



NO WEDDING FOR NOW

Bengali actor Ritabhari Chakraborty takes to social media to refute speculations about her wedding

LEISURE P2



AID FOR SURVIVORS

Japanese PM Suga will grant medical sops to 84 Hiroshima residents who were exposed to radioactive 'black rain'

INTERNATIONAL P10



MIRABAI CHANU RETURNS

Tokyo Olympics silver-winning weightlifter Mirabai Chanu goes through chaotic reception upon arrival

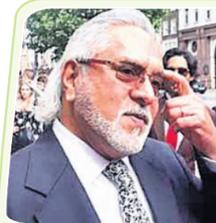
SPORTS P12

24-hour NCW helpline for women

NEW DELHI: The National Commission for Women will be starting a 24-hour helpline to provide immediate assistance to women facing domestic violence and sexual harassment. The new helpline, scheduled to be launched Tuesday, aims to facilitate an integrated range of services for women affected with violence under one roof such as help from police, psycho-social counselling and access to One Stop Centres, among others. The helpline has been developed in collaboration with Digital India Corp, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.



Photo for representation



Mallya declared bankrupt

LONDON: Businessman Vijay Mallya was declared bankrupt by the London High Court Monday, with a consortium of Indian banks led by the State Bank of India winning the case related to recovering debt from loans paid out to Mallya's now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines. The verdict opens the doors for Mallya's assets to be seized. Mallya said he would appeal against the HC order, but he was refused permission for the same. "As at 15.42 [UK time], I adjudicate Dr Mallya bankrupt," Chief Insolvency and Companies Court Judge Michael Briggs said in his ruling during a virtual hearing of the Chancery Division of the HC here.

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Watching Olympics is so informative... so many beautiful countries to visit once we default on bank loans!

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	CHANGE	PERCENTAGE
SENSEX	52852.27	↓	123.53
NIFTY	15824.50	↓	31.50
DOLLAR	74.69	↓	₹0.01
EURO	87.84	↑	₹0.25
GOLD	₹47,523	↓	₹11
SILVER	₹67,069	↑	₹45

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	31.8°C	33.4°C
MIN	26.6°C	26.5°C
Humidity	87%	69%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Light rain very likely

6 Assam cops die in clash with Mizo

AGENCIES

Guwahati/ Silchar, July 26: At least six personnel of the Assam Police were killed in firing by miscreants from neighbouring Mizoram on Monday as violence escalated along the inter-state border in Cachar district, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

A senior Assam Police officer, who is still inside the forest amid continuous firing from across the border, told PTI that at least 50 personnel, including Cachar Superintendent of Police Nimbalkar Vaibhav Chandrakant, were injured in firing and stone-pelting. "I am deeply pained to inform that six brave jawans of @assampolice have sacrificed their lives while defending constitutional boundary of our state at the Assam-Mizoram border. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families," Sarma tweeted.

The senior police officer said miscreants from across the border suddenly started firing when civil officials of both sides were holding a dialogue to sort out the differences. "I immediately cannot say how many people have been injured, but my guess is at least 50 personnel. Our SP was also in-

Shah asks CMs to ensure peace

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Monday spoke to the chief ministers of Assam and Mizoram over the ongoing border row between the two states and asked them to ensure peaceful resolution of the dispute, sources said. During his separate telephonic conversations with Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and his Mizoram counterpart Zoramthanga, Shah asked them to maintain peace along the inter-state border where tension prevails, the sources said. The home minister asked the chief ministers to resolve the border issue mutually. Both CMs have assured the home minister that the needful will be done.

jured in the firing and a bullet hit his leg," the officer said over the phone.

The IPS officer spoke to PTI while he was hiding inside a forest and firing could be heard in the background. "I along with the team are still sitting at the foothills. We were engaged in a dialogue with Mizoram's Kolasib SP Ralte and his additional SP Assam Police IGR,DC, SP all were there and talking to find a solution to the problem.

"We did not allow our public to go there, but their people were constantly throwing stones. Many were injured. They were also hitting us with marbles using catapults. As we were talking, suddenly they opened fire from the hilltop. They fired aiming at us while we were having the meeting," he said.

The officer said that the Assam Police team "somehow" managed to take position and start retaliatory firing. Silchar Medical College and Hospital (SMCH) Principal Babul Bezbaruwa told PTI that at least 50 police personnel were admitted with bullet injuries.

"There is a constant flow of injured personnel. As we are talking, another vehicle with a few more injured persons entered the hospital. All of them have bullet and pellet injuries. We have called in all doctors and formed different teams to treat the injured," he said.

A senior doctor, who wished not to be named, said the Cachar SP's condition was critical with one bullet hitting his thigh, besides he also got injured in the abdomen.

"He lost blood and we have infused him with one unit of blood. I guess more blood will be required," he added.



HAPPY DAYS BACK
As schools reopen for Classes X and XII following relaxations in Covid curbs, students of Saraswati Shishu Vidya Mandir at Tulaspur in Cuttack enter the institution premises in strict compliance with Covid norms, Monday

Yedi steps down as Karnataka CM

AGENCIES

Bangalore, July 26: After months of speculation over his exit, BS Yediyurappa Monday stepped down as the Chief Minister of Karnataka, coinciding with his government completing two years in office.

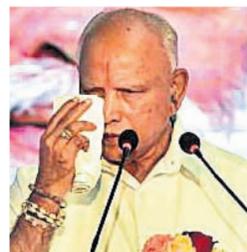
He termed these two years as "trial by fire", pointing out that he had to run the administration without cabinet in the initial days, followed by devastating floods and the challenge of Covid-19 management, among other issues.

The 78-year-old BJP veteran who submitted his resignation to Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot at the Raj Bhavan here, said he quit "voluntarily".

"I had decided to resign two months ago, as we complete two years of our government today. I thought it was apt to resign now and have submitted the resignation to the Governor, and he has accepted it," Yediyurappa told reporters emerging from the Raj Bhavan.

An official notification from the Governor's office said Gehlot has accepted Yediyurappa's resignation and has dissolved the Council of Ministers headed by him with immediate effect.

Thanking the party leaders and the people for giving him an opportunity to serve the state, he said, he had no "pressure" from the party's central leadership in Delhi, and has quit on his own



Yediyurappa addressing media after resignation in Bangalore, Monday.

"voluntarily", to make way for others to serve as the Chief Minister.

"I will not make any proposal on who should be the next Chief Minister, it is left for the high command to decide. Whomever they choose, I will cooperate and work with...I don't want to take any names," he said in response to a question.

Monday's developments now shift the focus to the BJP veteran's successor who could lead the party-led government for its remainder of term till 2023.

Among the names that have been doing the rounds as the probable successor to Yediyurappa are that of Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, BJP national General Secretary CT Ravi, its national organising secretary BL Santhosh and State Assembly Speaker Vishveshwar Hegde Kageri.

OHRC seeks suo motu info on Hyder death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: The Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) Monday took suo motu cognizance of the reported police 'encounter' that led to the death of dreaded gangster Sheikh Hyder, Friday.

A notice seeking reports from the police was sent to Additional Chief Secretary (Home department), Director General of Police (DGP), DG (Prisons) and twin city Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarshi Monday.

The eighties body has asked the senior police officials and the department heads vide its office order (No-1781 dated-26.07.2021) to submit their respective reports within four weeks. The next hearing in the case is scheduled to be held September 6, 2021.

Sheikh Hyder was killed in police firing while he was allegedly trying to flee police custody while being shifted from Choudwar Circle Jail in Cuttack to Baripada Central Jail in Mayurbhanj district July 24 (Friday).

Notice seeking info sent to Additional Chief Secretary (Home), DGP, DG (Prisons) and twin city Police Commissioner

The rights body asks the respondents to submit their respective reports within four weeks

CM TURNS ON 'SUJAL' IN PURI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: With an aim to ensure round the clock quality water supply, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday unveiled the 'Drink from Tap—Sujal' project in Puri town. With this, Puri became the first town in India to provide 'drink from tap' quality water 24X7.

"Today, a new chapter has been added to the development history of not only Puri, but the whole of Odisha. From today, all families in the Jagannath Dham Puri have got access to quality drinking water through taps," Patnaik said.

From now on, Puri people can drink water directly from the tap and there is no need to store or filter water and the facility is available round the clock, he said.

Stating that the land of Lord Jagannath is always ahead of other cities, the CM said, even Indian



metro cities also don't have the drink from tap facility. "Puri now joined the league of global cities like London, Singapore and New York, which is a matter of pride for all of us," he stated.

The 'Sujal' mission falls under the 5T governance mantra and is set to benefit the city's 2.5 lakh population and 2 crore tourists

who visit the holy city annually, the Chief Minister said.

The government has set up 400 drinking water fountains in various places of the city. This provision of safe drinking water will further help prevent the usage of plastic bottles, eliminating 400 metric tonnes of plastic waste, he pointed out.

The CM said his government has enhanced the budgetary allocation under drinking water supply by 20 times in past five years from ₹200 crore to ₹4,000 crore.

Women Self Help Groups have been designated as Jalsathis and they have a major role to play for its success, he added. Apart from Puri, the mission is being implemented in 16 other cities across Odisha covering its 40-lakh population, said housing and urban development minister Pratap Jena. Joining the event, Union housing and urban affairs secretary Durga Shankar Mishra said this project will be an example for other states.

The project is a step in the direction of the state government's vision for making Puri a world-class heritage city. Puri residents, tourists and pilgrims alike can now drink water from a tap, be it at home or outside.

From Army and BSF to RAW, spyware threat looms

DIDI FORMS PANEL TO PROBE PEGASUS

Upping the ante in her tense faceoff with the Centre over the Pegasus controversy, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday announced a two-member inquiry commission to go into the allegations of snooping on politicians, officials and journalists. The surprise development came shortly before the TMC supreme boarded a flight for New Delhi where she will hold parleys with opposition leaders to explore ways to cobble together an alliance of anti-BJP parties ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

MORE PG 9

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 26: Two serving colonels who challenged official policy, a retired intelligence officer who took RAW to court, and two serving BSF officers also figure in the Pegasus project database as persons of interest for an unidentified agency, The Wire reported.

KK Sharma, who was head of the Border Security Force (BSF) in 2018, his telephone numbers were added to a list of numbers containing several hundreds from India marked as probable targets for surveillance. These numbers are part of a leaked database containing 50,000 numbers worldwide that an international consortium

of media organisations has analysed as part of its Pegasus Project reporting initiative.

The leaked records include three phone numbers used by Sharma, two of which he still uses after his retirement in 2018, indicate he was very much a person of interest to the Indian client of the NSO Group during the time he was in service as the BSF chief.

It is not clear what the purpose of any potential surveillance might have been. Serving officers are not meant to be politically aligned, but if the Indian agency in question was interested in studying the extent to which Sharma actually sympathised with the RSS, whatever it learned about his leanings clearly



did not disqualify him from a key post-retirement assignment, The Wire reported. Soon after Sharma retired, the Election Commission (EC) appointed him special central police observer for the impending

Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal and Jharkhand. As per that order Sharma "would oversee the deployment and other security related issues in the said states." A day after Sharma's appointment, the

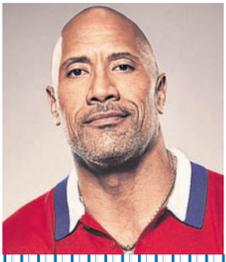
Trinamool Congress objected to his deployment in the state. Showing a photo of Sharma attending an RSS event in Kolkata in 2018 to local media, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that her party would write to the EC. The leaked database also shows that a BSF Inspector General of Police, Jagdish Maithani, was selected as a potential target for surveillance around the same time as Sharma.

A BSF commandant posted in Assam, Maithani appears to have been of considerable interest to an Indian client of NSO between 2017 and 2019. Maithani has been associated with the Ministry of Home Affairs' border management system (CIBMS) project.

The gangster had allegedly tried to escape the police custody after snatching a gun from one of the police personnel escorting him at Simulia in Balasore district. Hyder allegedly threatened to shoot the members of the escort party which forced the cops to retaliate. An injured Hyder was rushed to the hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. The deceased gangster's wife, however, has alleged foul play and said that the police have 'murdered' her husband. "If the police officials were chasing Hyder then how could he get shots on front?" questioned Hyder's wife.

On the other hand, police claimed that they had received reliable intelligence on Hyder again starting his criminal activities from Choudwar jail. Subsequently, police sought the court's permission to transfer him to Baripada jail. Accordingly, he was getting transferred to Baripada.

leisure



'ALL OF OUR DAUGHTERS ARE VERY EXCITED FOR JUNGLE CRUISE'

Hollywood star Dwayne Johnson has revealed that actress Emily Blunt and his daughters are very excited about the release of their upcoming film *Jungle Cruise*. Blunt also shared "I have all my chips bet on this movie that it will up my cool factor with my daughters finally. They are very excited."

OSCAR ISAAC IS MY NEW MAN-CRUSH: MOMOA

Aquaman star Jason Momoa has tagged actor Oscar Isaac as his new man crush. The 41-year-old actor also shared that he had a great time working on the upcoming film *Dune* because it had such a great cast, including his dream co-star Javier Bardem, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You may have a wide circle of casual friends, but today, these associations will prove to be beneficial. Your friends will help you chase away the blues. That way, you will also understand the deeper role of friendship, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
Hoist the sails and prepare to leave port. Your sugar-coated words will seal business deals with ease, predicts Ganesh. The activity and action may slow down as the day progresses. Resist the urge to get sentimental as it could lead to conflicts that will haunt you in the days to come, warns Ganesh.

GEMINI
You will ponder over religious and social issues and discuss and debate the issue with your family members and make your opinions known to them. This apart, you will probably discuss on issues like law, education, social obligations, and culture with those close to you, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You may have to give more priority to your job. You will swiftly finish the task entrusted to you with concentration. Your zeal for work will be high. You will give so much importance to friends that you will go out of way to meet them.

LEO
Be it a job or business, you will face severe competition today. You will need to be extra cautious today. You will need to be more serious about whatever it is that you are doing. You will become more influential in your social circle or amongst your colleagues as a result, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Today may prove to be a turning point for you. You will explore the opportunities to secure the money needed to make your future bright. Matters regarding relationships will be on the top of your priority list today. You may feel inclined towards spirituality, and Ganesh says as such you may try doing meditation or yoga.

LIBRA
Ganesh says your friend who is very influential will be lucky for you. You will be able to start a new joint venture business with out any obstacles. Your efficiency and hard work will be appreciated.

SCORPIO
You reveal your true avatar of being adventurous today, feels Ganesh. It's a favourable day for businessmen as they would make plans that would yield them huge profits. With your great communication and convincing power, you are going to impress your superiors today.

SAGITTARIUS
Unnecessary expenditure might clog your bill today, feels Ganesh. Organising and detailing will be a time-sink as you will spend hapless hours trying to discipline things. The vibrant evening will be a contrast to your hectic day as you kick back and relax while socialising.

CAPRICORN
You may feel utterly disappointed as all of your hard-work and planning will go in vain. You will have difference of opinion with others and at times these differences may turn into heated arguments, predicts Ganesh. Such disharmonious environment will add to your anxiety, but don't lose hope. There is light at the end of the tunnel and you'll surely get through these turbulent times.

AQUARIUS
You have been turning a blind eye towards the pending work you are loaded with. But, today you will take up the challenge of getting done with the pile of work. You may clean your desk at work or room, make payments and purchases, and clear the mess. It will bring clarity to your life. Now it's time to bring clarity to your mind as well, suggests Ganesh.

PISCES
It is important to plan your finances in life, and you will devote your energies towards the same today. You might turn stingy with your money all of a sudden. An unexpected illness in the family will leave you worried. But it is likely to be a crisis which will blow over soon. Do not let it stress you out, says Ganesh.

Saw a lot more successful films in South: Tamannaah

NEW DELHI: Actress Tamannaah Bhatia says she has seen a lot more successful films in the South. Tamannaah is one of the most prominent names in the South film industry and has even featured in Hindi such as *Himmatwala*, *Entertainment*, *Humshakals* and *Tuak Tuak Tutiya*. Asked between south or Hindi films which one is the most difficult to headline, Tamannaah said: "I saw a lot more successful films in the south and it just is very simple. The industries work in exactly the same fashion. There is no difference in the work. At the end, wherever you get success that place accepts you a lot more right?"

