



### SHILPA'S STAND

Actor Shilpa Shetty says she is not involved in husband Raj Kundra's company or the 'porn' content it produced

LEISURE P2



### WHO AFTER YEDI?

BJP high command mulls over three candidates from the final list for possible change of guard in Karnataka

TWO STATES P8



### IMRAN ON PoK

Imran Khan says Islamabad would let the people of PoK decide whether they want to join Pak or become independent

INTERNATIONAL P10

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



At least our athletes are making us proud

# Mirabai lifts silver



THE DIMINUTIVE IRON LADY FROM MANIPUR LIFTED A TOTAL OF 202KG (87KG+115KG) TO BETTER KARNAM MALLESWARI'S BRONZE IN THE 2000 SYDNEY OLYMPICS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Tokyo, July 24:** A confident smile never leaving her face, Mirabai Chanu ended India's over two-decade long wait for a weightlifting medal at the Olympics, clinching the 49kg category silver medal five years after leaving the same platform in tears following a disastrous debut.

With her historic triumph, she ensured that India was second on the medals tally for a brief while, a feat that has never been achieved before by the country. It was also the first time that India managed to win a medal on the opening day competitions.

The diminutive iron lady from Manipur lifted a total of 202kg (87kg+115kg) to better Karnam Malleswari's bronze in the 2000 Sydney Olympics. With this, she exorcised the ghosts of the 2016 Games where she had failed to log a single legitimate lift, leaving her shattered.

"I am very happy, I have been dreaming of this for the past five years. I am very proud of myself right now. I did try for gold but even silver is a great achievement for me," Chanu told re-

porters after her career-defining triumph for which she had been training in the US for past few months.

The 2016 experience was a watershed in her career and Chanu had spoken about how confused she had felt during her debut at the biggest stage. There was none of those nerves to be seen Saturday, just a very composed and focused athlete who knew she was destined for the podium.

"I am very happy to win the first medal for India at these Games. I don't just belong to Manipur, I belong to the whole country," she said in response to a query on what it meant for her as a Manipuri.

"I would like to thank my coach Vijay Sharma and the support staff for their continuous hard work, motivation and training," she added.

Her smile shone the brightest during the entire performance on Saturday but also hard to miss were the Olympic rings shaped earrings that she was sporting, which were a gift from her mother. "I would like to thank my family, especially my mother for a lot of sacrifices and believing in me," she said.

The gold went to China's Hou Zhihui with an effort of 210kg (94kg+116kg), who created Olympic records in all three categories (snatch, clean and jerk and Total).

Aisah Windy Cantika of Indonesia took home the bronze.

### 3 militants killed in J&K

**SRINAGAR:** Three unidentified militants were killed while an Army jawan was injured in an encounter in Bandipora district of Jammu and Kashmir Saturday, officials said. Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Shokbaba forest in the Sumblar area of Bandipora in north Kashmir following inputs about the presence of militants there, they said. The officials said as the forces were conducting searches in the area, the militants fired upon them. The forces retaliated, ensuing an encounter in which so far three militants have been killed, they added. Srinagar-based PRO Defence Col Emron Musavi said an Army personnel suffered injuries in the gunfight.

### Couple found hanging

**JAIPUR:** Bodies of a married couple were found hanging at Jugal village under Korei police limits in Jaipur district Saturday. The deceased have been identified as Santanu Jena and his wife Sabita Jena. While Sabita was found hanging inside the house, Santanu was found hanging from a tree outside the house. Santanu's family members said that the couple was involved in an altercation last night after dinner. Following it they went to sleep but were found hanging today morning. Meanwhile, Sabita's family members have alleged that they have been murdered as she had not bore a child even after five years of marriage.

### 9 die in LPG cylinder blast

**AHMEDABAD:** Four children and five others have succumbed to severe burn injuries that they suffered in an explosion and fire that was triggered by leakage of gas from an LPG cylinder in a room on the outskirts of Gujarat's Ahmedabad city, a police official said Saturday. The incident had occurred on the night of July 20. While eight victims - labourers and their family members - died in the last couple of days during treatment, another one succumbed Saturday. All of them were from Madhya Pradesh, he said.

**I was in tears seeing it and also during the moment she won the medal. Her father (Saikhom Kriti Meitei) was also in tears. Tears of joy. All her hard work has led to the success**

SAIKHOM ONGBI TOMBI | MIRABAI CHANU'S MOTHER

**Your outstanding performance in the Tokyo Olympics 2020 is sure to be remembered as one of the best by an Indian athlete at the Olympics Games and shall also serve as an inspiration for generations to come**

ABHINAV BINDRA | WINNER OF OLYMPICS 2008 GOLD MEDALIST

# Gangster Hyder killed in police encounter

PNN & AGENCIES

**Balasure, July 24:** Notorious gangster Hyder was killed in a police encounter near Simulia in Balasure district when he was being shifted from Choudwar jail to Baripada jail for security reasons.

Balasure District Headquarter Hospital ADMO Dr Mrunjan Mishra said Hyder was brought to the hospital in a critical condition where he died within three to four minutes.

The ADMO said a detailed cause of death will be ascertained only after post-mortem.

Hundreds of people on hearing the news rushed to the hospital and authority deployed four platoons of police force near the hospital as a precautionary measure to avoid any law and order problem.

Sources said that the gangster was taken in a vehicle with police escort from Choudwar jail at about 10 am to Baripada jail when he tried to escape from the clutches of the escort party in the pretext of attending a natural call.



The gangster in police custody. FILE PHOTO

lowing his conviction in connection with the murder case of Rashmi Ranjan Mohapatra of Kendrapara in 2015. He was also convicted in the murder of one Seikh Chunu.

The gangster was also involved in scores of crimes including murder, extortion and kidnapping.

Hyder was lodged in Sambalpur jail after his conviction in the murder of a businessman.

On April 10 last, the gangster managed to escape from SCB Medical College and Hospital at Cuttack where he was admitted for treatment after giving food laced with sedatives to the Constable guarding him.

This incident created a hue and cry in the state. However, after a 120-hour-long operation, the Odisha Police successfully intercepted and arrested him April 15 evening from Sangareddy district in Telangana while he was moving in a motorcycle with another person.

He was brought to Odisha and produced before local court and was sent to Choudwar jail in Cuttack.

Police sources said the gangster tried to flee by snatching a gun from one security personnel accompanying him at about 3.20 pm near Simulia.

In the encounter the security personnel fired three rounds to prevent him from fleeing from the spot. The bullet reportedly hit him around his stomach and hand.

It may be noted Hyder was undergoing life term imprisonment fol-

## ICSE CLASS X, ISC CLASS XII RESULTS OUT

AGENCIES

**New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, July 24:** The CISCE Saturday announced results for Classes X and XII, with Class X girls and boys achieving the same pass percentage of 99.98 per cent.

In the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE)

Class XII results, girls outscored boys by a margin of 0.2 per cent.

In Odisha, 99.98 per cent students have cleared ICSE Class X exams while 99.83 per cent students have cleared ISC Class XII exams.

Altogether 8,935 students appeared for the ICSE Class X exams in 92 schools in Odisha. Among them, 8,933 have cleared the exams, sources said.

On the other hand, a total of 1,813 students appeared for ISC Class XII exams in 25 schools in Odisha. Among them, 1,810 have cleared the exams, sources added.

The board said like last year, there will be no merit list this time too in view of the exceptional circumstances in which the results have been prepared. The CISCE had cancelled the exams for both classes this year in view of the aggressive second wave of Covid-19.

## 'Vax for children likely by Sept'

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 24:** India is likely to start vaccinating children by September, AAIMS chief Dr Randeep Guleria said as he underlined that it will be an important move to break the chain of transmission.

"I think Zydus has already done the trials and they're waiting for the emergency authorisation. Bharat Biotech's Covaxin trials should be over by August or September; and by that time we should get an approval. Pfizer vaccine has been already approved by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration of the USA). Hopefully, by September, we should start vaccinating children, and that will be a big boost as far as breaking the chain of transmission is concerned," Dr Guleria said.

India has given over 42 crore doses of vaccines so far and inoculated nearly 6 per cent of its population while the government aims to vaccinate all adults by the end of this year. However, the country is yet to clear a vaccine for children amid concern over a third wave.

On Friday, the European medicines watchdog approved the use of Moderna's coronavirus vaccine for children aged 12 to 17 years. In May, the United States had authorised the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for children aged 12 to 15 years old.

"We need to get our own vaccines too - that's why both Bharat Biotech and Zydus are important. Getting the Pfizer vaccine will also

be helpful, as there is enough data to suggest it's safe... but we can't be sure if we will get required numbers. We will hopefully have more than one vaccine for children by September," the AAIMS chief said.

A study published earlier this week by The Lancet, one of the world's oldest medical journals, underlined that "living with 11-17 year olds increases the risk of infection by 18-30 per cent."

Talking about it, Dr Guleria this morning said: "It's an important issue. Vulnerable people - the elderly or those having illnesses - are at an increased risk of getting the infection (in such cases). That's one of the reasons why people are worried about children about going to schools... they may get a mild infection but they may pass it to their grandparents. We need more data but this is something that has been shown even with influenza."

Earlier this month, Dr NK Arora, who heads the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration, had said that vaccination for children will start by September with the Zydus vaccine for 12 to 18-year-olds.

## 4TH NATIONAL SEROLOGICAL SURVEY

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** A recent serological survey undertaken by the Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) in three districts of Odisha has revealed that around 85.53 per cent of the healthcare workers in the areas have developed antibodies against the virus.

Moreover, around 54 per cent of the children surveyed were also found to be exposed to the virus. The survey was undertaken jointly by the RMRC and state government in the districts of Ganjam, Raygada and Koraput. The survey studied 1,230 randomly selected individuals from the local community, while 311 healthcare workers also gave their blood samples to the survey team.

The survey results claimed that the highest sero prevalence (presence of antibodies in the population) was reported from Ganjam (70.9 per cent) fol-



lowed by Raygada (63 per cent) and Koraput (61.3 per cent).

The survey was undertaken under the fourth national serological survey of ICMR through its regional centre - RMRC here. The RMRC 10 clusters in each district and collected samples from those areas. This survey also studied kids for the first time.

RMRC Director Sanghamitra Pati said that the results hinted towards herd immunity. "The results showed that healthcare professionals and elderly above 60 years reported higher sero prevalence. This could be because of the natural infection and also because of the antibodies acquired through vaccination," she told Orissa Post.

She also added that as kids below the age of 18 years reported 54% prevalence, they seemed to be naturally exposed to the virus in the second wave of the pandemic.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
TEMP		31.6°C	32.8°C
MAX		31.6°C	32.8°C
MIN		25.0°C	25.0°C
Humidity		97%	82%
Rainfall		Nil	Nil
	Forecast	Generally cloudy sky	

# Millions sleep well at night for Pegasus: NSO

The company says Pegasus is rooted in the protection of human rights - including the right to life, security and bodily integrity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jerusalem, July 24:** Amid the raging controversy over its surveillance software Pegasus, Israeli cybersecurity company NSO Group has defended itself by saying that millions of people around the world sleep well at night and walk in the streets safely due to such technologies available with intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

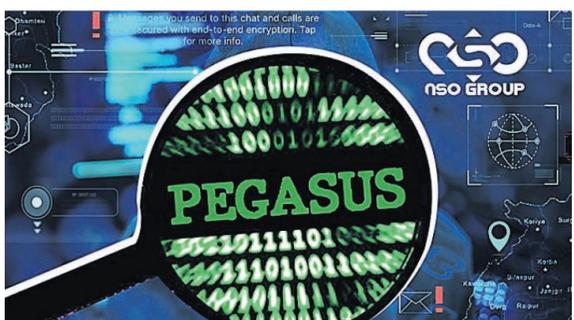
The company also stated that it does not operate the technology nor does it have access to the data collected by its clients.

The alleged use of the Pegasus software to spy on journalists, human rights defenders, politicians and others in a number of countries, including India, has triggered concerns over issues relating to privacy.

"Millions of people around the world are sleeping well at night, and safely walking in the streets, thanks to Pegasus and similar technologies which help intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies around the world to prevent and investigate crime, terrorism, and paedophilia rings that are hiding under the umbrella of end-to-end encryption apps," a spokesperson for NSO said.

"NSO, together with many of the other cyber intelligence companies in the world, provides cyber intelligence tools for governments because law enforcement agencies around the world are in the dark and there's no regulatory solution that allows them to monitor malicious acts on instant messaging and social media," the company said.

On the controversy around its



snooping software that has rocked the world, the spokesperson asserted that "NSO does not operate the technology, nor do we have visibility to the data collected".

"We are doing our best to help cre-

ate a safer world," it said.

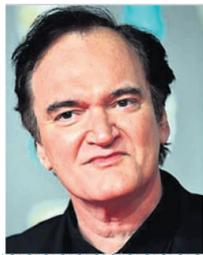
NSO in a written response to PTI in October 2019, when the issue first came to the limelight with reports of misuse in India, had said that it considers "any other use of our prod-

ucts than to prevent serious crime and terrorism a misuse, which is contractually prohibited".

"We take action if we detect any misuse. This technology is rooted in the protection of human rights - including the right to life, security and bodily integrity - and that's why we have sought alignment with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, to make sure our products are respecting all fundamental human rights," it said; a stand its executives still maintain.

Without confirming, or denying, if the software was sold to India, the company had said that its "products are licensed to government intelligence and law enforcement agencies for the sole purpose of preventing and investigating terror and serious crime".

# leisure



## TARANTINO FEELS SON MIGHT LIKE KILL BILL WHEN HE TURNS FIVE

Hollywood filmmaker Quentin Tarantino has shared that he is open to letting his 17-month-old son Leo, watch his movie *Kill Bill* when he turns five or six-years-old. The 58-year-old filmmaker shares Leo with his wife Daniella Pick.

## RAJA KUMARI UNVEILS HER NEW SINGLE FIRESTARTER

Grammy-nominated rapper and singer-songwriter Raja Kumari unveiled her brand-new single titled *Firestarter* Friday. She says that the track has a universal appeal to it. Raja has earned herself a plum position as a powerful female voice in the modern hip-hop landscape.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
You will be very logical and rational today, as creativity is put on the back-burner. The situation at your workplace will be full of challenges, but you will take them head-on. Later, all the stress will be mitigated by the soothing touch of your loved ones, says Ganesha.

**TAURUS**  
This day, you can't afford to take chances with your health, says Ganesha. If there is the least sign or symptom of illness, go consult a doctor straight away. As you are going to be unusually prone to injuries and infections, it is advisable that you stay at home.

**GEMINI**  
You need to guard against hurting anyone's feelings because of your ill-temper or harsh language. You need to help others in their troubles. You ought to reflect on the toll that the troubles that have visited you have taken on you, and accordingly empathise with others, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
Intimate friends will be impressed with your attitude. You will try to make them happy and spend a happy evening with them. Affection and cordial ties will linger for long and prove fruitful.

**LEO**  
Your mind will be filled with conflicting emotions, says Ganesha. You will feel extreme happiness one moment, and then will be depressed the next. You need to guard against mood swings and find a balance to achieve success in your work today. Financial gains are indicated.

**VIRGO**  
The remarkable manner in which you function at work will earn for you a lot of accolades and supporters. Your seniors will appreciate your dedication to work. There will be fun and entertainment in the evening. Ganesha says you can look forward to relaxing with some soft music.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says governmental work will be beneficial today. Those of you who are officials in the government will be having a positive and good day ahead. Your family members will show their support for you and this is something that you will need from them. Children will progress in life. This is a good time to take important decisions.

**SCORPIO**  
The stars are aligned in a way that they produce a constructively favourable day for you today, predicts Ganesha. You know the importance of a team and treat everyone - seniors & juniors as equals. This will make the work environment harmonious.

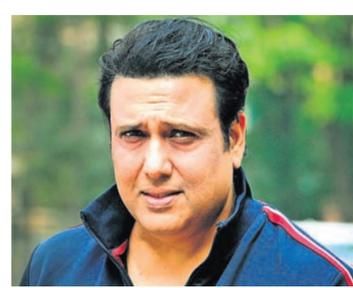
**SAGITTARIUS**  
Your imagination knows no boundaries. Your kind heart is ready to forget and forgive the evil. As Ganesha puts it, this attitude will take you a long way! Charity and donation, too are on your mind today. You enjoy a benevolent time today.

**CAPRICORN**  
Aren't you tired of doing the same thing again and again? Ganesha advises you to come out of your shell and breathe in some fresh air. Moving to a bigger and better house is on the cards for you, foretells Ganesha. It will take a major chunk out of your savings, but you are not complaining. You are not a spendthrift.

**AQUARIUS**  
Expect the unexpected today! Success, money, love, whatever it is that you'd lost hope of will suddenly come your way! In the evening, you may catch up with reading, research, discussion or other such activity, says Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
You will have no idea how time flies by today, while you struggle to complete an unceasing flow of tasks. You might end up missing out on the smaller details owing to your work load. Hence you need to concentrate on your daily routine.

## When Govinda was taught romantic steps



**Mumbai:** Actor Govinda, who will soon be seen the dance reality show *Dance Deewane*, revealed that he was shy while enacting a romantic scene in his debut film *Itzaam*. The actor will be seen shaking a leg with choreographer Ganesh Acharya and joining the duo as the judges will be the actress Nora Fatehi. In the show, Nora comments on contestant Piyush's shyness which encourages Govinda to reveal a

fun incident. Sharing an interesting incident from the sets of his debut film, the actor said: "I remember during my first film, I had to shoot a romantic song with Neelam and I just couldn't do it. From the corner, Saroj (Khan) held me and inquired whether I had ever romanced a girl! I said 'no', and she immediately asked one of her assistant choreographers to teach me how to do the romantic steps, and it was quite something." **IAN5**

## Kriti's WFH video sums up pandemic work life

**Mumbai:** The pandemic has changed the definition of work from home completely. Before the pandemic work from home used to be an option used during dire need and wasn't considered much professional. However, now people are setting up work desks at home, making sure they have all the office essentials and are trying to operate more professionally from home than ever. And the reason we are pointing out this difference is all because of Kriti Sanon's latest WFH video.

Taking to her social media handle, the actress has shared a video of her, wherein she showcased her work desk and essentials. She very beautifully captured herself, all dolled up for a Zoom meeting, and then pointed the camera at her coffee, water, light, and laptop. Sharing the video she wrote -

"Workmode". Meanwhile, on the cinematic front, Kriti has an amazing lineup. She will be seen in movies like *Bhediya*, *Hum Do Hamaare Do*, *Adipurush*, *Ganapath* and *Bachchan Pandey*. Reportedly, apart from these, she has some unannounced projects as well. **AGENCIES**



## Tanya takes digital detox once a week

**New Delhi:** Young actress Tanya Maniktala chooses not to succumb to the social media pressure like her contemporaries. The actress prefers to stay away from gadgets as much as possible.

"I actually take a digital detox every third day of the week. The part of the detox is to uninstall Instagram from my phone and be away from gadgets as much as possible. People who know me, very well know that I am not a text person. If there is something urgent they can always call me. I prefer face-to-face interactions much more than any social media text or message," Tanya said.

Tanya's recent reel life character is the opposite of her real life. The actress is seen in the web series, *Chutzpah*, where she plays the role of Shikha, who has a long-distance relationship on the Internet with actor Varun Sharma's character.

