT



FILE PHOTO

## TROUBLED LOT

A FARMER CAN GET 10 SACKFULS OF UREA AT THE PRIMARY AGRICULTURE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES BY SUBMITTING NECESSARY DOCUMENTS

MARGINAL FARMERS HAVE TO FACE THE PINCH OF BUYING FERTILISERS AT HIGHER PRICES WHEN FARMING ACTIVITIES REQUIRE MORE FERTILISERS AT THIS TIME

FARMERS DEMANDED IMMEDIATE SUPPLY OF FERTILISER AS PADDY CROPS BADLY REQUIRED UREA AT THE PRESENT STAGE FOR THE GROWTH OF PLANTS

FARMERS ALLEGED THAT THEY HAVE TO BUY A PACKET OF UREA AT HIGH PRICES - PAYING ₹50 TO ₹60 MORE THAN ITS USUAL PRICE

ally cultivated in 2,47,268 hectares in Bargarh district. Based on the targets for paddy cultivation, the quantities of fertilisers for the district are fixed.

During the last kharif season, the quota for different fertilisers for the district was 24,385 tonnes. This year, the quantity of fertilisers required for the district is 24,500 tonnes.

Transplantation of paddy has already been completed in most parts and the standing crops badly require fertiliser. Urea should be applied within 15 days of transplantation, but there is a scarcity of urea in the district, it is said.

Farmers demanded immediate supply of fertiliser as paddy crops badly required urea at the present stage for the growth of its plants.

If the fertiliser is not applied in the right time, it will affect the growth of paddy plants and the yield, they said.

Laxman Pradhan, a farmer of Gobindapalli, said if urea is not applied in right quantities at this time, expecting a good harvest this year is impossible. Like previous years, the district is facing a shortage of urea.

Suresh Nekanti, a farmer of Kalapani, said a farmer gets 10 packets of urea on the basis of the Aadhaar card, but medium and large farmers have to buy fertilisers from outside to meet their huge requirements.

Many farmers alleged that they have to buy a packet of urea at high prices - paying ₹50 to ₹60 more than its usual price.

District agriculture officer Santosh Kumar Maharana said, "We have 19,000 tonnes of urea in stock while farmers are being supplied the fertiliser at subsidised price."

"We have written to higher authorities to allot more fertiliser to the district," he added.

his/her necessary documents. "At present, the required quantities of fertilisers are not being made available at the societies. On the other hand, the fertiliser is being black marketed in the district. 10 sackfuls of urea do not meet the requirement of large farmers. They have to buy it from traders in the open market," they said.

Marginal farmers have to face the pinch of buying fertilisers at higher prices when farming activities require more fertilisers at this stage.

A packet of urea (45 kg) is officially priced at ₹266.50 available at PACSs and authorised retailers.

In kharif season, paddy is usu-

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, July 21:** Even as farming activities are picking up in western Odisha, farmers in various parts of Bargarh district have started facing a shortage of urea fertiliser. It was alleged that there was rampant black marketing of the fertiliser, while the administration is yet to stop it. Farmers said, in the initial phase of the farming activities, urea is needed for the saplings to grow. They pointed out that the agriculture department has made a provision of 10 sackfuls of urea for a farmer at the primary agriculture cooperative societies after submitting

# Migrant worker's body in ambulance for 4 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bahanaga, July 21:** The body of a migrant worker was left unattended to in an ambulance for four days. The vehicle carried it from Tamil Nadu to Bahanaga area in Balasore. The family members of the migrant worker alleged that he was murdered. The villagers staged a dharna, demanding action against the accused.

According to reports, Sridhar Sethi, a labour contractor of Simulia area, had taken Sanjay Kumar Das (35) to Tamil Nadu on the promise of work at a private company June 20. Sanjay used to speak to his family regularly, but from July 14, the family could not contact him. His cell phone was showing switched off. Apprehensive, family mem-

bers tried to contact the labour contractor, who told the former that Sanjay had died, but did not clarify what led to his death.

Bereaved family members said that when Tamil Nadu police were contacted about the incident, Sanjay's photograph and CCTV footage of the company were sent to the family. The family suspected foul play and filed a complaint at the police station against the contractor, who had also fights with Sanjay there.

The family members alleged that police did not take action in this regard. An ambulance carried the body to the village three days ago. Three youths had come in the ambulance. The villagers detained the youth and ambulance, demanding arrest of the contractor.

# 3 yrs on, no move to rebuild razed buildings

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Boinda, July 21:** Several government offices and sheds were demolished along the road from Jambunali to Bhangamunda of NH-55 (Cuttack-Sambalpur) in Kishorenagar block in Angul district to make room for four-laning of the NH.

Although, three years have passed, no new office buildings have been constructed in place of the razed ones, causing a lot of trouble to the people.

It is said that the administration is not getting suitable sites for construction of the office buildings. The administration started the eviction drive for the four-laning of the national highway May 17, 2018. Since the affected persons were not fully compensated, they had objected to the eviction drive.

The administration, however, imposed prohibitory orders under Section 144 and completed the drive.

The RI office building, veterinary hospital, a bungalow of the works department, Kishoreganj Primary School, Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra in Nunukapashi panchayat, Boinda outpost, Boinda Janata College, a passenger rest shed at Boinda Square and a rest shed at Boinda College in Boinda area were pulled down.

The other buildings and structures that bit the dust included rest sheds at Luhamunda and Deberapali villages, the barrack of Handapa police station, a rest shed at Baisina village, classrooms of Baisina Project Primary School, the boundary wall of Pagabandha Primary School, rest sheds at Nakichi Phulamba, Sarigipali, Ambapal and Bamur villages, the



Officials of both the states at the construction site in Rayagada

bouring government had started a bridge project across a creek near Sanalakuti.

A pillar of the under-construction bridge is inside the territory of Andhra Pradesh while two pillars are inside the Odisha territory. Learning about the developmental linkage to its village, the neigh-

bouring government had started a bridge project across a creek near Sanalakuti.

ing a lot of trouble. With no options left, they are forced to depend on Handapa veterinary hospital, which is seven kilometres away. Similarly, despite the fact that ₹2 crore has been sanctioned for the dak bungalow of the works department and a piece of land has been identified for the same, work on it is yet to start. In the absence of this dak bungalow, the VIPs and political leaders who depended on it are facing difficulties. This is affecting the developmental activities in Boinda.

Mentioning that a patch of land behind the place where the old Boinda outpost stood as the suitable place for the new building for the outpost, Boinda residents had written (Letter No. 15/01/2021) to the Athmallik MLA. But they are yet to get any response.

The contractor firm engaged in

the construction of the rest shed and school buildings is working on two school buildings, but work is progressing at a snail's pace.

Similarly, the inordinate delay in the flyover construction at Boinda and Bamur has triggered dissatisfaction among people.

They alleged that the flyover construction work had not progressed beyond some pillar holes in Boinda. Drain work has also been left mid-way through, resulting in rainwater entering the houses in the locality even after a slight drizzle. Only 30 per cent of the bridge work at Bamur has been completed. Moreover, the affected businessmen are yet to be rehabilitated.

People in Boinda have urged the administration to intervene and ensure construction of new office buildings at the earliest.

# HELPING HAND



Expectant mothers are being handed out free kits at a hospital in Naugaon block of Jagatsinghpur district

OP PHOTO

# Admin halts bridge work by Andhra

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, July 21:** Amid persistent efforts of Andhra Pradesh to claim territory of Odisha in border areas, the neighbouring government had sought permission of the Rayagada district administration to reconstruct a half-built bridge across a creek at Sanalakuti village under Sadar block.

However, the district administration has made it clear that if there is a need for any developmental work, it will be only carried out by the Odisha government.

According to reports, Lada village of Andhra Pradesh is 2 km from Sanalakuti village in Rayagada district. Sanalakuti is the only way to reach Lada. To get commuting linkage to its village, the neigh-



Officials of both the states at the construction site in Rayagada

bouring government had started a bridge project across a creek near Sanalakuti.

A pillar of the under-construction bridge is inside the territory of Andhra Pradesh while two pillars are inside the Odisha territory. Learning about the developmental linkage to its village, the neigh-

bouring government had started a bridge project across a creek near Sanalakuti.

ing a lot of trouble. With no options left, they are forced to depend on Handapa veterinary hospital, which is seven kilometres away. Similarly, despite the fact that ₹2 crore has been sanctioned for the dak bungalow of the works department and a piece of land has been identified for the same, work on it is yet to start. In the absence of this dak bungalow, the VIPs and political leaders who depended on it are facing difficulties. This is affecting the developmental activities in Boinda.

chayati raj department rushed to the spot and ordered the engineer to not resume the work.

"The Odisha government will carry out all the developmental work in the village," they said.

It may be noted that there is a 240 metre road from the PWD road up to the limits of Sanalakuti border. Another 140 metre cement-concrete road is also there. "A 100-metre stretch of the road and the bridge will be done by the Odisha government. The work is getting delayed due to monsoon," the BDO said. He also added that the developmental work will be done after holding discussions with the Collector. The tehsildar said that the Andhra officials had taken stock of their territory in the presence of Odisha officials.

# FARMER AWARENESS



A vehicle meant to create awareness among farmers about online registration on paddy procurement is being flagged off by local tehsildar at Sheragad in Ganjam district

OP PHOTO

# ILS commissioned at VSS airport

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 21:** Instrument Landing System (ILS) has become operational at Veer Surendra Sai (VSS) Airport in Jharsuguda, officials said Wednesday.

In a tweet, the Airport Authority of India (AAI) said the ILS will help in precise landing of aircraft at the airport. It will also positively impact flight regularity during bad weather and low visibility conditions. The overall cost of the project is approximately ₹15 crore.

The new ILS became operational July 15, 2021. The installation, testing, commissioning and flight inspection of the facility were carried out keeping all Covid-19 related safety precautions in mind, the AAI said.