The 31-year-old actress, who has starred in Southern blockbusters including the *Baahubali* franchise, *Anbanavan*, *Asaradhavan*, *Adangadhavanace*, *K.G.F: Chapter 1* and *Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy* among many others, aspires to reach out to a global audience. "I feel I got that in and received that kind of love and fan following in the south and I aspire that the kind of work I am doing I will be able to reach out and continue to reach out to a more pan-India and hopefully global audience," said the *Baahubali* actress. IANS



Ritabhari refutes wedding rumours

KOLKATA: Bengali film actress Ritabhari Chakraborty took to social media Monday to refute speculation about her wedding bells ringing. Ritabhari issued a statement on Instagram saying she is not tying the knot anytime soon. "I am not getting married anytime soon. I just recovered from two surgeries as you all know so all am focusing is on my health and all the projects I have signed to work on. PS — No more articles or calls on this please. I am not going to talk about this," reads her

Instagram post Monday. The actress' social media post comes amid unconfirmed reports speculating about a possibility of her engagement later this year and her wedding next year. Specifications suggest that the actress might be tying the knot with her rumoured beau Tathagata Chatterjee, a psychologist by profession. On the work front, Ritabhari's film *Brahma Janen Gopon Kommott*, which released last year, received acclaim and the actress was lauded for her performance. IANS



KARGIL VIJAY DIWAS

Akshay remembers BRAVEHEARTS



MUMBAI: India observes Kargil Vijay Diwas on July 26th, every year in honour of the heroes who lost their lives at the line of duty in the 1999 Kargil War. Celebrities have taken to their social media handles to remember the brave hearts. Akshay Kumar took to his Twitter handle as he paid tribute to Kargil war heroes. The actor tweeted, "Remembering our bravehearts who fought valiantly and sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. My salute to our heroes, *aap hain toh hum hain #KargilVijayDiwas*." Abhishek Bachchan also thanked the 'real heroes' for keeping the country safe. "A day to remember the gallant efforts and sacrifices of the real heroes of the Kargil War: Thank you for shielding us, protecting us, and keeping us safe. Huge respect for all the Kargil warriors," the actor, who played Kargil hero Captain Vikram Batra in JP Dutta's *LOC: Kargil*, he wrote. On the work front, Akshay is currently working on his film *Raksha Bandhan*, which also stars Bhumi Pednekar. He is also a part of *Sooryavanshi*, *Prithviraj*, *Ram Setu* and *Bachchan Pandey* in the pipeline. He is also a part of *Bell Bottom*, which is a spy thriller directed by Ranjit Tewari and stars Huma Qureshi, Lara Dutta and Vani Kapoor. Akshay will also star in *Atrangi Re* with Sara Ali Khan and Dhanush. AGENCIES

Int'l content will lure movie goers back, says Inox

The company plans to recognise vaccinated customers by offering them freebies and special offers

MUMBAI: Pent-up demand along with new international content will lure movie goers back to multiplexes in India, says industry major Inox Leisure. Notably, unlike the last unlock exercise the industry this time will have plenty to offer including the likes of *F9 The Fast Saga*, *The Conjuring 3*, *The Quiet Place 2*, *Space Jam: A New Legacy*, *Black Widow*, *1921*, *Peter Rabbit 2* and *Cruella*. According to Inox Leisure's Chief Executive Officer Alok Tandon, currently, a prevalent pent up demand can be witnessed in the markets around the world. "As compared to the resumption of operations after the first wave, when we had to wait longer for fresh new content, we will have ample fresh content from Hollywood available with us soon after reopening." "This enticing lineup is expected to play a critical role in our reopening journey." Globally, estimates claim that more than 90 per cent of the cinema markets are now operational. In India, the move to reopen cinemas depends solely on state to state regulations. But, easing of Covid restrictions and accelerated vaccination drive are expected to allow for a restart soon. Accordingly, Inox plans to start reopening some cinemas from July 30th. "We are looking at resuming

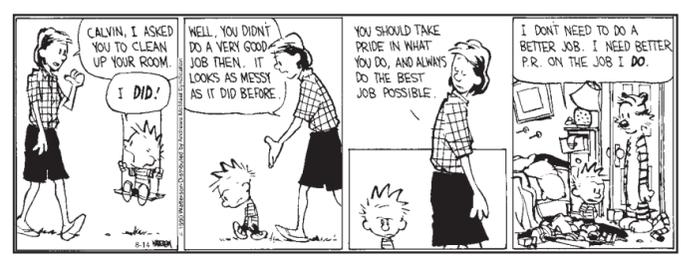


country," says an Inox official. At present, the movie showcase industry is not allowed to open multiplexes in key states of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Besides, the company has adopted the bio-safe philosophy with 100 per cent employee vaccinations being complete. "100 per cent of our eligible staff across the country has received the first dose of vaccination. "We earnestly hope that the entire country's eligible population gets vaccinated at the earliest. Widespread vaccination bodes well for the entire country and its future state of economy," added the official. Furthermore, the company plans to recognise vaccinated customers by offering them freebies and special offers. "The guests will have to show their first dose certificate at the counter and make the most of this gesture," he further said. IANS

PEANUTS



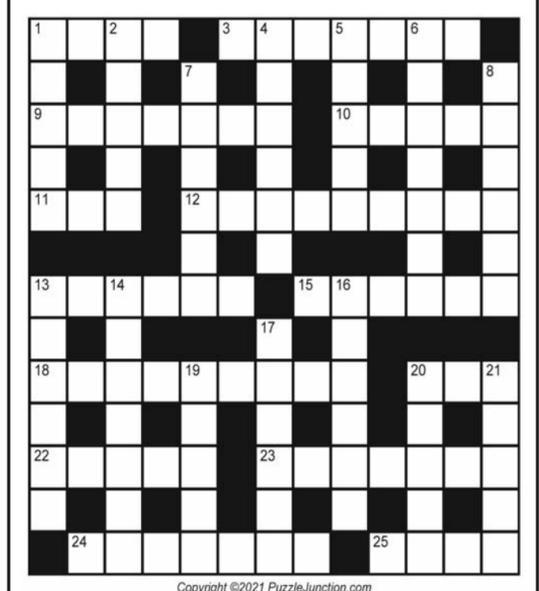
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



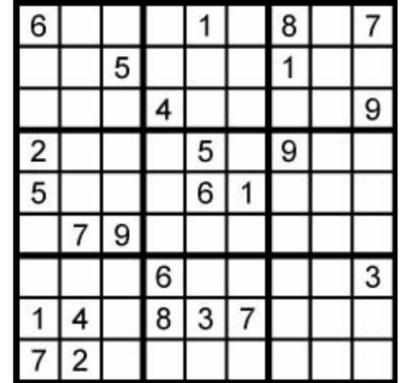
FUN post CROSSWORD



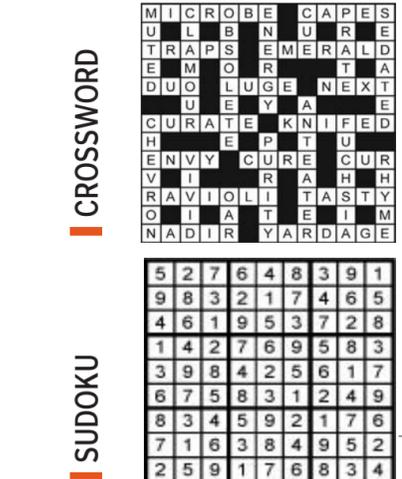
- Copyright ©2021 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Sugar unit
 - 3 Nutty
 - 9 Rust
 - 10 Big cat
 - 11 Jabber
 - 12 Wise
 - 13 Renounce
 - 15 Like a unicorn
 - 18 Marvelous
 - 20 Mountain pass
 - 22 Settee
- Down**
- 23 Powwow
 - 24 Disentangle
 - 25 Poker installment
 - 1 Sidekick
 - 2 Dirigible
 - 4 Dig up
 - 5 Kind of nerve
 - 6 Like some toenails
- 7 Carpenter's tool**
- 8 Deleted**
- 13 Mar**
- 14 Capital of Puerto Rico (3,4)**
- 16 Mystical**
- 17 Daze**
- 19 Pallid**
- 20 "That's a ___!"**
- 21 Handbag**

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.



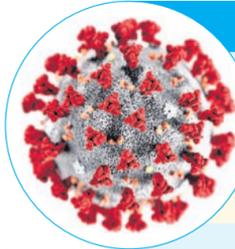
SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Lokanath temple in Puri wears a deserted look on the first Monday of Shraavan as state government has banned 'Bol Bam Yatra' of Shiva devotees for the second consecutive year due to pandemic



	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	19,50,23,473	17,69,27,232	41,79,014
India	3,14,11,262	3,05,79,106	4,20,967
Odisha	9,69,185	9,45,177	5,574

Babus' reluctance mars Niramaya

CAG REPORT BLAMED UNDERUTILISATION OF 'E-NIRAMAYA' APPLICATION FOR DELAY IN SUPPLY OF DRUGS AND MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Even though the Health department has allocated ₹1.42 crore for development of 'e-Niramaya' application, the reluctance of the officials to use it has put the Niramaya scheme on the back burner. The application was developed for better management of the health scheme which ensures free as well as affordable essential medicines in hospitals.

The Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMCL) is the nodal agency for procurement of drugs, equipment and other health related infrastructure.

The application was envisioned to automate supply chain management of medical consumables. The functionalities include management of the procurement, distribution and quality control of the drugs. Its use began April 1, 2017.

Much of the delay in the supply of essentials was attributed to the OSMCL officials preferring manual methods to e-Niramaya. The of-



APPs were prepared manually after consolidating the annual requirement/indents received from field functionaries outside the e-Niramaya application

Thus, the e-Niramaya application was not utilised optimally and could not be used to mitigate the delays in finalisation of the APP, says the CAG report

ficials allegedly continued to delay in putting forth the Annual Procurement Plan (APP) before the concerned committees. OSMCL was mandated to submit their APP by December 15 but it delayed the submission by five to seven months.

The report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India tabled in the last Budget session of Odisha Assembly revealed the massive under-utilisation of 'e-Niramaya'. "The state/district-wise consolidated annual demand

was not forecast/ generated through the e-Niramaya application, despite having a provision for the same in the system. Instead, APPs were prepared manually after consolidating the annual requirement/indents received from field functionaries outside the e-Niramaya application. Thus, the e-Niramaya application was not utilised optimally and could not be used to mitigate the delays in finalisation of the APP," read the CAG report released in April 2021.

The report, responsible for auditing the Niramaya scheme management by OSMCL, also cited the response from the Health department which had claimed in August 2020 that irrational indents or indents in improper format, received from concerned officers, contributed to the delay in the approval of APP.

"The fact, however, remained that these delays impacted the supply of essential drugs and equipment to health institutions. Further, non-utilisation of the e-Niramaya application for generating accurate indents also contributed to delays in preparation and approval of APP," the CAG report said.

OSMCL was also accused of showing undue favours to suppliers and failing in maintaining minimum stocks of medicines. CAG accused OSMCL of not abiding by the prescribed norms.

"Monitoring of inventory management through e-Niramaya software application was ineffective leading to shortage of drugs in health institutions and expiry of drugs as well. Government was unsuccessful in providing an unbroken supply of essential drugs to the patients in public health institutions as per its own prescribed Essential Drug List," the CAG report said.

OSMCL authorities, however, were not available for the queries when contacted over phone.

Cong targets Modi, Shah over Pegasus snooping



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Several members of the state unit of the Congress party staged a demonstration here Monday condemning the snooping on several people including political leaders from opposition parties.

Party members, led by state Congress president Niranjan Patnaik, staged an agitation at Master Canteen Square here and burnt effigies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.

Terming it as an 'illegal' and 'unconstitutional' act, Niranjan alleged that the BJP government

has done the phone tapping by using Pegasus spyware because the concerned agency only deals with governments.

The Pegasus spyware was used by the Centre to hack the cell-phones of several key political leaders, human right activists, lawyers and journalists among others, Niranjan said.

Several media reports claim that Pegasus spyware, created by NSO Group of Israel, was used in India to target the phones of several prominent journalists, politicians and other personalities. "Democracy is being trampled and the fundamental rights of citizens are being suppressed," said a protesting Congress worker.

1,450 govt schools have internet facility: Pradhan

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, July 26: As many as 1,450 government schools in Odisha have internet connection through broadband services, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan informed the Lok Sabha.

Responding to a written question regarding internet connectivity in government-run schools across the country, the Union Minister informed the Lower House that under the BharatNet programme, the CSC e-Governance Services Ltd, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) set up by the Ministry of Electronics & IT, has been assigned the task of providing Fibre To The Home (FTTH) connectivity to government institutions including schools. Pradhan said that 1,19,581 government schools have been con-

nected with internet across the country.

"This project is for providing internet connection to government schools in respective gram panchayats (GPs). The School Education departments of the respective state governments have appointed district-wise nodal officers for effective implementation of the project," the Union Minister said.

He said that out of the targeted 1,20,392 gram panchayats in this phase, a total of 1,18,649 have been made service ready.

"As part of the BharatNet project, the last mile connectivity, through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, internet services are to be provided in a phased manner in the gram panchayats in the country," Pradhan said.

ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCT



A woman puts up terracotta utensils for sale in Nayapalli area of Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

CM pays homage to Kargil martyrs

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday joined the nation in paying tributes to the soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice in the Kargil war.

The 21st anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas is being celebrated to commemorate the victory of Operation Vijay.

The day marks India's victory over Pakistan in the 1999 Kargil War.

Taking to twitter, Patnaik said, "Tributes to the bravehearts who fought with exemplary valour in the Kargil War to protect the sovereignty of our great nation. On this Kargil Vijay Diwas, join the nation to offer homage to the martyrs for their supreme sacrifice & unparalleled love for the motherland."

Violent clash in broad daylight rocks City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Rampant criminal activities in the Capital city have exposed the tall claims of the Commissionerate Police about the maintenance of law and order, if a violent group clash in broad daylight here Monday is any indication.

Two groups wielding sharp weapons and iron rods Monday clashed at busy Master Canteen Square here in broad daylight. Past enmity is stated to be the reason behind the incident.

According to sources, the prime accused, Raja Behera, who has a tea stall in Master Canteen area had engaged in a heated argument with some youths of Masjid Colony that later turned violent around eight days ago. Sources claimed that the



miscreants from Masjid Colony brutally assaulted Behera for allegedly overpricing some paan masala products.

Behera had reportedly lodged a complaint with Capital police in this regard. Police had subsequently left the accused persons by serving notice under Section 41(a) of the CrPC last week.

However, Behera, his brother and other associates harboured a grudge against the rival group over the issue. Both the groups had reportedly entered into a heated argument over the issue Sunday night too.

Monday afternoon, Sk Sayeed along with a few of his friends attacked Behera and his faction at

Master Canteen. Four persons including Sayeed sustained severe injuries in the clash.

On being informed, police officials from Kharavel Nagar and Capital police reached the spot. Sayeed and other injured persons were later rushed to the Capital hospital.

The injured persons are currently undergoing treatment at a private medical college and hospital here.

On the other hand, speaking to media persons, relatives of Sayeed accused Behera of selling drugs. Behera allegedly attacked Sayeed as they were opposing him and his brothers.

Police detained prime accused Behera at Capital police station till the last report came in.

No offline matric exam for differently-abled: OHRC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: The Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) Monday directed the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) not to conduct the offline High School Certificate (HSC) examination for 139 differently-abled students of nine special schools in the state.

The commission's direction came in response to a petition filed by rights activist Manoj Jena over non-declaration of results of 139 differently-abled students.

The Commission stated that in his application, Jena stated that the BSE, without waiting for the final orders of this Commission in the matter, had decided to conduct the High School Certificate examination of the differently-abled students in offline mode from July 30.

The direction came in response to a petition filed by rights activist Manoj Jena over non-declaration of results of 139 differently-abled students

Jena contended that such a decision of the BSE is 'not only arbitrary but also it is intended to put the differently-abled students in utter difficulty during such Covid-19 pandemic situation.'

Taking serious note of the matter, the rights body said it does not find any justification on part of the BSE for such a decision. The OHRC expressed its surprise that

when the result of lakhs of students of general schools have been published without any examination on the basis of marks secured in Class IX and Class X, why the Board is insisting on offline mode examination for the differently-abled students.

In its interim order, the Commission said, "The Board of Secondary Education, Odisha, Cuttack is hereby called up not to proceed with the offline examination of the differently-abled students stated to be commenced from 30.07.2021 till the next date of hearing. It is made clear that if anything untoward happens in the matter affecting the interest of the differently-abled students it shall be at the sole risk of BSE Odisha and the officer concerned."

The next hearing has been scheduled for August 6.

Collectors asked to inform demise of MPs in 24 hours

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: The state government has directed all the district Collectors to submit a report within 24 hours, in case of demise of any sitting Member of Parliament (MP).

Following instruction from the Parliament Secretariat, State Parliamentary Affairs secretary G Mathi Vathanan has recently written a letter to all the Collectors in this regard.

"It is instructed to furnish the confirmatory information regarding demise of sitting/former Members of Parliament, Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha with biological sketch i.e. date and place of demise & name address of next of kin of the deceased to the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha Secretariat adhering to the timelines," the secretary said in his letter.

In case of the demise of a sitting MP, the information should be sub-

mitted within a period of 24 hours while such reports can be given within seven days in case of former MPs, he said.

This instruction was given to make obituary references on the passing away of sitting/former MPs at the first available opportunity.

A few days ago, Lok Sabha secretary general Utpal Kumar Singh had written a letter to state Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra saying, "It has been noticed that in some cases, the information of demise of sitting/former MP is received late in Lok Sabha, leading to delay in making obituary reference in the House." The secretary general had asked Mahapatra to submit such information on time.

As per practice, the confirmation of the death of a sitting/former MP is obtained from the district authorities through the Chief Secretary of the state before an obituary reference to the demise of sitting/former MP is made in the House.

Emotional day as offline classes resume

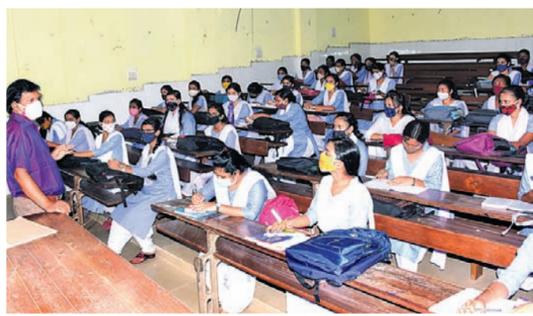
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: It was an emotional day for the Classes X and XII students who, after long wait, met their friends at the schools as physical classes resumed Monday in compliance with Covid-19 protocols across the state.

The students arrived at the schools for offline classes that are scheduled to be held from 10am to 1:30pm, as per Covid SOP. As per the guidelines, the school premises were sanitised. Classrooms, furniture, libraries, laboratories and storage places of common use were reportedly sanitised by the authorities.

This apart, a separate isolation room has been created in each of the school and kept ready if any student or staffer develops Covid symptoms.

At the entrances of the schools, the students sanitised their hands and their temperature was recorded through thermo scanners. After that, students presented the consent



Plus II students of Rama Devi college attend physical classes

OP PHOTO

letter of the parents to the school authorities.

Many schools also offered chocolates and sweets to the students for coming to school after so many days. Many students were also seen taking selfies with friends after the much-awaited reunion.

Swetalina Mohanty, a student of BJEM School, said that she was very happy to come to school after

so many days and that the school had taken all the measures for their safety.

Likewise, Sanjukta Patnaik, a Plus II student of Rama Devi College, said, "Online classes are not helping us greatly as we are not able to ask any questions to the teachers properly but now we can clear our doubts openly."

Principal of SAI international

Class X, XII students reunite

As per Covid-19 guidelines, the school premises were sanitised before arrival of students, teachers and other staffers

Classrooms, furniture, libraries, laboratories and storage places of common use were reportedly sanitised by the authorities

A separate isolation room has been created in each of the schools and kept ready if any student or staffer develops Covid symptoms

School Nilakantha Panigrahi said, "All the arrangements have been put in place for the safety of the students. We have separate isolation room with multiple beds in case of

emergency. Not more than 20 students are allowed in every classroom. All the teachers of the school have been vaccinated with at least the first dose."