Tanya plays a very different character in the web series as compared to her earlier roles on the web like *School Days*, *Flames* and *A Suitable Boy*. **IAN5**

## I'm not involved with HotShots: Shilpa

**Mumbai:** In a latest development in the controversial porn case involving Shilpa Shetty's husband Raj Kundra, the actress has denied her involvement with the company or its nature of content and has pointed fingers at Kundra's brother-in-law. After a court hearing Friday, the Crime Branch team raided the Juhu

residence of Shilpa and Raj. The investigative team is looking for money trail and corresponding emails, which will incriminate the accused and his alleged involvement in pornographic content. According to police sources, Crime Branch officials recorded Shilpa Shetty's statement in the case. The actress has denied her involvement in the company, claiming she was not aware of the exact content of HotShots.

She also mentioned that erotica is different from porn, for which her husband has been accused of, and he is not involved in producing porn content. Sources claim that Shilpa Shetty named Raj Kundra's brother-in-law Pradeep Bakshi for running the functioning of the app and its operations. **IAN5**



### PEANUTS



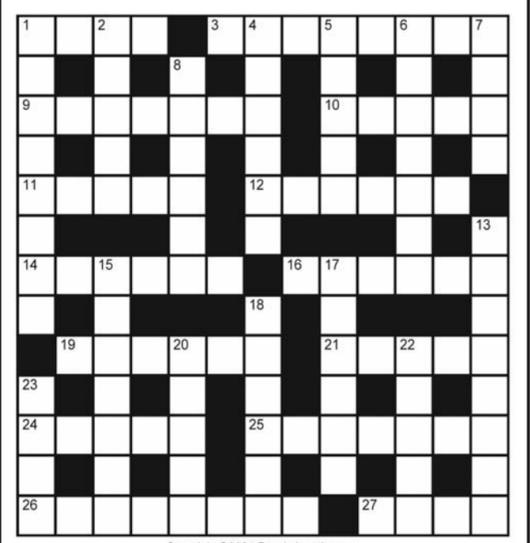
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



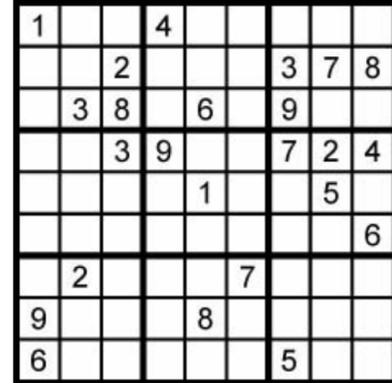
### FUN post CROSSWORD



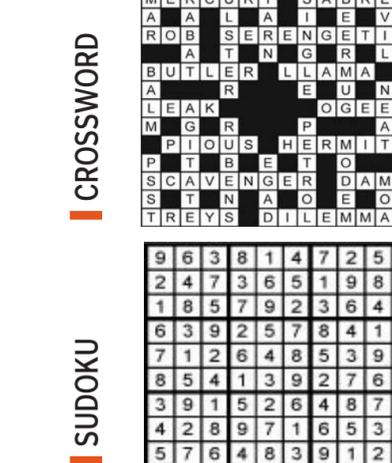
- Across**
- 1 Circular flower whorl
  - 3 Sunup
  - 9 Hawaiian guitar
  - 10 Mature
  - 11 Raw fish wrapped in seaweed
  - 12 Calamine, e.g.
  - 14 Xylophone striker
  - 16 Iran, once
  - 19 Minded
  - 21 Billiards shot
  - 25 Some nerve
  - 26 Endurance
  - 27 Terminal info
- Down**
- 1 Macabre
  - 2 Defeats badly
  - 4 Ring of colour
  - 5 Military wear
  - 6 Utilises
  - 7 Picture card
  - 8 Central American country
  - 13 Swift graceful antelopes
  - 15 Shellfish
  - 17 Fine fur
  - 18 Pas de deux part
  - 20 Marina sight
  - 22 North Atlantic herring
  - 23 Limerick, e.g.

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



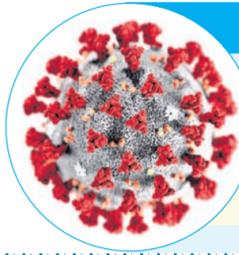
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## FESTIVAL OVER

Bhoi servitors remove wooden charioteers and idols of subsidiary deities from chariots after the culmination of annual Rath Yatra in Puri, Saturday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	19,42,52,204	17,63,05,145	41,64,023
India	3,13,32,159	3,05,03,166	4,20,016
Odisha	9,65,715	9,43,069	5,445

# Covid era lifestyle leads to eye ailments

Experts say increased screen time during the pandemic triggers vision related issues like dry eyes

MANISH KUMAR, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** With a large section of working class people and schoolchildren adapting to the lifestyle changes in Covid era, several eye ailments have come to the fore, thanks to an increased exposure to cellphones and laptops.

Ophthalmologists from the city claimed that more number of youths turning up with eye problems which was not the case in pre-Covid period. Most of the ophthalmologists blamed overuse of computers and mobile phones for the health hazard.

"We have seen a rise in vision related issues among youths and kids who are now spending more time on cellphones and laptops/computers. Most of the cases are implications of what we call 'Computer Vision Syndrome' wherein eyes are strained resulting in new vision related issues," said Dr Amrita Mohanty, an ophthalmologist from LV Prasad Eye Institute here.

She also opined that the most common problem that arises due to this is dry eyes, which was earlier confined to elderly population and professionals who used to have



### DRY EYES

Problems like myopia (short-sightedness), refractive index issues and changes in vision power are also seen in kids who are now spending more time on computers due to online classes and assignments

When we are exposed to screens, our blink rate reduces by around 60 per cent which interferes in the spread of tear films in our eyes and makes the eyes dry

Exposure to screens for a longer period prevents eye movement in different directions leading to less secretion of tears. Further, unlike book reading, we see the computer screens in a unidirectional manner

longer screen time.

"Problems like myopia (short-sightedness), refractive index issues and changes in vision power are also seen in kids who are now spending more time on computers due to online classes and assignments. Many youths who are

working from home are also becoming victims of eye disorders," she said.

Other experts claimed that rampant use of mobile phones has also escalated the cases of eye disorders which include dry eyes.

According to Dr Anurag Mishra,

an ophthalmologist from Cuttack, "We are now observing a large number of people including youths and kids, who are using digital devices, are facing eye ailments. There are three main reasons how the increased screen time triggers dry eyes," Mishra said.

"When we are exposed to screens, our blink rate reduces by around 60 per cent which interferes with the spread of tear films in our eyes and makes the eyes dry. Second, it avoids movement of eyes in different directions leading to less secretion of tears. Third, unlike book reading, we see the computer screens in a unidirectional manner," he added.

Even paediatricians warn that excess use of mobiles and laptops can take a toll on kids' eye health.

Dr Braj Kishore Behera, a paediatrician from the city, said, "Screen time should be restricted to one hour for preschool children and infants should not be allowed to cell phone exposure. Increased screen time leads to obesity, myopia, sleep deprivation, impaired learning ability, improper social skills and behavioral problems. Not too much and not too less but optimum screen time is advised with proper parental guidance."

## RUSH FOR ABADHA



A day after the culmination of annual Rath Yatra, around 10,000 devotees Saturday collected Mahaprasad from Srimandir in Puri even though the 12th century shrine has remained shut for people due to the Covid-19 pandemic

# WODC chief for revamping tourism in Kandhamal dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Principal Advisor to Chief Minister and Chairman of Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) Asit Tripathy Saturday asked Kandhamal district administration to work for the development of tourism in the district.

Tripathy made a field visit to the district Saturday and reviewed its tourism potential with senior officers of the district at Phulbani. Speaking to reporters there, the WODC Chairman said, "Kandhamal district is full of scenic beauties with its hill ranges from a part of the great Eastern Ghats. Last year, one eco-retreat camp was started at Daringbadi. It got an encouraging response. This year, more eco-retreat camps will be arranged at attractive spots."

It has been planned to continue the retreat camp for five years so that tourists, tour operators and businessmen associated with tourism will get room to expand their activities, he added.

Further, Tripathy directed district Collector D Brundha to identify the roads connecting the dazzling waterfalls like Kuturi, Putudi and Katramal, and develop those



### BIKING CIRCUIT MOOTED

The district administration has been asked to identify a proper place for establishing a district museum

Kandhamal SP Vinit Agrawal has been directed to promote the district as a biking circuit linking it with Chandaka and Bhubaneswar

Forest department officials of the district have been instructed to develop roads in a time bound manner before the winter

with convergence of funds from MGNREGS and other schemes to attract more tourists to these spots.

Forest department officials of the districts have been instructed to develop roads in a time bound manner before the coming winter season. The officials have been asked to arrange more eco camps in the district.

Tripathy asked the district administration to identify a proper place for establishing a district museum. Kandhamal SP Vinit Agrawal was directed to promote

the district as a biking circuit linking it with Chandaka and Bhubaneswar.

"There are many excellent roads passing through the natural sites and forests which can offer exciting biking experience to nature lovers," the WODC Chairman commented. The SP was advised to develop the biking circuit in coordination with biking clubs at state and national levels. It was decided to start the biking festival along with the eco-camps during the coming winter.

## PRISON DECONGESTION

### HPC EXTENDS PAROLE LIMIT TO 120 DAYS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** The High Powered Committee (HPC), set up to decongest the prisons across the state to stop the spread of Covid-19 among the inmates and staff, has extended the period for parole for the convicts to 120 days.

Following the orders of the Supreme Court May 7, as many as 747 convicted prisoners were earlier granted special parole or furlough for 90 days till July 16. Similarly, the state Prisons department, as per the directions of the HPC, has shifted 2,105 prisoners from overcrowded jails to prisons with lesser number of inmates till July 7, 2021.

Currently, as many as 1,584 prisoners have been kept in quarantine wards in the state jails after testing positive for Covid-19.

However, the state Prisons directorate, despite all its efforts, failed to decongest the jails satisfactorily. According to the available data, there are around 22,092 prisoners lodged in 87 jails of the state as against the capacity of 19,799.

## New IIC for Infocity

**Bhubaneswar:** In a minor reshuffle, the Commissionerate Police Saturday appointed Samita Mishra as the new Inspector In-Charge of Infocity police station. The IIC post at Infocity police station had been lying vacant since the transfer of the then IIC Biswajit Mohanty to Koraput for alleged dereliction of duty in a high-profile gangrape incident last year. Similarly, another inspector-rank officer Durga Prasad Jena has been posted as the new IIC of Traffic police station-II at Chandrasekharpur here.

# Cops release posters of youth found dead in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** The Commissionerate Police Saturday released the posters of the unidentified youth whose body was spotted at Kuakhai riverbed at Barimunda under Mancheswar police limits here July 21.

The police urged the public to share with senior officers the information, if any, regarding the youth through the contact numbers given in the posters.

Police also assured that the name of the informant would remain confidential. The person would also be provided with appropriate financial reward. The posters pasted at important public places in the city have also images of clothes, ear top and slippers found along with the body. Notably, a few locals had spotted the hands of a body tumbling out of the sand Wednesday evening and informed the police. Later, the Commissionerate Police along with the members of the scientific team exhumed the body.

"The body is of a youth aged around 18 to 25 years. At least 50 per cent of his face has been badly decomposed. The youth was wearing a black track suit and a white



The police urged the public to share with senior officers the information, if any, regarding the youth through the contact numbers given in the posters

Police also assured that the name of the informant would remain confidential

The informant would also be provided with appropriate financial reward

full-sleeve shirt. Besides, he was wearing an ear top (right). A pair of sandals were also found near the body," said a police officer.

It is pertinent to mention here that police are yet to succeed in finding any clue regarding the lady whose skeleton was recovered from the seized SUV parked inside the premises of Janla police outpost under Jatni police limits in February this year.

## NOW, YOUTHS MORE PRONE TO CARDIAC ISSUES, SAY EXPERTS



**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Cardiac care experts from the city Saturday claimed that youths are now becoming more prone to cardio thoracic diseases in the state due to changes in lifestyle and stress.

"There are several factors which are contributing to the unhealthy trend. Unhealthy lifestyle and stress are some of the common reasons for the same. We have seen a rise in such cases among youths now in the last few years in the state," Dr Prashant Kumar Sahoo, a cardiologist from the city, said.

He also added that cardiovascular diseases have contributed immensely to mortality in the country while Indians at large are seen more prone to the disease. He, however, said that newer interventions like dissolving stents have proved to tackle such cases in better way post surgeries.

# Dengue cases in City cross 300-mark

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** The Capital city's total number of dengue cases crossed 300-mark Saturday with detection of about 39 more cases from several areas of the city in 24 hours.

As per sources, the dengue cases in the city reached 330 with about 4,646 households being surveyed.

The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) that has deployed various teams in dengue-affected areas is said to have destroyed about 446 sources of aedes mosquito larvae.

"All cases are being monitored and most of them have recovered. Active surveillance and awareness campaigns are being regularly conducted and

no severity in cases has been reported. More than 1,900 people have been surveyed and about 1,029 potential source reduction has been done," said ADUPHO, Antaryami Mishra.

He also mentioned that anyone having symptoms of fever and body ache can get himself/herself tested for free at Capital Hospital, RMRC and AIIMS.

# BMC rolls out e-waste collection drive

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Facing constant challenges on waste segregation front, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Saturday launched an e-waste collection drive aiming at weekly collection of discarded electrical or electronic wastes from different wards here.

Launching the drive, deputy commissioner of the Sanitation wing of the civic body Suvendu Kumar Sahoo stated that e-waste will be collected from each ward every Saturday. To sensitise the citizens about the new drive, Swachha Sathis will be roped in who will intimate people beforehand through awareness activities.

"Initially, e-waste will be collected from 10 wards of the BMC which would be directly managed by the civic body's sanitation team. The e-waste collection drive will be further extended to other wards.



Dedicated vehicles will move from door to door for collection of e-waste. Some residents Saturday handed over their e-waste like cords, computer switch boards and other articles. This will be an important step in waste segregation," Sahoo said.

He also added that all the e-waste would be taken to Material Recover

Facilities (MRFs) in the city. It can be mentioned that the Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) has earlier stated that the e-waste should be managed only by a certified e-waste collector. However, sources at the BMC said that the civic authority is yet to hand over management of such waste to dedicated e-waste collectors.

## WASTE SEGREGATION

- Initially, e-waste will be collected from 10 wards of the BMC which would be directly managed by the civic body's sanitation team
- e-waste collection drive will be further extended to other wards under the civic body
- Dedicated vehicles will move from door to door for collection of e-waste every Saturday

"Waste materials collected will be deposited in specified areas called e-waste corners at three different MRFs. The stock items then will be handed over to e-waste collectors of the city as recommended by the OSPCB. The handing over of the waste is still in pipeline and will be initiated soon," said a BMC official.

## FARM HANDS



Women remove weeds from a millet field at OUAT in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

# Foreign-bound Indians can get Covishield 2nd dose in Odisha



## INOCULATION DRIVE

The Central government had reduced the time gap between two doses of the Covishield vaccine for people seeking to undertake foreign travel for educational purposes, employment opportunities and for India's contingent to the Tokyo Olympic games

The time interval was reduced to 28 days from 84 days only for the above categories of beneficiaries

At present, the gap between the first and second doses of Covishield vaccine is 12-16 weeks

Secretary, P.K. Mohapatra informed all District Collectors, Municipal Commissioners and Chief District Medical and Public Health officials about the decision.

"If an Indian citizen has taken first dose of Covishield or AstraZeneca (ChAdOx1 nCov-19) vaccine outside India, the beneficiary can register on CoWIN app at the time of taking the second dose of Covishield vaccine after prescribed time interval. Details of the first dose can be recorded on the CoWIN app at the same time," Mohapatra said in a letter to the local authorities.

The district and municipal authorities have been asked to inform all programme officers, managers, vaccinators and verifiers engaged at Covid-19 vaccination sites to implement the decision with immediate effect.

Earlier, the Central government had reduced the time gap between two doses of Covishield vaccine for people seeking to undertake foreign travel for educational purposes, employment opportunities and for India's contingent to the Tokyo Olympic games. The time interval was reduced to 28 days from 84 days only for the above categories of beneficiaries.

vaccine in a foreign country can take the second dose in Odisha after prescribed time period and will also get a certificate for the same. At present, the gap between the first and second doses of Covishield vaccine is 12-16 weeks, the officials added.

After receiving instructions from the Central government, the Odisha Health and Family Welfare department's Additional Chief

## AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Foreign-bound Indian nationals, who have taken the first dose of Covishield or AstraZeneca vaccine in a foreign country, can now receive the second dose of Covishield in Odisha, state government officials said Saturday.

Any Indian citizen who has taken the first dose of Covishield

## Cops seize brown sugar worth ₹38L

### POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** The Commissionerate Police Saturday seized brown sugar weighing 380 grams worth around ₹38 lakh from a slum area under Khandagiri police limits. Police also arrested two persons identified as Arun Dugal of Padrikia under Raikia police station in Kandhamal district, and Dinabandhu Majhi of Badaberena village under Begunia police limits in Khurda district. Dugal is currently staying near Max showroom at Chandrasekharpur here.



Following a tip-off, a team of Khandagiri police conducted a raid at Tapobana basti area Saturday morning. The accused were caught while transporting the contraband. Police seized one Discover motorcycle bearing registration no OR 02 AL 7985 along with cash of ₹1,48,000 and three mobile phones from their possession. The accused were sent to jail under the case number 381/21 under sections 21(C) of NDPS Act.

## Farmer killed in lightning

**Kendrapara:** A 60-year-old farmer died in Kendrapara district after being struck by lightning, police said. Biswanath Pradhan, a resident of Dandisahi village in the Pattamundai police station area, was in the field when the incident happened, they said. A case of unnatural death was registered and the body sent for postmortem, police said.

## CLASSIFIED

### AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, I Jayashiss Pattanaik, S/o. Satyaban Pattanaik, At: I.R.C. Village, Jayadev Vihar, Bhubaneswar, Dist.-Khordha, PIN - 751015, declare that I have changed my name from Jayashiss Pattanaik to Jayashiss Pattanaik for all purposes

# Heavy rain likely today, says IMD



### POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** The regional office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday issued warning of heavy rainfall in different parts of the state Sunday.

The department in its warning for Sunday said that northern parts of the state are likely to witness heavy rainfall. "Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Balasore districts."

It also added, "Light to moderate rain or thundershower is very likely to occur at many places over the districts of North Odisha and at a few places over the districts of South Odisha."

The department, however, has not issued any warning of heavy rain for Monday. It has only is-

sued warning of thunderstorm and lightning Monday. However, it has warned of heavy to very heavy rainfall Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Met department also said that cloudy sky and drizzle could occur in different parts of the state capital while the maximum temperature could go upto 34 degrees Celsius.

The IMD forecast said that rainfall activity could increase due to formation of a low pressure area over north Bay of Bengal by July 28.

"Under its influence, rainfall activity is likely to enhance and light to moderate rain/thundershower is likely to occur at most places over the districts Odisha with isolated heavy to very heavy rain in some districts of Odisha July 28, 2021 and in subsequent 2-3 days," the department said.