Prior to the operationalisation of ILS, the flights were landing at the second functional airport in Odisha using Doppler Very High-Frequency Omni Range (DVOR) and Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) procedure, sources said.

In September 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had inaugurated the airport during his visit to Odisha. Currently, Air India and SpiceJet operate flights from the airport to cities like Kolkata, Delhi and Mumbai.

# 60-ft wide breach in Rengali canal, farmlands submerged in Dhenkanal



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rengali, July 21:** A 60-ft wide breach occurred in Rengali right side distributary canal at Santharapur village near Antagadia under Kamakhyanagar block of Dhenkanal district in the wee hours of Wednesday.

In another incident, a 10-ft wide breach developed in the Rengali left side distributary canal near Dhalapada village under Bhuban block of the district, Tuesday.

The surging rainwater has submerged hundreds of acres of farmland in the region. Paddy seedlings already planted by many local farmers have been washed away and several farmlands have become sand-cast, some farmers of

Dhalapada village said.

It is pertinent to mention that the canal was commissioned on a trial basis four days ago. Similarly, the long-awaited Rengali left side canal under JICA irrigation project was inaugurated July 15, 2021.

The ambitious project, which after completion targeted to irrigate 5,847 hectares of farmlands, has a main canal and three distributary canals, including 63 minor and sub-minor canals. On the other hand, many farmers have alleged low-quality work. They have demanded adequate compensation.

Meanwhile, executive engineer of the Rengali irrigation project and other officials of the department have rushed to the spot. The officials have started repair work.

# Cross-border narco trafficking is 'terror lifeline' in J&K

During the last two years, the security forces have been able to seize narcotic consignments costing over ₹500 crore in the international market

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jammu, July 21:** Narco terrorism is becoming a major challenge for the security forces as the smuggling of narcotics in over 95 per cent cases has been linked directly with financing of various terrorist organisations in Jammu and Kashmir. Intelligence agencies believe that all cross-LoC and cross-international border smuggling rackets in J&K are directly linked to financing and sustaining terrorism from across the border.



"In over 95 per cent narcotics smuggling cases, we have been able to establish a direct link from across the border to fund terrorism in J&K. What once used to be an individual over-adventurism to become rich overnight has now become a cartel operation primarily run by groups supporting and sustaining terrorist activities here," said a senior intelligence officer.

The arrests of smuggling kingpins from Bihar and Punjab whose direct connections with the cross-border narcotics traders have established the interstate dimension of this underground trade.

Security officials argue that an interstate kingpin of narcotics smuggling cannot be imagined to

be getting involved in the racket without knowing the end use of the funds so generated.

"Wouldn't the interstate sponsor of narcotic trade know the origin of his consignment? If he knows the origin of such consignments then he also knows the end use of the funds generated therefrom," said a senior security force official.

Accepting the seriousness of the matter and the resultant damage narco terrorism has been doing to peace and tranquillity in J&K, DGP, Dilbag Singh took a high level meeting in Jammu July 19 to check narco-trafficking since it is used to fund various terrorist groups in J&K. "DGP Jammu and Kashmir Dilbag Singh chairs high level joint

security meeting; reviews security situation #Jammu zone. Directs officers to give special focus on measures to check narco-trafficking as it being used to fund terrorist groups," J&K police said on its official Twitter handle.

The special areas of focus for curbing cross-border narcotics smuggling are the LoC in Kupwara district of Kashmir and the Jammu-Samba-Kathua arch of Ate international border in Jammu division, said a senior police officer.

It is estimated that during the last two years, the security forces, 'especially the local police', have been able to seize narcotic consignments costing over ₹500 crore in the international market.

# New faces to lead in 2022 UP elections

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, July 21:** With around six months left for the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, it is a new generation of leaders that is preparing to lead the political campaign, paving the way for a new look politics in the state.

Leading from the front is Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra who faces the uphill task of reviving a near defunct party. Priyanka will not contest the Assembly elections but there is no doubt that she will design an aggressive campaign for her party.

Under her leadership the Congress will try to catch the proverbial bull by its horns and her direct and aggressive style of campaigning is bound to unnerve her opponents to an extent.

Another new generation politician who will be leading his party into the electoral arena is Jayant Chaudhary, president of the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD).

For Jayant, this is his first independent election when he will not have the guidance of his father, Chaudhary Ajit Singh, who succumbed to Covid-19 in May this year.

The scales, however, are tipping in his favour because of his proactive role in the ongoing farmers' agitation and the overwhelming support that he has been receiving from his Jat community.

Aditya Yadav, son of Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Shivpal Singh Yadav, will be contesting his



Aditya Yadav

Chandra Shekhar Azad

Jayant Chaudhary

maiden election in 2022 though his choice of constituency is not yet decided.

Aditya was scheduled to debut in electoral politics in 2017 but the family feud that almost split the Samajwadi Party vertically, made him put off his plans.

A quiet and unobtrusive leader, Aditya has been learning organisational skills from his father Shivpal Yadav and is his most trusted backroom boy.

Chandra Shekhar Azad, head of the Bhim Army that will be contesting the UP elections under the name of Azad Samaj Party, is another young politician to mark his debut in the state.

The 34-year-old Dalit activist has already plunged headlong

into the campaign and his cycle yatras are criss-crossing the state these days.

Chandra Shekhar's aides say that he may not contest the elections this time but will ensure that his party gets ample Dalit support -- a move that could be directly detrimental to the interests of the Bahujan Samaj Party.

While the BJP will also be field-

ing several new candidates, (including sons and daughters of senior leaders) after replacing sitting legislators, the party is apparently not worried about the onslaught of young leaders from other parties.

"New faces cannot bring a change. The BJP has been working on the ground and people know what our governments have done for them. These new faces can grab eyeballs but not votes," said state BJP vice-president Vijay Bahadur Pathak.

SP spokesperson Julie Singh, however, said the change was an ongoing process and with the entry of new faces, new leaders would bring a change in the political scenario.

# Prof held for making derogatory remarks against Smriti Irani

AGENCIES

**Firozabad (UP), July 21:** A professor, who allegedly made derogatory remarks against Union Minister Smriti Irani on Facebook, was sent to jail after he surrendered in a court here.

Shaharyar Ali surrendered to Additional Sessions Judge Anurag Kumar and moved an interim bail application Tuesday. The judge cancelled the bail plea after which the professor was sent to jail.

Firozabad Police had booked Ali, head of History department at SRK College, in March for an alleged obscene Facebook post against the women and child development minister. The college had then served him with a suspension notice.

Earlier this month, the Supreme Court refused to grant protection from arrest to Ali.

An anticipatory bail plea filed by the professor was also rejected by the Allahabad High Court in May. Refusing to grant Ali protection from arrest, Justice JJ Munir said there was no material on record to show that the professor's account was hacked.

## FESTIVE SPIRIT



Muslim children greet each other on the occasion of Eid al-Adha, at Taj Mahal complex, in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, Wednesday.

# Prepare to leave, Adityanath is coming back: ABAP to poet

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Prayagraj, July 21:** The Akhil Bhartiya Akhara Parishad (ABAP) told poet Munawwar Rana to "start getting prepared to settle down outside Uttar Pradesh" since Yogi Adityanath is all set to become Chief Minister again.

Rana had recently said if Yogi becomes the Chief Minister again, "then I will assume that the state is no longer fit for Muslims to live and I will have to migrate to some other place."

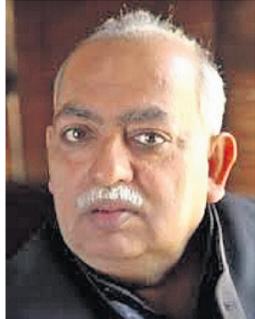
In response, ABAP President Mahant Narendra Giri said: "It seems that Munawwar Rana is playing in the hands of the fundamentalists. During the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh, led by Yogi Adityanath, there has been no riot in the last four and a half years. Whenever there have been other governments in Uttar Pradesh, there have been riots and Muslims have also been unsafe."

"In BJP rule, Muslims are also completely safe in the state, but Rana's statement of leaving Uttar Pradesh if the BJP wins the next Assembly elections and Yogi Adityanath becomes the Chief Minister is ridiculous."

He further added that "from the statement of Rana, it appears that his mental condition is not good."

"Anyone is completely free to go anywhere, and if Munawwar Rana also wants to go to West Bengal, then of course he can. But they should not forget that West Bengal is also a part of India," said Giri.

The ABAP chief further said that "as far as the formation of the next government in Uttar Pradesh is concerned, the next government



Rana had recently said if Yogi becomes the Chief Minister again, "then I will assume that the state is no longer fit for Muslims to live and I will have to migrate to some other place"

will also be formed under the leadership of Yogi Adityanath and he will be the next Chief Minister of the state."

However, Giri said that as a poet Rana has a good reputation throughout the country and both Hindus and Muslims respect him.

"But the kind of controversial statements he has been making continuously for the last few days, his image has also been affected. If Rana abandons his controversial statements and returns to the mainstream of nationalism, then he will definitely get the same respect from the people again."

# Nishad politics warming up in Uttar Pradesh

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, July 21:** Nishad politics in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh is now warming up. Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP), an ally of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Bihar, has announced that it will observe the death anniversary of former Samajwadi Party MP and bandit queen Phoolan Devi, who belonged to the Nishad community, July 25.

Mukesh Sahani, VIP Chief and Minister of Animal Husbandry and Fish Resources in Bihar, has said that his party will install 18 statues of Phoolan Devi on her death anniversary.



These statues will be installed at all 18 divisional headquarters in Uttar Pradesh where Assembly polls will be held in 2022. Sahani will also attend the installation ceremony to be held at Sujabad Parao in Varanasi district.