Earlier, School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash had said, "We had announced the reopening of schools and all the required arrangements have been completed. We hope the turnout of students will be good in schools."

However, it is not mandatory for all students to attend the classes in person. "We have given them an option to come to school only with the consent of their parents," said School and Mass Education Secretary Satyabrata Sahu.

Meanwhile, the schools will continue with online teaching for all classes, including Classes X and XII, Sahu said.

After analyzing the situation, the state government will take steps to resume physical teaching for Classes IX and XI students from August 16 and September 15, respectively.

HIGH COURT FOUNDATION DAY



Orissa High Court Chief Justice (CJ) S Muralidhar pays floral tributes to Justice Bira Kishore Ray, the court's first CJ, on the foundation day of the state's apex court in Cuttack, Monday

Kolkata-based ponzi firm MD held for fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the state Crime Branch has arrested the top executive of a company from Kolkata in connection with a chit fund fraud case in Balasore, an official said Monday.

According to the EOW, Prapat Kumar Biswal, the chairman-cum-managing director of M/s Mass Infra Realty Limited and president of Human Welfare Credit and Thrift Co-operative Society Limited, has been arrested from New Garia, a posh location in Kolkata, Saturday.

The arrest was made on the basis of a case registered with the agency July 25, 2021 under Sections 406, 420, 467, 468, 471 and 120B of IPC and Section 6 of the Odisha Protection of Interests of Depositors (in Financial Establishments) Act, 2011.

"Biswal was produced before the South 24 Parganas Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate in Kolkata Saturday. Later, on the strength of a transit remand is-



sued by the court, he was brought and produced before a court in Balasore," said an EOW official, pointing out that Biswal has been sent to judicial custody after his bail plea was nixed by the Balasore court.

The fraud came to light after Sukadev Hota of Soro in Balasore approached the probing agency in this regard. Hota alleged that Biswal, along with six top executives of the firm, had collected crores of rupees from various depositors by illegally issuing redeemable debentures in his company name. Hota had personally bought debentures with face value of ₹100 to tune of

The fraud came to light after Sukadev Hota of Soro in Balasore approached the probing agency in this regard

Hota had bought debentures with face value of ₹100 to tune of over ₹50,000 in 2012

over ₹50,000 in 2012.

The company was not authorised by Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) or any other related government agency to collect deposits by issuing share or debentures.

However, the accused persons have duped several investors of

crores on the pretext of providing high returns on the deposits through their offices at different places in Bhadrak, Kendrapara and Balasore.

"It was found that M/s Mass Infra Realty Limited is registered with ROC in Kolkata during September 2010 under the Companies Act, 1956 having its registered office under Barasat police station at 24 Parganas in West Bengal. Biswal was its chairman-cum-managing director and six others were its directors. However, in 2012, it changed its name to Human Welfare Credit and Thrift Co-operative Society Limited registered under Multistate Co-operative Societies Act, 2012 having its registered office in Laxmi Nagar, New Delhi and Biswal was its president," the agency said about the investigation.

The company had lured the general public with false promises of returning high rate of interest on deposits under different schemes of the company and unauthorisedly collected huge sum of money from several investors and absconded from the locality after closing their offices, the EOW said in a statement.

'Encourage students for enrolling in ITIs'

Six among the top 100 ITIs of India are from Odisha as per the list released by Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Skill Development and Technical Education department Monday started a publicity campaign process for admission at ITI and Polytechnic institutes of the state for the 2021-22 academic session.

Minister Premananda Nayak said on the occasion that six ITIs of the state were among the best 100 ITIs in the country, as per the list released by Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. ITI Berhampur stood first in the state having All India Rank 12, followed by Government ITI Hinjilicut (21), ITI

Jajpur (31), ITI Cuttack (35), ITI Jharsuguda (47) and ITI Puri (96)."

"This puts the state ITIs among the top institutes of the country, focusing on building a robust skill ecosystem in Odisha by strengthening technical and vocational education," said Nayak.

He also informed that for this academic session, as many as 18,258 students have applied so far for different ITIs and other institutes of the state. The department Principal Secretary Hemanta Sharma asked the principals of ITIs and private engineering colleges to prepare plan for encouraging more students towards this course.

Covid situation improves as TPR drops to 2.19 per cent

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 26: The Covid-19 situation in Odisha has 'significantly' improved over the past one month as 1,637 new cases were recorded Monday, down from 3,554 exactly a month ago, a Health department official said.

The caseload in the coastal state has risen to 9,69,185, he said.

Sixty-two fresh fatalities pushed the toll to 5,574, the official said, adding that the list of casualties issued Monday does not reflect deaths occurring on any particular day.

"It gives details of past deaths for which the death audit process has been duly completed and the cause of death has been identified as due to Covid-19," the Health and Family Welfare department said on Twitter. Justifying his claim of "significant improvement in the situation", the official said the daily test positivity rate (TPR) in the state has dropped to 2.19 per cent from 5.17 per cent June 26.

Of the 1,637 new positive cases, 949 were recorded in quarantine centres and the rest detected during contact tracing.

Khurda district of which the state capital Bhubaneswar is a part reported 350 new cases, followed by Cuttack at 250 and Angul at 100. Gajapati is the only district that did not record any fresh case.

Of the 62 fatalities, 42 were reg-



Sixty-two fresh fatalities pushed the toll to 5,574, the Health official said, adding that the list of casualties issued Monday does not reflect deaths occurring on any particular day

Khurda district of which the state capital Bhubaneswar is a part reported 350 new cases, followed by Cuttack at 250 and Angul at 100. Gajapati is the only district that did not record any fresh case

istered in Khurda district, 10 in Sundargarh, four in Keonjhar and two in Jajpur. One patient each succumbed to

the infection in Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur, Kandhamal and Puri. Odisha currently has 18,381 active cases, while as many as 9,45,177 patients, including 2,108 Sunday, have recovered from the highly infectious disease.

The cumulative positivity rate in the state stands at 6.19 per cent.

As many as 74,553 tests were conducted Sunday, taking the total number of samples examined so far to more than 1.56 crore.

According to the Health department, as many as 1,52,82,523 doses of Covid-19 vaccines have been administered in the state, including 6,784 Sunday.

SK Palita becomes acting VC of CUO

Palita has taught Zoology in two reputed autonomous colleges of Odisha - Kendrapara Autonomous College and Nayagarh Autonomous College - for a period of over 29 years

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Koraput, July 26: A noted academician and scientist, Sharat Kumar Palita took charge Monday as the acting Vice-Chancellor of the Central University of Odisha, Koraput as per the office order issued by the registrar.

"Consequent upon the appointment of Prof. Kshiti Bhusan Das as the Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Jharkhand, Palita shall hold the charge and perform the duties of the Vice-Chancellor as per the rules/directions of MoE & UGC until a new Vice-Chancellor assumes office or the existing Vice-Chancellor resumes the duties of his office, as the case may be," the order said.

While assuming the office, Palita said, "This is hard time for the University and only through our collaborative effort the University can march ahead." He solicited all



round support from the all the stakeholders.

Presently, Palita is the senior most professor, and Dean of School of Biodiversity and Conservation of Natural Resources (BCNR). This is the second time he has assumed the charges of Vice-Chancellor of the University. When former Vice-Chancellor Sachidananda Mohanty had relinquished February 2019, Palita was appointed as the in-charge Vice-Chancellor till December 2020.

Palita has a teaching career spanning 38 yrs. He has taught Zoology in two reputed autonomous colleges of Odisha i.e. Kendrapara Autonomous College and Nayagarh Autonomous College over a period of 29 years. For the last eight years he has been teaching biodiversity in Central University of Odisha.

UU brings booklet on disaster management

BHUBANESWAR: Utkal University, in collaboration with Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) & Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF), released an illustrative booklet on state-specific disasters. The state government had declared lightning, whirlwind, tornado, heavy rain, sunstroke, boat accident, drowning, and snakebite as State Specific Disasters April 1, 2015. The booklet is developed by the University under the RUSA 2.0 project. "As a part of Utkal University's community linkage and rural outreach programme, the university plans to impart water safety and safe rescue skills to the students of the elementary stage with the help of OSDMA and ODRAF," said Sabita Acharya, Vice-Chancellor of Utkal University.

Faculty devpt program launched at IIT-Bhub



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: The All India Council for Technical Education Training and Learning (AICTE ATAL) inaugurated a faculty development programme on 'Effective Team Work' at the School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Management (SHSSM) of IIT Bhubaneswar, Monday.

The AICTE ATAL Academy offers continuous learning opportunities to faculty members of AICTE approved institutions from all over the country. The initiative is to ensure skill improvisation for AICTE affiliated teachers in these challenging pandemic times.

Corporate Vice President and Managing Director of Cadence Design Systems India, Jaswinder S Ahuja graced the event as the chief guest. Anil Sahasrabudhe, chairman, AICTE and guest of honour Mamta Rani Agarwal, Adviser-I, ATAL Academy had joined the virtual inauguration.

"Through our very effective programme, IIT Bhubaneswar has always been leading the path in providing continuing education opportunities to engineers on duty and very importantly the teachers. We complement AICTE for the very effective ATAL FDP initiative and we are glad to participate in the endeavour," said RV Raja Kumar, Director of IIT Bhubaneswar.

LIVELIHOOD AT STAKE



Auto-rickshaw owners under the aegis of 'Smart City Online Auto Group' stage a demonstration near PMG Square in Bhubaneswar, Monday, seeking the state government's intervention into the 'harassment' meted out to them by private finance agencies during the pandemic

e-Mulakat at Jharpada, Choudwar jails

Bhubaneswar/Cuttack: Prisoners can now meet their relatives through virtual mode from their home. The Prisons Directorate Monday launched the e-Mulakat system at Jharpada Special Jail and Choudwar Circle Jail on a pilot basis. The Prisons Directorate informed that they are planning to implement the system at all the district and circle jails by August 15. Officers at the jails have been imparted with special training in this regard. On Monday, six persons met their dear ones virtually at Jharpada Special Jail.

Priyanka murder: Statement recorded

Bhubaneswar: The Airfield police Monday recorded the statement of a witness in Priyanka Priyadarshini murder case. The statement was recorded under Section 164 of CrPc in the presence of Magistrate. Police had arrested the accused Jagannath Pradhan after he was discharged from the City AIIMS July 21. Pradhan had confessed to have murdered Priyanka by slitting her throat at her residence in Bhimtangi here July 5. Pradhan had tried to end his own life too by consuming poison.

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POLITICAL STIR



Youth Congress workers trying to break into the office of the Revenue Divisional Commissioner at Sambalpur during an agitation over problems faced by farmers, hike in fuel prices and other essentials, Monday

No canal, farmers forced to pay water cess

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, July 26: Resentment prevails among the villagers of Kendrapara and Pattamundai tehsils as the revenue department has levied water cess on the farmers in the area despite the fact that there is no canal there, a report said.

According to reports, Dobandha and Sobala villages in Kendrapara tehsil as well as Chandanpur, Nilakanthapur, Tamalasan, Arua, Keshpur in Pattamundai tehsil do not have a canal to irrigate the agricultural lands of the local farmers.

However, the Revenue department has imposed water cess on the farmers and is asking for payment. This has sparked resentment among the villagers who earn their livelihood from agricultural activities. The villagers have opposed the arbitrary imposition of water cess and demanded its immediate withdrawal. The villagers have also de-



FILE PHOTO

manded irrigation facilities for their farmlands by digging up a canal and abolition of water cess. Villagers Ranjan Kumar Sahu, Pareswar Samal, Chhatish Kumar Parida and Prafulla Kumar Parida have warned of an agitation by farmers in coming days if the authorities did not begin a proper investigation into the irregularities and took action against those responsible for im-

posing the water cess.

They villagers alleged that the Revenue department has imposed water cess on them since long despite absence of a canal in the area. They opposed such an arbitrary move of the Revenue department and have already lodged a complaint in this connection.

Meanwhile, taking note of the complaint, the district Collector had directed for a probe (letter No-33284, dated July 22, 1997) into the charges. In another letter (No. 9354, dated August 4, 1997), the then Collector again directed the Pattamundai tehsildar to conduct a probe and submit a report to him. Later, the villagers filed a petition in the consumer forum in 1998 as the matter was not properly investigated.

The consumer forum heard the matter and directed the tehsildar not to collect water cess from the villagers till irrigation facilities are made available to the farmlands.

However, the tehsil officials refused to abide by the order and went on collecting water cess from the villagers. Since then, the villagers have been paying water cess to the Revenue officials despite the absence of a canal in the area.

The villagers alleged that they are being unnecessarily harassed by the Revenue and tehsil officials on the pretext of water cess. Every time the villagers visit the tehsil office to get any work done, for instance to collect necessary certificates for their children's higher education, the tehsil officials demand that they clear their pending water cess payments.

When contacted, Sub-Collector Niranjan Behera said that the allegations would be probed into. The villagers will be provided with necessary certificates for the higher education of their children after completion of the probe. Moreover, steps will be taken to provide irrigation facilities to the farmlands.

Tractor driver gangs up with employer, molests ex-wife

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sajanagad, July 26: In a shocking incident, a man ganged up with his employer and molested his ex-wife at Chasakhanda village under Nilagiri police limits in Balasore district, a report said Monday.

The accused, along with his employer, also trimmed her hair after molesting her, the report said. The incident has sparked shockwaves in the area.

According to reports, the 27-year-old victim, a native of Chasakhanda village, married Dillip Singh, 30, a tractor driver by profession of Baigadia village. Later, she became a mother of two sons. However, their relationship did not last long as the two filed for divorce before the notary. The woman, after being separated from her husband, was staying with her parents at her native village.

The incident took place when the woman was returning home after shopping at a market near her na-

tive village, at 8 pm Saturday. The woman's former husband and his employer waylaid her on road and molested her. The two after molesting her trimmed her hair.

The incident took place when the woman was returning home after shopping at a market near her native village

She raised the matter before village elders first and then reported it to the local police. According to reports, the matter was settled for ₹5,000 first, but the man refused to pay the penalty.

Later, the woman turned up at the police station Monday and lodged a complaint against her former husband demanding compensation for her and two children. The husband has reportedly admitted to have trimmed the hair of his former wife, sources said.

Another note by Bidyabharati surfaces

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, July 26: Another hand-written note by the deceased Paralakhemundi Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) Soumya Ranjan Mohapatra's wife Bidyabharati has brought to the fore the strained relationship between the two.

The note was reportedly written by Bidyabharati when she was at the Livestock Inspector Training Centre (LITC) in Bolangir. This is the third note and it has added another facet to the case. It was found Sunday from Soumya's official quarters in this town.

"I insulted myself by speaking about me. He (Soumya Ranjan) meets me only superficially and is always plotting to hurt me. He gets angry without any reason. I am very happy

that you have so much of jealousy, but one day God will laugh at you for your jealousy," read the note written by Bidyabharati.

"It is good that you have the support of the majority today, but I will have mine one day. I hate everyone. There is nobody for me. I hate

ACF DEATH

him. There is a lot to say but I will say later," the note read. Bidyabharati also wrote the name of 'Akshay', in the note, but later scribbled over it.

The deceased ACF's father demanded that the police should immediately arrest Bidyabharati. Meanwhile, Mohapatra's post-mortem report was handed over to his family Monday. According to the autopsy report, Mohapatra died after sustaining 95 per cent burns. His autopsy was conducted at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack.

IRREGULARITIES IN PMAY

Rich grab housing units as genuine beneficiaries suffer



A press meet underway over the PMAY irregularities

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhograi/Khaira, July 26: Massive irregularities in the implementation of rural housing scheme PMAY have been alleged in Bhograi block of Balasore district. The implementation of the project is far from its objectives as rich people are getting housing units while the poor fail to get the benefits, reports said.

Precisely speaking, people eligible for the housing units under the scheme have been left out of it. This has enraged people of Nimatpur panchayat and they have warned of an agitation over the irregularities.

They alleged that many rich people in the village have managed to grab housing units under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin) with help of some people's representatives and block officials.

They stated that in 2021, the panchayat had sent a list to the block administration with the names of 227 beneficiaries. While the block ad-

Fact File

Villagers alleged that many rich people in the village have managed to grab housing units under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin) with help of some people's representatives and block officials

This happened even as many poor people are living in broken thatched houses in the panchayat. In addition, the last cyclone that hit the state had flattened many houses

Sarpanch Dharitri Rana, former sarpanch Bhagwan Rana and some social activists alleged that the block officials are preparing faulty lists of beneficiaries on the basis of their party lines, while genuine beneficiaries have been ignored

ministration displayed a list of 97 people, locals alleged that 20 people included in the list of beneficiaries were in fact not eligible to get PMAY houses.

This happened even as many poor

people are living in broken thatched houses in the panchayat. In addition, the last cyclone that hit the state had flattened many houses.

Sarpanch Dharitri Rana, former sarpanch Bhagwan Rana and some social activists alleged that the block officials are preparing faulty lists of beneficiaries on the basis of their party lines, while genuine beneficiaries have been ignored.

They demanded an investigation into such irregularities and houses for the genuine beneficiaries. Many block-level officials are providing concrete houses to ineligible for their vested interest, they alleged.

The villagers pointed out that massive irregularities in the implementation of rural housing schemes have been committed at both the panchayat and block levels. Some local leaders are encouraging the anomalies to appease their supporters, they alleged.

In Khaira, scores of poor and landless people in the SC and ST categories have been deprived of the benefits of the housing scheme as they have not been provided land pattas.

Over a hundred people from five villages in Gadapokhari panchayat have drawn attention of the Khaira tehsildar towards the issue. Tehsildar Mahendra Prasad Behera assured the people that necessary steps will be taken in this direction.

These people have been residing on forest land for over 30 years at Gadapokhari. Guapal, Gagua, Sharat and Bhudeishula. Though their names were included in the IAY scheme in 2018-19, lack of land pattas has been a hurdle in making housing units available to them.

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, BANPUR

E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Bid Reference No.: 01/2021-22
Tender Call Notice No.: 1192/Dt.22.07.2021
No. C-638- The Executive Officer on behalf of NAC Banpur invites percentage Bid through e-procurement in single cover system according to norm of e-procurement.