## ANXIOUS MOMENT



Students checking ICSE Class X results at a school in Cuttack, Saturday

OP PHOTO

# Surging TPR in coastal belt a concern

High daily test positive rate (TPR) in the coastal belt remains a major cause of concern for the state government as it was 5.18 per cent in Cuttack, 4.34 per cent in Khurda and 3.43 per cent in Kendrapara Friday, and is witnessing a rising trend



PNN/AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Odisha's Covid-19 tally soared to 9,65,715 Saturday as 1,864 more people tested positive for the infection, while 68 fresh fatalities pushed the state's

coronavirus death toll to 5,445, a health official said.

As many as 1,082 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 782 fresh infections were detected during contact tracing.

High daily test positive rate

(TPR) in the coastal belt remains a major cause of concern for the state government as it was 5.18 per cent in Cuttack, 4.34 per cent in Khurda and 3.43 per cent in Kendrapara Friday, and is witnessing a rising trend.

Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls, recorded the highest number of new cases at 496, followed by Cuttack (221) and Balasore (114).

The district also registered the highest number of fresh fatalities at 30, of which 23 were recorded in Bhubaneswar alone, followed by Puri (11) and Angul (eight). This apart, 53 coronavirus patients have died due to comorbidities so far.

"The rate of infection in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack is more because these two cities are the health, commercial as well as administrative hubs of the state. People from across Odisha and the country visit the twin cities,"

**Khurda district registered the highest number of fresh fatalities at 30, of which 23 were recorded in Bhubaneswar alone**

Directorate of Medical Education and Training (DMET) Chief Professor CBK Mohanty said.

The state now has 19,013 active cases, while 9,41,204 people have recovered from the disease so far, including 2,044 Friday. Odisha has thus far tested over 1.55 crore samples, including 74,707 Friday. The state's positivity rate stands at 6.22 per cent.

The coastal state has administered 1,51,24,809 vaccine doses to date, including 1,23,683 Friday. As many as 12,231 pregnant women have been inoculated so far.

# 14.53 lakh cases pending in Odisha courts: Rijiju

### POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Around 14.53 lakh cases are pending for disposal in various courts in Odisha, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju has told to the Parliament.

Replying to a un-starred question of BJD Rajya Sabha Member Sasmit Patra, Rijiju said as many as 14,53,079 cases are pending in various courts of Odisha. The highest number of 1,60,012 cases are pending for disposal in Khurda district while 1,31,029 cases pending in Cuttack district and 1,08,452 in Balasore district.

Similarly, 62,970 cases are still pending in Angul district, 43,231 in

**The highest number of 1,60,012 cases are pending for disposal in Khurda district while 1,31,029 cases pending in Cuttack and 1,08,452 in Balasore**

Balangir, 42,077 in Bargarh, 86,550 in Bhadrak, 10,682 in Boudh, 9,356 in Deogarh, 35,512 in Dhenkanal, 8,084 in Gajapati, 65,205 in Ganjam, 37,179 in Jagatsinghpur, 56,037 in Jajpur and 36,230 in Jharsuguda.

The other districts having pending cases are—Kalahandi (34,111), Kandhamal (14,613), Kendrapara (33,444), Keonjhar (46,672), Koraput (32,160), Malkangiri (9,015), Mayurbhanj (68,309), Nabarangpur (22,536), Nayagarh (21,011), Nuapada (21,011), Puri (68,106), Rayagada (68,106), Sambalpur (77,444), Sonepur (11,436) and Sundergarh (92,470), the Law Minister said in his written statement.

Meanwhile, the Orissa High Court has decided to continue with the virtual hearing of cases till July 30 in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. All the Benches notified for the period from July 26 to July 30 will function through video-conferencing, sources said.

## Woman dies in wall collapse

### AGENCIES

**Kendrapara, July 24:** A 42-year-old woman was buried alive and three others were critically injured as the wall of their mud house collapsed due to incessant rain in Kendrapara district, police said Saturday.

The incident happened at Narendrapur village in the Aul police station area Friday night, they said. Nirupama Mohanty, who used to work as a cook at the village Anganwadi centre, died on the spot as a heap of soil caved in while she was sleeping, police said.

Three other family members sustained critical injuries, they said. A relief of ₹10,000 was given to the family, besides assistance to rebuild the house, officials said.

## SHUTDOWN EFFECT



Shops at Unit-II market in Bhubaneswar remain closed due to the weekend shutdown, Saturday

OP PHOTO

## ILLEGAL SAND MINING

# Lokayukta directs Vigilance probe

### POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** The Odisha Lokayukta has directed the state vigilance directorate to investigate into the alleged illegal mining of sand on the river beds around the state capital here.

The Lokayukta issued the order July 22 while hearing a petition filed by advocate Deepak Kumar Sahu who alleged rampant mining of sand worth around hundreds of crores from the river beds of Daya, Kuakhai and Kushabhadra. The premier anti corruption wing of the state has been directed to submit the enquiry report within two months.

Earlier, the ombudsman had issued notices to Bhubaneswar tehsildar and the regional officer of State Pollution Control Board seeking their responses over the allegations. The tehsildar, in his response, reportedly admitted of the rampant mining from the riverbeds



flouting all prescribed norms. He also informed about the seizure of number of vehicles engaged in the act. He claimed that ₹54,50,700 have been collected from various persons for their involvement in the illegal mining.

On the other hand, the regional officer of Pollution Control Board here told the Lokayukta that he had been repeatedly making complaints to the Collector of Khurda district in this regard. The Collector was allegedly informed by the officer about the illegality of the operation of mines and the need for immediate intervention several times but to no avail as no action

has been taken by the Administrator yet.

Notably, Sahu alleged in his petition that huge quantity of sand is being illegally transported to different places in the City every day. He claimed that around five hundred Hyva trucks have been engaged in the transportation of sand causing losses to the tune of lakhs to the government exchequer every day. The district administration has turned a blind eye to the rampant illegal mining on the river beds despite repeated letters from the Pollution Control Board authorities requesting immediate action against the illegal activities.

Sahu has submitted several documents, fetched under the Right to Information Act, on the illegal mining. He claimed, on the basis of the RTI reply, that almost none of the miners have valid license to engage in mining of sand on the beds of Daya and Kuakhai rivers on the outskirts of the City.

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# DSP to probe assault on scribe by lady cop

**BOTH THE REPORTER AND THE LADY CONSTABLE HAVE FILED FIR AND COUNTER FIR IN KENDRAPARA SADAR POLICE STATION**



FILE PHOTO

The IG has directed the Kendrapara SP to get the incident inquired by a DSP level officer and submit the report within a day or two

Action would be taken against the lady constable after the receipt of the inquiry report, the IG said. After the incident both the reporter and the lady constable have filed FIR and counter FIR in Kendrapara sadar police station

While Bhimasen Sethy, the reporter in his petition alleged that the lady constable Pinu Nayak slapped him and abused him in filthy language after he clicked her photograph for not wearing a mask while on duty and put it on his social media site

clicked a photograph of her not wearing a mask while on duty violating the Covid protocols.

The IG said he has directed the Kendrapara SP to get the incident inquired by a DSP level officer and submit the report within a day or two. Sources said DSP KC Mallick was asked to look into the incident.

Action would be taken against the lady constable after the receiving the inquiry report, the IG said. After the incident, both the reporter and the lady constable have filed FIR and counter FIR in Kendrapara sadar police station.

While Bhimasen Sethy, the reporter in his petition alleged that the lady constable Pinu Nayak slapped him and abused him in filthy language after he clicked her photograph for not wearing a mask

while on duty and put it on his social media site.

He also alleged that the constable had snatched his gold chain worth ₹76,000 and threatened to implicate him in a false case.

The constable in her petition alleged that she slapped Sethy as he molested her and thrashed her.

Police have registered cases on the basis of the FIRs lodged by both the constable and the reporter and are looking into the incident.

Meanwhile, District Congress president Anshuman Mohanty and former minister Ganeswar Behera have condemned the action of the lady constable and urged the district Collector and the SP to take action against her.



Students sit on a hilltop during an online class in Khajuripada area of Kandhamal district as the locality has no Internet connectivity

OP PHOTO

# Probe team to grill Bidyabharati again

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Paralakhemundi, July 24:** With the death case of Paralakhemundi assistant conservator of forests (ACF) Soumya Ranjan Mohapatra getting complicated with each passing day, the police team here is considering interrogation of Soumya's wife Bidyabharati again.

"The investigation into the case is underway and the deceased ACF's wife will be questioned again," Gajapati SP Tapan Kumar Patnaik said.

According to official sources, a five-member police team will visit an educational institution

## ACF SOUMYA DEATH



in Bolangir district in connection with the probe. Bidyabharati had been pursuing higher studies in the institute. The probe team will collect information from office-bearers as well as the institute's hos-

tel inmates as to what circumstances led her to visit Bolangir after her marriage. During her visit, she had hosted a party in the institute.

It is pertinent to mention, Gajapati DFO Sangram Keshari Behera, who is an accused in the FIR lodged by the deceased ACF's father Abhiram Mohapatra, has refuted any relationship with Bidyabharati.

"The call detail record (CDR) analysis indicated that DFO had no link with the deceased ACF Soumya's wife. The DFO Behera has never visited Bidyabharati's residence," Gajapati SP Tapan Patnaik

told media persons.

The ACF had suffered severe burn injuries at his official residence in Paralakhemundi town where Bidyabharati was also present July 12 night. He had suffered 90 per cent burn injuries and succumbed July 13 while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Cuttack.

Paralakhemundi police have registered a murder case against three accused persons namely Soumya's wife Bidyabharati Panda, divisional forest officer Behera and a cook who was present at the deceased ACF's government residence on the intervening day.

# Angul: Jumbo electrocuted

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Hindol, July 24:** An elephant carcass was spotted lying in Kusapada forest near Kantamila village under Hindol forest range of Angul district Saturday. Preliminary investigation revealed that it died after coming in contact with a live wire, possibly laid out to hunt boars.

Local residents spotted the carcass Saturday morning when they were passing in the area. They immediately informed the forest department. Later, Hindol forester Lohit Rath along with staff and a veterinary doctor reached the spot and launched an investigation. The veterinary doctor performed the postmortem there.

According to locals, it is common for poachers to lay live electric wires in jungles to kill wild animals. The jumbo is suspected to have stepped on one such electric wire Friday night.

The forest officials said they were yet to make any arrest in this



According to locals, it is common for poachers to lay live electric wires in jungles to kill wild animals. The jumbo is suspected to have stepped on one such electric wire Friday night

connection. Their investigation is on, they added. Notably, two elephant carcasses had been recovered at Raba village of Kushakala panchayat under Bhuyan Juang pidhi forest Range in Keonjhar district July 19. The carcasses were of a female elephant and a calf.

# State of the art library at VIMSAR taking shape

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, July 24:** A state of the art library will be established at VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla in this district which will have the facilities for 350 persons to study at one time, a report said. This has been announced by the state government as it has sanctioned ₹16.44 crore for construction of the new library. This was stated here by Professor Dr Lalit Meher, director of VIMSAR.

Meher said the state of the art library will be a six-storied building having the facilities of a lift. It will be constructed on the basis of an ultramodern design and model. The library will also have the facilities of a canteen where 250 people can have their food at a time. The building will also house small offices.

As many as 350 persons can simultaneously study in the library. It will have separate facilities for the teaching staff and students.

Dr Sanjeev Mishra, a former president of junior doctors' association, said the new library was a long-felt need of the students and the teaching staff in VIMSAR. The old library was falling short for the teaching staff and students of VIMSAR where they were not getting the necessary scope for their studies and to conduct research.

A demand for establishment of a new library was made before the Development Commissioner in 2020. The state government had then directed the works department to submit a detailed estimate and the draw-



AS MANY AS 350 PERSONS CAN SIMULTANEOUSLY STUDY IN THE LIBRARY. IT WILL HAVE SEPARATE FACILITIES FOR THE TEACHING STAFF AND STUDENTS

Dr Sanjeev Mishra, a former president of junior doctors' association, said the new library was a long-felt need of the students and the teaching staff in VIMSAR. The old library was falling short for the teaching staff and students of VIMSAR where they were not getting the necessary scope for their studies and in conducting research

A DEMAND FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW LIBRARY WAS MADE BEFORE THE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER IN 2020. THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAD THEN DIRECTED THE WORKS DEPARTMENT TO SUBMIT A DETAILED ESTIMATE AND THE DRAWING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW LIBRARY ON THE VIMSAR PREMISES

ing for the establishment of a new library on the VIMSAR premises.

The works department submitted a report in this regard in April of the same year, but the project was recently sanctioned.

Notably, VIMSAR has a strength

of 1000 under-graduate students, 350 post-graduate students and 150 house surgeons. Around 1,500 students study in this medical college but the existing library has the facilities for study of only 150 persons at a time.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, July 24:** A special Odisha Protection of Interests of Depositors (OPID) court in Ganjam sentenced two senior staff of a ponzi firm to seven years of imprisonment after convicting them of defrauding investors of their hard-earned money on the pretext of offering more interests on deposits, a report said.

Judge Debashis Panda of the OPID court heard the matter and handed down seven years and six months of imprisonment each to Chandrakant Bhargav Goel, the managing director (MD) of the ponzi firm Sriramkrishna Electro Control Pvt Ltd and its branch manager (BM) Suresh Chandra Padhi of Berhampur branch for the offence.

The court also slapped ₹50,000 fine on the two. In case of default, the

two have to undergo an additional six months of imprisonment, the judge observed.

According to the case diary, Chandrakant opened a lending firm at Janana Hospital Road in Silk City and lured people into parking their money in their schemes at attractive interests. Chandrakant was the managing director of the firm while Padhi was the branch manager of its Berhampur branch. Lured by the offer, many people in Ganjam deposited their money with the hope of higher interests, but their hopes were shattered after they failed to get back their money. The matter came to the fore after Lakshmi Charan Das, a depositor, who had deposited ₹50,000 in the ponzi firm failed to get back his money. Das lodged an FIR at the Baidyanathpur police station. Police registered a case against the MD and the BM August 27, 2013.

# Tribal woman beheaded over 'witchcraft'

AGENCIES

**Baripada, July 24:** A tribal woman was beheaded in Mayurbhanj district over suspicion of practicing witchcraft, police said Saturday. The incident took place at Purunapani village in the Bangriposi police station area, they said.

Police seized the skeleton and skull of the woman, Kuni Jerai (55), Friday, said inspector-in-charge Sanjay Kumar Parida. Jamira Singh

(30), the accused, was arrested and sent to judicial custody after being produced at the court Saturday, police said.

Singh suspected that his son died because of Jerai's witchcraft, they said. He beheaded the woman with an axe and threw the body at a place near the village July 9, police said. Jerai's family had filed a missing report, following which police began an investigation.

Police said they have seized the murder weapon.

## LAW AND ORDER



Women stage a road blockade on the Angul-Athagarh state highway following alleged rape and murder of a college student, Saturday

OP PHOTO

# KESINGA KENDU LEAF GODOWN SELLS RECORD 33K QNT LEAVES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kesinga, July 24:** Central kendu leaf warehouse here in Kalahandi district has created a distinct identity in the district by selling 33,000 quintals of kendu leaves in the first lot in 2021 fiscal.

There are a total of 60 village kendu leaf godowns (locally known as 'fadi') under this warehouse this year. As many as 6,822 kendu leaf pluckers had deposited 93,84,580 bundles of kendu leaves at village kendu leaf godowns and the same were later sold to the central kendu leaf warehouse. In return, the pluckers had received ₹1,11,41,508.

This apart, ₹84,25,606 was also distributed among the pluckers towards 50 per cent bonus for 2020 fiscal. Binding workers and casual



workers also received 10% bonus. Similarly, 7,200 pluckers received ₹8,40,240 towards slippers in the 2020 financial year. In the second lot, the warehouse has so far sold 400 quintals of kendu leaves out of 1,850 quintals. Ranger, central kendu leaf warehouse, Daitari Nayak said that Kesinga range has achieved a distinction in the district due to the effort of pluckers, binding and casual workers.

EAST COAST RAILWAY	
Tender Notice No. ST-OT-TELE-ZONAL-CTC-226, Dt. 19.07.2021	
NAME OF WORK : TELECOM ZONAL WORK EACH COSTING RS. 5,00,000/- OR LESS IN THE SECTION UNDER JURISDICTION OF SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (TELECOM) / CUTTACK OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION EAST COAST RAILWAY FOR 12 (TWELVE) MONTHS.	
Tender Value in (₹) : 46,41,656/-	
Bidding Start Date : 26.07.2021.	
Date and Time of Closing of Tender : At 1100 Hrs. of 09.08.2021.	
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.	
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is available in website : <a href="https://www.irps.gov.in">https://www.irps.gov.in</a>	
Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / Corrigendum issued for this tender.	
Divisional Railway Manager (S&T) / PR-226/M/21-22	
Khurda Road	



The heart's words fall back unheard from Wisdom's throne.  
SRI AUROBINDO



## Life will carry on

All a few weeks ago, the issue dominating the media in India and for a few days even in the world was India's management of the pandemic. Vaccines are still in short supply, as we are hearing daily from chief ministers, but for now the story is on the back burner. Another has moved to the front burner and that is the Pegasus: the Israeli software the government purchased to spy on journalists, politicians, sexual harassment victims and their relatives and officers of the Central Bureau of Investigation. Why did it do so? We do not know and will never be told. India is democratic but it is also opaque. The government is run like a kingdom and the elected leader does not need to respond to questions or hold press conferences. Media that reports the truth will be raided.

This column is however not about the current story but one that has been on the back burner for the entire period of the Modi era. It is about where we stand and what our future will be. Like on Pegasus, like Covid, there have been no answers from the government on the current economic situation and India's future. But the facts cannot be hidden. Here they are and ask yourself at the end of it where you think India is today, and where it is being taken. Spending on food by the poorest Indians had declined before the pandemic. Consumer expenditure of Indians was lower in 2017-18 than in 2011-12. The data on this came from the government but was not released. Joblessness rose consistently under Modi. The total number of Indians with work shrank under Modi from 44 crore in 2013 to 41 crore in 2016 to 40 crore in 2017 and then to 38 crore in 2021, though the workforce grew from 79 crore to 106 crore. Consequently, the Indian middle class stopped growing under Modi. Residential sales in eight major cities (Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune) remained stagnant from 3.3 lakh units in 2012 to 3.2 lakh in 2019. In 2020 they fell to 1.5 lakh units.

Passenger vehicle sales remained stagnant for a decade, with sales of 27 lakh in 2012, 27 lakh in 2019 and 27 lakh in 2020. Two wheeler sales were stagnant at 1.6 crore in 2014, 1.7 crore in 2019 and 1.5 crore in 2020. Three-wheeler sales were 5 lakh in 2012, 5 lakh in 2015, 5 lakh in 2016, 6 lakh in 2019 and 2 lakh in 2020. Commercial vehicle sales were stagnant at 7.9 lakh in 2012, 6 lakh in 2015, 7 lakh in 2016, 7 lakh in 2019 and 5.6 lakh in 2020.

The total Indian market for consumer durables (air conditioners, washing machines, television sets) was estimated in 2014 to be worth ₹150,000 crore by 2020. It was ₹76,400 crore in 2019 and ₹50,000 crore in 2020.