The statues will also be installed in Lucknow, Prayagraj, Sultanpur, Mirzapur, Meerut, Balia, Banda, Jaunpur, Gorakhpur and Ayodhya. Sahani said the statues of Phoolan Devi would remind people how a rural woman, who was subjected to physical torture, fought against the perpetrators of crime, scaled heights in public life and reached the Parliament.

# Indian, Pak armies exchange sweets along LoC in Kashmir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, July 21:** Indian and Pakistani armies Wednesday exchanged sweets at two places along the Line of Control in Kashmir on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha, the first time since 2019.

On the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha and as a gesture for promoting peace, harmony and compassion in the true spirit of the festival, India and Pakistan armies held a flag meeting and exchanged sweets at Kaman Aman Setu, Uri and Tithval Crossing on Kishanganga River in Tangdhar, Kupwara, a defence spokesperson said here.

The exchange of sweets along the line of control on major festivals of India and Pakistan has been a feature of the engagement between the two armies but the



events were stopped in 2019 following the Pulwama terror attack in which 40 CRPF jawans were killed.

The spokesperson said the event has been held when both the armies have been strictly following the February cease-

fire agreement along the LoC.

India and Pakistan had February 25 this year released a joint statement announcing a ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, following talks between their Directors General of Military Operations.

# IT'S 'GHAR WAAPSI' SEASON IN UP CONG

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, July 21:** It is now 'ghar waapsi' time in the Uttar Pradesh Congress unit.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, party general secretary, during her recent three-day visit to Lucknow, reportedly directed UPPC president Ajay Kumar Lallu to ensure the return of those party workers, especially veterans, who had been shoved out of the party.

Immediately after her return to Delhi, Lallu withdrew the expulsion of three senior leaders -Nek Chand Pandey, Bhudhar Narain Mishra and Rajendra Singh Solanki - and welcomed them back into the party's state headquarters with bouquets and smiles Tuesday.

AICC secretaries Dhiraj Gurjar and Rohit Chaudhary said that these leaders will play an important role in strengthening the Congress in future. These three veterans were a part of the group of 10 senior leaders who had been expelled from the party in November 2019 after they reportedly held a meeting on Nehru Jayanti which was termed as an anti-party activity.

"Ten leaders had gathered to celebrate the birth anniversary of former Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi and also to discuss the prevailing political situation. I do not think there was anything anti-party in this. One of the expelled leaders, Ram Krishan Dwiwedi, passed away last year. We repeatedly sought an appointment with Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi but were denied the same. We were asked to tender an apology. Why



should we tender any apology when we did not indulge in any indiscipline?" said expelled leader, Haji Siraj Mehndi.

The expulsions led to a vertical divide in the party and paved the way for an old-versus-young war within the Congress.

Soon, majority of the senior party leaders withdrew from participating in Congress activities and relatively unknown leaders took over the reins.

According to party sources, Priyanka, who was apparently kept in the dark about the festering resentment in the party ranks, has now asked the state leadership to withdraw expulsion of old guards and reach out to all veterans in the party.

"She said that when she asked for induction of young blood in the Congress, she certainly did not mean the ouster of old timers. She said that she wanted experienced leaders to coexist with young leaders," said a party source.

Ajay Kumar Lallu, when asked, said the Congress was reaching out to all the veterans and all those committed to the party would be welcomed.

# Allahabad High Court asks for action against 'noisy' bikers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, July 21:** The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court has directed state authorities to crack down on two-wheelers causing noise pollution through modified silencers.

The court has asked the authorities to file personal affidavits by the next date of hearing on the action taken against the owners of such bikes.

A bench comprising Justice Abdul Moyn passed the order Tuesday, taking suo motu cognisance of noise pollution caused by modification of silencers in the Indian and foreign-made two-wheelers that emit noise above the permissible limit of 80 decibels.

Directing its registry to treat the matter as a PIL and place it before an appropriate bench, Justice Moyn directed principal secretary (transport), principal secretary (home), director general of police, chairman, state pollution control board and deputy commissioner of police (traffic), Lucknow, to file their affidavits of compliance by August 10.

The court expressed concern over vehicular noise pollution and said, "Modification of noise mufflers/silencers has led to a situation where a vehicle driven hundreds of meters away can be heard, causing discomfort to children, old and infirm persons. The problem is like the legend of Hydra where two more heads emerge as soon as one head is severed."

## of the day quote

The entire Pegasus snooping row is timed to disrupt Parliament and build a baseless agenda

**MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR** | HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER

Criminals are roaming fearlessly. Policemen are being targeted now. What happened with a police inspector and a head constable in Sikar yesterday clearly shows the level of law and order during the Congress rule

**SATISH POONIA** | RAJASTHAN BJP PRESIDENT

The Pegasus spyware snoops on every thing in a phone, including mails, messages and passwords

**KAMAL NATH** | MADHYA PRADESH CONGRESS CHIEF

## SHORT TAKES

### Red alert for Mumbai

**Mumbai:** The Regional Meteorological Centre of the IMD issued a 'red alert' for Mumbai, predicting heavy to very heavy rainfall in the country's financial capital Wednesday. Earlier, the Met office had sounded an 'orange alert', but it is now being changed to 'red alert' for Wednesday because of the "favourable synoptic conditions", Dr Jayant Sarkar, head of the Regional Meteorological Centre here said. Heavy rains had battered the metropolis on Sunday and Monday as well.

### Centre gives jolt to Nitish

**Patna:** In a jolt to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar who has been battling for caste-based census for long, the Central government has said that, as a matter of policy, it will not enumerate caste-wise population data, other than on SCs and STs. The Nitish Kumar government had passed a bill in both houses in 2019 and 2020 for caste-based census which was first demanded by RJD chief Lalu Prasad during the Mahagathbandhan government in Bihar. The Nitish Kumar government managed to pass the bill twice with some amendments.

### Quake hits Bikaner

**Jaipur:** An earthquake measuring 5.3 on Richter scale hit Rajasthan's Bikaner district Wednesday. The National Centre for Seismology said that the tremors were felt at 5.24 a.m. about 343 kilometres West North West of Bikaner at a depth of 110 km.

### Thieves trigger blast at ATM

**Pune:** Unidentified men allegedly triggered an explosion at an ATM centre and decamped with over Rs 28 lakh cash at Chakan MIDC in Maharashtra's Pune in the early hours of Wednesday, police said. The thieves, possibly two, allegedly used explosives to trigger a blast at the ATM centre in Bhamboli in Chakan MIDC, an official from the Pimpri Chinchwad police said.

### Naxals release seven villagers

**Raipur:** Seven people, who were allegedly abducted by Naxals in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district a few days back, have been released and they have safely returned to their village, police said Wednesday. Before releasing them, the rebels warned the villagers "not to support police or development works" in the area, the police said.



There has been no death on account of shortage of medical oxygen in Madhya Pradesh

**PRABHURAM CHOUDHARY** | MADHYA PRADESH HEALTH MINISTER

## 'NO OXYGEN DEATHS'

# Oppn takes on Centre

INDIA SAW A MASSIVE SHORTAGE OF MEDICAL OXYGEN AND HOSPITAL BEDS DURING THE PEAK OF THE SECOND COVID WAVE

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 21:** Opposition parties Wednesday reacted strongly to the central government's claim in the Rajya Sabha that no deaths due to lack of oxygen were specifically reported by states and UTs during the second Covid-19 wave. Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut Wednesday said people whose relatives died due to oxygen shortage during the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic should "take the Union government to court". "The Union government is running away from the truth. It seems it is the effect of Pegasus (Israeli spyware)," the Rajya Sabha member said sarcastically while talking to reporters. The Sena's chief spokesperson further said it needs to be found out whether the people whose relatives died due to lack of oxygen supply believe in the Centre's response in Parliament over the issue.

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain Wednesday said there have been many deaths due to oxygen shortage in Delhi and many other places across the country. "If there was no shortage of oxygen, why did hospitals move court? Hospitals and the media had been flagging oxygen shortage issues daily. Television channels showed that how hospitals were running out of the life-saving gas. It is completely false to say that no one died due to oxygen shortage. There have been many deaths due to oxygen shortage in Delhi and many other places across the country," he said. The Union government Tuesday



FILE PHOTO

said in the Rajya Sabha that there was an unprecedented surge in demand for medical oxygen during the second wave and it peaked at nearly 9,000 MT in the first wave, following which the Centre had to step in to facilitate equitable distribution among the states. But there was an unprecedented surge in demand for medical oxygen during the second wave and it peaked at nearly 9,000 MT compared to 3,095 MT in the first wave following which the Centre had to step in to facilitate equitable distribution among the states, it said. Responding to a question on whether a large number of Covid-19 patients died on roads and hospitals due to acute shortage of oxygen in the second wave, Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar noted that health is a state subject and states and UTs regularly report the number of cases and deaths to the Centre.

"Detailed guidelines for reporting of deaths have been issued by the Union Health Ministry to all states and UTs. "Accordingly, all states and UTs report cases and deaths to the Union Health Ministry on a regular basis. However, no deaths due to lack of oxygen have been specifically reported by states and UTs," Pawar said in a written reply. Hitting out at the government, Priyanka Gandhi said, "No death due to lack of oxygen": Central Government. The deaths happened because -- in the pandemic year, the government increased oxygen exports by about 700 per cent." The Congress general secretary alleged that the deaths happened because the government did not arrange tankers to transport oxygen and ignoring the advice of the empowered group and a parliamentary committee, no arrangement was made to provide oxygen.

# PARL PANEL LIKELY TO QUESTION OFFICIALS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 21:** A parliamentary panel IT headed by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor is likely to question top government officials, including from Home Ministry, next week on allegations related to phone tapping of many using Pegasus spyware, sources said Wednesday.