- Type of Works : Civil Construction works as in the D.T.C.N.
- Total No. of works : 02 Nos.
- Tender Amount Cost : Rs.17,72,492
- Period of Completion : 60 days
- Date and time of availability of Bid Documents in the Portal : From 10.00 A.M. of Dt.23.07.2021 upto 5.00 P.M. of Dt.04.08.2021
- Original Bid documents submission in Tender Box : Dt.05.08.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Date & Time of Opening of Tender : Dt.06.08.2021 at 12.30 P.M.

Further, the details of e-tender documents can be had from the E-Procurement portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Corrigendum if any shall only be published in above website.

Sd./- Executive Officer, N.A.C., Banpur
OIPR-13177/11/0001/2122

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

(Under Regulation 32 and 33 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Liquidation Process) Regulations, 2016)

RELEVANT PARTICULARS

1 Name of the corporate debtor	Maadurga Thermal Power Company Limited
2 Date of Incorporation of Corporate Debtor	December 15, 2008
3 Authority under which corporate debtor is incorporated/registered	Registrar of Companies - Cuttack
4 Corporate identity number/limited liability identification number of corporate debtor	U40102OR2008PLC010501
5 Address of the registered office and principal office (if any) of corporate debtor	Registered Office: CADD Centre Building, 2nd Floor Press Chhak, Madhupatna, Cuttack, Orissa - 753010 Plant Location: Bainsi, Tangi, Cuttack - 754022, Orissa
6 Liquidation commencement date of the corporate debtor	June 25, 2019
7 Name, address, email address, telephone number and the registration number of the Liquidator	Name: Pankaj Dhanuka Registered Address with IBBI: FE 328, Sector 3, Salt Lake City, Kolkata, West Bengal, 700106 Registered Email Address: pankajdhanuka@gmail.com Telephone: +91 98300 18128 Registration No.: IBBI/PA-001/IP-P01205/2018-2019/11911 Communication Address: Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP, 13th Floor, Building - Omega, Bengal Intelligent Park, Block - EP & GP, Sector - V, Salt Lake City, West Bengal 700091 Communication Email Address: inmtcpil@deloitte.com
8 Date of E-Auction	Auction Start Date & Time: August 17, 2021 @ 11:00 a.m. Auction End Date & Time: August 17, 2021 @ 04:30 pm
9 Manner of Obtaining the Process Document	The detailed terms and conditions of the auction process are set out in the process document, which can be obtained by the bidders by sending an email request at inmtcpil@deloitte.com .
10 Last Date of Obtaining the Process Document	August 16, 2021
11 Subject Matter of Auction Process	Acquisition of the Corporate Debtor as a going concern
12 Manner of Submitting Bid	As set out in the process document to be issued by the liquidator of the Corporate Debtor.
13 Mode of Sale	The mode of sale is open-auction, where bidders can view other competitive bids from other bidders during the open window. The acquisition of the Corporate Debtor as a going concern shall be on 'as is where is' basis, without any representation, warranty or indemnity by the Corporate Debtor or the liquidator.
14 Reserve Price	The reserve price for the purpose of conducting this e-auction of the Corporate Debtor as a going concern is determined at INR 41 Crores.
15 Earnest Money Deposit requirement	Bidder(s) shall be required to submit an Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of INR 50 lakhs in order to Bid for acquisition of the Corporate Debtor as a going concern.

Note: Nothing contained herein shall constitute a binding offer or a commitment to sell the Corporate Debtor as a going concern or any of its assets. Bidders must note that the aforementioned auction process is being conducted in accordance with the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 ("Code") and the relevant regulations thereunder. In the event, if any assets of the Corporate Debtor are realised by existing charge holders in terms of Section 52 of the Code read together with the applicable regulations, the same shall be excluded from the ambit of the auction process being conducted by the liquidator, as and when such an option is exercised by the relevant charge holder. The liquidator reserves the right to amend and/or annual this invitation including any timelines or the process therein, without giving any reason, at any time and in any respect. Any such amendment in the invitation, including the aforementioned timeline, shall be notified on the website of the Corporate Debtor www.inmtcpil.in.

For Maadurga Thermal Power Company Limited
Sd/-
Pankaj Dhanuka
Insolvency Professional - Regn. No.: IBBI/PA-001/IP-P01205/2018-2019/11911
Registered Address: FE 328, Sector 3, Salt Lake City, Kolkata, West Bengal, 700106
Registered Email: pankajdhanuka@gmail.com
Communication Address: Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP, 13th Floor, Building - Omega, Bengal Intelligent Park, Block - EP & GP, Sector - V, Salt Lake City, West Bengal 700091
Communication Email: inmtcpil@deloitte.com
Date: July 27, 2021
Place: Kolkata

Rape, murder cases on rise in Angul district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, July 26: Incidents of rape and murder are on the rise in Angul district. Such cases are increasing because, as the locals alleged, exemplary punishment is not being given to the accused and the police are not creating awareness about such crimes and the punishment involved.

The latest incident that shocked the residents of the district to the core took place July 24, 2021. The victim was a Plus III final year student at Angul College. She had gone to the rivulet near their village to bathe around 8:00 am on the fateful day.

When she did not return home for a long time, her family members launched a frantic search for her. Later, they found her nude body near the rivulet, hidden under leaves and twigs.

The incident enraged the villagers, who along with the victim's family members had staged a road blockade on Angul-Athgarh state highway demanding action against the accused.

Other two sensational cases are the Kangula rape and murder case and the Angul busstand case of 2019.

In the first case, a Class VIII girl was raped and murdered January 20, 2019. She was carrying food for her father, who was working in their farmland. Finding her alone, an accused, later identified as Anam



THE VICTIM WAS A PLUS III FINAL YEAR STUDENT AT ANGUL COLLEGE. SHE HAD GONE TO THE RIVULET NEAR THEIR VILLAGE TO BATHE AROUND 8:00 AM ON THE FATEFUL DAY

IN MOST CASES THE PERPETRATORS ARE SORT OF PATIENTS SUFFERING FROM MENTAL ILLNESS. THERE SHOULD BE PROVISIONS FOR STRINGENT ACTION AGAINST THEM

Dehury, a resident of Kangula village, overpowered her. He not only raped her but also murdered her by hitting on her head with a stone. Far from feeling remorse for what he had done, he turned out to be a necrophiliac and had sex with the body.

The incident had then huffed headlines. Four days after the incident, the police arrested Dehury from Kolkata. But exemplary punishment is yet to be handed out to the accused.

The POCSO court had awarded capital punishment to the accused while adjudging it as a rarest of rare case. However, the Orissa High Court had set aside the death sentence.

In the July 21, 2019 incident, an eight-year-old girl was sleeping with her family members on the verandah of a shop in Angul busstand. Shibu Patnaik, a middle-aged man of Amlapada area, who got out of his house between 2:00 am and 4:00 am, saw the girl. He allegedly abducted her and took her behind a nearby Aahaar centre. There he threatened to kill her if she tried to cry for help. Subsequently, he then raped her and left the spot after dumping her in a drain. Later, the victim was rescued in a critical condition and the accused was arrested.

The case is still pending for judgment. According to some intellec-

tuals, in most cases the perpetrators are sort of patients suffering from mental illness. There should be provisions for stringent action against them.

"Many people are losing their thinking capacity due to drug and alcohol addiction. They are no longer able to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong. Watching porn videos is also leading many youths to astray, making them commit such crimes. A stringent law can only make some difference in checking such crimes," observed Dr Rashmita Bhanjdeo, a psychologist. Expressing her concern over the increasing incidents of rape and murder, a housewife, Sushree Sangeeta Mohanty said, "These cases are increasing because the police are not in touch with the common people and not keeping tabs on criminals. Women and girls are not feeling safe anymore. They are afraid to go out. The police department should be more watchful to put a check on such cases.

When contacted, Anjali Tripathy, a lecturer of Psychology department, Angul College, said there are still some loopholes in the law that help such criminals go scot-free. So the law should be made stringent.

In this regard, Angul SP, Jagmohan Meena said, "We are taking all the rape cases reported at different police stations in the district seriously. After registering cases, we

are investigating into the cases and taking actions against the accused. But we have no information regarding several cases that are not being reported. Several cases are coming to the fore after the launch of 'Pink Patrolling'. If the police receive complaints about people having some psycho problems, it will be easy for them to keep tabs on them."

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (AGRI.), KEONJHAR DIVISION, KEONJHAR
Phone No. - (06766)-255378 Email ID: eeagri1.kjr@gmail.com
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS THROUGH E-Procurement
No. 652/AgriL, Dated: 20.07.21

Bid Identification No./e-Procurement Notice No. - E.E.(A)- KEONJHAR Division-01/2021-22
No. L-35- 1. The Executive Engineer (Agril.), Keonjhar Division, Keonjhar, Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate Bids in Single Cover system for the works as detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Approximate Estimated cost put to Tender (Excluding G.S.T.) (R.S.)	Cost of Bid Documents (in Rs.)	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion
1	Construction of BAO Office, Telkoi, Dist: Keonjhar	21,93,054.00	6000.00	B & C	6 (Six) Calendar months
2	Construction of BAO Office, Saharpada, Dist: Keonjhar	21,93,054.00	6000.00	B & C	6 (Six) Calendar months
3	Construction of BAO Office, Patna, Dist: Keonjhar	21,93,026.00	6000.00	B & C	6 (Six) Calendar months
4	Construction of BAO Office, Harichandanpur, Dist: Keonjhar	21,93,064.00	6000.00	B & C	6 (Six) Calendar months
5	Construction of BAO Office, Banspal, Dist: Keonjhar	21,93,039.00	6000.00	B & C	6 (Six) Calendar months
6	Construction of BAO Office, Jhumpura, Dist: Keonjhar	21,93,574.00	6000.00	B & C	6 (Six) Calendar months
7	Construction of boundary wall of FIAC and DAO office (Ghatagaon, Dist: Keonjhar)	7,01,778.00	4000.00	C & D	2 (Two) Calendar months

The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. The website for "ONLINE BIDDING" is <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>. Bid documents will be available in above Website from Dt.02.08.2021 at 11.00 AM up to 5.00 PM of Dt.16.08.2021 for "ONLINE BIDDING". Date of Original bid documents submission Dt.05.08.2021 at 11.00 AM to Dt.17.08.2021 upto 4.00 PM. Bids shall be opened at 11.00 AM & onwards on Dt.19.08.2021.

The bidder must possess matching class compatible Digital Signature Certificate (DSC). Further details and other terms and conditions can be seen from DTCN in the e-Procurement website www.tendersorissa.gov.in. N.B.: Subsequent corrigendum / addendum if required shall be available in the website as indicated above. OIPR-01398/11/0001/2122

Sd./- Executive Engineer (Agril.), Keonjhar Division, Keonjhar

Knowledge gropes but meets not
Wisdom's face.

SRI AUROBINDO



WHO-China Entente

The credibility and sanctity of the World Health Organisation (WHO) - the global body working for the protection of world population against diseases - have never before been dented the way they are now over the origin and control of Covid-19. It is perceived to have aided China in the latter's alleged cover-up of the origin and suppression of facts relating to the spread of the deadly virus. There is even suspicion whether it has from the beginning of the outbreak been dancing to the tune of China desperately trying to exonerate itself from the charge that it is solely responsible for the pandemic. The suspicion is now strengthened by China's stiff resistance to the WHO's plan for the second phase of a study into the origins of Covid-19. Zeng Yixin, Vice-Minister of China's National Health Commission, has expressed shock and surprise that the plan includes further investigation of the theory that the virus might have leaked from a Chinese lab. China has been persistently denying that the lethal virus originated from its lab in Wuhan. Another theory floated in early 2020 was that the virus originated in the wet market in Wuhan. China did not allow WHO experts to visit the lab for a year after the outbreak on one pretext or the other. Now, it has started implicating other countries for the spread by suggesting that the virus might have come from places other than China as the wet market in Wuhan gets its supply from several countries.

The search for the answers to the origin of the Covid-19 outbreak has now become a cause for diplomatic row between China on the one hand and the USA and many of its allies on the other. The latter accuse China of not being transparent about the sequence of events from the first detection and spread of the deadly virus from Wuhan. China's position is that it is being falsely blamed for the pandemic and the matter is being politicised instead of being left to scientists to unravel the truth.

And here comes the significance of the role of the WHO. Many questions are being raised about the methods followed by the WHO in declaring the pandemic. It was first in a denial mode over whether the virus spread through human-to-human contact. Then it equivocated on the question of whether the virus got leaked from a Chinese lab or it was a creation of nature jumping from bat to man. It is alleged that Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director-general of WHO, was aided in getting elected to this post by the Chinese vote. The then President of the United States, Donald Trump withdrew funding to WHO on the grounds that it was dithering in exposing the truth and protecting China. Trump had stated that while the USA contributed \$853 million in 2018-19, China put in \$89 million. Now that President Joe Biden has reversed Trump's decision and pledged \$4 billion to WHO, fresh attempts are being made to press China for further investigation into the origin of the virus.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus finally admitted that there had been a 'premature push' after the first phase of the study in China by WHO experts to rule out the theory that the virus might have escaped from a Chinese government lab in Wuhan. His desperation to save the WHO's reputation is obvious.

The first team of WHO scientists conducted a study in Wuhan earlier this year along with their Chinese counterparts. The team was accused of wilting under Chinese pressure after it suggested further study wasn't necessary. The experts visited markets in Wuhan that sold live animals and recommended further study of the farms that supplied the market. This prompted China to clamour for examining the meat supply chain located in other countries as possible source of the virus.

WHO stated January 14, 2020 that Chinese authorities did not find any clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of the coronavirus. It accepted the Chinese version on the plea that as per procedure, it has to go by the report given by the country first affected. Tedros refused to declare Public Health Emergency of International Concern on the ground that the Emergency Committee was divided on the issue. He declared coronavirus as a pandemic later in March 2020.

Statistics emanating from China continue to fuel suspicion. Only 12 new domestically spread cases were reported last week and China's death toll from the virus has remained unchanged for months at 4,636, although China's statistics are always suspect. It claims to have largely ended local transmission of Covid and has now administered over 1.4 billion doses of Chinese vaccines. The question is whether this proves China's efficiency in tackling Covid-19 or whether it is a typical propaganda to capture the world health market and deflect blame.

WISDOM CORNER

- I never think of the future - it comes soon enough. **ALBERT EINSTEIN**
- Laughter is the closest distance between two people. **VICTOR BORGE**
- Flowers grow out of dark moments. **CORITA KENT**

WORDSWORTH

One-off

It comes out of manufacturing, in which off has long been used to mark a number of items to be produced of one kind: 20-off, 500-off. This seems to have begun in foundry work, or a similar trade, in which items were cast off a mould or from a pattern ("We'll have 20 off that pattern and 500 off that other one"). An example is in a book of 1947 by James Crowther and Richard Whiddington, Science at War: "Manufacturers found it very difficult to give up mass production, in order to make the 200 or so sets 'off'." A one-off was just a single item, used in particular to refer to a prototype. The first known example appeared in the Proceedings of the Institute of British Foundrymen in 1934: "A splendid one-off pattern can be swept up in very little time." (The reference is to a casting mould formed in sand.) Out of this came our current figurative sense of something that is done, made, or happens only once - as you say, one of a kind. An example appeared in the Coventry Evening Telegraph in February 2006: "Anyone who would like to donate in Mo's memory is welcome to make a one-off donation or more long-term contributions." It can also be used of a special person, someone for whom it might be said "After they made him, they broke the mould". Here's an example from the Daily Telegraph of 13 April 2006, about Michael Eavis, who runs the Glastonbury Festival: "I have great respect for him. He's a fantastic eccentric, really, a one-off."

Onomasticon

A book such as the Oxford Names Companion is an onomasticon, and the word has throughout history turned up most often in the titles of dictionaries of proper names or place names. It still does occasionally: There's the Buffverse Onomasticon, an online resource that gives the origins of the names of all the characters in the television series Buffy the Vampire Slayer. The Onomasticon to Cicero's Letters and the Onomasticon of the Hittite Pantheon (in three volumes) are two modern scholarly examples. The word is from Greek onomázein, to name, of which onoma, a name, is a close relative. They're the source of other words to do with names. An onomastician studies the origin and form of proper names of every kind and the field of study is called onomastics. The study of place names is an important onomastic endeavour, and has its own name, toponymy (from Greek topos, a place + onoma), with a toponymist being a person who studies it. We must also distinguish between an onomastician and an onomasiologist - the latter studies the principles of naming, such as the way it varies between places and groups of people and how new names are formed.



Jagdish Rattanan

THE DIVISIONS IT HAS CREATED, THE STRIFE THAT IT HAS NURTURED AND THE DIET OF HATRED THAT IT HAS SERVED ONLY GO TO SHOW AND TELL THAT THE PEGASUS SCANDAL IS EXACTLY THE KIND OF DITCH THAT THIS GOVERNMENT WOULD DRIVE THE NATION INTO

FOCUS PEGASUS SPYWARE

RAMPARTS BREACHED

In 1983, Pulitzer Prize-winning US journalist Seymour Hersh wrote a book (The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House) in which he 'revealed' that Morarji Desai had worked as a CIA spy. No one in India believed him. Supposedly well-researched allegations by a journalist known for such nation-stirring exposés as the My Lai Massacre, and charges which would have routinely stuck in other cases, were met with almost unanimous contempt and dismissal across India - such was the moral standing of Morarji bhai, whether in power or not. Morarji Desai sued and lost the case in the US courts on legalese but that loss did not matter as this nation cared not what anyone said of a prime minister known for his integrity.

Cut to today, and a series of denials, statements and the force of an army of social media accounts fail to give any credibility to a government that is armed with a brute majority in the Parliament but has little moral standing in the eyes of many Indians. The divisions it has created, the strife that it has nurtured and the diet of hatred that it has served only go to show and tell that the Pegasus scandal is exactly the kind of ditch that this government would drive the nation into.

Rahul Gandhi is not too off the mark when he calls this an act of treason. This is the act of deploying a weapon of such destructive power that the homes and private spaces of key people in India are broken into, which is what the spyware built and sold by the NSO group of Israel is designed to do. The government has of course denied the reports that have stirred a global alert. Ashwini Vaishnav, the Minister of Electronics & Information Technology, says illegal surveillance is not possible in India "with the checks and balances in our laws and our robust institutions."