Total passengers (rail plus air) fell from 840 crore in 2012 to 826 crore in 2019, and this is before the pandemic. China's premier Li Keqiang has developed an index which measures real GDP growth through three indicators: railway cargo volume, electricity consumption and loans disbursed. Total tonnes ferried by railways was 1.1 billion tonnes in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. It was 1.2 billion tonnes in 2019 and 1.2 billion in 2020. Electricity generation remained at 1.3 billion units for four years in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 while India's population grew by 7 crore. The growth of bank credit to industry fell from 15 per cent in 2013 to 12 per cent in March 2014, 5 per cent in 2015, 2.7 per cent in 2016, minus 1.7 per cent in 2017, 0.7 per cent in 2018 and 6.9 per cent in 2019. Growth of credit to medium-sized industries was minus 0.5 per cent in March 2014, 0.4 per cent in 2015, minus 7.8 per cent in 2016, minus 8.7 per cent in 2017, minus 1.1 per cent in 2018 and 2.6 per cent in 2019. All this was before the pandemic. Credit to micro and small industries grew minus 2.3 per cent in March 2016, minus 0.5 per cent in 2017, 0.9 per cent in 2018 and 0.7 per cent in 2019. Before Modi, between 2009 and 2013, loans disbursed (non-food credit) had grown at an average of 17 per cent.

This then was the result of the performance of the Modi government. Why has it come to this? What does our future hold? How will we compete with the rest of the world and bring our crores out of poverty if we continue in this fashion? We do not know and the government has no interest in either acknowledging that this is the state of affairs, or about responding to what it is doing about it. It will deflect the current scandal and hope that it will ebb soon, just like the previous scandal ebbed. Life will carry on. Sab chhanga si.

### WISDOM CORNER

You have succeeded in life when all you really want is only what you really need.  
VERNON HOWARD

Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative.  
OSCAR WILDE

Blessed is the man, who having nothing to say, abstains from giving wordy evidence of the fact.  
GEORGE ELIOT

### WORDSWORTH

#### Once upon a time

The expression has for a very long time indeed been an idiom, one that most of us take in at a gulp without much bothering about the meaning of the individual words. We've learned that it usually begins a mythical or fabulous story set in some unspecified moment in the past. "Once upon a time," Charles Dickens wrote in A Christmas Carol, "old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house." People often use it in a hand-wavily imprecise way to indicate a moment in the past or to imply a fairy tale: "Once upon a time we all believed in the magic of the Fed", the Independent headlined a story December 1, 2007. It's definitely English in origin, though it's hard to say how old it is. The Oxford English Dictionary has examples going as far back as Chaucer's Canterbury Tales in 1385, but it had probably achieved the status of a conventional phrase even then. We still use it in connection with time, though it often sounds formal ("we plan to meet upon another occasion"). It was once the done thing to attach it to any time-related term where we would now use on or at. Lord Dunsany wrote in Time and the Gods in 1905, "Upon an evening of the forgotten years the gods were seated on the hills." Another phrase with similar meaning to once upon a time was upon a day, as in Westward Ho! by Charles Kingsley: "And it befell upon a day, that we came into a great wood of ferns." Another was upon a time — an example is in Miles Coverdale's translation of the Old Testament book of Job, dated 1535: "Now upon a time ... the servants of God came and stood before the Lord."

### LOL

#### THE TRAIN HAS FAILED

A large two-engine train was crossing America. After it had gone some distance one of the engines broke down. "No problem," the engineer thought, and carried on at half power. Further on down the line, the other engine broke down, and the train came to a standstill.



The engineer decided he should inform the passengers about why the train had stopped, and made the following announcement: "Ladies and gentlemen, I have some good news and some bad news. The bad news is that both engines have failed, and we will be stuck here for some time. The good news is that you decided to take the train and not fly."

## FOCUS WORLD

# CHANGING MAP OF ECONOMICS

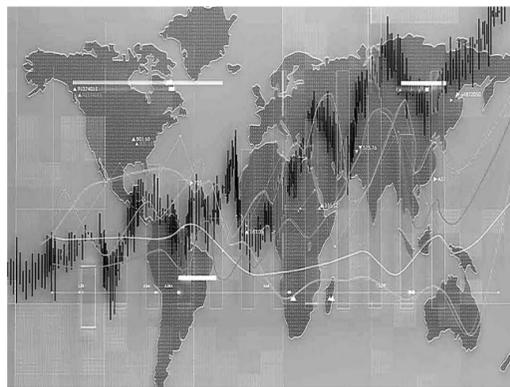
The International Economic Association's triennial World Congress has long been one of the most important global gatherings of economists, owing to its success in bringing together researchers and policymakers from the poorest to the wealthiest corners of the world. The 19th edition of the event earlier this month, albeit held via Zoom instead of in person, was no exception.

One recurring theme of this year's Congress was that the global economy and capitalism are at a crossroads. While the Covid-19 crisis was the immediate impetus for this view, other major shifts — from climate change and the rise of digital technology to the changing nature of labour markets — have been increasingly salient. The pandemic has merely accelerated these shifts or thrown them into sharper relief.

Covid-19 has forced us into one kind of "learning by doing," an idea that the Nobel laureate economist Kenneth J. Arrow, who emphasised that much learning "is the product of experience," developed in the abstract a long time ago. We have learned to give lectures and hold conferences by Zoom, and to make complex decisions in meetings conducted via Webex. People have suddenly realised that they had been spending more time than necessary in the office, and that they can do much of their work from home. And we have learned to shop at home, too, via digital platforms.

As a result, demand for office and retail space will fall, even after the pandemic. And because more people will have the freedom to work remotely, property prices will gradually rise where they were previously low and fall where they were high, leading to greater leveling.

On the other hand, salary disparities will increase, because the labour market will tend to be more of a common pool with heightened competition for talent. Most important, globalisation, after some initial stumbles, will accelerate, with rapid growth in cross-country outsourcing. This is likely to have a significant effect on labour markets, national politics,



The global economy and capitalism are at a crossroads, owing to Covid-19, climate change, the rise of digital technology, and the changing nature of labour markets. Understanding this new world will require major breakthroughs in economic thinking, and closer scrutiny of some of the discipline's core assumptions

and the nature of conflict.

Understanding this new world will require major breakthroughs in economic thinking. Economics normally proceeds by contesting the explicit assumptions and axioms on which theory is built. But all scientific disciplines also have hidden assumptions that are so deeply embedded that we do not state them explicitly and often forget they exist. In their celebrated research in the 1950s that provided a formal structure for understanding Adam Smith's idea of the "invisible hand," for example, Arrow and fellow Nobel laureate Gérard Debreu showed the many assumptions that were needed for Smith's conjecture to be valid.

There were other assumptions that were taken for granted — simply part of the woodwork of economics — including the symmetry of knowledge among buyers and sellers. One of the biggest breakthroughs of modern economics was the insight that knowledge is often asymmetric, and that this asymmetry can shatter the invisible hand. This breakthrough earned Joseph E. Stiglitz, George

Akerlof, and Michael Spence the 2001 Nobel prize in economics, and led to new forms of regulation that made the modern economy possible. We owe many of our regulations concerning quality control and product standards to this breakthrough, which showed definitively that the market's invisible hand cannot ensure standards when information is asymmetric. It remains to be seen what form the economics profession's new intellectual discoveries will take and what regulations we will need to apply them. What is clear is that the strain humanity has imposed on the environment means growth as we currently know it cannot be sustained. But that does not mean we have to learn to live with lower growth. In fact, I believe future growth will be faster than we have seen thus far.

The lower-growth camp's mistake stems from a common misunderstanding of GDP or national income. A higher GDP is often taken to indicate more wasteful consumption and consumerism of the kind we are indulging in now. But that need not — and now must

not — be the case.

The consumption of more art, music, and learning, as well as better health and greater longevity, are all components of GDP, and are, or can be, environmentally friendly. Reforming our regulatory system can foster rapid GDP growth — but with the content of GDP changing dramatically, and with a disproportionate amount of human labour directed to creative activities. The nature of reform for the new world is a big topic, but policymakers will need to focus on curricula that nurture creativity, because routine work will increasingly be automated; shift consumption away from environmentally wasteful goods; and redistribute wealth radically to lessen inequalities.

My recent research on group morality, however, highlights a caveat that we must address. When discussing matters like climate change and current global inequities, we urge people to be other-regarding. In other words, they should not be concerned solely about their own well-being but also consider the welfare of the current poor and future generations who will be affected by our decisions.

But as moral philosophers have long known, group morality is a problematic concept. I have recently tried to address the "Samaritan's Curse," whereby a future generation can end up being hurt when all individuals today take its well-being into consideration. This problem, like the prisoner's dilemma but in the moral domain, can potentially defeat our best intentions.

So, the road ahead will not be easy. Economists and society as a whole must confront profound intellectual and moral challenges in order to come to grips with the changing world. But humans have done it before. One can only hope that our intelligence and resolve enable us to do it again.

*The writer, a former Chief Economist of the World Bank and Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University.*

PROJECT SYNDICATE

### SPECTRUM NATION

# Coexistence, a unifying factor for Indians

For most political parties, sociologists and psephologists what an ordinary Indian on the street thinks matters the most. It is an insight into a common man's psyche, which allows them to strategise and formulate new plans and narratives. Though political parties are able to set the narrative for their own narrow agendas yet they are unable to control the common perceptions and thinking among the populace.

Studies like a recent one by the US-based Pew Research Centre's Survey of Religion across India not only help the narrative formulators but also offer a peep into the common man's psyche. The recent Pew study based on nearly 30,000 face-to-face interviews of adults conducted in 17 languages between late 2019 and early 2020, finds that Indians of all religious backgrounds overwhelmingly say they are very free to practice their faiths. Indians see religious tolerance as a central part of who they are as a nation. Across the major religious groups, most people say it is very important to respect all religions to be "truly Indian". And tolerance is a religious as well as a civic

value: Indians are united in the view that respecting other religions is an important part of what it means to be a member of their own religious community.

Yet, members of India's major religious communities often don't feel they have much in common with one another. The majority of Hindus see themselves as very different from Muslims (66 per cent), and most Muslims return the sentiment, saying they are very different from Hindus (64 per cent).

Indians, then, simultaneously express enthusiasm for religious tolerance and a consistent preference for keeping their religious communities in segregated spheres — they live together, yet separately. These two sentiments may seem paradoxical, but for many Indians they are not.

Indeed, many take both positions, saying it is important to be tolerant of others and expressing a desire to limit personal connections across religious lines. Indians who favour a religiously segregated society also overwhelmingly emphasise religious tolerance as a core value.

In other words, Indians' concept

of religious tolerance does not necessarily involve the mixing of religious communities. While people in some countries may aspire to create a "melting pot" of different religious identities, many Indians seem to prefer a country more like a patchwork fabric, with clear lines between groups.

This is what I ascribe to the synthetic Indian values, which you'll not be able to see in any Western society. Indians in spite of all differences and antagonisms try to view themselves as colours of a rainbow, which India is and this is what makes India united.

Most of India's Muslims say that Indian culture is superior. Today, India's Muslims almost unanimously say they are proud to be Indian (95 per cent), and they express great enthusiasm for Indian culture: Eighty-five per cent agree with the statement that "Indian people are not perfect, but Indian culture is superior to others."

A few Muslims say their community faces 'a lot' of discrimination in India (24 per cent). In fact, the share is similar to the share of Hindus who say Hindus face widespread religious dis-

crimination in India (21 per cent).

In addition, most Muslims across the country (65 per cent), along with an identical share of Hindus (65 per cent), see communal violence as a big national problem.

Many Indians, across a range of religious groups, say it is very important to stop people in their community from marrying into other religious groups. Roughly two-thirds of Hindus in India want to prevent inter-religious marriages of Hindu women (67 per cent) or Hindu men (65 per cent). Even larger shares of Muslims feel similarly: Eighty per cent say it is very important to stop Muslim women from marrying outside their religion, and 76 per cent say it is important to stop Muslim men from doing so.

The survey throws up many findings which may sound contradictory and unbelievable, yet they represent the true feelings of Indians, however convoluted they may be. And this contradictory, yet assimilating feeling is what makes India what it is.

*The writer is a political commentator based in New Delhi.*

IAN5



Asad Mirza

INDIANS IN SPITE OF ALL DIFFERENCES AND ANTAGONISMS TRY TO VIEW THEMSELVES AS COLOURS OF A RAINBOW, WHICH INDIA IS AND THIS IS WHAT MAKES INDIA UNITED

#### India, take note

Sir, This is in reference to "Xi makes maiden trip to Tibet town bordering Arunachal," **Orissa POST**, July 24. Chinese President Xi Jinping made a rare visit to Nyingchi, a politically sensitive and strategically located border town close to Arunachal Pradesh. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of South Tibet, which is firmly rejected by India. Memories of Indian and Chinese soldiers engaging in bloodbaths in the Galwan Valley are still afresh in the minds of Indian citizens. The visit of Jinping to the Tibetan town should be taken seriously. China this year approved a plan to build a huge dam over the Brahmaputra which raised concerns in the riparian states of India and Bangladesh. The Brahmaputra is the 9th largest river in the world by volume. Lives of at least 130 million people of India and Bangladesh are dependent on the water of the Brahmaputra. Further, China has started building dams on rivers only at a distance of 20-40 kilometers away from Indian border so as to make it easier for its army to access the areas via rail or road.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

#### Sterling Chanu

Sir, Saikhom Mirabai Chanu has bagged India's first medal at the Tokyo Olympics 2020. She also became the only Olympic silver medalist from Northeast India. Indians and especially Northeast Indians are beaming with joy at her success at the grand event. Northeast has a sea of talent, but many of these talents have withered away because of lack of facilities. With this silver medal Chanu has opened the door to the talent pool of Northeast. Once again, congratulations to Chanu. We are proud of her and wish her more such accolades in the future.

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR

#### Monsoon mayhem

Sir, The monsoon unleashed its fury on Maharashtra and Karnataka, wrecking lives and infrastructure. With the rains showing no signs of abating, more misery is on the cards. Landslips killed over hundred in western Maharashtra and the coastal Konkan region even as heavy rains and water-logging hampered rescue efforts. The authorities would do well to deploy the NDRF and SDRF in severely affected areas.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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

# Rural electrification scam under scanner

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chandahandi, July 24:** The government has executed various schemes to ensure electricity reaches all at the grassroots level — like street-lighting and electrification of Anganwadi centres.

However, people are still deprived of the benefits from these schemes in many panchayats under Chandahandi block in Nabarangpur district due to large-scale irregularities.

It was alleged that irregularities were committed in rural electrification works in 14 panchayats under this block. Locals have demanded a Vigilance probe into such wrongdoings.

Reports said, funds of 14th Finance Commission were allocated for electrification in each panchayat and Anganwadi centre. The district administration floated a tender for the work while a contractor was awarded the electrification work.

As per the tender agreement, electrification of all Anganwadi centres should ensure quality works. But it was alleged that sub-standard electrical kits were used along with a fan and bulb in each Anganwadi centre. If calculated, as per the market rates, the contractor has spent only ₹1500 to ₹2,000 for purchase of electrical kits for each Anganwadi centre. Most of the electrical kits are not in working condition.

"Whenever children, pregnant women and lactating mothers visit the Anganwadi centres, they are unable to get service due to sub-standard kits for which lakhs of rupees have been drained out," local residents pointed out.

However, it was alleged that the



## Fact file

Irregularities were allegedly committed in rural electrification works in 14 panchayats under this block. Locals have demanded a Vigilance probe into such wrongdoings

As per the tender agreement, electrification of all Anganwadi centres should ensure quality works. But sub-standard electrical kits were allegedly used along with a fan and bulb in each of the centre

The street lights installed at Malagaon are allegedly of poor quality while lights have gone out of order even though it was claimed that ₹30,000 is spent on each street light

contractor has been paid ₹10,000 as bill for each AWC. "Electrification of Anganwadi centres is nothing but a waste of money. The child development project officer (CDPO) has cleared the bill of the contractor despite the sub-standard work," locals lamented, adding that the work should have been properly assessed before payment.

Locals have demanded Vigilance probe into all such irregularities and role of the CDPO in such mess.

When contacted, Chandahandi CDPO S. Gita said the contractor has completed electrification of 94 Anganwadi centres out of a total of 130 centres in the block.

"After receiving complaints about use of sub-standard electrical kits, I am getting the matter investi-

gated by Anganwadi supervisors. If the allegation is substantiated during the investigation, we will recommend the higher authorities to stop the bill payment to the contractor," the CDPO said.

It was learnt that the same contractor had been allowed the street electrification work at Gabhirapada, Saradhapur and Malagaon panchayats at a cost of ₹5.5 lakh each.

Locals alleged that the work in Saradhapur panchayat has not been completed, but the bill of the contractor has been cleared.

The street lights installed at Malagaon are of poor quality while lights have gone out of order even though it was claimed that ₹30,000 has been spent on each street light, it was alleged.



## BATTLE AGAINST VIRUS

After detection of Covid cases, local administration has declared Arjundhara village under Kishorenagar block of Angul district as a containment zone.

# Interstate dacoit gang busted, 8 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nabarangpur, July 24:** In a major crackdown Saturday morning, police busted an interstate gang of dacoits in Nabarangpur district and arrested eight persons in this connection, an official source informed.

According to police, six of the arrested were identified as Udaya Pujari, Mukesh Patra, Sunil Harijan and Rajesh Nayak from Papadahandi, Sushant Harijan

from Kodigaon in the district and Karna Majhi from Pottangi in Koraput.

Identities of two others have not been ascertained yet. The gang was looting motorcycles and various other valuables from Nabarangpur and had been subsequently selling those in Vishakhapatnam of Andhra Pradesh.

The gang was active in Papadahandi, Nabarangpur,



Kodigaon and Vishakhapatnam areas. Five motorcycles, a laptop,

a desktop printer, two mobile phones, a home theatre audio-visual system, gold jewellery and several other electronic items were seized from their possession.

Acting on an FIR lodged with Nabarangpur police by Vivekananda Sahu July 19 alleging that his motorcycle was stolen, the police launched a probe and seized a number of stolen motorcycles from Papadahandi leading to arrest of the members.

## PANDEMIC WOES

# From a sought after actor to a smalltime shopkeeper

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Padmapur, July 24:** There was a time when opera lovers used to eagerly wait for his arrival on stage. His every dialogue would make the audience put their hands together. The area would reverberate with clapping sounds.

Cut to the present scene, he is now selling grocery items to feed his family members. He is Deepak Kumar Mohanty (Deepu) - a resident of Damodarpur village under Balimed panchayat in Basudevpur block of Bhadrak district.

Bit by acting bug in his childhood days, Deepak had been on lookout for opportunities. The opportunity came his way in 1998 in form of an offer from Sahani Opera. He was then 23. And, there was no looking back for him since then.

Thereafter, offers started pouring in for him from different opera troupes. He has worked with Satasankha Opera, Dhauri Opera, Satchidananda Opera, Jatrangaon Opera and Rangmahal Opera. In his career spanning 23 years, he has performed several characters.

'Kie Kacha Puni Kie Kanchan', 'Mun Sei Bhadrakia Toka' and 'Badadandara Bhikari' are among some of his well-appreciated plays.



Deepu's family comprises four members - his wife, two daughters and him. The pandemic affected all the sectors as opera shows weren't allowed to stop the spread of virus. Being out of work for long made a dent in his little savings.

"It was when Covid-19 situation started improving and government eased restrictions in phases but then came the second wave and dashed all our hopes. I found it difficult to run my family. With no options left, I decided to open a grocery shop," said Mohanty.

"I am worried about the future of my two daughters. If the restrictions are not lifted, running the family will be a Herculean task for me. I request the government to think about the hardships of artists, technicians and others associated with opera parties," he added.