An international media consortium has claimed that several Congress leaders including Rahul Gandhi, two union ministers, Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee and some 40 journalists were among those whose phone numbers were listed as potential targets for hacking through the Israeli spyware which is usually supplied to government agencies. The Indian government and Israeli surveillance company NSO Group, which sells Pegasus spyware worldwide, have refuted the reports. The 32-member Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information and Technology

headed by Tharoor is scheduled to meet on July 28. The agenda of the meeting is 'Citizens' data security and privacy', according to the notification issued by Lok Sabha Secretariat. The panel, which has maximum members from the ruling BJP, has summoned officials from the Ministry of Electronics, Information and Technology and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The issue also rocked proceedings in Parliament as opposition parties launched a scathing attack on the government. Describing the entire snooping incident as a matter of "national security concern", Tharoor had demanded an explanation from the government. Speaking in Lok Sabha, Union IT and Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnav had dismissed the reports as "baseless" and said that the allegations levelled just ahead of the Monsoon session of Parliament were aimed at maligning Indian democracy.

## PEGASUS ROW

## JOG FALLS TO GET NIGHT LIGHTING

The Karnataka government is planning to give a facelift to world-famous tourist destination Jog Falls at a cost of Rs 164 crores, with a ropeway to get a closer view of the waterfalls, boating arrangements, water sports facilities, and lighting for the falls during night on the anvil



## FARMERS TO STAGE PROTEST AT JANTAR MANTAR FROM TODAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 21:** Farmers protesting the three contentious farm laws will start holding a stir at Jantar Mantar from Thursday under heavy security with Delhi Lt Governor Anil Bajjal giving special permission for demonstrations by a maximum of 200 peasants till August 9.

A group of 200 farmers will travel to Jantar Mantar from the Singhu border in buses with a police escort and hold protests there from 11 am to 5 pm, sources in the Delhi Police said. They said the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of farmers' union which has been spearheading the protest against the farm laws, has been asked to give an undertaking that all Covid norms would be followed and the stir would be peaceful. Although the SKM said that their protest at the Jantar Mantar will continue till the end if the Monsoon Session of Parliament August 13, the L-G has given permission for protest till August 9. This is the first time since the violence in the national capital during a tractor rally January 26 that the authorities have granted permission to protesting farmer unions to hold a protest in the city.



## SHOW OF STRENGTH

# Sidhu hosts 62 MLAs amid tussle with Capt



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Amritsar, July 21:** In what is seen as a show of strength, nearly 60 Congress MLAs gathered at the residence of new state party chief Navjot Singh Sidhu here Wednesday, amid suspense over a possible truce between him and CM Amarinder Singh. The Congress has 80 MLAs in the state Assembly. Sidhu and Amarinder Singh have been at loggerheads for the past some time, with the Amritsar (East) MLA recently attacking the CM over the desecration cases. The Chief Minister was also averse to his appointment as the state Congress chief. After Sidhu's elevation, the CM had said that he won't meet him until the cricket-turned-politician apologises for his "derogatory" tweets against him. Among the ministers who reached here were Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, Tript Rajinder Singh Bajwa, Charanjit Singh Channi and Sukhbinder Singh Sarkaria besides outgoing state unit chief Sunil Jakhar.

The MLAs joined by Sidhu boarded luxury buses and went to pay obeisance at the Golden Temple, where a large number of Congress supporters gathered. They also went to the Durgiana temple and Ram Tirath Sthal here. After paying obeisance at the Golden temple, Jakhar told reporters, "We sought blessings for a prosperous Punjab, in which we all contribute together." On Chief Minister Amarinder Singh's stance that he will not meet Sidhu till he publicly tenders an apology, some MLAs said there was no need for it. On Tuesday, scores of Congress workers and Sidhu supporters had accorded a warm welcome to Sidhu when he arrived here after being appointed the state party chief. The party workers have put up posters of Sidhu at many places in the city. Some party MLAs and supporters here claimed that nearly 60 legislators reached here after they were asked by Sidhu to reach Amritsar for paying obeisance at the Golden temple and other shrines.

## THE LION KING



A pair of Asiatic lions at Sarthana Nature Park in Surat

PTI PHOTO

## INDIA SUCCESSFULLY TEST-FIRES NEW GEN AKASH MISSILE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 21:** The DRDO successfully flight-tested the new-generation Akash surface-to-air missile system from an integrated test range off the Odisha coast Wednesday. The defence ministry said the missile was test-fired at around 12:45 pm from a land-based platform and that the "flawless performance" of its weapons system was confirmed by the complete flight data.

The new variant of the Akash missile (Akash-NG) can strike targets at a distance of around 60 km and fly at a speed of up to Mach 2.5. "The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight-tested the new generation Akash Missile from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) off the coast of Odisha on July 21," the ministry said. "The flight trial was conducted at around 12:45 PM from a land-based platform with all weapon system elements such as ultrafunction adar, command, control and communication system and launcher participating in the deployment configuration," it added in a statement.



The Akash missile system has been developed by the DRDO's laboratory in Hyderabad in collaboration with other wings of the premier defence research organisation. In order to capture flight data, ITR deployed a number of monitoring mechanisms such as electro-optical tracking systems, radar and telemetry. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the DRDO, the Indian Air Force and production agencies Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) for the successful test-firing of the missile. The missile will strengthen the Indian Air Force, he said.

# Subdued Eid celebrations across country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 2:** Eid-ul-Adha was celebrated across the country with limited number of people offering prayers at mosques amid gathering curbs due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted people on the occasion. The Border Security Force (BSF) and Pakistan Rangers also exchanged sweets at various points along the border, the first time since Pakistani side shunned the custom in 2019 after the Centre abrogated provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

In Uttar Pradesh, the usual buzz was missing as people preferred to celebrate the festival in the confines of their homes. Led by Maulana Khalid Rashid Farangi Mahali, around 50 people offered "namaz" with masks on while maintaining social distancing at the historic Eidgah in



Muslim children greet each other on the occasion of Eid al-Adha at the Jama Masjid in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

Lucknow. They prayed for the eradication of coronavirus and development of the country, a statement issued by the Islamic Centre of India said. The centre had issued an advi-

sory for celebrating the festival in accordance with the government guidelines, which had said that not more than 50 people should gather at any place at a given time. In Tamil Nadu, the devout offered prayers at mosques in conformity with COVID-19 protocols. Meanwhile, Eid was celebrated with fervour in neighbouring Pondicherry, with prayers being held in mosques, including at Nellihooppu. The Muslim community in Kerala celebrated Bakrid in a subdued manner at their homes sans usual social gatherings. As only 40 people were permitted for prayers adhering to stringent pandemic protocol, there was no usual festive mood in mosques across the southern state, which used to witness a sea of devotees since morning during the occasion. Devotees could be seen following social distancing norms during the prayers inside the mosques. Considering their safety, the majority of mosque authorities have

asked devotees to come for the Eid prayer in the morning after performing "Vulu" (cleaning) and to carry their own "Musalla" (sheet for niskaram)". They also seemed to avoid the usual exchange of pleasantries and embraces after the prayers. The Supreme Court's criticism of the government's relaxations for Bakrid in areas with high COVID-19 positivity rate further dulled the spirit for some ahead of the festival. Devotees mostly stayed indoors to offer "namaz" in Delhi. The celebrations in Kashmir were a low key for the third consecutive year since August 2019. A majority of the faithful marked the festival of sacrifice by offering prayers in small groups and observing social distancing. Thousands of sheep and goats were sacrificed by Muslims across the Valley to mark the tradition of Prophet Ibrahim, the officials said. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha extended Eid greetings to people.

# international



**The pandemic is a test the world is failing. The threat is not over anywhere until it's over everywhere. Anyone who thinks the pandemic is over is living in a fool's paradise**  
**TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WHO CHIEF**

**GIGANTIC ASTEROID**  
A gigantic asteroid is heading towards Earth at a very high speed and will fly past the planet July 24. The asteroid, named "2008 Go20", is estimated to be the size of a stadium or thrice the size of the Taj Mahal



## of the day quote

We continue to oppose the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. We view it as a Kremlin geopolitical project that is intended to expand Russia's influence over Europe's energy resources and to circumvent Ukraine

I was among the first to have a domestically developed Covid-19 vaccine when I got the shot in May last year. I have now had three shots that used different technology and were from different manufacturers and I haven't felt any discomfort

**GAO FU | HEAD OF THE CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, CHINA**

We are extremely disappointed in this decision and believe Liverpool still deserves its world heritage status given the significant role the historic docks and the wider city have played throughout history

**JOANNE ANDERSON | LIVERPOOL'S MAYOR, UK**

## WORST IN A MILLENNIUM

# China province deluged by heavy rains

President Xi Jinping described the situation as "extremely severe" with flood control measures entering a "critical stage"

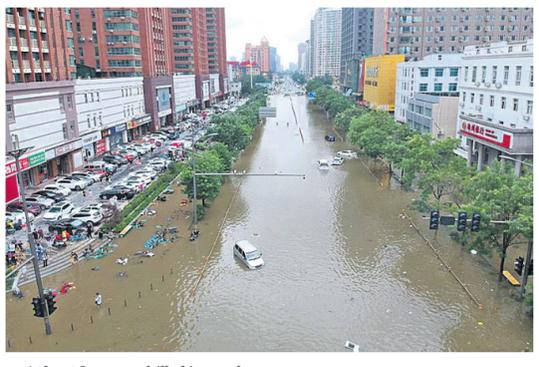
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Beijing, July 21:** At least 25 people have died after torrential rains caused landslides and flooded a city in central China, with shocking images showing passengers struggling against chest-high water inside a train carriage.

Around 200,000 residents were evacuated in Zhengzhou, local government officials said, as soldiers led rescue efforts in the city of over 10 million people which saw the equivalent of a year's average rain dumped on it in just three days.