The argument that the data from this act of illegal snooping was available not to the Israeli com-



Who is to say if the reported hacking by the Indian government, busy settling personal scores and political battles, provided a smokescreen for foreign powers to hack into key powers and positions in India, including listening in to meetings of our highest political and military authorities?

pany that sold the stuff but only to the Indian government that presumably bought and deployed this weapon is frivolous. Consider what the NSO group, which has built and licensed the Pegasus software to select governments, said July 21: "We do not operate the system, nor do we have access to the data of our customers, yet they are obligated to provide us with such information under investigations... NSO will thoroughly investigate any credible proof of misuse of its technologies, as we always had, and will shut down the system where necessary."

NSO co-founder and CEO Shalev Hulio has been quoted by Forbes as saying: "While NSO isn't actively monitoring what customers do with its technology, the company can get access to log files from customers when it has cause to investigate, allowing the company's auditors to check what numbers were selected for surveillance."

This appears to be a case of we can break in but we won't break in! What this is saying is trust us - we do the right things. And trust is precisely what is missing in

this relationship. Apart from internal trust issues in India, who could trust a company that sells software that intrudes into phones without the target having to do anything for the malware to takeover and leak data? Further, this package is sold to other governments without identifying the buyers, while seeking "approval from the export controls unit of Israel's Ministry of Defense, an unusual decision because at the time the unit only regulated overseas weapons sales," to quote the Washington Post. Who is to say if the reported hacking by the Indian government, busy settling personal scores and political battles, provided a smokescreen for foreign powers to hack into key powers and positions in India, including listening in to meetings of our highest political and military authorities? Israel may be categorised as a friendly power today but it is worth pointing out that its closest ally, the United States, does not allow the software to operate on its shores or on US-based phones.

From an outside perspective, the company is more like a military-intelligence collaborator, sell-

ing weapons-grade equipment to collaborators it sees as friends, in the long-term strategic interests of its nation. Here is a master controller allowing customers to play their little games and making money on it knowing full well that it can interfere and stop the game when required.

In any case, it should be anyone's guess that a super-hacker let loose isn't about to have any boundaries; hacker and hacked are both trapped. In this view, India's ramparts have been breached and the nation's sovereignty has been put on the line by a bunch of leaders who continue to plunder the richness and the intangible wealth of India - its democratic traditions, its respect for diversity and the values of togetherness that bind us as one nation. This is why the charge of treason holds.

The picture of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, holding aloft her smartphone, plastered with brown tape to prevent prying eyes from looking, recording, breaking in is in many ways the picture of India - equally broken, taped and patched. The chief minister is not on the list of those allegedly hacked but you don't have to be on the list to worry. Anyone seeking to protect themselves will have to adopt such rudimentary stopgaps while we ponder how we had reached this low.

The government can escape the charge of treason if it cooperates across the political spectrum and agrees to an impartial JPC probe. If its hands are clean, nothing is lost and there is everything to be gained from a probe that can record, if required, some of the evidence in private. In India, it is time to say "enough is enough," which curiously is the header of the NSO statement that announced "it will no longer be responding to media inquiries on this matter..."

The writer is a senior journalist and a faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.
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SPECTRUM DEVELOPMENT

How to strengthen anti-poverty efforts

From 1990 to 2019, the number of people living in extreme poverty (according to the World Bank threshold of \$1.90 per day) plummeted, from 1.9 billion to 648 million. Covid-19 has reversed much of this progress. By the end of 2021, the pandemic will have pushed approximately 150 million people back into extreme poverty.

Even before Covid-19, however, the world was not on track to end extreme poverty in the next decade. Progress on poverty reduction had been slowing long before the pandemic hit, with global poverty rates falling by less than half a percentage point per year between 2015 and 2019. At that pace, even without Covid-19, 537 million people would have still been living in extreme poverty in 2030, implying failure to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 1.

At BRAC, the world's largest Global South-led NGO, decades of designing, implementing, advising on, and adapting poverty reduction interventions have given us insights into how to make anti-poverty programmes and policies more effective. First, programmes need to reach people in the most extreme states of poverty. People living in extreme poverty face hurdles to accessing social programmes and services. They are less likely to have bank accounts, permanent addresses,

or formal identification - all of which may be required for registration. They also face social stigma associated with receiving public services, and often lack sufficient information about the programmes for which they are eligible.

In low-income countries, 79 per cent of the bottom quintile of earners receive no social assistance whatsoever. To ensure that help reaches those most in need, governments and their partners must design policies and programmes that overcome the barriers people living in extreme poverty face and integrate them into existing social safety nets.

Second, programmes must empower people living in extreme poverty to build long-term resilience. Governments and their partners must do more than improve the provision of basic needs. They must also invest in enabling people in extreme poverty to acquire the skills and resources they need to avoid falling back into the poverty trap. This approach is crucial in times of crisis, as our team at BRAC found when advising the Philippine government, in partnership with the Asian Development Bank, on a recent anti-poverty intervention.

During the pandemic, the programme connected participants to cash assistance from the national government and food assistance from their local government. Meanwhile, it provided the resources

and training they needed to establish multiple sources of income. As a result, 76 per cent of participants were able to continue earning income even during strict lockdowns.

Third, programmes need to treat poverty as multifaceted and context-specific. Extreme poverty is multidimensional. An accurate definition must account for the many areas of deprivation people living in extreme poverty face, from lack of clean water and electricity to malnutrition and social exclusion. These deprivations and the interventions needed to overcome them vary across populations and geographies. Governments and their partners need to create more holistic interventions that empower poor people to face their unique challenges.

Fourth, these programmes must engage local communities and governments, whose active participation can help anti-poverty interventions better reflect the realities of people's daily lives and gain local buy-in. Bringing civil society into the process can also play an important role in holding the government accountable.

Fifth, governments and their partners must learn what is working and what is not, then adapt programming accordingly. To maximise the impact of anti-poverty interventions at scale, governments and their partners must commit to monitoring, evaluating, and

learning from programmes as they are implemented.

This must be a collaborative effort. If the international community adopts these steps, anti-poverty programmes and policies can become more inclusive, adaptive, and comprehensive. Beyond engaging civil society and academia, governments need development actors, including multilateral institutions and donor countries, to help close resource gaps until they can independently mobilise sufficient domestic resources. Many low- and middle-income countries simply lack the fiscal space and state capacity to pursue large-scale poverty reduction measures on their own.

SDG 1 is deeply connected to the other SDGs, from ensuring gender equality to advancing sustainability to improving nutrition. Covid-19 has reversed decades of progress in these areas, and we need cross-cutting interventions that support multiple areas of development simultaneously if we are to recover. The only way to prevent leaving many people behind is to ensure that anti-poverty interventions are better funded, more holistic, and more effective at scale.

The writer is Senior Director of Microfinance and Ultra-Poor Graduation Programmes at BRAC.
©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Shameran Abed

EVEN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC REVERSED PROGRESS IN REDUCING EXTREME POVERTY, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES LARGELY FAILED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE POOREST AND MOST MARGINALISED

Yediyurappa's exit

Sir, Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa's resignation at this stage was uncalled for, while the interference by the Lingyat Swamis in his government also vastly damaged the prospects of his continuance. However, credit goes to Yediyurappa for opening the BJP's account in South India. Yediyurappa proved that he could make or break the prospects of the saffron party when he formed the Karnataka Janata Party (KJP) and prevented the BJP from coming to power in the 2013 Karnataka Assembly elections. The BJP's share of votes was divided, and consequently the Congress government headed by Siddaramaiah came to power. The formation of the KJP also marred Yediyurappa's chances of coming to power. Realising that he has no future if he continues with the KJP, he disbanded the party, crawled back to the BJP, strengthened the party and grabbed power dislodging the JDS-Congress government. Yediyurappa was implicated in a denotification case and lost ground to Sadananda Gowda who succeeded him. Gowda was later succeeded by Jagadeesh Shettar. This time, pressures from within the party triggered a condition for Yediyurappa to submit his resignation. Yediyurappa should be credited for increasing the age of superannuation for government employees from 58 years to 60 years. He also must be credited for reducing the age of senior citizens from 65 years to 60 years to travel in buses with concession in bus fare by 25 per cent.

KV Seetharamaiah, HASSAN (KARNATAKA)

Third wave

Sir, It won't be wrong to assume that the coronavirus is here to stay. With new strains emerging every three-four months, the pandemic has shown that it is not going to subside anytime soon. Recently, AIIMS director Randeep Guleria stated that the third wave of Covid-19 is going to hit India between mid-September and early-October and that it will affect children the most. I want to urge these authorities to please refrain from making such statements. The public is already under strenuous physical and mental stress and these types of statements only aggravate the suffering. If we maintain all the precautionary measures of social distancing, washing our hands after coming in contact with a surface, wearing proper masks, we can stay away from this disease. Let numerous waves of the virus come, if we are careful they cannot harm us.

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR (ASSAM)

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

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'Nirmal Scheme' goes haywire in Angul DHH

MODERN EQUIPMENT WORTH CRORES GATHERING DUST



POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, July 26: The district headquarters hospital (DHH) here has received equipment worth crores of rupees under the Odisha government's 'Nirmal Scheme'. These have been given to maintain cleanliness on the hospital premises and also to carry out sanitation on a regular basis. However, the machines have never been used even once.

The 'Nirmal Scheme' launched in 2018-19 aimed to give the state-run hospitals the look and cleanliness of the private medical facilities and to provide patients and their families with a clean and hygienic environment. The scheme was launched with the aim of drawing more people to the government-run hospitals and to provide them with medical facilities at a cheaper rate. However, it seems that the effort has failed at the DHH here.

Under this scheme, a hospital is provided with funds and equipment to keep the floor and window panes clean, repair broken furniture and electrical equipment and to maintain drains and gardens

The 'Nirmal Scheme' launched in 2018-19 aimed to give the state-run hospitals the look and cleanliness of the private medical facilities and a clean and hygienic environment to the patients and their kin

Under this scheme, a hospital is provided with funds and equipment to keep the floor and window panes clean, repair broken furniture and electrical equipment and to maintain drains and gardens

Angul DHH manager Debashis Das blamed the firm for the present situation. He said in spite of repeated requests, it is not carrying out its responsibilities properly

pack vacuum cleaner, heavy-duty scrubbing pole, buckets and trolleys. However, none of these machines have been used. Instead, the same old practice of using brooms and mops is continuing.

The Angul DHH has 'Three Bucket Cleaning System' to keep the floor free from germs and dirt. In this system, a push cart carries three buckets containing water, phenyl and a chemical. The three items are mixed for cleaning floors. However, the equipment has not been used even once since it was brought here. Most of the staff feigned ignorance when asked

about this particular equipment.

It has also been alleged that the firm which has signed the contract to maintain cleanliness and repair broken furniture is not doing its job in a proper manner.

Patients and their relatives criticised the DHH authorities for their callous attitude. "We fail to understand why the employees of the contractor's firm are not using the modern equipment available for maintaining the hospital premises," they said.

However, an official of the firm engaged for maintenance defended their action. "These machines have been lying defunct for years now. So we are sweeping and mopping the floors manually," he said on the condition of anonymity.

Rogi (patient) Kalyan Samiti member, Subodh Mishra, however, blamed the hospital authorities for such a situation. "It is being said that the machines are not functioning. So how did the equipment develop problems when they have not been used on a single occasion," Mishra asked. "It may be the firm is trying to wriggle away from its responsibilities to avoid being punished. Overall, it just goes to show how inept the hospital management is," he added.

Angul DHH manager Debashis Das blamed the firm for the present situation. He said in spite of repeated requests, it is not carrying out its responsibilities properly. He said a report on the issue has been sent to the higher ups.

When contacted, ADMO (Medical) Dr Manas Ranjan Biswal admitted that the machines have not been used even once since their procurement. He termed the performance of the contractual firm as 'pathetic'. "The contractor has been asked to file a report in this regard within 15 days. If they fail to do so, stringent action will be taken against it," he asserted.



AGRI-TECH DEMO

A farmer levelling his farmland with a bullock-drawn machine during a public demonstration in G Udayagiri of Kandhamal district

OP PHOTO

Farmers fume over defunct irrigation project

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, July 26: Already under severe mental distress due to the ongoing pandemic situation and monsoon playing truant, farmers of Beltikiri area of Sadar block in Dhenkanal district are currently at their wits end. Owing to frequent power cuts, the irrigation project they have has been lying unused for the last three months, resulting in their lands going parched.

"The irrigation project is of no use without electricity. We are lagging far behind in agricultural activities despite the project being close to our farmlands," the beneficiaries, including Jitendra Sahu, Bikram sahu, Sudhanshu Nayak, Siba Prasad Behera, Madhumita



Farmers alleged that owing to frequent power cuts, the irrigation project has been lying unused for last three months

Dehury, Prashant Gadnayak and Rabi Narayan Sandha, alleged.

Informing about the problem, the villagers said they have a deep tube well in their village. It was sunk by the Lift Irrigation department under Biju Krushak Vikas Yojana at a cost of ₹26,80,000. A 63 KVA transformer has also been installed

to ensure that there is no problem in supplying water to farmlands.

But water supply to these farmlands has been severely affected for last three months because of power cuts. "In the absence of water, agricultural activities in 40 acres have suffered," they alleged. "We have transplanted paddy and

vegetables like tomato, brinjal, long yard beans etc. Initially, we were worried about irregular rains. However, we decided to go on with the agricultural activities, pinning our hope on the irrigation project. But, frequent power cuts have left us nowhere. As of now, many farmlands are lying fallow," they alleged.

The farmers added that they have taken the issue up with the Electricity department, Lift Irrigation department and district administration but are yet to receive any response from them. "The engineer of the Electricity department is only doing what he is best at - giving assurances. If no step is taken in this regard soon, we will be forced to resort to agitation," they warned.

Youth drowns in canal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, July 26: A youth drowned in a canal at Salania village under Nandipada police limits in Keonjhar district, Monday.

The incident took place when the deceased had gone to take a bath in the waterbody.

The deceased has been identified as Iswar Jena, son of Manguli Jena who is a native of Nishangpur village. Locals recovered the youth's body after a long search operation.

Locals said Iswar had been to the Salania branch canal in the morning. However, he was swept away in the stream.

On being informed, locals rushed to the spot and carried out a search operation, and recovered the body from the water. Police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem.

Director, Soil Conservation, visits Gajapati

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, July 26: Director, Soil Conservation and Watershed Development department, Hemant Kumar Panda was in Gajapati district on a two-day visit from July 24. He was here to review the progress of various projects taken up under different schemes by the Project Director, Watersheds.

Panda visited the farm pond of Sarathi Sabar, a beneficiary in Kinoda village of Rayagada block, July 24. After going around the pond and witnessing the integrated farming approach such as pisciculture, horticulture, bund plantation of pineapple, banana, papaya, drumstick, coconut and lemon, he was all praise for Sabar. Before leaving, he advised Sabar to continue the integrated farming approach because it would ensure earnings throughout the year. He also praised Dharitri



WSHG for their active supervision of the work.

Next, Panda along with staff of the Project Director, Watersheds, visited projects like Loose Boulder Check Dam (LBGD), Trench-cum-Bund and Staggered Trench that are taken under MGNREGS; Community Tank and Check Dam under RKVY scheme and interacted with the beneficiaries. In the after-

noon, he held a discussion with the district level officers of Watershed, Agriculture, Horticulture, Fishery, Animal Husbandry and Mission Shakti departments and appreciated their works.

On the second day, he along with former Additional Secretary, Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment department, Dukhishyam Paika visited

The director advised a beneficiary, Sarathi Sabar, to continue with the integrated farming approach which would ensure earnings throughout the year

Padmapur village in Gosani block. There, they reviewed the progress of the construction of a farm pond with a check dam. This dual structure is being constructed with an estimated cost of ₹15 lakh. After visiting some projects like Akili farm in Chandiput village under Mohana block, he directed the staff to submit an action plan for the betterment of farms and how more revenue can be generated in the coming years.

RAPE & MURDER OF MINOR NHRC summons Keonjhar, Bhadrak SPs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued conditional summons directing the Superintendents of Police of Bhadrak and Keonjhar districts to personally appear before it in connection with the kidnapping and murder of a minor girl at Anandpur in Keonjhar in 2020.

The Commission issued the summons as the police officials failed to submit any report on the issue despite repeated reminders from the NHRC. The SPs have been asked to be present before the Commission in person October 4, 2021.

"However, in case the requisite report is submitted on or before 27.09.2021 their personal appearance shall be dispensed with," added the NHRC.

According to sources, the 17-year-old victim, a native of Bhadrak dis-

trict, was staying with her uncle and studying in Plus II at a college in Anandpur. The victim later came into contact with one Swarna Ranjan, who allegedly kidnapped her 14, October, 2020. Later, Ranjan kept her at a rented house near Keonjhar town.

The landlady, Manorama Patnaik and Ranjan reportedly forced the minor girl to engage in flesh trade. So, they allegedly killed the victim in November 2020.

Later, they cut her body into pieces and packed the dismembered body in a gunny bag. However, some villagers spotted the accused while trying to dispose of her body. Police recovered the body and later arrested both Patnaik and Ranjan.

However, the deceased minor's father alleged that police inaction was the major reason behind his daughter's death. He claimed that police did not take any action on the missing report filed by him just three days after her disappearance October 17, 2020.



RURAL JOB SCHEME

Members of Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) and other Left party workers staging a demonstration demanding 200 man-days and ₹600 wage per day to MGNREGS workers in Bhadrak

OP PHOTO

Jagatsinghpur DHH in 'LaQshya' aspirant list

LAQSHYA IS A NATIONAL LABOUR ROOM AND MATERNITY OPERATION THEATRE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE LAUNCHED BY THE CENTRE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jagatsinghpur, July 26: Jagatsinghpur district headquarters hospital (DHH) is in the running for 'LaQshya' certificate.

LaQshya is a National Labour Room and Maternity Operation Theatre quality improvement initiative launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

The final round of assessment to decide whether the DHH is eligible for the 'LaQshya' certificate or not, two national-level assessors - Dr Mrinalini Mani and Dr JL Meena - recently undertook the final assessment virtually.

At the outset, chief district medical and public health officer Dr Bijay Panda welcomed the two assessors and then ADMO (Medical) Dr Ajay Kumar Swain presented the facts and figures of the current year as well as the previous year. Basically he informed them that the maternity mortality rate, child mortality rate and infection rate are lower at the DHH compared to that of the state.