# Dereliction of duty: 3 HMs in Ganjam showcaused

A CLERK HAS TAKEN SALARIES FOR TWO MONTHS STAYING AT HOME

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, July 24:** Three school headmasters had to face the music for negligence of duty and breaking official guidelines in Chhatrapur in Ganjam. They were served show cause notices. Salary of a headmaster and other teachers of his school have been stopped.

According to reports, the three teachers were absent in their schools when the Collector, the district education officer and officials of the district and block administration visited the schools.

The teachers who were served show cause notices are the headmaster-in-charge of Udayanath High school (Hinjili block), the headmaster-in-charge of BNS Bidyapeetha at Sasanagaon and the headmaster of Sheragada MG High school.

According to reports, under the school transformation programme, 133 schools in the district have been equipped with smart classes.

ST Secretary VK Pandian has been monitoring implementation of the scheme and in constant touch with the headmasters, teachers, students, members of school



Three teachers were absent in their schools when the Collector, the district education officer and officials of the district and block administration visited the schools

management committees. Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange has also been taking stock of the scheme at regular intervals.

Ganjam DEO and officials of the district and block administration had visited the Udayanath High School July 16 to take stock of YouTube classes. All staff had

earlier been asked to be present at the programme.

The officers came to know that most of the teachers had not formed Whatsapp groups for YouTube classes. Besides, a clerk of the school was receiving his salaries even though he was not attending the school. The clerk stayed at home and made statements for teachers' salaries without the knowledge of the junior clerk.

The officials had also visited the two other schools a few days ago and found two teachers playing truant.

It was alleged that some headmasters were found neglecting to monitor YouTube classes, make home visit of the students and prepare worksheets.

# Action against hoarder: 66 packets of fertilizer seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Lathore, July 24:** Amid alleged short supply of fertilizers and their black marketing, officials of the agriculture department conducted raids at Tankapani village under Khaprakhol block in Bolangir district Saturday. They seized 66 packets of fertilizers illegally hoarded by Pancham Hans.

The officials were tipped off about hoarding of fertilizers in the area. Block agriculture officer Sujit Kumar Bhoi and tehsildar Dhiraj Kumar Patra deputated as

magistrate raided the shop of Pancham Hans.

They seized 66 packets of urea and DAP. The seized fertilizers were immediately brought to Lathore Cooperative Society.

The agriculture officer said that Hans has to give details of his fertilizer stock within seven days. If he fails to do so, a case will be filed against him at the district magistrate's court.

He said raids are going on in various parts to check alleged hoardings of fertilizers while farmers are allegedly complaining of its shortage in the block.



Seized fertilizers being taken to a godown of cooperative society



## FIELD VISIT

Agriculture officials making a field visit to Padmapur in Bargarh district to take stock of inter-cropping

OP PHOTO

# Missile-like object falls in Balasore village, triggers panic among locals

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bahanaga, July 24:** Panic gripped residents of coastal Maharudrapur Adia village under Baripada panchayat in Bahanaga block of Balasore district after a missile-like object fell in front of the house of a villager at about 4 pm Friday.

The missile-like object, measuring around 3.5 metre long and weighing around 60 kilograms, should have fallen in the sea. Instead, it fell in the village with a deafening sound, leaving men and animals alike in fear. It dropped in front of Akshaya Nanda Das's house and created a four-foot deep hole in the ground.

There is a test range on the coast, few metres away from Maharudrapur Adia village. At the time of the incident, some DRDO officials rushed to the house, only to face the anger of the villagers.



The villagers later dug out the object and wanted to hand it over to officials, but they refused to take it. Instead, they left the place after noting down a number written on it. This led to further resentment among villagers.

"Had the object fallen on the house or in a crowded place, the outcome would have been totally different," one of the villagers rued.

According to the villagers, ammunition were being test-fired

from DRDO's Integrated Test Range at Chandipur in Balasore district Friday. As many as eight ammunition were test-fired in presence of DRDO officers and staff at the test range at 3pm and they all fell into the sea. But, the object test-fired at 4:00 pm did not fall in the sea. For some reasons, it veered towards the village and fell in front of Akshaya's house.

When it landed, it produced such a deafening sound that Das's son, who was then sitting on a cot, went up along with the cot to a height of one or two feet.

Das's father was sitting in front of his house. He too ran into the house. He was so frightened that he could not speak for some time. The cattle in Das's cowshed were also terrified. It was also noticed that blood was oozing out of some cows' noses.

The villagers are in a state of panic over the incident, it was learnt.

# Faced challenges from day one, says Yediyurappa staring at exit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, July 24:** As he stares at his possible exit, BS Yediyurappa Saturday said he had to face several challenges from the day he took charge as the Chief Minister, but is satisfied that he has made honest efforts to better the lives of the people.

The Chief Minister also said that he feels proud to have paid back to the people of Shivamogga district and his Shikaripura constituency, by ensuring its all round development. He was speaking after virtually inaugurating projects worth Rs 1,074 crore and laying the foundation for various projects worth Rs 560 crore in Shivamogga district, from his home office here.

"I am satisfied that in the last two years we put maximum efforts for the development of Shivamogga district. The projects that are being inaugurated are evidence for it. I feel proud to say that through all-round development, I have made honest efforts to pay back to the people of Shivamogga district, and more specifically Shikaripura taluk, which gave me political birth," Yediyurappa said.

"From the day I took charge as the Chief Minister till now, I had to face several challenges like natural disasters that the state had never faced in the past and the corona pandemic, which ravaged lives. Now once again there is a flood like situation,"



Yediyurappa noted.

Stating that he has spoken to Deputy Commissioners of eight districts, including Shivamogga and directed them to take up relief and rescue works, he said "I'm satisfied that despite all these (challenges), I have been able to take steps to improve the living standard of the people and their financial position...I thank the people for their support in facing the challenges."

Indicating that Monday might be his last day in office, Yediyurappa had recently said that based on the instructions that the central leaders will give him July 25, he will begin 'his work' from July 26. His government will complete two years in office July 26.

Yediyurappa, who began his political career as Purasabha president in Shikaripura, was first elected to the Legislative Assembly from Shikaripura in 1983 and went

on to win eight times from there.

The Chief Minister's elder son BY Raghavendra is the MP from Shivamogga Lok Sabha constituency.

Pointing out various initiatives on infrastructure development, irrigation works to provide water to farms, filling up of lakes in Shivamogga, among others, Yediyurappa expressed confidence that the irrigation projects taken up in the district would change the financial condition of the farmers in the days to come.

Noting that Shivamogga airport work at Sogane village was under progress, he said the Rs 384 crore airport is viable for operating Airbus aircraft and would also benefit neighbouring districts in terms of tourism, industries and employment generation. The airport will start operations by next April, he added.

# BJP top brass mulls over next Karna CM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, July 24:** As the stage is being set for a possible change of guard in Karnataka, the BJP high command is yet to finalise the successor of Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa. However, the high command is mulling over three candidates from the final list prepared in consultation with the RSS unit of Karnataka Pranth (region).

The final list included the names of Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Coal Pralhad Joshi, National General Secretary CT Ravi, MLA and former Union minister Basavanagouda Patil Yatnal, the Speaker of Legislative Assembly Vishveshwara Hegde Kageri, Minister for Mining Murugesh Nirani and MLA Aravind Bellad, sources said. The name of National Organising Secretary BL Santhosh is also doing the rounds, they added.

The high command is thinking of various possibilities in Karnataka as it is being hailed as the gateway to South India. This includes caste, region, loyalty to Hindutva principles and ability to take the party out from the shadow of Yediyurappa.

The party is also focusing on winning the next assembly elections scheduled to be held in 2023. The strategy is said to be to install a candidate in the form of a chief minister, who could cut through caste politics and bring all castes under the Hindutva umbrella.

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi has been a party president in Karnataka and is credited with enrolling as many as one crore members for BJP in the state. His par-



ticipation in 'Save Kashmir movement' and 'Flag hoisting movement in Edgah Maidan of Hubli' is an added advantage. The caste factor, however, seems to put him on the negative side.

The party is also keen on CT Ravi, a former minister, who was snubbed by Yediyurappa and is now elevated to the higher ranks by the party. If the high command decides to give leadership to a candidate from other than the Lingayat community, he stands a better chance, say party insiders.

Basavanagouda Patil Yatnal, known for his fiery speeches, is a Lingayat from north Karnataka. The party thinks he could be the person to sideline Yediyurappa by taking independent pro-party decisions. However, the party will have to take a chance with his tem-

## Gateway to South

The high command is thinking of various possibilities in Karnataka as it is being hailed as the gateway to South India. This includes caste, region, loyalty to Hindutva principles, ability to take the party out from the shadow of Yediyurappa

The party is also expected to spring a surprise by announcing a new face as the BJP top leadership has experimented in other states

perament, sources say

Vishveshwara Hegde Kageri, a senior leader is among the most loyal party men in the state. His clean image might help him to get the CM's post.

Though the name of Murugesh Nirani, a Lingayat is also doing the rounds, the high command is said to be considering corruption charges and court cases against him before taking a call.

The names of BJP Lingayat MLA Aravind Bellad, Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai, National Organising Secretary BL Santhosh are also being considered for the post, as per the party sources. However, it is said that Santhosh, considered as the betoneiro of Yediyurappa in state political circles, is said to be vouching for candidates who carry aggressive Hindutva in the state.

However, the party is also expected to spring a surprise by announcing a new face as the BJP top leadership has experimented in other states.

# Can CM-level meet resolve Assam-Meghalaya border row?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Shillong, July 24:** The first Chief Minister-level meeting to resolve the inter-state border troubles between Assam and Meghalaya was held here Friday with both sides deciding to remove the disputes in the 12 bordering locations in a phased manner.

After the maiden meeting with his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad K. Sangma, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the next CM-level meeting would be held in Guwahati August 6, and if necessary, both of them would visit all the 12 disputed sites.

"We have agreed to go beyond the status quo in resolving the border disputes between the two states. Claims and counter claims would be discussed thoroughly and a solution towards the vexed problem would be reached as soon as possible in a phased manner," Sarma told mediapersons.

An Assam government statement said that after detailed discussions between the Chief Ministers along with the concerned officials, both the state governments have decided to adopt a pragmatic approach and move from status quo to solution.

"It was a very fruitful discussion. We came to a common understanding and we are firm and committed to resolve the border disputes," the Assam Chief Minister said, adding that in view of the contradictory claims, there would be more discussions and reviews so that a lasting solution can be reached.



Meghalaya Chief Minister Sangma, while thanking his Assam counterpart for his visit, said that since it is a long-pending issue, it would take some more time as well as consultations to reach an amicable and accepted solution that is agreeable to both the states.

Terming Friday's meeting as 'historic', Sangma said that the inter-state border issues would be taken up on priority, as both the states are committed to resolve the long-pending issues.

The Meghalaya Chief Minister said that delay in resolving the is-

ssues has led to problems in the inter-state border areas, and there have many instances of violence as well. He said that resolving the issue is not simple and it would require many consultations, adding that the local issues, history and factual data would be considered to move forward and find a practical and acceptable solution.

Assam Chief Secretary Jishnu Barua, Director General of Police Bhaskarjyoti Mahanta, Meghalaya Chief Secretary MS Rao, Additional Chief Secretary RV Suchiang, Commissioner and Secretary R.

Lyngdoh and Secretary (Home and Political) CVD Diengdoh were present in the meeting. Inter-state boundary disputes between Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Meghalaya, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh during the past several years have witnessed many violent activities and skirmishes among the security forces and the people living along the boundaries of these states.

Encroachment in the border areas, and various unlawful activities, including attacks and abductions, infrequently took place

along the inter-state borders of the northeastern states, occasionally leading to major incidents.

Central para-military forces have been deployed in some of the inter-state borders to prevent further escalation of violence.

Assam shares borders with six other northeastern states -- Nagaland (512.1 km), Arunachal Pradesh (804.1 km), Manipur (204.1 km), Mizoram (164.6 km), Tripura (46.3 km) and Meghalaya (884.9 km). Of the inter-state border troubles in the northeastern region, the Assam-Mizoram border disputes witnessed many violent incidents since October last year.

The Assam-Mizoram border predicament was tamed last year following the intervention of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, top Home Ministry officials and Chief Ministers of both the states, following which Central para-military troops were deployed along the borders to prevent further trouble after a series of clashes and blockades on National Highway 306.

But since June 29, the troubles along the borders of the two northeastern states have resumed after the two states accused each other of encroachment of either territories.

According to Assam police, since October last year, several inter-state border skirmishes have taken place along the 164.6 km Assam-Mizoram border in which one man was killed, over 50 were injured, besides causing large-scale damage to properties of government schools and homes of the bordering people.

# Assam's small tea growers seek MSP for green leaves



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, July 24:** Small tea growers of Assam have urged the state government to fix a minimum support price for their produce as the low price realisation has been a longstanding issue for them, a statement said.

Small tea growers sell their crops to bought leaf factories (BLFs). During an interaction with Industry and Commerce Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary Thursday, representatives of small tea growers' associations of the state raised the issue of low price realisation and sought the MSP for their produce in the peak and lean seasons.

They requested the state government to fix a fair price or minimum rate of their tea leaves.

The issue of overpriced mature and challenges of the small tea growers of Assam were raised in the meeting, the statement said Friday. "There will be no compromise on the quality of tea leaves and fair price," the minister said, adding that their griev-

ances will be addressed.

The minister will hold a meeting very soon with all the deputy commissioners of districts to monitor that BLFs buy only quality tea leaves and ensure a fair price for the small growers, the statement said. Patowary asked Tea Board India's executive director (north-east zone) Arunita Phukan Yadav to instruct all its development officers to visit the BLFs and monitor strict compliance with the quality of tea leaves.

The minister also urged small tea growers to ensure the quality of their produce and encouraged them to opt for orthodox variety that can help fetch remunerative prices in the international markets.

He also advised them to set up bought leaf factories through self-help groups. Around 2 lakh small tea growers in Assam contribute nearly 50 per cent of the state's annual production.

Of the 618.20 million kg of tea produced in the state in 2020, small tea growers' share was 285.19 million kg.

# Rain plays havoc in Karnataka

AGENCIES

**Bangalore, July 24:** Torrential rain continued to cause a flood-like situation across Karnataka Saturday with the death toll rising to nine.

The continuous rain affected 12 districts of north Karnataka, coastal Karnataka and Malnad region.

It is estimated that some 830 houses collapsed, 15 school buildings were damaged and 8,733 people, including women and children, have been shifted to safer places across the state.

The state government has opened 80 relief centres. As heavy rain continued to lash the Western Ghat region, life was thrown out of gear in north Karnataka districts and coastal Karnataka region.

The body of a 12-year-old girl Kiran Shanura Veebhuti, who was washed away in the floods on Friday, was found by rescue teams at Chikkodi in Belagavi district.

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster



Response Force (SDRF) have been deployed in 12 districts for rescue operations.

Since the water flow towards the dams across the state is steadily increasing, water is being released from dams and this is causing the rivers to cross danger levels, endangering the safety of people.

Due to floods in the Western Ghats, all major connecting roads to the rest of Karnataka have been closed. The Bangalore-Mangalore highway has also been closed as it is impossible to cross the inundated stretch of roads that run through thickly forested areas.

As many as 300 people in Yaduravadi village of Belagavi dis-

trict were evacuated in boats to safer places as the village was inundated. The rain water has submerged thousands of houses and several others are on the verge of collapse in the region.

The floods have damaged state highways across Kodagu district. Many villages in Hassan, Chikmagalur and Shivamogga districts have been flooded.

Meanwhile, the Indian Meteorological Department has warned that heavy rain will continue to lash Udupi, Mangalore, Karwar, Chikmagalur, Shivamogga and Hassan districts for five more days. A red alert has already been sounded across the state.

# 'PM-KISAN scheme used to influence voters'

THE ASSAM JATIYA PARISHAD CLAIMS THE 'HIGHEST NUMBER OF INELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES' UNDER THE FARMERS' WELFARE SCHEME HAS BEEN DETECTED IN THE NORTHEASTERN STATE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, July 24:** The AJP Saturday alleged that benefits under the Centre's PM-KISAN scheme were provided to a section of ineligible farmers to influence voters by the previous BJP government in Assam and by the saffron party in several other states where assembly elections were held earlier this year.

The Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) also claimed that the "highest number of ineligible beneficiaries" under the farmers' welfare scheme has been detected in the northeastern state where the BJP-led government was in power and retained it in the last assembly polls.

Tamil Nadu where the BJP had an alliance with the AIADMK was in the second position with 7,22,271 ineligible farmers under the central scheme, AJP president Lurinjyoti Gogoi alleged.

Addressing a press conference here, Gogoi said, "The benefits under the PM-KISAN scheme were used for political gains. It is evident from the fact that ineligible farmers in Assam and Tamil Nadu got benefits under the programme. The BJP has been in power here and had an alliance with the then ruling AIADMK in the southern state."

As per information provided by Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar in the Lok Sabha on July 20, Assam had provided the PM-KISAN benefits to 8,35,268 ineligible farmers, he said.

This forms one-fifth of over 42 lakh ineligible farmers detected under the welfare programme in the country, the AJP president said.

"However, in West Bengal where assembly polls were held together with Assam and Tamil Nadu, the number of ineligible farmers is 19. The BJP was not in power in Bengal,"

Gogoi said. Under the PM-KISAN scheme, a financial benefit of Rs 6,000 per year is provided to the eligible farmer families, payable in three equal instalments of Rs 2,000. The fund is transferred directly to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

"If we assume that there are four persons in a family, then over 33.41 lakh voters were influenced in Assam. This scam also raises a question on how many genuine beneficiaries have been included in other government schemes," Gogoi said. The AJP president also alleged that there was a "discrepancy in the figures of ineligible beneficiaries under the PM-KISAN scheme in Assam."

Assam Agriculture Minister Atul Bora had July 5 said that 36 lakh beneficiaries were given funds under the farmers' welfare scheme in the state. Of them, 19.47 lakh were found eligible and 11.72 lakh were not, he

said, adding that about 5 lakh beneficiaries, who have received the money, are yet to be identified.

"Again, it was informed in reply to a query under the RTI Act that 9,39,146 ineligible farmers in the state have been asked to return the money. There is inconsistency in giving numbers of ineligible beneficiaries," Gogoi said.

He also questioned the government's sincerity to unearth the scam and urged the opposition parties to raise the issue in the state assembly to ensure that eligible farmers are not deprived of benefits of the scheme. The AJP and the Congress had earlier demanded a CBI inquiry into the irregularities. The alleged scam had first come to light last year and then chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Bora had admitted that some anomalies took place in implementation of the programme.

## of the day quote

Could not have asked for a happier start to Tokyo2020! India is elated by Mirabai Chanu's stupendous performance. Congratulations to her for winning the Silver medal in weightlifting. Her success motivates every Indian

**NARENDRA MODI** | PRIME MINISTER

People's lives on the line, government admits no timeline, classic case of missing spine

**RAHUL GANDHI** | CONG LEADER

I consider the victory of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha as my top priority. I have been calling the farmers' agitation as sacred for the past one year

**NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU** | PUNJAB CONG CHIEF

## SHORT TAKES

### K'taka govt eases curbs

**Bangalore:** The Karnataka government Saturday further eased restrictions in places of worship and also allowed amusement parks and similar places to reopen from Sunday onwards. However, permission was denied for large gatherings, jastras, temple festivals, processions and congregations. Similarly, water sports, water related adventure activities have also not been allowed yet. N Manjunath Prasad, Principal Secretary in the Revenue Department (Disaster Management) and Member Secretary State Executive Committee, stated in the order that after assessing the Covid-19 situation in the state, permission has been given for additional activities in temples.