Rainstorms submerged Zhengzhou's metro late Tuesday, killing 12 people and injuring five, while city officials said hundreds were rescued from the subway. Nerve-shredding images shared on social media showed shocked passengers contending with the fast-rising waters inside a train carriage. Rescuers cut open the roof of the coach to pull people to safety, local media reported.

Others showed dramatic rescues of pedestrians in Zhengzhou from torrents gushing through the streets.



At least four were killed in nearby Gongyi city where houses and walls have collapsed, the official Xinhua news agency said, adding that rainfall had caused multiple landslides.

Relatives outside Zhengzhou made anxious pleas on China's Weibo for information as communications to the city went down.

**Army Sent**  
Authorities have issued the highest warning level for Henan province as floods continue to ham-



## DAM BLASTED TO DIVERT FLOODS

China's military has blasted a dam to release floodwaters threatening one of its most heavily populated provinces, as the death toll in widespread flooding rose to at least 25. The dam operation was carried out late Tuesday night in the city of Luoyang, just as severe flooding overwhelmed the Henan provincial capital of Zhengzhou, trapping residents in the subway system and stranding them at schools, apartments and offices.

mer the region, with landslides blocking many roads, villages evacuated and large areas left without communication. As the scale of the disaster continued to unspool and the damage

## SHORT TAKES

### Ariel Henry named as new Haiti PM

**Port-au-Prince:** Ariel Henry has been sworn in as Haiti's new Prime Minister, nearly two weeks after the assassination of the country's President Jovenel Moise. The late president asked Henry to take the job, days before he was gunned down in the capital, Port-au-Prince. Speaking at a ceremony, the new prime minister called for unity, the BBC reported Wednesday. "One of my priority tasks will be to reassure the people that we will do everything to restore order and security," said Henry.

### Storm strikes fishing ships in Indonesia

**Jakarta:** Rescuers have found 24 bodies and kept searching for 31 other missing persons after 18 ships were hit by a storm in waters off West Kalimantan province in central Indonesia days ago, the top rescuer of the province said Wednesday. The incident took place in Sambas district when two tug boats and fishing ships had already taken position near the coast, and some others were on their way to the territory in response to the warning from the weather agency of the possibility of extreme weather conditions, said Yopi Haryadi, head of the provincial search and rescue office.

### France rolls out Covid health pass

**Paris:** A new Covid-19 health pass has come into effect in France amid a surge in the number of new infections, officials said. From Wednesday, people will require proof of vaccination, a negative test or recent recovery from Covid-19 to enter most museums and cinemas, the BBC reported. Later, lawmakers will debate whether to extend its use in August for entry to cafes, restaurants and shopping malls. It comes the day after Health Minister Olivier Veran announced 18,000 new infections in just 24 hours.

### Saudi facing \$50M cyber extortion

**Dubai:** Saudi Arabia's state oil giant acknowledged Wednesday that leaked data from the company - files now apparently being used in a cyber-extortion attempt involving a USD 50 million ransom demand, likely came from one of its contractors. The oil firm did not say which contractor found itself affected nor whether that contractor had been hacked or if the information leaked out another way.

## POST-BREXIT TRADE

# EU rejects UK call for new deal on N Ireland

AGENCIES



AGENCIES

**London, July 21:** Britain demanded Wednesday a new deal to oversee problematic post-Brexit trade involving Northern Ireland, warning it already had the right to unilaterally ignore parts of an agreement struck with the bloc just last year.

The European Commission immediately poured cold water on the plea, saying Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Brexit minister David Frost had negotiated the protocol and Britain had to respect its international obligations.

"We will not agree to a renegotiation of the Protocol," said the commission's Vice President Maros Sefcovic.

The Northern Ireland protocol was part of the settlement, backed by Johnson, that finally sealed Britain's bitter divorce from the bloc, four years after British voters backed leaving in a referendum.

## The UK has threatened to unilaterally suspend parts of the agreement if changes aren't made

Businesses in Northern Ireland say it is damaging trade, and some pro-British groups have protested at what they say is a weakening of ties with Britain, raising concerns about a return to the sectarian violence which plagued the province for three decades.

"We cannot go on as we are," Frost told parliament Wednesday, saying London said wanted a new "balance", and to eliminate EU oversight of the accord.

The protocol addresses the biggest conundrum of the divorce: how to ensure the delicate peace brought to the province by a 1998 US-brokered peace accord - by maintaining an open border - without opening a back door through Ireland to the EU's single market of 450 million people.

# Israel's National Security Council looking into NSO

AGENCIES

**Jerusalem, July 21:** Israel has set up a senior inter-ministerial team to "look into" proliferating allegations that spyware sold by an Israeli cyber firm has been abused on a global scale, an Israeli source said Wednesday, while adding that an export review was unlikely.

The team is headed by Israel's National Security Council, which answers to Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and has broader areas of expertise than the Defence Ministry which oversees exports of NSO Group's Pegasus software, the source said.

"This event is beyond the Defence

## PEGASUS SPYWARE



Ministry purview," the source said, referring to potential diplomatic blowback after prominent media reports this week of suspected abuses of Pegasus in France, Mexico, India, Morocco and Iraq. NSO did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Neither did Bennett's office. Addressing a cyber conference

Wednesday, the prime minister did not comment on the NSO affair.

The source, who has first-hand knowledge of the team and requested anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue, deemed it "doubtful" that new curbs would be placed on Pegasus exports.

Stopping short of describing the team's task as a formal investigation, the source said: "The objective is to find out what happened, to look into this issue and learn lessons."

NSO did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Neither did Bennett's office. Addressing a cyber conference Wednesday, the prime minister did not comment on the NSO affair.

## Pak again blocks access to TikTok

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, July 21:** Pakistan Wednesday blocked access to TikTok in the country for its failure to remove inappropriate content, taking down the popular Chinese short video-sharing app for the fourth time in recent months.

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), the telecom regulator, in a tweet said that in light of relevant provisions of Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016, PTA has blocked access to TikTok App and website in the country.

The action has been taken due to the continuous presence of inappropriate content on the platform and its failure to take such content down, it said.

The move comes after the Sindh High Court July 2 withdrew its earlier decision to ban Tiktok for spreading immorality in the country.

The court on June 28 had asked the PTA to suspend the Tiktok app on the complaint by a citizen regarding immorality and obscenity on the mobile app.

Before that, the Peshawar High Court (PHC) in March suspended the app following a petition filed by several citizens. However, the PHC after a few weeks lifted the ban by asking the PTA to take measures so that no immoral content was uploaded.

## Russia launches new science module to ISS

AGENCE-FRANCE-PRESSE

**Moscow, July 21:** A Russian Proton-M rocket carrying the new Nauka laboratory module for the International Space Station blasted off from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan Wednesday, the Roscosmos space agency said.

**The module's long-planned journey to the ISS will take eight days. It is expected to dock to the nadir port of Russia's Zvezda service module July 29**

Images released by Roscosmos showed the carrier rocket taking off at 14:58 GMT, taking into orbit the first Russian ISS module in 11 years.

The module's long-planned journey to the ISS will take eight days. It is expected to dock to the nadir port of Russia's Zvezda service module July 29, Roscosmos said in a statement in early July.

The assembly of the 20-tonne Nauka multipurpose laboratory module started back in the 1990s but its launch - initially scheduled for 2007 - has been continuously delayed. Pending a successful launch Wednesday Nauka will replace the Pirs module after twenty years in service, which is expected to detach from the ISS Friday and burn up in the Earth's atmosphere over the Pacific Ocean.

While Nauka's main purpose is research, it will also provide "additional volumes for the workplaces and storage of cargo, places for water and oxygen regeneration equipment," Roscosmos said.

It will also "improve the conditions of cosmonauts' stay, providing an additional toilet and a third sleeping location for the Russian side of the ISS."

## UNREST INTENSIFIES



A demonstrator raises an axe towards police during anti-government protests, as Colombia commemorates Independence Day in Bogotá

# Pak Prez signs bills protecting women, senior citizens' rights

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Islamabad, July 21:** Pakistan President Arif Alvi has signed two important bills including the one which ensures women's property rights and protects them from harassment, coercion, force or fraud, the media reported citing officials.

The second bill to which the president gave his consent is Senior Citizen Bill, 2021 and is aimed at the welfare of senior citizens of Islamabad. With the president's signing Tuesday, these bills have become acts, the Dawn reported.

According to the presidency, Alvi signed the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights (Amendment) Bill 2021 which has amended Section 5 of the relevant Act 2020.

The bill will allow filing of an appeal to the president within 30 days against a decision of the ombudsman (Mohtasib).

"It offers an effective and speedy

**THE LAW SEEKS TO PROTECT WOMEN'S RIGHT OF OWNERSHIP AND POSSESSION**

**'DARUL SHAFQAT' (OLD AGE HOME) WOULD BE ESTABLISHED FOR THE ELDERLY**

**CITIZENS OVER 60 YEARS WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE SENIOR CITIZEN CARD**

**SENIOR CITIZENS WILL GET 20 PER CENT SUBSIDY ON AIR AND RAILWAY TRAVEL**

grievance redressal mechanism under which any woman deprived of ownership of property or possession of her property, may file an appeal to the ombudsman if no proceedings in a court of law are pending regarding that property," the law says.