Thereafter, Dr Mrinalini Mani and Dr JL Meena were taken on a virtual visit of the DHH beginning from the facility's entrance to its campus, covering all the sections and wards. They were also informed about the facilities at OT and labour rooms.

On this occasion, the assessors interacted with the staff nurses, the gynaecologist, sweepers, attendants and security guards. Dr Rabindranath Pal, Dr Pramod Kumar Nayak, staff nurse-in-charge Khulana Barik and Sudhanshu Malini Das were at the labour room

Assessors interacted with the staff nurses, the gynaecologist, sweepers, attendants and security guards during a virtual visit

and they participated in the discussion, briefing the duo about the facilities at the labour room.

They also discussed in details about the equipment at the cesarean section, labour table, OT trolley, medicine and the rules followed. During the entire period, assessors from the state government were also present.

While Dr Basant Kumar Barik and DPM Chakradhar Jena provided technical support, deputy manager Sukant Kumar Pradhan, assistant manager Sujata Priyambada Das, ADMO Pramod Kumar Barik and Class-IV employees of labour room and OT assisted them.

Gujarat 'most favoured state' in Centre's health allocation: RTI

'UP next stop for farmers' stir'

AGENCIES

Lucknow, July 26: The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, spearheading the farmers' campaign against the Centre's three agriculture laws, Monday announced its 'Mission UP and Uttarakhand', saying it will turn Lucknow into Delhi and hold a 'maha rally' in Muzaffarnagar.

"The farmers' agitation will not end till the Government of India withdraws these three black laws. We want to tell the government here (UP) as well to work properly otherwise our agitation is intensifying and Lucknow will also be turned into Delhi and all roads leading to the state capital from all sides will be sealed," Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait told reporters here. But, he did not elaborate on when the planned agitation will begin in Lucknow. This mission will start with a 'maha rally' of farmers from Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh September 5 and mahapanchayats will be held at all the divisional headquarters in the state with an aim to take the eight-month-old agitation to the village level, Tikait said.

He said, "The historic farmers' agitation for the repeal of three anti-farmer laws and demanding legal guarantee of the minimum support price has completed eight months. In these months, the move-



Now, Lucknow will be turned into Delhi. Like in Delhi, where all roads are sealed by farmers from all sides. We will devise our strategy for this and make preparations for it

RAKESH TIKAIT | BKU LEADER

ment, which became a symbol of self-respect and unity of the farmers, is now a movement to save democracy and save the country." In a statement, the SKM said it has decided to start the next phase of the movement as Mission Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand to make it more intensive and effective. The objective of this mission would be that like Punjab and Haryana, every village in UP and Uttarakhand will be involved in the movement, it said. The SKM leaders, who addressed a joint press conference, demanded making all toll plazas free in UP and Uttarakhand, organising protests at commercial establishments of capitalists and boycotting the programs of the BJP and its allies. Tikait said, "Now, Lucknow will

be turned into Delhi. Like in Delhi, where all roads are sealed by farmers from all sides, in Lucknow too farmers will surround the city from all sides. We will devise our strategy for this and make preparations for it."

He said a series of meetings, visits and rallies would be started all over UP to make this mission work. The farmer leaders addressing the press conference said the aim of the mission would also be to challenge the corporate power and "anti-farmer" BJP and its allies at every step, adding that it is the responsibility of the state and its people to save farming and farmers from the corporate houses and their political middlemen. Other leaders including Yogendra Yadav of the Jai Kisan Andolan, Shiv Kumar Kakkaji of the Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Mahasangh, Jagjit Singh Dallelwal and Ashish Mittal were also present during the press conference.



Mizoram, Chandigarh and Meghalaya -- were given GIA of less than Rs 10 crore.

Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, and Puducherry got less than one crore rupees, while Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattigarh, Daman & Diu, Goa, Karnataka, Ladakh, Lakshadweep Isles, Rajasthan, Sikkim and Tamil Nadu did not get a single rupee under GIA.

He said that the NHA's official data reveals how -- compared with 2019-2020 (Rs 2,992.94 crore) - the health budget fell steeply for 2020-2021 (Rs.2544.12 crore), when it was required to be en-

Covid-19 entered India last year (2020) and quickly spread. So, huge funds were required to save people's lives, especially in worst-hit states like Maharashtra and Kerala, but the Centre appeared to focus only on Gujarat

PRAFUL SARDA | ACTIVIST

hanced substantially. "Covid-19 entered India last year (2020) and quickly spread. So, huge funds were required to save peoples' lives, especially in

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, July 26: The Centre's National Health Authority (NHA) -- has allocated the maximum funds to Gujarat as grant-in-aid for various government schemes under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, as per the latest details provided in RTI replies.

The RTI query was filed by Pune-based activist Praful Sarada seeking details of the budget allocated to the overall health sector including the flagship AB-PMJAY.

The NHA's replies were startling -- for the current year 2021-2022 (till July 17, 2021) -- it said the Centre has released a staggering Rs 330.55 crore as grant-in-aid (GIA) for implementation purpose to Gujarat -- or the lion's share.

The next on the list is Kerala at Rs 128.62 crore, Maharashtra with Rs 117.43 crore, Andhra Pradesh got Rs 110.95 crore and Madhya Pradesh secured Rs 104.79 crore as GIA.

Among the double-digit states under GIA, Uttar Pradesh was given Rs 75.07 crore, Assam Rs 31.62 crore, Haryana Rs 25.16 crore, Punjab Rs 23.07 crore, Uttarakhand Rs 21.81 crore, Jammu & Kashmir Rs 19.87 crore and Himachal Pradesh Rs 15.09 crore.

Seven states -- Jharkhand, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland,

SP, Cong hitch on to Brahmin bandwagon



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, July 26: After the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), more and more political parties are taking to what is now being termed as the 'Parshuram Path' in Uttar Pradesh to woo Brahmins.

The Samajwadi Party and the Congress have also hitched on to the Brahmin bandwagon, making the upper caste community a much sought after vote bank.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav held a meeting with five senior Brahmin leaders of his party -- former UP Assembly Speaker Mata Prasad Pandey, Manoj Pandey, Abhishek Mishra, Sanatan Pandey and Pawan Pandey.

During the three-hour long meeting, it was decided that the party will hold 'Prabuddh Varg Sammelans' from next month to establish a contact with the Brahmin community.

The first sammelan will be held in Siddharth Nagar August 22, Ballia August 24 followed by similar events in Mau and Aurraiya August 25 and 26.

Akhilesh Yadav also formed a core committee of the five leaders to plan the Brahmin outreach, issues and strategy.

SP's effort to woo Brahmins comes at a time when the BSP is also holding Prabuddh Varg Sammelans to win over Brahmins.

However, SP president has specifically asked his leaders not to go overboard or play the Hindutva card which may jeopardise the party's Muslim outreach. Muslims form the core base vote of the Samajwadi Party in UP.

Sources said the party will list issues faced by the Brahmin community at the district level and prepare a white paper on how the community has been at the receiving end of administrative high-handedness under BJP government. SP is also installing statues

of Lord Parshuram, the sixth Avatar of Lord Vishnu and a Brahmin ideologue, in every district.

Manoj Pandey, state president of Samajwadi Prabuddh Samaj and the party's pointsman behind the Brahmin Sammelans, said, "We announced installing of idols of Lord Parshuram in every district about a year ago. We have identified land for the purpose in almost 50 districts and idols have already been installed in 8 districts, including Jalaun, Aurraiya and Balrampur."

Abhishek Mishra, a former SP minister, meanwhile, dismissed the speculations that SP is organising Brahmin Sammelans taking a cue from BSP.

"The party had announced much earlier that it will install a 108-foot idol of Lord Parshuram in Lucknow. The idol is being made in Jaipur and will be installed in Lucknow soon. The SP government had also announced a holiday on Parshuram Jayanti which was later withdrawn by the Yogi Adityanath government," Mishra said.

Reports are that the installation of the idol in Lucknow will be a huge event.

The party will also highlight the fact that it gave tickets to 42 Brahmins in the 2012 UP assembly elections and 23 of them won.

Meanwhile, former Congress MP Pramod Tiwari, for the first time, raised the issue of victimization of the Bikru minor widow Khushi Dubey who has been languishing in jail for the past one year. He said, "It is the anti-Brahmin mentality of the Yogi Adityanath government that is responsible for the victimisation of Khushi who had been married for just three days when she was picked up by the police."

The Aam Aadmi Party has already been campaigning for Khushi's freedom for the past several months.

56 ROADS CLOSED AS RAINS POUND GUJARAT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, July 26: Incessant rains lashed several parts of Gujarat in the last 24 hours, causing water-logging and damage at various places due to which 56 roads in the state were closed for vehicular movement, the state government said Monday.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had earlier predicted an "active wet spell" in the state till July 27.

In its latest forecast, the IMD has predicted heavy showers at isolated places in some districts in the next 24 hours and advised the fishermen not to venture into the Arabian Sea till July 29.

As per figures provided by the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC), most parts of Gujarat, including the Saurashtra region, received heavy to moderate rainfall in the 24-hour period ending at 6 am Monday.

Lodhika taluka of Rajkot district in Saurashtra received the highest 198 mm rain during the period, the SEOC said in a release.

A total of 56 roads, including a state highway, 54 roads under various panchayats and one uncatagorised road, were shut following the heavy downpour, while all the national highways passing through



the state were open for traffic, the release said.

In the last 24 hours, Chhotaudepur taluka of Chhotaudepur district received 190 mm, followed by Kwant in Chhotaudepur-182mm, Becharaji in Mehsana-160 mm, Kalavad in Jammnagar-147 mm, Tilakwada in Narmada-147 mm, Botad taluka in Botad-146 mm, Kaprada in Valsad-142 mm, Manavadar in Junagadh-134 mm, and Kutiana in Porbandar-128mm, it said.

Significant rainfall in the range of 60 mm to 100 mm was also recorded during the last 24 hours

in other districts, including Vadodara, Panchmahal, Mahidagar, Kheda, Arvali, Morbi, Gir-Somnath, Tapi, Ahmedabad and Dahod, said the release.

As per the latest weather prediction by the IMD, heavy rains are very likely at isolated places over the next 24 hours in Valsad, Jammnagar, Gir-Somnath districts, and in the adjoining Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu.

In view of the bad weather and rough sea conditions, fishermen are advised not to venture into the waters till July 29, the IMD said.

Shia Board concerned over conversion law

AISPLB executive body asks Yogi Adityanath government to promote education among Muslims instead of creating new laws that are against the community

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, July 26: The All India Shia Personal Law Board (AIS-PLB) Monday decried the attempts being made to malign the Muslim community on the issue of religious conversion.

At its executive meeting, the Board said that innocent Muslims were being framed on the issue and urged the government to rethink its laws on the issue.

"Muslims who are being framed on the issue are getting relief from the court which proves that they are being deliberately framed by vested interests," Board spokesperson Maulana Yasooob Abbas said.

The AISPLB executive body also asked the Yogi Adityanath gov-

ernment to promote education among Muslims instead of creating new laws that are against the community.

Referring to the new proposed population policy, the Board was of the view that the policy should be withdrawn and the government must do rethinking on the issue.

It demanded action against former Shia Wazif Board chairman Waseem Rizvi for insulting the Holy Quran.

Rizvi has come up with a 'new Quran' after deleting 26 verses, that, the Board said, was blasphemous.

The Board spokesman said that a delegation would soon meet Chief Minister Adityanath and apprise him of their demands.



RFQ sought for makeover of Surat, Udhna 'Railpolis'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, July 26: The Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation has invited Request for Qualification (RFQ) for the transformation of Surat and Udhna stations in Gujarat into what the nodal agency called 'Railpolis', or a mini smart city where one can "Live, Work, Play and Ride".

The IRSDC, in a release, said the aim was to redevelop them as "integrated railway stations and sub-central business districts to transform station estate and surroundings using Transit-Oriented Development and Smart City principles."

Redeveloped Surat railway station will have provision of central concourse and walkways as passenger interchange plaza to provide seamless inter-connectivity to railway platforms, state and city bus terminals, proposed metro rail, parking and other recreational zones, the release added.

Similarly, Udhna railway station will be redeveloped with better connectivity and a circulation plan for hassle-free approach, concourse for departing passengers, as well as segregation of departing and arriving passengers, the IRSDC said.



The indicative cost of the redevelopment of the two stations is Rs 1,285 crore over a four-year time-frame, with the pre-bid meeting scheduled to be held August 6 and the deadline for submissions being August 31.

"The stations will be redeveloped in line with global standards to transform them at par with international airports and provide world-class amenities to travellers. The Surat railway station is envisaged to be redeveloped into a

multi-modal transport hub (MMTH), thus providing a hassle-free and comfortable travel experience to the commuters," said SK Lohia, MD and CEO, IRSDC. The redevelopment of the stations will be carried out by IRSDC

Redeveloped Surat railway station will have provision of central concourse and walkways as passenger interchange plaza to provide seamless inter-connectivity to railway platforms, state and city bus terminals, proposed metro rail, parking and other recreational zones

on behalf of a special purpose vehicle, Surat Integrated Transportation Development Corporation Limited (SITCO), a joint venture between IRSDC, Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation (GSRTC) and Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC).

Work on the redevelopment of 125 stations across the country is currently in progress, with the total investment required being in the range of Rs 50,000 crore, the IRSDC said.

of the day quote

President Macron of France called PM Bennett of Israel and demanded to know full information about alleged use of Pegasus spyware to hack phones in France. The only government that is unconcerned is the Government of India!

P CHIDAMBARAM | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

The entire Opposition is united to have a discussion on the Pegasus snooping issue in the presence of the Prime Minister or the Home Minister and announce a Supreme Court-monitored enquiry into the scandal

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS CHIEF WHIP IN PARLIAMENT

On this day, 22 years ago, Indian soldiers gave a strong message that any nefarious design to hurt the nation's sovereignty will be defeated at any cost, again and again

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Terrorist killed in encounter

Srinagar: One unidentified terrorist has been killed in an ongoing encounter between the militants and security forces in Aharbal area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district, officials said Monday. "One unidentified terrorist has been killed in the Kulgam encounter. Operation is in progress," police said.

Delhi Metro trains run with 100% seating

New Delhi: In view of the improved coronavirus situation, the Delhi Metro services began running with full seating capacity from Monday, but there is still no provision for standing travel for commuters, officials said. The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), till Sunday, had been running trains with 50 per cent seating capacity since June 7 when the services resumed after a long hiatus.

Schools to reopen in Punjab

Chandigarh: Schools for classes 10 to 12 reopened in Punjab Monday with students saying they were happy to return to classrooms as they could interact with their teachers in person and understand things better. The schools have opened after nearly four months. They were shut in March amid a surge in Covid-19 cases. The state government has allowed only those teachers and staff to return to schools who are fully vaccinated.

NEP: PM to address nation on July 29

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation July 29 on the completion of one year of the new National Education Policy (NEP), Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said Monday. "The NEP, 2020, is a guiding philosophy for changing the learning landscape, making education holistic and for building strong foundations for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat," he tweeted.

Spurious liquor kills three in MP

Mandsaur/Bhopal: After three people died following consumption of spurious liquor in Mandsaur district of Madhya Pradesh, the state government has suspended the Excise Sub-Inspector while the house of the main accused who was selling illicit liquor has been demolished with a JCB machine.



Today, on Kargil Vijay Diwas we pay homage to all those who lost their lives in Kargil protecting our nation. Their bravery motivates us every single day

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

'YAMUNA NOT FIT FOR BATHING'

The Delhi Government Monday said that the Yamuna river cannot become fit for bathing due to absence of a minimum environment flow of water



Snooping scandal rocks Parl for 5th day

AGENCIES

Kolkata/New Delhi, July 26: West Bengal Monday set up a Commission of Inquiry to probe allegations of snooping on politicians, officials and journalists in the first move by a state seen as an attempt by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to put pressure on the Centre over the Pegasus phone-hacking scandal which rocked Parliament for the fifth day.

As Banerjee made the announcement to up the ante over the Pegasus spyware row in a surprise development that came shortly before the Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo headed to New Delhi, the Congress claimed that the entire opposition is "united" in demanding a discussion on the snooping row in Parliament.

The Congress also said the opposition wants a Supreme Court-monitored inquiry into the entire scandal while a party leader Shashi Tharoor indicated that opposition



parties would continue to disrupt Parliament's proceedings until the government agrees to a debate.

Former chief justice of Calcutta High Court Jyotirmay Bhattacharya and ex-Supreme Court judge Madan Bhimrao Lokur will be the two members of the Commission of Inquiry (CoI) announced by the West Bengal government.

"Sometimes, you need to wake up some people when they are sleeping. I believe that this small step taken by us (West Bengal government) will awaken others... I will

request Justice Bhattacharya and Lokur saheb to immediately start the investigation," said Banerjee, who had last week accused the Modi government of trying to establish a "surveillance state".

The chief minister said West Bengal had hoped that the Centre would form an inquiry commission or a court-monitored probe would be ordered to look into the phone-hacking incident.

"But the Centre is sitting idle... So we decided to form a Commission of Inquiry to look

into the matter. West Bengal is the first state to take a step in this matter."

Banerjee said the state Cabinet approved the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry in exercise of power conferred by Section 3 of the Commission of Inquiry Act of 1952 in the matter of widely reported illegal hacking, monitoring, putting under surveillance, tracking and recording of mobile phones of various persons in West Bengal.

Banerjee said the panel will try to find out who all are involved in hacking the phones and how are they doing it. Also, it is important to look into the steps that have been taken to stop this illegal activity, she told a press conference in Kolkata before leaving for New Delhi, where she is also scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Under the Commission of Inquiry Act, both the Centre and states can institute a probe.

Rahul Gandhi drives tractor to Parliament



AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 26: Extending support to farmers protesting against the Centre's three farm laws, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Monday drove a tractor to Parliament along with other party MPs and demanded that the agricultural laws be repealed.

Rahul Gandhi, along with party MPs Pratap Singh Bajwa, Ravneet Singh Bittu, Deepinder Singh Hooda, Gurjit Singh Aujla, Jasbir Singh Gill and other leaders like Randeep Surjewala, also carried banners and raised slogans. Rahul Gandhi said he has brought the message of farmers to Parliament.

"We have brought the message of farmers to Parliament. Their issue is not being allowed to be discussed in Parliament and farmers all over the country are being suppressed and that is why we are here. These black laws should be withdrawn," he told reporters. He claimed that these farm laws are aimed to help only two-three industrialists.