### Oxygen Express for Bangladesh

**New Delhi:** An Oxygen Express train of the Indian Railways will supply 200 metric tonnes (MT) of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) to Bangladesh in 10 containers, the Ministry of Railways said Saturday. A Railway Ministry statement said that this is the first time that the Oxygen Express will be put into operation to a neighbouring country. It said that Saturday, an indent was placed at Tata in Chakradharpur Division under South Eastern Railway to transport 200 MT of LMO to Benapole in Bangladesh.

### Soldier dies in LoC mine blast

**Jammu:** A 27-year-old Army jawan was killed in a mine blast along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said Saturday. Sepoy Kamal Dev Vaidya was on operational duty in Krishna Ghati sector Friday. He accidentally stepped on a mine and it exploded injuring him critically, a defence spokesman said. The soldier was evacuated to the nearest medical facility but he succumbed to injuries there, the official said.

### Priest arrested for hate speech

**Chennai:** A Roman Catholic priest George Ponnaiah who made disgusting speech in Kanniyakumari district about Bharat Mata, Hinduism, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and the DMK government led by Chief Minister MK Stalin was arrested in Madurai Saturday. He had said at a meeting attended by Christians and Muslims that the DMK government led by Stalin coming to power is nothing but alms of Christians and Muslims.



People belonging to other faiths, and even skeptics and atheists feel attracted to the teachings of the Buddha. This universal and eternal appeal of Buddhism is due to its logical, rational, and simple answers to the fundamental problems faced by human beings across time and place

**RAM NATH KOVIND** | PRESIDENT OF INDIA

### SBI'S FIRST BRANCH IN RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN

President Ram Nath Kovind Saturday inaugurated a new branch of State Bank of India (SBI) at the President's Estate here, according to an official communiqué. This is the first branch of SBI which is being opened within the premises of Rashtrapati Bhavan



## India lodges strong objection with Pak over drone activities

It was the first sector commander level meeting between two border guarding forces after the declaration of ceasefire agreement by DGMOs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, July 24:** India Saturday lodged a strong protest over drone activities by Pakistan authorities in Jammu areas during a sector commander-level meeting between the Border Security Force and the Pakistan Rangers, officials said.

The meeting was held at the request of Pakistan Rangers at the International Border (IB) in the Suchetgarh area and it was decided to re-energise instant communication between field commanders, whenever required, to resolve the



operational matters, a BSF spokesperson said.

Commanders of both the border guarding forces discussed various issues with the main emphasis by the BSF delegation on Pakistani drone activities, terrorist activities and digging of tunnels from across the border and other issues related to border management, he said.

A very strong protest was lodged by BSF delegates regarding drone activities by Pakistan authorities in the Jammu area, the officials said. At the same time, both sides expressed their commitment to maintain

peace and harmony at the IB, they said.

It was the first sector commander level meeting between two border guarding forces after the declaration of ceasefire agreement by DGMOs (in February), the spokesperson said.

The meeting was held in a cordial, positive and constructive atmosphere and both sides agreed on an expeditious implementation of the decisions taken in the earlier DG-level talks and committed each other to maintain peace and harmony at the IB, he said.

## 1st All India Media Common Entrance Test on August 14

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, July 24:** In a unique initiative the country's first-ever national level common entrance exam for media studies across universities will be held online Saturday, August 14. The test is being guided by the recently set up Global Media Education Council (GMEC).

The AIMCET (All India Media Common Entrance Test) offers admission to the undergraduate Journalism, Mass Communication, and other media courses in various partnering Universities across the country for the current academic year and in the next academic year it will include the post-graduate media programs as well.

To maintain the right balance between theory and practice in media syllabi and help develop employability in today's time, the Global Media Education Council (GMEC), a media body of educators and senior professionals has been set up earlier in 2021.

The test is organized by one of the leading educational news portals, Edinbox.com, for over 30 universities across the country including MUIT Noida, Adamas University Kolkata, Uttaranchal University Dehradun, JagranLakeCity University Bhopal, Ajeenkya DY Patil University Pune, Mody University Rajasthan among several others. The test involving five sections will be of total 100 marks consisting 100 objective-type questions and has to be completed in 120 minutes, which can open doors to many universities. The last date to apply for AIMCET examination 2021 is August 12, 2021. Interested students can look up AIMCET website (www.aimcet.in) for more information and apply for the test.

## UNGA Prez-elect meets PM Modi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 24:** Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid, the President-elect of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi here Friday.

He arrived in India Wednesday on a three-day visit.

Shahid is visiting India in his capacity as President-elect of the 76th session of the UNGA, following the election held in New York July 7, 2021.

India is the first country Shahid is visiting in his official capacity after he was elected to the post June 7.

He had last visited India in April in his capacity as the Maldivian foreign minister.

Prime Minister Modi congratulated Shahid on his resounding victory in the election, noting that this reflects the growing stature of the Maldives on the world stage.

He also felicitated the President-elect on his Vision Statement for 'Presidency of Hope', and assured him of India's full support and cooperation during his Presidency.

Modi emphasised the importance of reforming the multilateral system, including the UN organs, to reflect the current realities of the world and the aspirations of a vast majority of the world's population.

Modi and Shahid also discussed the rapid growth in the India-Maldives bilateral relationship in recent years. Prime Minister expressed satisfaction that bilateral projects are progressing well despite the constraints of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## BRAZIL SUSPENDS COVAXIN TRIALS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, July 24:** Brazil has suspended the clinical studies of Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine, Covaxin following termination of the company's agreement with its partner there, the South American Country's health regulator said.

Bharat Biotech Friday announced cancellation of the MoU it signed with Precisa Medicamentos and Enviax Pharmaceuticals LLC for its Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin for the Brazilian market.

The termination of the pact comes after the deal with the Brazilian government for supply of 20 million doses of the vaccine landed in controversy and attracted investigation by authorities in that country.

In The Coordination of Clinical Research at Anvisa (CopeCGMED) determined this Friday (23/7) the precautionary suspension of clinical studies of the Covaxin vaccine in Brazil.

### PARTNERSHIP FALLOUT



The suspension was carried out as a result of a statement from the Indian company Bharat Biotech Limited International, sent to Anvisa Friday (23/7), Anvisa, the Brazilian health regulator said Friday.

Precisa Medicamentos was Bharat Biotech's partner in Brazil, providing assistance, guidance and support with regulatory submissions, licensure, distribution, insurance and conduct of phase III

The termination of the pact comes after the deal with the Brazilian government for supply of 20 million doses of the vaccine landed in controversy and attracted investigation by authorities in that country

Anvisa received this Friday (23/7) a statement from the company Bharat Biotech, via e-mail, informing that Precisa Comercializacao de Medicamentos Ltd is no longer authorised to represent Bharat in Brazil, the Brazilian regulator said.

There are two processes of the company related to the regularisation of Covaxin in Brazil - an application for authorisation for

emergency use and a protocol for conducting clinical research in that country.

Based on the communication made by Bharat Biotech, Anvisa will reassess the processes underway at the Agency and adopt the relevant measures, it said.

The clinical trials of Covaxin in Brazil did not commence.

On February 26, Bharat Biotech Ltd had said it signed an agreement with the Brazilian government for the supply of 20 million doses of Covaxin during the second and third quarters of 2021.

Following the graft allegations and subsequent inquiry by the authorities, the Brazilian government had earlier suspended Covaxin's order temporarily.

Bharat Biotech will continue to work diligently with Anvisa, the Brazilian drug regulatory body to complete the regulatory approval process for Covaxin, Bharat Biotech said Friday while announcing the termination of its pact with its Brazilian partners.

## RIDE TO REMEMBER



Lt Gen MV Suchindra, GOC White Knight Corps and Lt Gen DP Pandey, GOC Chinara Corps leading the part (BB Cantt Srinagar to Wusun) of Dhruva Kargil Ride

PTI PHOTO

## CBI searches 40 locations in J&K, Delhi

### ARMS LICENCE CASE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar/New Delhi, July 24:** The CBI Saturday conducted searches at 40 locations in Jammu and Kashmir, and in the national capital in connection with cases related to alleged irregularities in the issuance of over 2.78 lakh arms licences to non-residents on forged documents during 2012-16, officials said.

The search operation was spread across Jammu, Srinagar,

the officials said. With reference to media reports, I have to confirm that CBI did search my residence and found nothing incriminating in ongoing arms licence probe.

Media friends may note the probe covers 4 years across all districts. I am fully answerable to CBI for my tenure, Choudhary tweeted.

He said oversight or procedural indiscretion in a few cases cannot be completely ruled out as these pass through several clerical stages. Of the 36,000 licences issued in

Udhampur between 2012-16, only 1,500 odd (less than 4 per cent) issued under my tenure, Choudhary said, adding that this number was the lowest among licences issued by all DMs.

He said he has complied with agency queries, and was committed to do so in the future as well.

He added that out of 4.49 lakh arms licences issued in Jammu and Kashmir during 2012-16, only 56,000 were issued in the three districts of Reasi, Kathua and Udhampur where he served as the DM.

## MAHA FLOODS

### 34 teams of NDRF engaged in rescue ops

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has enhanced the number of its teams from 26 to 34 for undertaking rescue operations in the coastal areas of Maharashtra that have been hit by landslides and floods triggered by heavy rainfall.

A spokesperson for the federal contingency force said these teams are being deployed in affected areas of Mumbai, Ratnagiri, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Satara, Sangli, Sindhudurg, Kolhapur, Pune and Nagpur for rescue and relief work after consultation with the state administration.

"In view of the severity of the situation, additional eight NDRF teams have been airlifted from Kolkata and Vadodara base which are being deployed in affected areas of Maharashtra," the spokesperson said. "This will take the total NDRF deployment to 34 teams," the

spokesperson said. The NDRF teams have rescued about 1,800 stranded people and evacuated 87 people to safer places till now, he said.

"These teams have also retrieved 52 bodies from various landslide sites and extensive searches are on for the missing persons," he said.

The force is constantly tracking the India Meteorological Department's weather forecast and the Central Water Commission's report with regard to Mumbai and coastal districts of the Konkan region in Maharashtra that are witnessing heavy rainfall since the last few days, the spokesperson said. An NDRF team usually has 47 personnel and they are equipped with life-saving equipment, inflatable boats and tree and pole cutters.

At least 76 people have died, 38 have been injured and 59 are missing after many areas in Maharashtra were hit by floods and landslides.



## Blinken to visit India with vaccines and China in focus

IT WILL BE BLINKEN'S FIRST VISIT TO THE WORLD'S LARGEST DEMOCRACY AS PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN'S SECRETARY OF STATE

AGENCIES

**New Delhi/Washington, July 24:** US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel next week to India, an important partner in US efforts to counter China and in vaccine diplomacy that is hobbled by its own Covid-19 crisis.

It will be Blinken's first visit to the world's largest democracy as President Joe Biden's secretary of state and he will meet Wednesday with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar. Blinken will also visit Kuwait at

the end of his July 26-29 trip. Washington sees India as helping in US efforts to stand up to China's increasingly assertive behavior in Asia and beyond. Blinken's trip will follow a visit by Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman to China and coincide with one to Southeast Asia by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

On Blinken's agenda will be Indo-Pacific engagement, shared regional security interests, shared democratic values, and addressing the climate crisis as well as the response to the coronavirus pandemic, the State Department



said. Blinken is also likely to discuss plans for an in-person summit of the so-called Quad. The grouping of India, Japan, Australia and the United States is seen as a counter to China's rising influence.

The meeting - which diplomats and others said could coincide with the late-September UN General Assembly, pandemic travel permitting - is expected to focus on ways to develop regional infra-

structure in the face of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

The United States hosted a virtual Quad summit in March at which the countries agreed Indian drugmaker Biological E Ltd would produce at least a billion coronavirus vaccine doses by the end of 2022, mainly for Southeast Asian and Pacific countries, which have seen Covid-19 surges and where Washington has been competing in vaccine diplomacy with China.

However, India, the world's largest vaccine producer, was subsequently hit by a catastrophic wave of infections and halted vac-

cine exports. Washington sent raw materials for vaccines, medical equipment and protective gear to India and India expects to receive 3-4 million doses of US-made vaccines by August.

India is such a critical country in the fight against Covid-19, Blinken told MSNBC Friday adding that it would eventually become a vital source of vaccines to the world.

They're focused understandably on their own internal challenges now, but when that production engine gets fully going and can distribute again to the rest of the world, that's going to make a big difference.

# international



It has been proven that without the CPC, there would have been neither new China nor new Tibet. The CPC Central Committee's guidelines and policies concerning Tibet work are completely correct  
XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

## VISION FOR EVERYONE

The UNGA approved its first-ever resolution on vision Friday, calling on its 193-member nations to ensure access to eye care for everyone in their countries which would contribute to a global effort to help at least 1.1bn people with vision impairment who currently lack eye services by 2030



## of the day quote

You're not gonna find anyone, I mean anyone, who knows how to get more done for Virginia than Terry. Off-year election, the country's looking. I tell you what, the guy Terry is running against is an acolyte of Donald Trump, for real  
JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

We explore all member states, including China, to cooperate fully with the World Health Organization, and if the World Health Organization believes it requires further information, we hope that they will all cooperate  
FARHAN HAQ | DEPUTY SPOKESPERSON, UN

Paramilitary troops including the Frontier Constabulary, Levies, Rangers are deployed at the borders to deal with regular issues including illegal border crossing, smuggling etc  
SHEIKH RASHID AHMED | INTERIOR MINISTER, PAKISTAN

## SHORT TAKES

### Pelosi, Cheney team up for Jan 6 probe

Washington: Democratic lawmakers and the Republican congresswoman were gathered in the House speaker's office as the group prepared for the first session of the committee investigating the Jan 6 insurrection at the Capitol. Pelosi spoke of the "solemn responsibility" before them and raised her water glass to Cheney, a daughter of the former vice president and the sole Republican in the room. "Let us salute Liz for her courage," she said.

### China sanctions US citizens, entities

Beijing: Beijing announced sanctions on seven American citizens and entities Friday in response to a US advisory on deteriorating freedoms in Hong Kong, just days ahead of a visit from a senior Biden administration official. Tensions between Beijing and Washington have soured on a number of fronts, including human rights, trade, cybersecurity and the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic. Last week, the United States warned its business community of the growing risks of operating in Hong Kong.

### Protests in Sydney against lockdown

Sydney: Thousands of anti-lockdown protesters gathered in Australia's largest city of Sydney Saturday amid a deteriorating Covid-19 situation in the country. New South Wales (NSW) Police Force accused the protest activity as unauthorised and said a high-visibility policing operation was launched in response to it, reports Xinhua news agency. The protesters marched towards the downtown through the suburb of Haymarket, which had just moments earlier been declared a virus hotspot by the state's health department.

### Vietnam shuts capital Hanoi

Hanoi: Vietnam announced a 15-day lockdown in the capital Hanoi starting Saturday as a coronavirus surge spread from the southern Mekong Delta region. The lockdown order, issued late Friday night, bans the gathering of more than two people in public. Only government offices, hospitals and essential businesses are allowed to stay open. Earlier in the week, the city had suspended all outdoor activities and ordered non-essential businesses to close following an increase in cases.

# China braces for Typhoon 'In-Fa' amid flood damage

### TYPHOON IN-FA IS FORECAST TO MAKE LANDFALL LATE SUNDAY NEAR SHANGHAI

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Beijing, July 24: China shut down ports and railways Saturday as it braced for Typhoon In-Fa as parts of the country struggled to recover from devastating floods earlier this week.

Chinese authorities have issued a level III alert - the third-highest - for the storm, while more than 100 trains travelling through the region have been cancelled, according to China Railway.

Shanghai authorities closed some public parks and museums and warned residents Saturday to "stop large-scale outdoor gatherings" and to stay indoors.

Meanwhile, all container ship docks were shut down from Yangshan Port south of Shanghai



and 150 vessels including passenger ships and cargo vessels were evacuated from the area.

In central China's Henan province, where historic floods this week have now killed at least

## Monsoon rains flood Philippines

Philippine authorities moved thousands of residents in the capital, Manila, out of low-lying communities Saturday as heavy monsoon rains, compounded by a tropical storm, flooded the city and nearby provinces. The national disaster agency said about 15,000 people, most of them from a flood-prone Manila suburb, had moved into evacuation centres. In some parts of the Philippine capital region, an urban sprawl of more than 13 million people, flood waters rose waist-high in places and cut off roads to light vehicles.

58 people, authorities are gradually clearing and reopening roads

blocked with vehicles and debris.

More than 495,000 people have been evacuated, according to the Henan government, with the flooding causing billions of dollars in losses. Henan emergency response official Li Changxun warned Saturday that the province would need to undertake large-scale cleaning and disinfecting to "ensure the disaster is not followed by an epidemic."

State media warned that In-Fa could bring more torrential downpours to parts of the province in the coming days.

Harsh weather has hit nearly all corners of the globe in recent weeks, bringing floods to China, India and Western Europe and heat waves to North America, heightening fears about the impact of climate change.

# Banknote used to threaten Afghan envoy's daughter

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Islamabad, July 24: A 50 Pakistani Rupees banknote that mentioned threatening remarks to the Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan, Najibullah Alikhel, was found with his daughter after she returned home in Islamabad following her abduction, a media report said.

According to the Pajhwok Afghan News report, Silsila Alikhel was kidnapped July 16 in Islamabad after she went to a supermarket for shopping. The report, citing a well-placed security source, said that Silsila came out of her house in Islamabad's F-7 area and got off from a taxi in front of the Tahzeeb Shop in the city's Blue Area.

After shopping, she hired another taxi to return home but some unidentified person forced their way inside the vehicle.

As she tried to complain to the driver, the attacker beat her up. The attacker told Silsila that her father is a communist and we will not let him go as well, the source said.

She found a pair of shoes and an old shawl, which had a 50 rupee banknote and on it, it was written This time it is your turn.

The source said she received fractures on her hands and legs and she is under medical treatment presently.

Pakistan's Interior Minister Shaikh Rashid however, termed the incident a drama and said it was a huge conspiracy hatched against Islamabad.

## POLL PROMISES

# Imran's new offer for PoK

As per Pakistan's declared policy on Kashmir, the issue should be resolved as per the UN resolution through a referendum allowing Kashmiris to choose either Pakistan or India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, July 24: Departing from Pakistan's declared policy on Kashmir, Prime Minister Imran Khan Friday said that Islamabad would let the people of Kashmir decide if they want to join Pakistan or become an independent state.

Addressing an election rally in Tarar Khal area of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) ahead of the polls July 25, Khan also rejected claims by a leading Opposition leader that his government was working on a plan to make Kashmir a province of Pakistan.

The response came after Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Maryam Nawaz addressing an election gathering in PoK July 18 said that a decision had been taken to change the status of Kashmir and make it a province.

I do not know where all this talk (about province) has sprung from, Khan said, while dismissing any such idea. Instead, the Prime Minister said that a day would come when Kashmiris would be allowed to decide their future as per the UN resolutions and expressed the confidence that the people of Kashmir on that day would decide to join Pakistan.