After preliminary assessment,



the ombudsman will seek a report from the deputy commissioner within 15 days and will pass the judgement after going through the

record. "The ombudsman will also seek objections from the complainant and her adversaries and will complete hearing within 60

## SL OKAYS MUSLIM WOMEN TO GET MARRIED UNDER REGULAR LAW

**B**reaking the archaic 1951 law, the Sri Lanka Cabinet has allowed Muslim women to get married under ordinary law - the Marriage Registration Ordinance in Sri Lanka. Muslim female activists and scholars have fought for decades against the Muslim Marriages and Divorce Act under which Muslim girls were allowed to enter wedlock. They charged that the law leads to child brides and other violation of their rights. The activists have claimed the women in their community were not even allowed to sign their own marriage contracts under

MMDA. "MMDA has included provisions that discriminate against women. Various women's organisations belonging to the Muslim community and Muslim law scholars have pointed out the need to repeal such provisions from the law," the Cabinet said Tuesday. "Under the common law governing the marriage and divorce of the citizens of Sri Lanka, it has become appropriate to provide them with alternative opportunities to govern the marriage and divorce of people of the Muslim community as well," it stated.

days," the bill adds. According to the bill, they will get free facilities of museum, parks

and library and will also be entitled to treatment facilities, subsidy on medicines and separate wards

## of the day quote

We are excited to partner with IBM as part of our vision to make BLR Airport the Smart Airport; a digitalised, seamlessly connected, intuitive airport

**HARI MARAR** | MD & CEO, BANGALORE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LIMITED

Britain decided itself to leave the single market of the European Union, to apply trade rules, to apply red tape to its goods that are leaving Britain, to goods that are coming into Britain

**THOMAS BYRNE** | IRISH EUROPEAN AFFAIRS MINISTER

While the country moves towards pre-pandemic normal in several other aspects, digital collections are expected to continue, and digital originations may also make their way, given the low cost of managing these and the ease they offer to borrowers

**ROHIT NAMDAR** | SENIOR DIRECTOR, CRISIL RATINGS

## SHORT TAKES

### Byju's acquires Epic for \$500mn

**Bangalore:** Leading online learning platform Byju's Wednesday said it has acquired Epic, the world's leading digital reading platform for kids 12 and under, for \$500 million. The big acquisition comes on the heels of it buying the Aakash Institute for nearly \$1 billion earlier this year. The Epic deal was backed by General Atlantic, Sequoia Capital, the Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative, Naspers, Silver Lake, Tiger Global and other investors.

### Havells Q1 profit jumps four-fold

**New Delhi:** Consumer electrical goods maker Havells India Ltd Wednesday reported nearly four-fold jump in its consolidated net profit at ₹235.78 crore for the first quarter ended June 2021. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹63.98 crore in the April-June quarter a year ago, Havells said in a regulatory filing. Its revenue from operations was up 75.95 per cent at ₹2,609.97 crore during the period under review as against ₹1,483.40 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal.

### Airtel, Intel team up to accelerate 5G

**New Delhi:** Bharti Airtel is collaborating with Intel for 5G network development by leveraging vRAN/O-RAN technologies. The collaboration is part of Airtel's 5G roadmap for India as it transforms its networks to allow its customers to reap the full possibilities of the hyperconnected world where Industry 4.0 to cloud gaming and virtual/augmented reality become an everyday experience.

### 'Handicraft exports to grow 10-15%'

**New Delhi:** The country's handicraft exports are likely to record a growth rate of 10-15% in the current fiscal on account of healthy demand in key destinations such as the US and Europe, Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) said. EPCH Chairman RK Malhotra, however, said that the growth may get impacted in the case the third wave hits. "Going by the current trend, we are expecting 10-15% growth this fiscal. Order books of exporters are good and there is a good demand in the US and Europe," he said.



With the introduction of the chief growth office, we are renewing our focus on global partnership ecosystem, amplifying and simplifying how we go to market to orchestrate cloud transformation for our clients

**STEPHANIE TRAUTMAN** | CHIEF GROWTH OFFICER, WIPRO

## INSTAGRAM TESTS NEW FEATURE

Instagram has said it is testing a new 'Collab' feature in India and the UK that will allow users to collaborate with others on Feed Posts and Reels. "With 'Collab', you can invite a collaborator to your Feed Post and Reels and so they can share the content with their followers," a statement said



# Netflix confirms move into 'video games'

AGENCIES

**San Ramon, July 21:** Netflix reported its worst slowdown in subscriber growth in eight years as people emerge from their pandemic cocoons. So it's adding a new attraction to its marquee: Video games. The video streaming giant has announced that it will offer video games in its existing subscription plans at no extra cost, but didn't say when that service will launch or what kind of games it will be developing.

The confirmation of the long-anticipated expansion came in conjunction with the release of Netflix's latest earnings report. That financial breakdown showed the video service added 1.5 million subscribers during the April-June period. That's slightly better than the mod-



est increase that management forecast after the service stumbled to a sluggish start during the winter months, but still far below its growth rate in recent years.

Netflix's net gain of 5.5 million subscribers through the first six months of this year represents its

weakest first-half performance since 2013 - a time when the company was still rolling out more original programming as it branched out from licensing existing TV series and movies.

Now Netflix is taking another leap by offering video games that

## AS GROWTH SLOWS

The video streaming giant has announced that it will offer video games in its existing subscription plans at no extra cost

Despite this year's growth slowdown, Netflix remains world's biggest streaming service in an increasingly competitive field that includes Walt Disney, HBO, Amazon and Apple

intends to produce itself as part of what it described as a multi-year expansion.

The Los Gatos, California, company telegraphed the move last week when it disclosed the hiring

of a veteran video game executive, Mike Verdu, to explore potential opportunities in another field of entertainment.

"The reason we're doing them is to help the subscription service grow and be more important in people's lives," Netflix co-CEO Reed Hastings told investors during a Tuesday discussion.

Greg Peters, Netflix's chief product officer, said the company will initially focus on mobile games before eventually expanding to consoles and TV sets as well.

The games initially will be tied to Netflix's most popular programming, Peters said, but stand-alone titles may be added to the mix too. He even speculated that Netflix eventually may create a TV series or film inspired by one of its video games.

## Coca-Cola raises revenue forecast as demand rebounds



REUTERS

**Atlanta, July 21:** Coca-Cola Co. raised its full-year sales and profit forecasts on Wednesday, as demand bounces back from pandemic lows for its beverages following the reopening of theaters, restaurants and stadiums.

Shares of the world's largest soda maker, which struggled for much of last year after public venues were shut to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, rose 3% in early trading.

Coca-Cola's revenues in North America, its biggest market, rose 28% in the second quarter, helped by the vaccine-aided reopening and easing of capacity restrictions across the United States.

Reopening economies in Europe, Asia and Latin America also lifted the company's adjusted overall revenue by 41.1% in the reported quarter to \$10.13 billion, beating analysts' average estimate of \$9.32 billion, according to IBES data from Refinitiv.

"Our results in the second quarter show how our business is rebounding faster than the overall economic recovery," Coca-Cola Chief Executive Officer James Quincey said in a statement.

The company's total net revenue had slumped 28% in the year-ago quarter due to the lockdowns.

Rival PepsiCo Inc, which is less dependent on sales to restaurants and bars, reported a 20.5% jump in second-quarter revenue last week. read more.

# AAI committees find Adani in violation of branding, logo pacts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 21:** Three committees of the Centre-run Airports Authority of India (AAI) in January found the Adani group to be in violation of branding norms, prescribed in the concession agreements, at the airports in Ahmedabad, Mangalore and Lucknow that the conglomerate took over last year.

Consequently, the Adani group of companies, which operates these three airports, have started making changes in brandings and displays in order to bring them in accordance with the concession agreements that they had signed with the AAI.

As on June 29, the changes in brandings and displays were in process at Lucknow and Mangalore airports and had been completed at the Ahmedabad airport, the AAI stated. PTI has accessed various documents related to this matter, including details received in response to RTI queries.

The Adani group won the bids to run the aforementioned three airports in February 2019. Its companies - Adani Lucknow International Airport Limited (ALIAL), Adani Mangaluru International Airport Limited



(AMIAL) and Adani Ahmedabad International Airport Limited (AAIAL) - signed the concession agreements with the AAI in February 2020. These companies then took charge of airports in October and November 2020.

The AAI in December 2020 found the brandings and displays at the three airports not in accordance with the concession agreements. Therefore, it wrote letters to ALIAL, AMIAL and AAIAL, asking them to take "corrective measures". However, these companies in late December responded that they have not violated the branding norms of the agreements.

A month later, the AAI formed three separate committees to carry out "joint survey" of all hoardings and displays at the three airports and check if they are in compliance with the concession agreements. Each committee had four mem-

bers: one executive of the Adani group company that is operating the airport, one official of the Centre-run Engineering Projects (India) Limited and two officials of the AAI.

In late January, the committee formed on the Lucknow airport submitted its report. It said, "The joint inspection committee found that airport name hoardings displayed by concessionaire (ALIAL) at the airport entrance and exit roads has also got Adani Airports written on both sides of Lucknow International Airport hoardings, which is in violation of concession agreement no. 5.15.2."

The committee also found that the name and logo of the AAI was not equally and prominently displayed in other displays where the concessionaire intends to display its own name, which was again violation of the Article 5.15.2 of the concession agreement.

# 'Property market to touch USD 1tn by 2030'

The number of people employed in the sector is also expected to rise to 7 crore in coming years, from 5.5 crore in 2019

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 21:** The Indian real estate market is estimated to touch USD 1 trillion by 2030 driven by rising demand and various reforms in the past seven years like new realty law RERA, Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra said Wednesday.

The number of people employed in the sector is also expected to rise to 7 crore in coming years, from 5.5 crore in 2019, he said while addressing a CII event on the real estate sector. The secretary further said that the states have been asked to soon implement the Model Tenancy Act, which was passed by the Union Cabinet in June this year.

Mishra also clarified that the law once implemented by the states will be prospective in nature and all disputes related to rent agreements will be dealt under the old laws of respective states.

He pointed out that the real estate sector suffered a "setback" during the first and second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic but said the housing demand has revived.

"The size of the real estate sector was around USD 200 billion 2-3



years ago. We expect the real estate market to touch USD 1 trillion by 2030," the housing secretary said.

"It is not mere talk and guess work. The trend clearly shows that the real estate sector of our country will touch the figure of USD 1 trillion in the next 7-8 years," Mishra said, while emphasising the importance of this industry in the Indian economy.