"The entire country knows for whom these laws have been brought. These laws are not for the benefit of farmers and that is why they have to be withdrawn," he added. Later, in a tweet in Hindi, Gandhi said, "If you force them to sell their land, then the tractor will run in Parliament - we will grow the crop of truth. Withdraw the anti-agri-

Women farmers hold 'Kisan Sansad'

Nearly 200 women farmers from Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana on Monday gathered at Delhi's Jantar Mantar for a 'Kisan Sansad', and demanded that the Centre's contentious agri laws should be repealed. They raised slogans demanding scrapping the three farm laws -- the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020; and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020. The focus of Monday's 'Kisan Sansad' was the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020, and the farmers' demand for the enactment of a law guaranteeing remunerative minimum support price (MSP) for their crops.

culture laws." Surjewala and Youth Congress chief BV Srinivas, along with a number of party leaders, were detained by the Delhi Police outside Parliament and taken to Mandir marg police station. The police said 10 people have been detained. The tractor driven by Rahul Gandhi has also been impounded by the Delhi Police.

REMEMBERING THE HEROES



Army Chief General MM Naravane, Air Force Chief Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria, Navy Vice Chief Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar, and CISC Vice Admiral Atul Jain pay tribute to the martyrs of Kargil war on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas, at National War Memorial in New Delhi

Hackers using Discord to spread malware: Report

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 26: Leading cybersecurity firm Sophos Monday warned users that popular chat platform Discord is being used by hackers for spreading malware.

The firm said that the findings are based on analysis of more than 1,800 malicious files detected by Sophos telemetry on the Discord Content Management Network (CDN).

The cyber threats include information-stealing malware, spyware, backdoors and ransomware resurrected as "mischiefware".

"Discord provides a persistent, highly-available, global distribution network for malware operators, as well as a messaging system that these operators can adapt into command-and-control channels for their malware - in much the same way attackers have used Internet Relay Chat and Telegram," Sophos senior threat researcher Sean

Gallagher said in a statement. "Discord's vast user base also provides an ideal environment for stealing personal information and credentials through social engineering," he added.

Among other things, the research revealed how the number of URLs hosting malware on Discord's CDN during the second quarter of 2021 increased by 140 per cent compared to the same period in 2020.

The firm said that the malware is often disguised as gaming-related tools and cheats.

The common "cheats" include modifications that allow players to disable an opponent or to access premium features for free - usually for a popular online game such as Minecraft, Fortnite, Roblox, and Grand Theft Auto.

According to the report, information-stealers are the most prevalent threat, accounting for more than 35 per cent of the malware seen.

Maha rains: Death toll rises to 192



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai/Pune, July 26: The death toll in rain-related incidents in Maharashtra rose to 192 Monday after the recovery of 28 more bodies, most of them in Raigad, the state government said, while Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar toured flood-hit villages in Sangli district and said a decision on providing financial relief will be taken in a couple of days.

As many as 48 persons were injured in these incidents and 25 still missing, while so far, 2,29,074 per-

sons have been evacuated from the flood and rain-affected affected areas and moved to safer places, the government said in a statement in Mumbai.

Giving the district-wise break up of fatalities in heavy rains and floods since last week, the official statement said Raigad has reported 95 deaths, Satara 45, Ratnagiri 21, Thane 12, Kolhapur 7, Sindhudurg, Akola, Pune and Wardha 2 each, and Mumbai 4 (total 192).

The administration of Raigad, the worst-hit district located in the coastal Konkan region, earlier Monday called off the search operations for 31 missing people in Taliye village which was ravaged by a massive landslide after heavy rains last week. Collector Nidhi Chaudhari said.

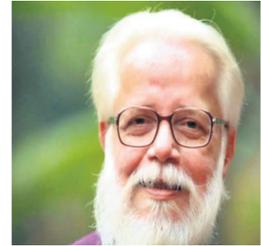
The village, located in Mahad taluka of Raigad, witnessed the deadly landslide last Thursday after heavy rains, flattening several houses in the area. The collector said the decision to call of the search operations was taken after

seeking opinion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the disaster response forces of the state and neighbouring Thane district.

"The rescue operations have ended officially. We have withdrawn our teams from Taliye. The 31 missing will be declared dead following the due process. Relatives of the missing people demanded closure of the operations since yesterday," the collector said earlier in the day.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray visited the village Saturday and said as landslides proved fatal in many parts of the state, the government would come up with a plan to permanently relocate people living in hilly areas. A decision on providing relief to the people affected by floods will be taken in the next couple of days, Deputy CM Ajit Pawar said after he toured various rain-hit villages in Sangli district and used a rescue boat to reach out to victims in some areas Monday.

CBI TO PROBE ISRO SCIENTIST'S FRAMING IN SPY CASE, SAYS SC



AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 26: The Supreme Court Monday gave a free hand to the CBI to probe the alleged conspiracy to frame ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan in an espionage case in 1994 as the agency, in a status report, informed the top court that it has registered an FIR against former Kerala DGP Siby Mathews and others in the matter.

A bench headed by Justice AM Khanwilkar said: "It is mentioned in the report after examining relevant aspect, the FIR has been registered. Now the law has to take its course." Advocate Amit Sharma, counsel for Mathews, and advocate Kaleeswaram Raj, counsel for another accused, submitted that the Justice D.K. Jain Committee report has not been shared with the accused, and argued that the CBI's refusal to do so is causing prejudice to the accused in availing their statutory remedies. They also contended that the central probe agency is relying on the report in the FIR.

The bench, also comprising Justice Sanjiv Khanna, noted that the CBI cannot proceed on the basis of the report of a panel headed by former top court judge Jain, formed in September 2018, to examine the matter, and the agency will have to collect material in the case independently. "The report by itself cannot be the basis to proceed against the respondents or persons named as accused in the FIR registered by the CBI," said the bench.

Landslide victim's tweets before death go viral

DEEPA SHARMA WAS AMONG THE NINE TOURISTS WHOSE TEMPO TRAVELLER WAS HIT BY THE BOULDERS IN THE SANGLA VALLEY LANDSLIDE IN KINNAUR DISTRICT SUNDAY



AGENCIES

Shimla, July 26: 'Life is nothing without mother nature', a tweet by a doctor from Jaipur, became widely popular minutes after her soul left the body in a natural disaster in the mountainous Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh.

Ayurveda doctor Deepa Sharma, 34, posted her merrymaking photos amidst nature just before boulders hit the vehicle in which she was travelling, killing her and eight other tourists on Sunday.

On a vacation to the hill state, Deepa posted her picture on Twitter and also wrote: "Standing at the last point of India where civilians



are allowed. Beyond this point around 80 kms ahead we have border with Tibet whom china has occupied illegally."

Her last Twitter post at 12.59 p.m. featured a picture of her posing at Nagasti checkpoint of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). Twenty-five minutes after the last tweet, the news came that massive boulders fell on a Tempo Traveller carrying tourists from Chitkula to Sangla, killing nine people and injuring three. Eight of them died on the spot.

'LIFE IS NOTHING WITHOUT NATURE'

international

of the day quote

China would never accept any country that claims to be superior to others. If the US has not learned to treat other countries equally, China and the international community have the responsibility to help the US learn how to do this

We are one of the few countries in the world to have a state-owned insurance company, SASRIA, which provides cover against incidents of public violence, strikes, riots and unrest

Alarming. 3752 new Covid patients yesterday. Get serious people of Pakistan. Cases have shot up post Eid. I was expecting & warning about it as I saw carelessness in streets, bazaars, weddings & mosques



'US creating imaginary enemy'

AGENCIES

Beijing, July 26: A top Chinese diplomat took a confrontational tone Monday in rare high-level talks with the United States, accusing it of creating an imaginary enemy to divert attention from domestic problems and suppress China.

Amid worsening relations between the world's two largest economies, Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, the second-ranking US diplomat, arrived Sunday for face-to-face meetings in the northern city of Tianjin that the US State Department described as frank and open.

No specific outcomes were agreed and the prospect of a meeting between US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping was not discussed, senior US administration officials said following talks that lasted about four hours.

China seized the early narrative, with state media reporting on confrontational remarks by Vice Foreign Minister Xie Feng soon after the session began, in echoes of a similarly combative opening by senior Chinese officials during high-level talks in March in Alaska.

Foreign media were kept at a distance from the site of the talks,

'FRANK' TALKS



The United States wants to reignite the sense of national purpose by establishing China as an 'imaginary enemy'. As if once China's development is suppressed, US domestic and external problems will be resolved, and America will be great again, and America's hegemony can be continued

XIE FENG | VICE FOREIGN MIN, CHINA

held outside of Beijing due to Covid-19 protocols, but Chinese media were permitted on the premises.

The United States wants to reignite the sense of national purpose by establishing China as an 'imaginary enemy', Xie was quoted as saying while the talks were underway.

The United States had mobilised its government and society to suppress China, he added.

As if once China's development is suppressed, US domestic and external problems will be resolved, and America will be great again, and America's hegemony can be continued.

Poverty, income inequality and the high cost of food continue to keep healthy diets out of the reach of some 3 billion people. Climate change and conflict are both consequences and drivers of this catastrophe

ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECY-GENERAL

TUNISIAN PREZ OUSTS GOVT

Tunisia faced its worst crisis in a decade of democracy Monday after President Kais Saied ousted the government and froze parliament with help from the army in a move denounced as a coup by the main parties including Islamists



POK ELECTIONS

Khan's party elected; Oppn alleges 'rigging'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, July 26: Prime Minister Imran Khan's party Monday was poised to form the government in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir for the first time after it won 25 of 45 seats in the legislative assembly elections marred by deadly violence and allegations of irregularities by the Opposition, local media reported.

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) won 25 seats while Pakistan People's Party (PPP) came second with 11 seats and the incumbent Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) secured just six seats, the state-run Radio Pakistan reported, citing unofficial results announced by the Election Commission.

Thus, PTI got a simple majority to form the government without support of any other party. It is for the first time that it will form a government in PoK.

Traditionally, the ruling party in the country wins the elections in PoK.



Muslim Conference (MC) and Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Party (JKPP) won one seat each.

India has previously slammed Pakistan for its decision to hold elections in Gilgit-Baltistan and said any action to alter the status of the militarily occupied region has no legal basis.

Prime Minister Khan thanked the people of the region for placing their trust in his party through their votes which resulted in PTI's electoral victory. We will focus on bringing the ppl out of poverty through our Ehsaas & Kamyab Pakistan prog; & establish accountability & transparency in govt, he tweeted.

SHORT TAKES

Malaysia reopens Parl after 7 months

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia's government said it will not extend a coronavirus emergency beyond August 1 as the Parliament reopened Monday after a disputed seven-month suspension. The emergency, which allowed the govt to halt Parliament and rule by ordinance without legislative approval, has been slammed as a ruse for embattled PM Muhyiddin Yassin to stay in power.

Typhoon Nepartak to affect Olympics

Tokyo: Typhoon Nepartak, currently moving northward from the Pacific, is likely to make landfall Tuesday on Japan's main island including Tokyo, where the Olympic Games are underway, authorities said Monday. Since Typhoon Nepartak is expected to move west and approach the eastern and northeastern parts of Japan, some Olympic events may be affected by the weather, Xinhua news quoted the Japan Meteorological Agency as saying. The weather agency has warned about heavy rain, winds and high waves.

Scottish climber dies in avalanche

Islamabad: A renowned Scottish climber died in an avalanche while attempting to scale K2 in northern Pakistan, the world's second-highest mountain peak, a Pakistani mountaineering official and the charity said Monday. Rick Allen, 68, died in the avalanche three days ago while trying to reach the summit along a route that had not been attempted previously on the mountain's southeast face, said Karrar Haidri, the secretary of the Alpine Club of Pakistan. Allen's two climbing partners survived the avalanche and were subsequently rescued, Haidri added.

13 killed, 47 injured in China bus mishap

Beijing: Thirteen people were killed and 47 others injured Monday when a passenger bus rolled over on a highway in northwest China's Gansu province, local authorities said. There were 63 people onboard the bus, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. The bus rolled over on the highway in Jingchuan County of Pingliang, it said. The Ministry of Public Security has sent a working team to the site to guide the investigation and handling of the accident.

Japan grants health benefits to A-bomb 'black rain' victims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tokyo, July 26: Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said Monday he has decided to grant official medical benefits to 84 Hiroshima residents who were exposed to highly radioactive "black rain" after the city's atomic bombing.

Suga's decision ends a long legal battle by the central government that delayed medical aid for the "black rain" victims, who were outside a government-set boundary used to decide survivors' eligibility for medical care.

On July 14, the Hiroshima High Court upheld a lower court's decision that the 84 are eligible for the same benefits as other atomic bomb survivors who were inside the boundary and ordered the government to certify their applications for state health care benefits.

"I have carefully thought about the ruling, and I believe that the 84

plaintiffs should be helped under the atomic bombing survivors' compensation law and its philosophy, Suga told reporters after meeting with Hiroshima's governor and mayor. "I have decided not to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Suga said the government will begin issuing certificates recognising the plaintiffs as "hibakusha", or atomic bomb victims.

The health ministry had maintained there is little scientific evidence proving the plaintiffs suffered from radiation exposure, but the high court ruled that the 84 developed radiation-induced illnesses and should be certified as atomic bomb victims eligible for government health care benefits.

The US dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima August 6, 1945, killing 140,000 people in the initial period after the attack. A second US atomic attack on Nagasaki killed another 74,000 before Japan's surrender August 15 ended World War II.



EFFORTS TO EXTINGUISH



A helicopter is being filled up with water from a tank as a wildfire burns near the village of Spathovouni, near Corinth, Greece

'Covid substantially impacts patients' intelligence'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, July 26: A severe coronavirus infection, involving hospitalisation and ventilator support, has a substantial impact on a recovered patient's intelligence as part of wider Long-Covid symptoms, a UK study has found.

Scientists tested 81,337 participants between January and December 2020 with a clinically validated web-optimised assessment as part of the Great British Intelligence Test. The questionnaire items captured self-report of suspected and confirmed Covid-19 infection and

Scientists say the findings should act as a "clarion call" for further research with longitudinal and neuroimaging cohorts to plot recovery trajectories and identify the biological basis of cognitive deficits in SARS-COV-2 or Covid-19 survivors

respiratory symptoms.

"These results accord with reports of long-Covid, where 'brain fog', trouble concentrating and difficulty finding the correct words are common," notes the study published in 'The Lancet - EclinicalMedicine' journal last week.

"The scale of the observed deficit was not insubstantial... When examining the entire population, the deficits were most pronounced for paradigms that tapped cognitive functions such as reasoning, problem solving, spatial planning and target detection whilst sparing tests of simpler functions such as

working-memory span as well as emotional processing," it said.

One possibility was the observed cognitive deficits related to ongoing symptoms of the deadly virus, such as a high temperature or respiratory problems, with 4.8 per cent of participants who were ill reporting residual symptoms.

People who had recovered from Covid-19, including those no longer reporting symptoms, exhibited significant cognitive deficits versus controls when controlling for age, gender, education level, income, racial-ethnic group, pre-existing medical disorders, tiredness, depression and anxiety.

Vatican trial opens into financial scandal rocking papacy

VATICAN PROSECUTORS HAVE ALLEGED A JAW-DROPPING SERIES OF SCANDALS IN THE BIGGEST CRIMINAL TRIAL IN THE VATICAN'S MODERN HISTORY, WHICH OPENS TODAY IN A MODIFIED COURTROOM IN THE VATICAN MUSEUMS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vatican City, July 26: A cardinal who allegedly induced an underling to lie to prosecutors. Brokers and lawyers who pulled a fast one over the Vatican No 2 to get him to approve a disastrous real estate deal. A self-styled intelligence analyst who bought Prada and Louis Vuitton items with the Vatican money that she was supposed to send to rebels holding a Catholic nun hostage.

Vatican prosecutors have alleged a jaw-dropping series of scandals in the biggest criminal trial in the Vatican's modern history, which opens Tuesday in a modified courtroom in the Vatican Museums.

The once-powerful cardinal and

nine other people are accused of bleeding the Holy See of tens of millions of dollars in donations through bad investments, deals with shady money managers and apparent favours to friends and family. They face prison sentences, fines or both if convicted.

The trial, which will likely be postponed for several months after the first hearings Tuesday and Wednesday, is the culmination of a two-year investigation into the Holy See's flawed 350 million-euro London real estate venture.

That operation exposed the Vatican's once-secret financial dealings and its structural dysfunction, which allowed just a few people to do so much damage to the Vatican's finances and reputation, with little expertise or oversight.



But the prosecutors' case also suggests that Pope Francis and his top lieutenants were not only

aware of some of the key transactions, but in some cases explicitly authorised them, even without

full documentation or understanding the details. Given the hierarchical nature of the Holy See and the obedience required of underlings to their religious superiors, questions also remain about why some people were charged and others not.

One Vatican Monsignor who until recently was considered by prosecutors to be a key suspect, Monsignor Alberto Perlasca, managed to avoid indictment.

Perlasca's office handled the London investment from start to finish and his boss had identified him as the main in-house culprit in obscuring the deal's costly outcome. But prosecutors suggested that Perlasca flipped and became an important witness, in part after coming under pressure to recant

his testimony by the lone cardinal on trial, Angelo Becciu.

Francis, who as absolute monarch wields supreme legislative, executive and judicial power in Vatican City, has in many ways already convicted Becciu.

Last year, Francis presented Becciu with evidence that he had sent 100,000 euros in Vatican funds to a Sardinian charity run by Becciu's brother. Francis secured Becciu's resignation as head of the Vatican's saint-making office and then stripped him of his rights as cardinal, a sanction that was announced immediately by the Vatican press office.