He added that following the UN mandated referendum, "his government will hold another refer-



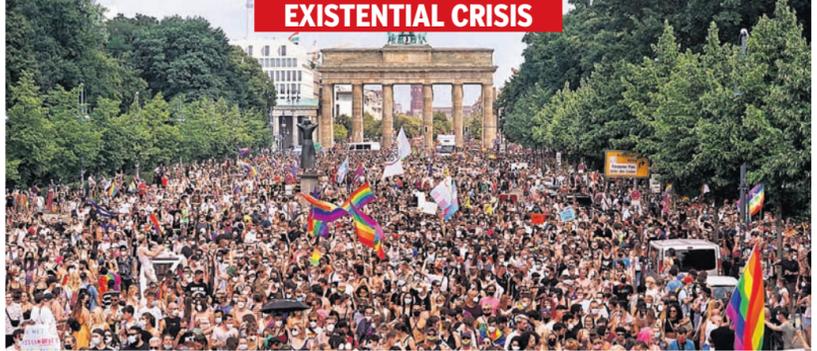
## PM deviating from Pak's historical stand: Oppn

Pakistan's Opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif Saturday rejected Prime Minister Imran Khan's remarks that Islamabad would let the people of Kashmir decide if they want to join Pakistan or become an independent state, saying he was deviating from the country's historical and constitutional position by proposing a second referendum other than the one mandated by the UN. The entire nation rejects anything other than Pakistan's historic position on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and UN Security Council resolutions, he said. The Jammu and Kashmir dispute will be decided according to a transparent and independent plebiscite held under the auspices of the United Nations and this is the position of the people of Pakistan and Kashmir, he said. He said that imposing a solution on Kashmiris without their consent and consultation is tantamount to helping India and betraying the Kashmir cause.

endum to give the people of Kashmir a choice to either live with Pakistan or become an independent state."

Prime Minister Khan departed from the policy by talking about the third option. There is no third option of independence in the UN resolution.

India has previously made it clear that the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral and inalienable part of India. New Delhi has also told Islamabad that issues related to Jammu and Kashmir are its internal matter and the country is capable of solving its own problems.



Thousands of people take part in the Christopher Street Day parade under the motto, 'save our Community - save our Pride', an allusion to the fact that many queer institutions fear for their existence because of the Coronavirus crisis

# Biden assures Afghan of continued US support

AGENCIES

Washington, July 24: With the last US forces on the way out of Afghanistan, US President Joe Biden assured President Ashraf Ghani of US diplomatic and humanitarian support Friday as Taliban advances piled pressure on the US-backed government in Kabul.

In a phone call, Biden and Ghani "agreed that the Taliban's current offensive is in direct contradiction to the movement's claim to support a negotiated settlement of the conflict," a White House statement said.

Biden told Ghani the United States would remain engaged diplomatically "in support of a durable and just political settlement," the White House said.

Violence has risen sharply since the withdrawal plan was announced in April, with the Taliban launching offensives, taking districts and important border crossings, and encircling or closing in on several provincial capitals.

Educated Afghans - especially women and girls who were barred from school and most work under Taliban rule - have voiced alarm at the insurgents' rapid advance, as have members of ethnic and sectarian minorities persecuted under the Taliban's severe interpretation of Sunni Islam.

About 2,500 Afghans could be brought to the facility, about 30 miles (48 km) south of Richmond, the Pentagon said Monday.



Biden Friday authorized up to \$100 million from an emergency fund to meet "unexpected urgent" refugee needs

Biden also authorized the release of \$200 million in services and articles from the inventories of US government agencies

The US is preparing to begin evacuating thousands of Afghan applicants for special immigration visas (SIVs) who risk retaliation from Taliban insurgents

## Night curfew in Af

Afghan authorities Saturday imposed a night-time curfew across 31 of the country's 34 provinces to curb surging violence unleashed by a sweeping Taliban offensive in recent months, the interior ministry said. The curfew will be effective between 10:00 pm and 4:00 am local time, Ahmad Zia Zia, deputy interior ministry spokesman said in a separate audio statement to reporters. After a brief lull in violence during this week's Muslim holidays of Eid al-Adha, fighting continued again with the authorities claiming to have killed more than 260 Taliban fighters in the past 24 hours across several provinces.

# 14 dead, 12 hurt in China godown blaze

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Beijing, July 24: A warehouse fire in northeastern China Saturday left at least fourteen people dead and twelve seriously injured, state media reported.

The logistics warehouse, located in Changchun, the capital of the northeastern province of Jilin, caught on fire Saturday afternoon, and rescue work is still underway, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Images published by the agency showed firefighters using ladders and cranes outside the burned-out shell of a glass-walled building.

"The cause of the incident is under investigation," Xinhua said. Deadly fires are not uncommon in China, where lax enforcement of building codes and rampant unauthorised construction can make it hard for people to escape burning buildings.

# UK-India FTA making progress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, July 24: The UK-India dialogue on the roadmap towards accelerated talks on a free trade agreement (FTA), with an interim agreement factored in, is "going well" and will see "good progress" in the coming months, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said Saturday.

A visit to India by Johnson is being considered around September, with Prime Minister Modi expected to visit the UK for the COP26 climate summit in

## ROADMAP 2030

There are several aspects to the roadmap that can lead up to a comprehensive free trade agreement. The possibility of an interim agreement is also factored into that. Both sides agree those talks are going well

WARDHAN SHRINGLA | FOREIGN SECRETARY, INDIA

November and Shringla's visit is said to have been organised at short notice to keep up the "in-

tensive engagement" ahead of those high-level summits.

Asked about any roadblocks, the Foreign Secretary noted: "While here, we reviewed the entire range of issues and we didn't find anything which is insurmountable. Most of it is what we can do to continue to maintain the momentum."

"PM Johnson takes a lot of interest in the relationship and I was able to discuss with David Quarrey about where we were on the summit decisions and how we can take that relationship forward," said Shringla.

# NASA selects SpaceX for mission to Jupiter's moon Europa

THE AIM IS TO CONDUCT A DETAILED SURVEY OF THE ICE-COVERED JOVIAN SATELLITE, WHICH IS A BIT SMALLER THAN EARTH'S MOON AND IS A LEADING CANDIDATE IN THE SEARCH FOR LIFE ELSEWHERE IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM

AGENCIES

Los Angeles, July 24: Elon Musk's private rocket company SpaceX was awarded a \$178 million launch services contract for NASA's first mission focusing on Jupiter's icy moon Europa and whether it may host conditions suitable for life, the space agency said Friday.

The Europa Clipper mission is due for blastoff in October 2024 on a Falcon Heavy rocket owned by Musk's company, Space Exploration Technologies Corp, from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, NASA said in a statement posted online.

The contract marked NASA's latest vote of confidence in the

Hawthorne, California-based company, which has carried several cargo payloads and astronauts to the International Space Station for NASA in recent years.



## Europa Clipper mission

The total contract is worth \$178 million

NASA's first mission focusing on Jupiter's icy moon Europa

The mission will launch on a Falcon Heavy rocket

The blastoff is due for October 2024

In April, SpaceX was awarded a \$2.9 billion contract to build the lunar lander spacecraft for the planned Artemis program that would carry NASA astronauts back to the moon for the first time since 1972.

But that contract was suspended after two rival space companies, Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin and defense contractor Dynetics Inc, protested against the SpaceX selection.

The company's partly reusable 23-story Falcon Heavy, currently the most powerful operational space launch vehicle in the world, flew its first commercial payload into orbit in 2019.

NASA did not say what other

companies may have bid on the Europa Clipper launch contract.

A bend in Europa's magnetic field observed by NASA's Galileo spacecraft in 1997 appeared to have been caused by a geyser gushing through the moon's frozen crust from a vast subsurface ocean, researchers concluded in 2018. Those findings supported other evidence of Europa plumes.

Among the Clipper mission's objectives are to produce high-resolution images of Europa's surface, determine its composition, look for signs of geologic activity, measure the thickness of its icy shell and determine the depth and salinity of its ocean, NASA said.



**Destiny and Drive is making the 21st century's favourite nation ready for a great leap forward. India stands at the doorstep of prosperity that is both significant and inclusive, and of delivering all-round human development through the democratic route**

MUKESH AMBANI | CHAIRMAN, RELIANCE INDUSTRIES LIMITED

## EV STARTUP ANNOUNCES \$2.5BN FUNDING ROUND

Electric car startup Rivian, Friday said that it has closed a \$2.5 billion fundraising round led by investors Amazon, Ford Motor Co and T Rowe Price. The announcement came the day after the California-based company said it was exploring building a second US assembly plant



## of the day quote

Rising prominence of e-commerce is creating opportunities for every retailer and this trend is likely to continue. Retailers could leverage digital channels (e-commerce), enabling them to reach out to more consumers

SANJIV GOENKA | CHAIRMAN, SPENCER'S RETAIL

The EV segment is gaining momentum with positive policy action. With an eye on the future, we are strategically working on developing our future EV products, while we continue to work on our internal combustion engine offerings

SIDDHARTHA LAL | MANAGING DIRECTOR, EICHER MOTORS

We have focused our efforts on a few very promising agreements where I can clearly see huge comparative advantages for India to get market access and the ability to trade both in goods and services in a much bigger way. The UK, EU, Australia, Canada, UAE are countries with whom we can expand our engagements

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

# Honest taxpayers deserve to be recognised, says FM

*In her message to the IT Department on the 161st anniversary of Income Tax Day, she complimented the department for continuing to work towards simplifying its procedures and processes, and making its functioning hassle-free, fair and transparent*



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 24:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Saturday said honest taxpayers deserve to be recognised for dutifully paying their due share of taxes and appreciated the Income Tax Department for successful implementation of various reforms. In her message to the I-T Department on the 161st anniversary of Income Tax Day, she com-

plimented the department for continuing to work towards simplifying its procedures and processes, and making its functioning hassle-free, fair and transparent.

"The minister observed that the honest taxpayers deserve to be recognized for the contribution they are making to the progress of the nation by dutifully paying their due share of taxes... She also lauded taxpayers for discharging their compliance obligations de-

spite the difficulties caused by the pandemic," an official statement said.

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary observed that most of the processes and compliance requirements have been shifted to online platforms and the need for taxpayers to physically visit tax offices has been eliminated or minimized.

He highlighted the fact that the interaction with taxpayers is now characterized by a spirit of trust and respect, relying more on voluntary compliance.

Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj also complimented the department for having done well in adapting itself to the emergent changes in the economy and having been able to achieve a healthy growth in tax collections.

He also appreciated the initiatives undertaken by the department to reorient its approach towards revenue collection, making its functioning trust-based and taxpayer-centric.

Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Chairman J B Mohapatra lauded the tax officers for their collective efforts and effectively fulfilling their twin role as the revenue earning arm of the nation and provider of taxpayer services.

Referring to the larger and far-reaching policy measures like 'Honouring the Honest', Faceless Regime and adoption of the Taxpayers' Charter, he noted that these initiatives have made the departmental functioning more transparent, objective and taxpayer-friendly.

## India expected to become \$5tn economy in 5-10 yrs: Paytm CEO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 24:** The country is in an exciting phase of growth and the economy is expected to add USD 2.5 trillion in the next 5-10 years, Paytm founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma said Saturday.

"If this country's economy is USD 2.5 trillion today, in next 5-10 years, you will see another USD 2.5 trillion. It took 70 years for us to make it USD 2.5 trillion... Now only in 10 years all that history will be recreated and doubled.



"It's an amazing, inspiring moment for us to be in India and lucky to be in India," Sharma said while speaking at a 2-day virtual world conclave organised by IMC Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

He said one should never hesitate to do what they feel very strongly about even if it seems small.

"When somebody makes you feel that you're solo... That's just the way you handle the adversity. And once you are a success, all these adversities will become the folklores, so you should never feel bad about it," he added.

## IMPORT DUTY RELAXATION

# Musk expects 'temporary tariff relief' for EVs in India

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 24:** American electric vehicle (EV) maker Tesla may set up manufacturing unit in India if it first succeeds with imported vehicles in the country, according to company CEO Elon Musk. He, however, said at present import duties in India are "the highest in the world" and is hoping for "at least a temporary tariff relief for electric vehicles."

Interacting on twitter with followers who asked him to launch Tesla cars in India Musk said, "We want to do so, but import duties are the highest in the world by far of any large country!"

Currently, India imposes 100 per cent import duty on fully imported cars with CIF (Cost, Insurance and Freight) value more than USD 40,000 and 60 per cent on those costing less than the amount.

Musk further said, "Clean energy vehicles are treated the same as diesel or petrol, which does not seem entirely consistent with the climate goals of India." He, however, said, "We are hopeful that there will be at least a temporary

**If Tesla is able to succeed with imported vehicles, then a factory in India is quite likely**

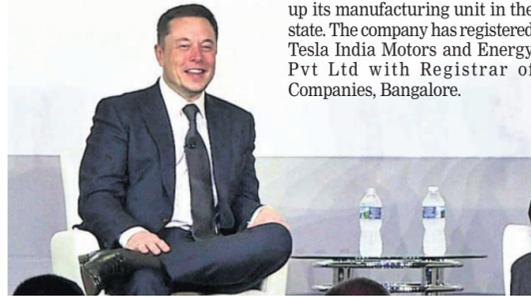
ELON MUSK | CEO, TESLA

tariff relief for electric vehicles. That would be much appreciated." Asked by a follower if Tesla could start with local assembly in India, Musk said, "If Tesla is able to succeed with imported vehicles, then a factory in India is quite likely."

A senior government official on Friday had said Tesla had asked for reduction in import duty. Recently, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari had said Tesla has a golden opportunity to set up its manufacturing facility in India given the country's thrust on e-vehicles.

Tesla is already sourcing various auto components from Indian automakers and setting up base here would be economically viable for it, the road transport and highways minister had said.

In February this year, Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa had claimed that Tesla would set up its manufacturing unit in the state. The company has registered Tesla India Motors and Energy Pvt Ltd with Registrar of Companies, Bangalore.



## SHORT TAKES

### Demand to sustain revenue traction

**New Delhi:** Pent-up demand, coupled with work-from-home provisions, will sustain the strong revenue traction of the consumer durables sector in the coming quarters. Besides, improving housing activities and resumption of Capex will support this trend. "Leading companies have taken price hikes to pass on the raw material inflation, while restoration of operational costs will be compensated for by op-lev. Hence, the EBITDA margin will remain healthy in the coming quarters," HDFC Securities said in a report.

### 'Pharma industry to touch \$130bn by 2030'

**Hyderabad:** The Indian pharmaceutical industry is expected to grow almost by three times to about 130 billion US dollars by 2030, Chairman of Dr Reddy's Laboratories, K Satish Reddy said Saturday. "If you see, currently the pharma industry is about \$42bn, half between the domestic sales, half between the exports. We expect that it will grow almost by three times in the coming decade, reaching almost 120 to 130 billion dollars by 2030," he predicted.

### ICICI Bank net profit rises 78%

**Mumbai:** ICICI Bank reported a 78 per cent rise in net profit to ₹4,616 crore on a stand-alone basis for the April-June quarter in the financial year 2021-22, compared to ₹2,599 crore in the year-ago period. The country's leading private sector lender's provisions - excluding provision for tax, declined sharply as it has changed its policy on nonperforming loans in the quarter to make it more conservative.

### SBI opens branch in President's Estate

**New Delhi:** The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) Saturday opened a branch at President's Estate. The branch was inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind along with First Lady Savita Kovind, in the presence of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, SBI said in a statement. The branch will provide all types of banking services including safe deposit lockers to the residents of President's Estate, it said.

## BIZ BUZZ

### Samsung launches Galaxy M21 2021

**Bhubaneswar:** Samsung announced the launch of Galaxy M21 2021 Edition. Galaxy M21, 2021 edition comes with monster 6000mAh battery for extended battery life, 48MP triple camera with GM2 Sensor and stunning 6.4 inch Super AMOLED FHD, Infinity-U Display. Galaxy M21 2021 Edition is priced at ₹12,499 for 4/64GB and ₹14,499 for the 6/128GB memory variant. Available in two vibrant colours - Artic Blue and Charcoal Black, the Galaxy M21 2021 Edition will go sale starting July 26, 2021 on Amazon.in, Samsung.com and select retail stores. As an introductory offer, consumers can avail INR 1000 cashback on ICICI Bank debit and credit cards. Galaxy M21 2021 Edition comes with Android 11 and One UI Core 3.1.



### Patta distribution programme held

**Bhubaneswar:** Dulanga Coal Mining Project arranged one patta distribution programme in the Community Hall of Majhapada inside the R&R colony constructed for the displaced villagers. Collector and District Magistrate of Sundargarh, Nikhil Pavan Kalyan inaugurated the Community Centre at Majhapada. After inauguration, he distributed Patta to the displaced villagers. Partha Mazumder, Regional Executive Director, CMHQ, Ranchi, CR Barik, Head of Project, Dulanga CMP, Abhimanyu Behera, Sub-collector (Sundargarh), SK Ray, GM (Project) were also present. The Sundargarh



Collector appreciated the initiatives taken by NTPC especially by the Head of Project CR Barik in last two years to improve the standard of living of the displaced villagers in R&R colony. In order to provide banking facility to the displaced villagers in R&R colony, NTPC - Dulanga CMP has facilitated the opening of ICICI Bank.

# 'High iron ore price draws poor response in auction'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** The steel companies in Odisha showed their low interest to participate in recent iron ores auction due to the continual hike in base price of iron ore lumps and fines.

Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) has recently invited buyers to participate in e-auction for six iron ores. According to OMC officials, about 18 firms expressed their interest by paying the earnest money deposit (EMD) to take part in the e-auction. But only two firms took part in the final bidding.

According to sources, "The poor response to the auction has been due to the OMC's continued hike in base price of iron ore lumps and fines."

"OMC has increased the base price about 5% over the last auction price. Steel companies, which are reeling under soaring raw material price, shied away from the auction because of the price hike. The steel industries in Odisha are already under stress because of two to three fold rises in iron ore price in last one year. The further hike in



iron price by OMC will make the survival of the industry difficult," said a senior official of a steel company.

Recently, about 20 companies have applied to the state government for allotment of iron ore under iron ore pre-emption scheme. Several industry bodies such as Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Federation of Indian Mineral Industries, Sponge Iron

Manufacturers Association and others have highlighted the severe shortage and increasing price of iron ore in Odisha. They have sought the state government's intervention to safeguard Odisha-based industries.

Considering the poor response to the auction by the OMC, the state government-owned miner may go for re-auction with reduced base price, sources said.

## NIXI to promote local content: CEO

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) has set out to promote local content with its bharat initiatives, said Anil Kumar Jain, CEO. On the occasion of successful completion of 18 years, NIXI hosted a webinar on Digital Economy - Expanding Footprints.



In the webinar, Jain said, "Further, the company has also set out to promote local content with its bharat initiatives. Starting with five languages, the Bharat domain is now available in all 22 of official languages. India is the only country to provide domain in 22 of official Indian Languages."

NIXI has been helping in peering of ISPs among themselves for the purpose of routing the domestic traffic within the country, instead of taking it all the way abroad, thereby resulting in a better quality of service and reduced bandwidth charges for ISPs by saving on international bandwidth.