Citing various reports of property consultants, the secretary said housing demand in the first quarter of this fiscal year has risen as compared to the year-ago period.

Talking about the importance of this sector in employment generation, he said: "Around 5.5 crore people were employed in the sector as per 2019 figure. Our predictions for the future is that around 7 crore people will be employed in this industry."

## J&J estimates \$2.5bn in Covid-19 vax sales



REUTERS

**New Delhi, July 21:** Johnson & Johnson raised its 2021 revenue estimates on Wednesday and forecast it would sell \$2.5 billion worth of its Covid-19 vaccine this year, as it strives to quell production and safety problems and catch up with rivals Pfizer and Moderna.

Although Johnson & Johnson's single-dose shot was approved in the United States months after shots from Pfizer Inc and Moderna Inc were cleared, its vaccine sales outlook still pales in comparison with its peers and reflects the widening gap in the global vaccine race. Pfizer and Moderna have forecast \$26 billion and \$19.2 billion in annual sales of their vaccines, respectively.

The J&J vaccine, once touted as an important tool for vaccinations in hard-to-reach areas, has the least uptake in Europe among all the vaccines approved for use, and has also struggled in United States.

# China says it will continue to open up financial sector

REUTERS

**Beijing, July 21:** China will continue to open up its financial sector and improve rules for foreign banks and insurance firms entering the market, state media quoted the cabinet as saying Wednesday. China has stepped up efforts to open its financial sector to help lure in more foreign investment and shore up the economy, amid rifts with the United States.

China will improve market access requirements for foreign banks and insurance companies, state media quoted the Cabinet as saying.

The country will also improve



rules on cross-border exchanges between parents and subsidiaries of financial institutions, the cabinet said without elaborating.

China will improve its macro-prudential framework to monitor systemic financial risks, the cabinet said, adding that China will keep the yuan exchange rate basically stable.

# YT adds new feature 'Super Thanks'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 21:** YouTube Wednesday said it has added a new 'Super Thanks' that will offer a new monetisation mechanism for creators on the platform. Fans watching YouTube videos can now purchase 'Super Thanks' to express their gratitude and show support, a statement said.

"They will see an animated GIF and, as an added bonus, get a distinct, colourful comment to highlight their purchase, which creators can respond to. Super Thanks is currently available at four price points between USD 2 and USD 50 (or local currency equivalent)," it added.

The feature was in beta testing



and will now be available to thousands of monetising creators.

"The feature is available to creators and viewers in 68 countries on desktop and mobile devices (Android and iOS). Creators can check if they have early access by following the instructions here. If they don't yet have access, fear not - we will be expanding availability to all eligible creators in the YouTube Partner Program later

this year," the statement said.

YouTube Chief Product Officer Neal Mohan said for creators, building a business isn't a one-size-fit-all approach.

"At YouTube, we're always looking for fresh ways creators can diversify their revenue streams. That's why I'm excited to unveil our fourth Paid Digital Good - Super Thanks. This new feature gives creators yet another way to earn money while also allowing them to strengthen relationships with viewers," he added.

YouTube also offers Super Chat (launched in 2017) and Super Stickers (2019) features. Super Chat is a highlighted message in the chat stream that stands out from the crowd to get more attention.

# Warning signs for global recovery as Delta dims outlook

REUTERS

**London, July 21:** A drubbing in world equity markets and a huge flight to safety into US Treasuries this week suggests investors now doubt that a much-anticipated return to post-Covid normality is feasible any time soon. Data from the United States and China, which account for more than half of world growth, suggests a slowdown in the recent blistering pace of the global economy alongside rising prices for all manner of goods and raw materials.

Coinciding with a resurgence in the Delta variant of Covid-19, markets may be sending alarm signals about the global economic outlook, Deutsche Bank chief FX strategist George Saravelos told clients.

"As prices have risen, the consumer has been cutting back de-

mand rather than bringing forward consumption. This is the opposite of what one would expect if the environment was genuinely inflationary and it shows the global economy has a very low speed limit," Saravelos wrote.

That sentiment was evident in the latest flow data too. Bank of America Merrill Lynch flagged "stagflation" concerns for the second half of 2021, noting slowing inflows into stocks and outflows from high-yield assets.

## DOLLAR REFUGE

Data on hedge funds' weekly currency positioning is the closest available real-time indicator of investors' thinking about the \$6.6 trillion a day foreign exchange markets.

With the dollar at its highest since end-March, latest Commodity Futures Trading Commission data shows net long positions on the dollar



against a basket of major currencies is the biggest since March 2020. Positioning had dropped to a net short bet as recently as early June.

Dollar appreciation against the euro and emerging market cur-

rencies is unsurprising given economic uncertainty, said Ludovic Colin, senior portfolio manager at Vontobel Asset Management.

## LESS VALUE

In recent months, investors op-

timistic about an economic recovery sent a flood of cash into so-called cyclical sectors such as banks, leisure and energy. These are, in short, companies that benefit from an economic recovery.

The tide may now be going out. Instead "growth" stocks, especially technology, has outperformed its value counterparts by more than

3 percentage points since the start of July. Many clients of Goldman Sachs believe the cyclical rotation was a short-lived phenomenon driven by recovery from an unusual recession, the bank said.

## FALLING YIELDS

Early this year, the dollar's trajectory was determined by the interest rate differentials enjoyed by US debt over its rivals, with correlations peaking in May. While real or inflation-adjusted US yields are still higher than their German counterparts, the drop in nominal US yields below 1.2% this week has raised concern over the global growth outlook.

Ulrich Leuchtmann, head of FX at Commerzbank, said that if global production and consumption did not return to 2019 levels soon, then a permanently lower GDP path has to be assumed. This is reflected to some extent in bond markets.

# DRAVID'S BELIEF 'PUSHED' CHAHAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, July 21: India pacer Deepak Chahar, who was an unexpected hero with the bat in the second ODI against Sri Lanka, Tuesday said coach Rahul Dravid's belief in his batting inspired him to produce a match-winning knock for his team.

Chahar came ahead of the more accomplished Bhuvneshwar Kumar in the batting order after India lost their six wickets for 160 runs while chasing 276. In the end, they both forged an unbeaten 84-run stand to script a three-wicket win for India.

"No better way to win the match for the country: Rahul sir told me to play all the balls. I've played a few innings with India A (when Dravid was coach) and I think he has belief in me.

"He told me he thinks I'm good enough to be a No.7 (but he batted at No.8). He has belief in me. Hopefully in the coming matches I don't have to bat. When we came under 50 that's when I believed we can win. Before that it was ball by ball. I took some risks after," said Chahar at the post match presentation.

Prior to this game, his highest scored in international cricket was 12. "It was hot out there, we did well there. Got two wickets. We managed to stop them at 270 (275 actually). It was a decent score on that wicket.

"Only one thing that was going on in my mind: this is the kind of innings I've been dreaming of. No better way to win the match for



the country," he said talking about his mindset in the middle.

India had romped to victory in the first ODI but it took a lot more effort Tuesday. Skipper Shikhar Dhawan said it was a good lesson the youngsters in the team.

"We were confident of chasing it, but we didn't start well. It was a good lesson for them. These sort of matches we're going to learn a lot as a team and they'll learn how to handle games like these.

"Everyone showed character. The odds were low but we knew that he's (Chahar) batting well in the nets. His presence of mind, his calculation - in the last four overs they didn't take on the leg-spinner (Hasaranga) because at the time he was lethal.

"I felt that the way Sri Lanka planned their innings, batting and bowling - they brought the spinner on early - and the way they fielded was good to watch and learn. They worked very hard but glad that we're on the winning side," said Dhawan.

Sri Lanka lost the game from a winning position and skipper Dasun Shanaka was understandably gutted. "I am really proud of how the boys played. They fought hard to get a win. Really tough game, credit to the Indian players, especially Deepak who took the game away from us.

"I think we started really well today. The middle period we lost wickets. I think the thing we shouldn't do in the next game is give them easy wickets. We should bat well until the last powerplay," he said.

## Deepak 'justified' coach's decision



COLOMBO: India vice-captain Bhuvneshwar Kumar said it was coach Rahul Dravid's decision to send Deepak Chahar up the order and he justified it with an "amazing" knock to guide the team to a stunning three-wicket win against Sri Lanka in the second ODI here. "Our aim was to play till the last ball, last over, so we wanted to take it as deep as possible, so we can score runs. The only plan was to play till the last, and the way Deepak batted was amazing," Bhuvneshwar said at the post-match virtual press conference late Tuesday night.

"Look, he has played under coach Rahul Dravid before in India A or some series and he had scored there as well. So, Dravid knew that he can bat and he can hit a few balls, so that was his Dravid's call.

"And the way he batted, Chahar proved it right. We all know that he can bat, he has batted in Ranji Trophy many times, so it wasn't a tough call but it is good to see the way he scored the runs."

Chasing 276 to win, India was teetering at 193/7 but Chahar and Bhuvneshwar helped India record a memorable win with five balls to spare.

"The only chat and plan was to play till the end. We never said to each other that from here on, we can win. Even when we needed 1 run (3 runs), we were taking one ball at a time. Deepak never let the run rate go above six," Bhuvneshwar said. "He almost played risk-free shots, where he got few boundaries and brought the required rate to under six. At no stage did we think that we are going to win or lose. We were playing according to the situation and taking it ball by ball."

Bhuvneshwar said Dravid, who is coaching the senior team for the first time, was elated with the show put up by the team.

"You get under tension, especially when you are sitting outside, you know this generally happens. I didn't see him much when I was batting, but when he came down, he just congratulated both of us and the entire team.

"He was very delighted, especially for the way we performed, when we were five-six down and then the way Deepak batted."

# India responded like champions: Rahul



COLOMBO: With its back to the wall, Team India responded like champions, said coach Rahul Dravid in an inspiring dressing room speech after his young side registered a series-clinching win in the second ODI against Sri Lanka here.

"Obviously we finished on the right side of the result, which is incredible and fantastic but even if we didn't finish on the right side of the result, it is the fight all the way through was absolutely brilliant, so well done to all of you," Dravid said in a video posted on BCCI.TV.

"We said they were going to respond, we knew we had to respect the opposition. The opposition was going to respond, they're also an international team. They responded, and we responded back like a champion team. With our back to the wall, we found a way to break them. So really well done to all of you. Fantastic job."

"It is not the right time to talk about individuals at this point, obviously there were some fantastic individual performances, especially towards the end," said Dravid, who was named India head coach for the limited-overs tour of Sri Lanka.

"We had talked about that, we acknowledge and recognise every player's contribution in this game. If you look at the whole game, there were some very good team performances. So many good performances in our bowling, batting, even at the start, fantastic team performances from all of you."

# EB fans clash near club tent; 5 injured

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 21: Two groups of East Bengal supporters clashed against each other near the club tent at the Maidan Wednesday, flouting COVID-19 protocols, in the wake of the ISL side's impasse with investors Shree Cement Ltd.

According to police sources, five were injured and taken to the hospital, while around 50 were arrested after the incident in front of Eden Gardens.

Trouble started brewing in the afternoon when supporters under the banner of 'East Bengal Real Power' and other fan clubs started gathering for a pre-planned protest against the authorities and started shouting slogan.

With placards in their hands, the supporters also demanded intervention from chief minister Mamata Banerjee yet again.

Another group, purportedly of the club management, soon retaliated with slogans as the situation snowballed into violence and police had to resort to lathi-charge.

There have been clashes between the arch-rival clubs East Bengal and Mohun Bagan in the past, but this is the first time supporters of the same club fought against each other in unruly scenes at the Maidan.

There has been furore all over since the club officials, led by president Dr Pranab Dasgupta and 24 executive members, issued a signed statement not to sign the 'final binding agreement' with SCL.

General secretary Kalyan Majumdar, in a statement, had said that the agreement does not



protect the rights of the existing club members.

"We will not sign the agreement where the members will lose their fundamental rights, where the club will be permanently handed over and we will lose the right over ground, logo, tent."

The Hari Mohan Bangur-led group had already refused to 'spend a penny' to build the side for the upcoming ISL season unless they get the sporting rights for which they needed the final term sheet signed by the club management.

Following the exit of former investor Quess Corp last year, East Bengal made a last minute foray into the ISL after SCL came on board following the intervention of Mamata.

Having acquired a stake of 76 per cent, the cement giants signed an initial term sheet with the club in September last year. But a final binding agreement of the deal has not been signed by the club management who are claiming that there are 'differences' from the initial term sheet.

The SCL, on the other hand, maintained that there have been no changes to the initial terms in the binding agreement and the club has so far failed to prove their point, leading to the logjam. In this scenario, the team is yet to sign players for the upcoming ISL season.

# Umesh spell nullifies Hameed ton

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Durham, July 21: Young opener Haseeb Hameed celebrated his Test recall with a gritty hundred even as Umesh Yadav bowled a few incisive spells and was largely responsible in India bowling Select County XI out for 220 on the second day of the warm-up first-class game.

Coming back into the England squad after nearly five years, right-handed opener Hameed lived up to his reputation of being called 'Baby Boys' for his dogged defensive game like former great Geoffrey Boycott with knock of 112 off 246 balls.

For India, Umesh was the stand-out bowler as he bowled in short spells and worked up a fair bit of pace with figures of 3/22 in 15 overs. Mohamed Siraj (2/32) certainly bowled the best delivery of the day, hurrying compatriot



Washington Sundar (2), representing the county side.

Umesh still might not make it to the playing XI in Nottingham but his performance will certainly keep the team management interested. Jasprit Bumrah (1/29) didn't give away loose deliveries but save the wicket of Rob Yates, where the left-hander went for a non-existent cut-shot to a delivery reared up, he hardly troubled Hameed,

who defended him comfortably most times.

It was Umesh, who first castled right-handed opener Jake Libby with an angled delivery that saw two of the three stumps knocked back. Siraj got a nasty short ball that suddenly climbed on Washington and flew off his gloves for an easy catch in the slip cordon.

Umesh's second victim was rival captain Will Rhodes, who lost his off-stump when the fast bowler came round the wicket and the delivery straightened after pitching beating the left-hander.

Umesh's third wicket was a short ball and James mistimed a pull-shot which was taken by Shartul, who got rid of Hameed.

**BRIEF SCORES:** India 311; County XI 220 (Haseeb Hameed 112; Umesh Yadav 3/27, Mohammed Siraj 2/32).

# AIFF awards: Jhingan takes top men's honour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 21: Senior India defender Sandesh Jhingan was Wednesday named the AIFF men's Footballer of the Year, while midfielder Suresh Singh Wangjam was picked as the Emerging Player for 2020-21 season.

It is the first time that the towering central defender has received the AIFF Player of the Year award, having won the Emerging Player of the Year Award in 2014. The award winners were chosen on the basis of votes from the Indian Super League and I-League club coaches.

"I take this award as a motivation to do better, and inspire oth-



ers to follow their passion for the sport. This Award comes with a huge responsibility - not to let anyone down," Jhingan said.

Jhingan made his senior national team debut in 2015 in Guwahati and has since gone on to make 40 appearances for the Blue Tigers, scoring four goals.

He was part of the Indian sides that lifted the Intercontinental Cup in 2018 and played out a memorable draw at the home of the Asian champions Qatar in 2019.

Jhingan has captained the senior team on five occasions, the most recent being the international friendly against Oman in Dubai in March. He was conferred with the prestigious Arjuna Award last year.

The 20-year-old Suresh, who made his Blue Tigers debut earlier this year against Oman, was part of

## OLYMPICS DIARY



### Djokovic arrives for Olympics

TOKYO: Tennis World No.1, Novak Djokovic, arrived at Haneda Airport here Wednesday afternoon, ahead of the Olympic Games. Only last Thursday, Djokovic, 34, posted on Twitter saying he had booked his flight and was proud to represent Serbia at the Games. If he wins gold in men's singles and at the US Open, he would be the first male tennis player to complete a 'Golden Slam' - all four Grand Slam tournaments and the Olympics in the same calendar year. Roger Federer, Rafa Nadal, Dominic Thiem and Nick Kyrgios are among the top men's players who won't be competing in the Olympics. His previous best at an Olympics was bronze in Beijing in 2008.



### Six officials allowed

TOKYO: Only six officials from the Indian contingent will be allowed to take part in the Olympics opening ceremony Friday, the country's deputy chief-de-mission Prem Kumar Verma told PTI, adding that athletes who have competitions the next day would be discouraged from attending the event. India is being represented by 127 athletes in the Games with the overall contingent size being 228, including officials, coaches and other support staff. "However, we have advised the athletes who have events the next day to skip the ceremony and focus on their game," Verma said after a meeting of the chef-de-missions here. Shooters, boxers, archers and the men's and women's hockey teams are scheduled to compete the day after the opening ceremony. India have named men's hockey captain Manpreet Singh and six-time world champion woman boxers MC Mary Kom as the flag-bearers for the opening ceremony.

## BLAST FROM PAST

With the Tokyo Olympics approaching, let's take a look at interesting facts and trivia about the Games from its previous editions. Here are some highlights and fun facts from the 1976, 1980 and 1984 Olympics Games...

### Montreal Games, 1976

boycotted the Games entirely because of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Eighty countries participated - the lowest number since the 1956 Olympics. Angola, Botswana, Cyprus, Jordan, Laos, Mozambique and Seychelles made their Olympic debuts. Several of the participating countries refused to attend the opening ceremony, and the Olympic hymn was played at several medal ceremonies, rather than the appropriate national anthem. Aleksandr Dityatin of Russia earned medals in every men's gymnastics event to become the first athlete to win eight medals at one Olympic Games. The East German women dominated the swimming as they had in 1976, capturing 11 of the 13 gold medals.

### Montréal 1976

Women's events in basketball, rowing and team handball all made their Olympic debut. Hockey was played on an artificial pitch for the first time. Fourteen-year-old Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci was awarded the first-ever perfect score of 10.0 for her performance on the uneven bars. She went on to earn seven maximum marks in total. Princess Anne became the first member of the British royal family to have competed in the Olympic Games. She was a member of her country's equestrian team. The Games were boycotted by 26 countries, mostly from Africa when the International Olympic Committee denied their request to ban New Zealand, whose national rugby team had recently toured South Africa, which had been barred from Olympic competition since 1964 because of its government's apartheid policies. USA's Margaret Murdock became the first woman to win a medal in Shooting at the Summer Olympics and the first to win an individual open World Shooting Championship. The Games produced 32 world records.

### Moscow Games, 1980

The Moscow Games were the first to be staged in Eastern Europe, and remain the only Summer Olympics held there. They were also the first Olympic Games and only Summer Olympics to be held in a Slavic language-speaking country. Led by the United States of America, over 60 countries

New Zealand's Archer Neroli Fairhall was the first paraplegic athlete to take part in a medal event, competing in a wheelchair. The first Olympic women's marathon was staged, and was won by USA's Joan Benoit. Rhythmic gymnastics, synchronised swimming and the women's cycling road race made their debuts. Many communist countries, including the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Cuba, retaliated for the USA-led boycott of the Moscow Games four years earlier by staying away from the 1984 Games. Corporate sponsors, principally USA-based multinationals, were allowed to put Olympic symbols on their products, which were then marketed as the 'official' product of the Olympics. With the powerful eastern European teams absent, the US men's and women's gymnastics teams had their best Olympic showing ever. In the absence of the Cubans, the US boxers dominated the competition, earning nine gold medals.