# Global supply chains buckle as virus variant, disasters strike

REUTERS

**London/Beijing, July 24:** A new worldwide wave of Covid-19, natural disasters in China and Germany, a cyber attack targeting key South African ports are some of the events that have conspired to drive global supply chains towards breaking point, threatening the fragile flow of raw materials, parts and consumer goods, according to companies, economists and shipping specialists.

The Delta variant of the coronavirus has devastated parts of Asia and prompted many nations to cut off land access for sailors. That's left captains unable to rotate weary crews and about 1,00,000 seafarers stranded at sea beyond their stints in a flashback to 2020 and the height of lockdowns.

"We're no longer on the cusp of a second crew change crisis, we're

in one," Guy Platten, secretary general of the International Chamber of Shipping, told Reuters. "This is a perilous moment for global supply chains."

Given ships transport around 90% of the world's trade, the crew crisis is disrupting the supply of everything from oil and iron ore to food and electronics. German container line Hapag Lloyd described the situation as "extremely challenging".

"Vessel capacity is very tight, empty containers are scarce and the operational situation at certain ports and terminals is not really improving," it said. "We expect this to last probably into the fourth quarter - but it is very difficult to predict."

Meanwhile, deadly floods in economic giants China and Germany have further ruptured global supply lines that had yet to recover from the first wave of the pan-



dem, compromising trillions of dollars of economic activity that rely on them.

The Chinese flooding is curtailing the transport of coal from mining regions such as Inner Mongolia and Shanxi, the state

planner says, just as power plants need fuel to meet peak summer demand.

In Germany, road transportation of goods has slowed significantly. In the week of July 11, as the disaster unfolded, the volume of

## PERILOUS MOMENT

■ The Delta variant of the coronavirus has devastated parts of Asia and prompted many nations to cut off land access for sailors

■ Given ships transport around 90% of the world's trade, the crew crisis is disrupting the supply of everything from oil and iron ore to food and electronics

■ Deadly floods in economic giants China and Germany have further ruptured global supply lines that had yet to recover from the first wave of the pandemic, compromising trillions of dollars of economic activity that rely on them

late shipments rose by 15% from the week before, according to data from supply-chain tracking platform FourKites.

Nick Klein, VP for sales and marketing in the Midwest with Taiwan freight and logistics company OEC Group, said companies were scrambling to free goods stacked up in Asia and in U.S. ports due to a confluence of crises. "It's not going to clear up until March," Klein said.

## MORE PAIN FOR AUTOMAKERS

Manufacturing industries are reeling. Automakers, for example, are again being forced to stop production because of disruptions caused by Covid-19 outbreaks. Toyota Motor Corp said this week it had to halt operations at plants in Thailand and Japan because they couldn't get parts.

Stellantis temporarily suspended production at a factory in the UK because a large number of workers had to isolate to halt the spread of the virus.

# Harmanpreet seals India win



**WINNING START:** Indian players celebrate after a goal by Harmanpreet Singh (2nd from L) against New Zealand in their Tokyo Games opener, Saturday

**Tokyo, July 24:** Harmanpreet Singh scored a brace and veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh stood like a wall in the closing minutes as the Indian men's hockey team overcame a late surge from New Zealand to eke out a close 3-2 win in its opening Olympic Games match here Saturday. India will next play mighty Australia Sunday.

Harmanpreet (26th and 33rd minutes) scored a double for India, while Rupinder Pal Singh (10th) was the other goal-getter for the eight-time former champions, currently ranked fourth in the world, in the Pool A match at the Oi hockey stadium here.

For the eighth-ranked New

Zealand, Kane Russell scored from a penalty corner in the sixth minute before Stephen Jenness (43rd minute) reduced the margin of defeat later in the match.

The Indians were shocked in the sixth minute when Russell found the top right corner of the Indian goal past Sreejesh with a fierce flick.

Even though he didn't score, striker Mandeep Singh was a live-wire for India upfront and earned a penalty corner for his side, which resulted in a penalty stroke from which Rupinder drew parity in the 10th minute.

New Zealand were not to be left behind as they gave the Indian defence a run for its money securing four consecutive penalty corners

but wasted all. From a counter-attack, Gurjant came close to handing India the lead but his effort was saved by New Zealand goalkeeper Leon Hayward.

Four minutes into the second quarter, Hayward again came to the scene when he kept away India skipper Manpreet Singh's lob from a one-on-one situation.

But six minutes later, Harmanpreet gave India a 2-1 lead at the half-time. Three minutes after the change of ends, Harmanpreet was again in the thick of things when he converted his second penalty corner of the day with a precision strike.

India secured another penalty corner minutes later but this time Harmanpreet's effort was saved

## EVES LOSE BIG

**TOKYO:** The Indian women's hockey team fought valiantly in the first two quarters before losing the steam to go down 1-5 against World No.1 Netherlands in their opening pool match at the Tokyo Olympics here Saturday. Felice Albers gave Netherlands the lead in the sixth minute before the advantage was evened out by India skipper Rani Rampal in the 10th minute. The Indians defended bravely in the first two quarters to go into the half time locked at 1-1 but the break seemed to have broken their momentum. Margot van Geffen (33rd minute) restored Netherlands' lead soon after resumption before the three-time Olympic champions and reigning silver medallist scored two goals in quick succession through Albers (43rd) and Frederique Matia (45th) to take control of the proceedings. Caia Jacqueline van Maasakker slammed home from their sixth penalty corner in the 52nd minute. India will play Germany in their next Pool A match July 26.

by the Kiwi defence. But the match came to life when Jenness scored with a lovely finish past Sreejesh in the near post in the 43rd minute.

Three minutes from full time, Lalit Upadhyay's strike from top of the circle was blocked brilliantly by Hayward to keep New Zealand in the hunt.

It was all New Zealand in the final few minutes of the game as they pressed hard for the equaliser and in the process earned three penalty corners in quick succession but Sreejesh came to India's rescue making some brilliant saves to keep the opponents at bay.

With 24 seconds to go, New Zealand secured another penalty corner but once again the experienced Sreejesh came to India's rescue and helped his side secure full points from the game.

# India lauds Mirabai feat

Saikhom Mirabai Chanu ended India's 21-year wait for a weightlifting medal at the Olympics by clinching a silver in the 49kg category at the Tokyo Games on a day that yielded contrasting results for the Indian participants. However, it was Chanu who bettered Karnam Malleswari's bronze in the 2000 Sydney Olympics and overshadowed everyone as the country still in awe of her feat...



**RAMNATH KOVIND:** Heartiest congratulations to Mirabai Chanu for starting the medal tally for India in the Tokyo Olympics 2020 by winning silver medal in weightlifting

**NARENDRA MODI:** Could not have asked for a happier start to Tokyo 2020! India is elated by Mirabai Chanu's stupendous performance. Congratulations to her for winning the Silver medal in weightlifting. Her success motivates every Indian

**MY DREAM OF WINNING AN OLYMPIC MEDAL HAS BEEN FULFILLED TODAY. I TRIED A LOT IN RIO, BUT IT WAS NOT MY DAY THEN. I THOUGHT THAT DAY ONLY THAT I WILL PROVE MYSELF IN TOKYO**

**MIRABAI CHANU**

**ANURAG THAKUR:** India's 1st medal on day 1! Mirabai Chanu wins SILVER in women's 49kg weightlifting! India is so proud of you Mira!

**KIREN RIJU:** India strikes first medal at Olympic Tokyo 2020 Mirabai Chanu wins silver Medal in 49 kg Women's Weightlifting and made India proud Congratulations Mirabai Chanu!

**ABHINAV BINDRA:** Many many Congratulations to Mirabai Chanu on winning India's first medal at Tokyo 2020. Such An inspiring performance that will be remembered for a long time to come and will inspire generations. Well done

**SACHIN TENDULKAR:** MIRABAI CHANU! Absolutely amazing display of weightlifting. The way you have transformed yourself after your injury and clinched a historic silver for Team India is absolutely stupendous

**VIRENDER SEHWAG:** Ghazab. Bhartiya Naari Sab par Bhaari. Mirabai Chanu, remember the name. Thank you for making us all proud Mirabai Chanu, and winning us a Silver at the Olympics. Many more to come

**SAKSHI MALIK:** Mirabai Chanu wins silver Medal in 49 kg Women's Weightlifting and made India proud. Congratulations Mirabai Chanu!

**SATISH SHIVALINGAM:** History create ho gaya. Itna aasan nahi hota (History has been created. It was not easy), it is a very very big thing. I had tears in my ears. It will be difficult for anyone to emulate this performance

**BAJRANG PUNIA:** Congratulations for a beautiful opening on medal tally Mirabai Chanu. This Second place medal is a morale boost for our Indian contingent. Thank you for a spectacular performance...jai hind

## INDIA'S SCHEDULE

- ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS:** Pranati Nayak in action in Women's Qualification - Subdivision 1; **6:30am IST**
- BADMINTON:** PV Sindhu vs Ksenia Polikarpova (Israel) in Women's Singles Group J Match; **7:10am IST**
- BOXING:** MC Mary Kom vs Miguelina Hernandez Garcia (Dominican Republic) in Women's 51kg Round of 32 Bout; **1:30pm IST;** Manish Kaushik vs Luke McCormack (Great Britain) in Men's 63kg Round of 32 Bout; **3:06pm IST**
- HOCKEY:** India vs Australia in Men's Pool A match; **3pm IST**
- ROWING:** Arjun Lal Jat & Arvind Singh in Men's Lightweight Double Sculls Repechage 2; **8:10am IST**
- SHOOTING:** Manu Bhaker & Yashaswini Deswal in Women's 10m Air Pistol Qualification; **5:30am IST;** Women's 10m Air Pistol Final; **7:45am IST;** Mairaj Ahmad Khan & Angad Vir Singh Bajwa in Men's Skeet Qualification Day 1; **6:30am IST;** Deepak Kumar & Divyansh Singh Panwar in Men's 10m Air Rifle Qualification; **9:30am IST;** Men's 10m Air Rifle Final; **12pm IST**
- SWIMMING:** Maana Patel in Women's 100m Backstroke - Heat 1; **3:32pm IST;** Srihari Nataraj in Men's 100m Backstroke - Heat 3; **4:26pm IST**
- TABLE TENNIS:** G Sathiyam vs Siu Hang Lam (Hong Kong) in Men's Singles Round 2 Match; **10:30am IST;** Manika Batra vs Margaryta Pesotska (Ukraine) in Women's Singles Round 2; **12:00pm IST**
- TENNIS:** Sania Mirza & Ankita Raina vs Liudmyla Kichenok/Nadiia Kichenok (Ukraine) in Women's Doubles Round 1; **7:30am IST**

# ROWERS MOVE TO REPECHAGE ROUND

**TOKYO:** The Indian rowing duo of Arvind Singh and Arjun Lal Jat qualified for the repechage round after finishing fifth in the men's lightweight double sculls heat here Saturday. Competing in heat 2, the Indian pair finished with a timing of 6:40.33 in the six-team field, failing to qualify for the semifinals. The top two teams - Ireland (6:23.74) and Czech Republic (6:28.10) - advanced to the semifinals while Poland (6:31.85), Ukraine (6:36.05) and Uruguay (6:42.85) moved to the repechage round alongside India. The repechage round allows boats a second chance to qualify for the quarter-finals, semi-finals or finals. While Arjun assumed the role of the bowler, Arvind was the stroker. Trailing till the 1500m mark, the duo sped up in the 500m to secure the fifth position.

## Saurabh finishes 7th

**TOKYO:** Indian medal hope Saurabh Chaudhary could not replicate the form he displayed in the qualifications to finish a disappointing seventh in the men's 10m air pistol final at the Tokyo Olympics here Saturday. The Indian ace shot 137.4 to be eliminated in the seventh place, an hour after topping the qualifications with a mind-blowing performance at the Asaka Range. Chaudhary did not get off to the best of starts and, with a score of 47.7, was placed eighth in the standings after the first five shots. The Asian Games and Youth Olympics gold-medallist was positioned sixth after the 12th shot, with a score of 117.2. He managed to survive the first elimination round but could not sustain that for long.

Making her Olympic debut, World No.1 Elavenil finished 16th in the qualifications after shooting 626.5 over six series of 10 shots each, while the more experienced Apurvi, who is also the finals world record holder in the event, settled for the 36th place after aggregating 621.9 at the Asaka Range.

**India lose to Korea**

**TOKYO:** The last-minute pairing of Deepika Kumari and Pravin Jadhav fumbled in the quarterfinals against top seed Korea to go out of the medal race in the mixed pair event of the archery competition at the Tokyo Games, here Saturday. Deepika and Jadhav, who were playing together at the international level for the first time, lost 2-6 to formidable Korea when the mixed event was considered a strong medal chance for the country. World No.1 Deepika failed to notch a single perfect 10 from eight arrows while Olympic debutant Jadhav missed a six in the crucial fourth set after drilling in three perfect 10s at the Yumenoshima Park. The Indians failed to shoot even a single 10 in the first set as the top seed Korean duo of An San

and Kim Je Deok took the first set 35-32 in a low-scoring affair: Earlier, Deepika and Jadhav had bounced back to knock out Chinese Taipei to reach quarterfinal.

**Injured Vikas bows out of Olympics**

**TOKYO:** Indian boxer Vikas Krishan (69kg) was out-punched 0-5 and left with a bloodied eye by local favourite Sewonrets Quincy Mensah Okazawa in his opening bout of the Olympic Games here Saturday, a thoroughly disappointing start for the nine-strong team. The 29-year-old Krishan sustained a cut below his left eye in the high-voltage clash, which, according to team sources, he competed with a shoulder niggle. He was the only Indian boxer in action on the day.

## Nagal 3rd Indian to win singles match at Games



**TOKYO:** Sumit Nagal Saturday became only the third Indian to win a men's singles match at an Olympics edition and the first in 25 years, when he edged past Denis Istomin in a three-setter at the Tokyo Games, here.

Nagal got the better of Istomin 6-4, 6-7(6-8), 6-4 in two hours and 34 minutes on court 10 at the Ariake Tennis Centre to set up a second round with World No.2 Daniil Medvedev.

Zeeshan Ali was the first Indian to win a singles match at the 1988 Seoul Games when he beat Victor Caballero from Paraguay. After that, the legendary Leander Paes won the historic men's singles bronze at the 1996 Atlanta Games, beating Brazil's Fernando Meligeni.

No Indian could win a singles match after Paes' heroic feat even as Somdev Devvarman and Vishnu Vardhan competed at the 2012 Games in London but did not manage to cross the first round hurdle.

Nagal now faces a Herculean task as he faces Australian Open runner-up Medvedev, who beat Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik 6-4, 7-6(10-8).

# Batra, Mukherjee off to promising start in singles

**TOKYO:** India's slim hopes for a table tennis medal in mixed doubles vanished in no time but Manika Batra and Suthirha Mukherjee made promising starts to their women's singles campaign at the Tokyo Olympics here Saturday.

The start to India's table tennis campaign was disappointing with Sharath Kamal and Manika losing 0-4 to the third seeds Lin Yun-Ju and Cheng I-Ching of Chinese Taipei in the mixed doubles round of 16.

However, World No.62 Manika returned to beat 94th-ranked Tin-Tin Ho of Britain 4-0 in her singles opener while 98th-ranked Suthirha made a strong impression on her Olympics debut with a come from behind 4-3 win against 78th-ranked Linda Bergstrom of Sweden.

Mukherjee play Portugal's Fu Yu in the second round while Manika takes on Ukraine's Margaryta Pesotska, who is ranked 32. Mukherjee showed remarkable grit to down her Swedish opponent after trailing 1-3 in the best of seven affair. She won 5-11, 11-9, 11-13, 9-11, 11-3, 11-9, 11-5.

Earlier in the mixed doubles, Sharath and Manika had to make all chances count against a superior opponent from Chinese Taipei but they couldn't do so after leading 5-1 and 5-3 in the first two games. In the end, it was a comfortable 11-8, 11-6, 11-5, 11-4 win for Lin and Cheng.

Manika Batra and Suthirha Mukherjee during their mixed doubles match, Saturday



Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra during their mixed doubles match, Saturday

# Varun set for debut in 1st T20I vs SL

**Colombo, July 24:** Mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthi could well be in line for international debut as a formidable India, with a galaxy of powerhouse IPL performers, start as overwhelming favourites against Sri Lanka in the opening T20I here Sunday.

Having lost a game in the ODI series, Shikhar Dhawan's men would look to go one better against Sri Lanka with a team that is ahead in almost all departments.

Coach Rahul Dravid will, however, want to check out Chakravarthi, who can bowl off-breaks, carrom ball and also take the deliveries away from right-handers, having proved his prowess in the Indian Premier League.

Having missed out on an away series in Australia and home se-



Varun Chakravarthi is set to make his T20I debut against Sri Lanka.

even as the Indian team is looking at one spinner for the World T20 in the UAE.

The other debut could be one among Devdutt Padikkal and Ruturaj Gaikwad, both of whom had been proven IPL performers. With Prithvi Shaw and Suryakumar Yadav set to leave for England, the team management might not risk playing both the players.

It is expected that both Ishan Kishan and Sanju Samson will be included in the playing XI from which Manish Pandey is set to be dropped. The Pandya brothers - Hardik and Krunal - are automatic choices in this format.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Deepak Chahar, after a much well-earned rest, will be back in the mix and Yuzvendra Chahal is likely to join Krunal and Chakravarthi in the slow-bowling department.

## Surya, Shaw to join Virat & co for Tests

**NEW DELHI:** Suryakumar Yadav has received his maiden Test team call-up and he along with opener Prithvi Shaw will be flying to England as replacements sought by the team management after three players were ruled out due to injury. Shubman Gill, Washington Sundar and Avesh Khan have been forced out from the ongoing tour. The Test series is due to start August 4. Off-spinner Jayant Yadav was also supposed to go to UK as Washington's replacement but it has been learnt that as of now only Suryakumar and Prithvi are being sent. A senior BCCI office-bearer confirmed the development.

# 'Lost too many wickets in middle overs'



India captain Shikhar Dhawan rued losing too many wickets in the middle overs and said his side were 50 runs short in the third and final ODI which they lost by three wickets to Sri Lanka here Friday.

**Colombo, July 24:** India captain Shikhar Dhawan rued losing too many wickets in the middle overs and said his side were 50 runs short in the third and final ODI which they lost by three wickets to Sri Lanka here Friday. India, however, clinched the three-match series 2-1 as they had won the first two games.

"Things didn't go our way after rain break. We had a good start but lost too many wickets in the middle overs. Think we were 50 runs short," Dhawan said at the post-match presentation.

Despite the loss, Dhawan said he was happy the way his players fought till the end. "We were positive about defending the target but at the same time we knew we were 50 runs short. I am happy of the way the boys fought," he said. "I always analyse where I can improve and get better."

India played five debutants in the game, the only second such in-

stance in their ODI history. "I am glad that they made their debut because everyone has been in the quarantine for a long time," Dhawan said. "So we had that opportunity today having sealed the series."

Player of the Series Suryakumar Yadav said he has been doing the same thing for last two years. "I wanted to score big in the last two games but... The atmosphere in the camp is really positive. Really looking forwards to the T20I series."

Sri Lanka captain said his team was happy to win an ODI on home soil after nine long years. "Congratulations to India for the series win. It was a very good series throughout. Young guys showed a lot of maturity, both with bat and ball and that's what I expect from them," he said. "It's a big win for fans, they were waiting for years for this win; we have won against India at home after quite some time."