Becciu, who is charged with embezzlement and pressuring Perlasca to recant, has denied any wrongdoing.

business

of the day quote

The genesis of the Tea Board order is to bring small tea growers (STG) in its fold. STGs account for 50% of the total production in the country

AZAM MONEM | WHOLE-TIME DIRECTOR, MCLEOD RUSSEL

From Tata Motors' perspective, the Indian government, through the FAME II incentives, eligibility criteria have been very clearly set for the direction in which the country should take to accelerate the adoption of EVs. This has always emphasised affordable EVs and also localisation as per the phased manufacturing plans

P BALAJI | CFO, TATA MOTORS

We are on the cusp of a major gaming boom in India based on the rising popularity of gaming witnessed in the last few years. For youngsters in India, gaming is increasingly becoming a passion point like music or any other sport

VICKRAM BEDI | SENIOR DIRECTOR (PERSONAL SYSTEMS), HP INDIA MARKET

SHORT TAKES

Vi lines up new postpaid plans

New Delhi: The enterprise arm of Vodafone Idea (Vi), Vi Business, Monday announced a range of new postpaid plans for corporate customers and said upgraded plans would be bundled with various benefits. With 'Work from Home', 'Learn from Home', and 'Entertainment from Home' emerging as the "new way of living" amid the pandemic-induced social distancing norms, customers too have evolved with their needs and requirement of high-speed data.

Axis Bank Q1 net jumps 94%

New Delhi: Axis Bank Monday saw its net profit almost double to ₹2,160.15 crore in the June quarter on the back of a healthy loan book growth and a fall in bad loan provisions. The private sector lender had posted a net profit of ₹1,112.17 crore in the year-ago period. In the first quarter of the current fiscal, total income of the bank rose to ₹19,591.63 crore from ₹19,032.15 crore in the same period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing.

SPN announces leadership rejig

New Delhi: Broadcaster Sony Pictures Networks India (SPN) Monday announced top level leadership rejig as part of its Vision 3.0 of creating a future-ready organisation. Under the changes which are effective immediately, Chief Revenue Officer-Ad Sales and International Business Rohit Gupta will now become an advisor to the management and the board. Gupta will be advising senior management on industry trends, developments and work closely with the CEO on various industry issues that could positively impact the company's strategy and growth, SPN said.

Oppo eyes 50% contribution

New Delhi: Smartphone maker Oppo expects online sales to contribute about 50% to overall business of the company in this year with its reach expanding to smaller towns as well through e-retailers, a senior company official said Monday. Oppo India Chief Marketing Officer Damyant Singh Khanoria said that as part of its omnichannel strategy the company is looking to focus on its online presence.



We are very proud to partner with Adagio in our shared mission to provide affordable access to a best-in-class antibody therapy for people affected by SARS-CoV-2. This aligns our joint vision of bringing superior biologic therapies to millions of patients

KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW | EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON, BIOCON BIOLOGICS

PAYTM EYES IPO BY OCT-END

Indian digital payments firm Paytm expects to launch its initial public offering (IPO) at around the end of October this year, pending regulatory approvals, a source familiar with the matter said Monday



2nd wave may have more lasting damage on economy: Moody's

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 26: The second wave of Covid-19 may have a more lasting damage on the Indian economy and exports will once again be the foundation for recovery, Moody's Analytics said Monday. In its report titled 'APAC Economic Outlook: The Delta Roadblock', Moody's Analytics said social distancing is weighing on the current quarter, but economic recovery will resume by the year-end.

The Delta variant of Covid-19 is among factors now adversely affecting economies of the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region, but the economic hit from the current round of movement restrictions in the region will not be as severe as the recessions in the second quarter of last year.

In India, where exports make up relatively small shares of the economy, high commodity prices have boosted the value of exports. This is one factor that helped reinvigorate India after its first devastating wave of Covid-19.

"While its second wave, which is now coming to an end, may have more lasting damage to the economy as the pandemic's one-two punch hit small enterprises very hard, exports will once again be the



Moody's Analytics said global GDP this year will be in the range of 5-5.5%, well above its 3% potential growth rate as recovery continues from last year's pandemic recession

foundation for recovery," it said. With regard to vaccination, Moody's Analytics, which is a financial intelligence company, said India is struggling to accelerate its pace of inoculation. The global economic recovery is continuing at a solid pace, but parts of Asia will

not reflect this in the near term given heightened social distancing restrictions now in place, particularly in Southeast Asia as the Delta variant of Covid-19 spreads across the region, it said.

Moody's Analytics said global GDP this year will be in the range of 5-5.5%, well above its 3% potential growth rate as recovery continues from last year's pandemic recession.

"Global trade continued its rapid recovery well into this year's second quarter. Global industrial production also is still rising, although now at a slower pace than merchandise trade as tie-ups in global supply chains slow many manufacturing processes," it added.

Biz resumption moderated last week: Nomura

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 26: Business resumption activities, which had been gathering pace after the end of the second wave, moderated for the week ended July 25, Japanese brokerage Nomura said Monday. The Nomura India Business Resumption Index declined to 95.3 from the previous week's high of 96.4, the brokerage said, stressing that it continues to be above the pre-second wave levels.

Mobility indices registered the first week-on-week fall since mid-May, with Google's workplace and retail and recreation mobility down 0.4 percentage points (pp) and 0.6 pp, respectively. The Apple driving index slipped 2.3 pp, it said.



Power demand also fell by a steep 4.1 per cent as compared to the preceding week, after a 2.8 per cent decline the previous week. The labour participation rate, however, rose to 41.1 per cent from 40.4 per cent.

It further said early macroeconomic data for June suggests a return to conditions similar to April, after the shallow decline in May.

No plan to print currency notes to tide over crisis: FM

Many economists and experts have suggested to the government to print more currency notes to tide over the intricate economic situation with a view to support the economy ravaged by the spread of Covid, and protect jobs



AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 26: The government has no plan to print currency notes to tide over the current economic crisis triggered by the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed Parliament Monday. To a question on whether there is any plan to print currency to tide over the crisis, the Finance Minister said, "No Sir".

Many economists and experts have suggested to the government to print more currency notes to tide over the difficult economic situation with a view to support the economy ravaged by the spread of Covid-19, and protect jobs.

In economic parlance, printing of money is called monetisation of the deficit. In other words, monetisation of the deficit happens when the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) buys government securities directly from the primary market to fund the government's expenses.

India's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to have contracted by 7.3% during 2020-21, Sitharaman said in a written reply to Lok Sabha. This contraction reflects the unparalleled effect of the pandemic and the containment measures that were taken to control the pandemic, she said.

"The fundamentals of the economy remain strong as gradual scaling back of lockdowns, along with the astute support of Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission has placed the

economy firmly on the path of recovery from the second half of FY 2020-21," she said.

The government had announced a special economic and comprehensive package of ₹29.87 lakh crore under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' to combat the impact of the pandemic, to revive economic growth and to bolster employment during 2020-21, she said.

The Union Budget 2021-22 announced a number of measures to support broad-based and inclusive economic development including a 34.5% increase in capital expenditure and 137% increase in health expenditure, she said, adding, the government announced a relief package of ₹6.29 lakh crore in June 2021, to strengthen public health and provide impetus for growth and employment measures.

Replying to another question, Sitharaman said, the impact of the second Covid-19 wave is expected to be muted given localised containment measures and rapid up-scaling of the vaccination drive. The Union Budget 2021-22, estimates India's nominal GDP growth at 14.4% during the current financial year ending March 2022.

The RBI, in its latest Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) resolution of June 4, 2021, has projected India's real GDP to grow at 9.5% in 2021-22, after accounting for the impact of the second wave as compared to its earlier projection of 10.5%, she said.

TPCODL, CSC joins hands to foster 'digital payment'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: In a quest to enhance the digital payment from rural area, TPCODL collaborated with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited for accepting electricity bill payment at Common Service Centres (CSCs) or through Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs). Around 5,800+ CSC/VLE, are spread across TPCODL area.

The customer has to visit to the nearest CSC or VLE for making a bill payment in three easy steps. The above service will ease the bill payment process for rural customers. M Shengbagam, CEO, TPCODL said, "Collaboration with CSC will make our bill payment process convenient for rural customers. We are delighted to partner with CSC and co creates this payment option for enhancing our customer's experience."

Skylo partners with BSNL to provide NB-IoT to fishermen

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Satellite-based IoT technology firm Skylo Technologies joined hands with state-owned BSNL to offer a breakthrough satellite-based NB-IoT (Narrow Band-Internet of Things) technology to fishermen.

With the BSNL-Skylo technology, fishermen can remain in touch with shore for sharing the information of catch and ensuring guaranteed sale for their catch even while they are at sea, send out SOS and share their location real time with authorities in case of accidents and receive timely alerts on storms, cyclones or other natural calamities, in turn saving their lives.

Odisha has about 10.84 lakh fish-



ermen, of which about 7.51 lakh are into inland sector while 3.33 lakh are engaged in marine sector that constitutes 2.95% of the total population of the state (4.37 crore as in 2014). The economic status of the fishermen is generally below the poverty line (BPL). The fisheries sector contributes 2.32% to the state GDP.

Ganesh Nakhawa, Program Director Fisheries, Skylo, said,

Govt tables Bill in LS to amend insolvency law

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 26: The government Monday introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha to amend the insolvency law and provide for a pre-packaged resolution process for stressed MSMEs.

The proposed amendments would enable the government to notify the threshold of a default not exceeding ₹1 crore for initiation of pre-packaged resolution process. The government has already prescribed the threshold of ₹10 lakh for this purpose.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2021 -- which was introduced by Corporate and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman -- will replace the ordinance that was promulgated on



April 4 as part of efforts to provide relief for MSMEs adversely impacted by the pandemic.

The bill, which was introduced in the Lower House amid Opposition din over various issues, seeks to have a new chapter in the Code to facilitate pre-pack-

aged insolvency resolution process for corporate persons that are Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Generally, under a pre-packaged process, main stakeholders such as creditors and shareholders come together to identify a prospective

buyer and negotiate a resolution plan before approaching the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). All resolution plans under IBC need to be approved by NCLT.

As per the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the bill, it seeks to specify a minimum threshold of not more than ₹1 crore for initiating pre-packaged insolvency resolution process as well as provisions for disposal of simultaneous applications for initiation of insolvency resolution process and pre-packaged insolvency resolution process, pending against the same corporate debtor.

There would be a penalty for fraudulent or malicious initiation of pre-packaged insolvency resolution process or with intent to defraud persons.

ESIC disburses pension under 'Covid Relief Scheme'

Bhubaneswar: Under the Covid Relief Scheme, ESIC Corporation Monday disbursed the first payment of monthly pension to the wife of deceased, Bhulup Sahoo who was working as a Junior Assistant at IMFA. The deceased's wife Bhanumati Sahoo received a cheque of ₹16,080 as monthly salary. The pension to the dependent (The deceased's wife) started May 6 this year. She was also paid ₹30,017 towards arrear of pension from May 6, 2021 to June 30, 2021. ESIC Corporation has received about 39 applications and two aspirants have already started receiving pensions.

Covid will cost world between \$16tn and \$35tn: McKinsey

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 26: By 2025, Covid-19 will have cost the world between \$16 trillion and \$35 trillion, as per McKinsey. The world is unlikely to ever reach global herd immunity, but it can contain the virus with a combination of vaccines, improved testing, and smarter quarantining, based on known outbreaks, rather than large, blunt lockdowns, McKinsey said in a report.

Obstacles to worldwide vaccination remain huge: while 49.6% of inhabitants of high-income countries had received at least one dose of the vaccine as of July 14, only 1% of those in low-income countries had.

In the next two decades, competition for global influence is likely to reach its highest level since the Cold War. Current tensions are most apparent in the unfolding competition between China and the United States, the homes of 76 of the world's 100 most valuable companies.

To manage geopolitical risk, boards should devote time to big-picture questions. Companies also need to think critically about their corporate narratives and decide whether they are global entities or whether they are tied to a specific country or region are more important, the report said.

The report said car sales and production have come roaring back, but today's consumers, sup-



pliers, and dealers demand more digital, connected, and electric ve-

hicles. Automakers will have to hire more software engineers and

CONTAINING THE VIRUS

Obstacles to worldwide vaccination remain huge: while 49.6% of inhabitants of high-income countries had received at least one dose of the vaccine as of July 14, only 1% of those in low-income countries had

In the next two decades, competition for global influence is likely to reach its highest level since the Cold War

reskill up to one-quarter of their current workforces.

Climate change poses specific risks for urban areas, 90% of which are coastal. By 2050, more than 800 million urban residents could be affected by sea-level rise and coastal flooding. A report co-written by McKinsey and C40 Cities Climate Leadership, a network of large cities committed to addressing climate change, identifies 15 high-potential actions that can work for many types of cities.

Case numbers are resurging in parts of the world where the Covid-19 pandemic was waning, falling in places that saw huge surges recently, and just beginning to rise in previously little-impacted parts of the globe.

Poor execution costs eves

OLYMPIC SILVER MEDALLIST CHANU RETURNS TO INDIA Warm but chaotic reception



Navjot Kaur in action during India's match against Germany, Monday

PTI PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tokyo, July 26: The Indian women's hockey team fought valiantly but poor execution proved to be its undoing, leading to a 0-2 defeat at the hands of Germany, a second consecutive setback for the side at the Tokyo Olympics here Monday.

After the 1-5 drubbing at the hands of World No.1 Netherlands, the Indians lifted their game but it was not enough to get past World

No.3 and Rio Games bronze-medallists Germany in their second Pool A match at the Oi Hockey Stadium. Indian will play Great Britain in their next pool match Wednesday.

The team was guilty of wasting a lot of opportunities, including a penalty stroke by Gurjit Kaur in the third quarter while luck also didn't favour the Rani Rampal-led side. Skipper Nike Lorenz (12th minute) and Anna Schroder (35th) were the goal scorers for Germany, who registered their second win on

the trot having beaten Great Britain 2-1 in their first match.

The Germans started on a bright note and had most of the possession early on but India slowly and steadily made their presence felt in the match. Germany had the first shot at the goal but India goalkeeper Savita was at the right place to deny Franzisca Hauke in the ninth minute.

But three minutes later the Germans were not to be stopped as skipper Nike Lorenz flicked the

ball past Savita from their first penalty corner. The Germans were more aggressive in the first half and got another penalty corner in the 21st minute but India this time defended stoutly.

The Rani Rampal-led side upped its game by a notch compared to the first game against Netherlands and penetrated the German circle on a quite a few occasions. But what let them down was finishing and a brave and strong German defence as India went into half time trailing by a goal.

The Indians came out with purpose after the change of ends and looked threatening, mounting attacks as the Germans got busy in defending their citadel. Vanadana Katariya had an excellent game as she created numerous chances for her side but the forward-line erred in the final touch.

Two minutes into the third quarter, it was Vandana who helped India secure its first penalty corner of the Games. Skipper Rani stepped up and her goalmouth strike hit the body of a German defender. India straight sought referral for a penalty stroke and duly got one but Gurjit failed to find the back of the net as her effort struck the side post.

The Germans punished India three minutes later when Schroder scored with a fierce hit from top right corner of the circle to double her side's lead. The Indians didn't lose hope and continued their attacking play but they failed to penetrate the German defence.

On two occasions, Vandana came close to scoring - first she was denied by the German keeper from a one-on-one situation with a brilliant save and then her deflection from Navneet Kaur's pass hit the top of the post in the 46th minute.

The Germans secured another penalty corner soon but faltered in execution. Thereafter, the Germans mostly tried to keep the possession, denying India any inroads.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 26: Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu returned to the country Monday after her superb silver medal-winning performance at the Tokyo Olympics, walking into sheer chaos after stepping out of the airport where social distancing went for a toss.

Chanu walked out of the Indira Gandhi International Airport, flanked by security and clad in a face shield and mask. "Happy to be back here in amidst so much



love and support. Thank You so much." she tweeted after landing. Inside the airport, the 26-year-old was greeted with chants of 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' by the staff present there and felicitated by officials of the Sports Authority of India among others.

Once out, the young star was mobbed by the waiting media leading to a melee and had to be completely enveloped by security personnel as she made her way through. She is scheduled to meet sports minister Anurag Thakur later in the evening.

The diminutive Manipuri lifted a total of 202kg (87kg+115kg) in the 49kg category to better Karnam Malleswari's bronze in the 2000 Sydney Olympics Saturday.

With that performance, she exorcised the ghosts of the 2016 Games where she had failed to log a single legitimate lift, leaving her shattered. Chanu has also been a former World Champion and a Commonwealth Games gold-medallist.

She was training in the USA before the Games and lived up to the medal expectations from her with a confident performance.

The Manipuri's focus for the past five years also kept her away from her family and she said she spent just five days with them during this period.

Boxer Ashish ousted after opening loss

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tokyo, July 26: Indian boxer Ashish Chaudhary (75kg) paid for an underwhelming start as his maiden Olympic appearance ended with an opening-round loss to China's Erbieke Touheta here Monday.

The 27-year-old former Asian silver-medallist went down 0-5 in the bout, which could have been way closer had he turned it up a little

bit earlier.

The boxer from Himachal Pradesh was caught on the back-foot in the opening round and lost it unanimously to the busy Chinese, who used his jab to good effect.

Ashish raised his game in the second round to give a better account of himself with more attacks but once again, the lack of clear and precise punches hurt his cause as the Chinese excelled in dodging him on most occasions. Touheta's combi-

nation hits also connected better.

Ashish went all out in the final three minutes and managed to trouble Touheta despite a cut beneath his left eye. The judges also scored unanimously in his favour but the Chinese had the decisive lead which gave him the victory.

Ashish is the third Indian boxer to bow out of the mega-event after Vikas Krishan (69kg) and Manish Kaushik (63kg) also exited with opening-round losses.

FENCER BHAVANI DEVI BOWS OUT

Tokyo: India's first ever fencer in the Olympics, CA Bhavani Devi, lasted two rounds at the Games, her historic maiden appearance ending with a loss to world number three Manon Brunet in the women's individual sabre event here Monday. The 27-year-old began her campaign with a confident 15-3 win against Tunisia's Nadia Ben Azizi but bumped into Rio Olympics semifinalist Frenchwoman Brunet in the next round, which she lost 7-15. The sabre is the fastest of the fencing competitions in which opponents can slash anywhere above the waist. The fencer who touches the 15 point-mark first is declared the winner. In the other two events - foil and epee - only the tip of the sword can be used to target the opponent.

ANGAD FINISHES 18TH IN SKEET

TOKYO: India's Angad Vir Singh Bajwa finished 18th while his senior compatriot Mairaj Ahmad Khan ended 25th in the men's skeet event of the Tokyo Olympics here Monday. The 25-year-old Angad shot 120 across five series and Mairaj could manage only 117 at the Asaka Range. Placed a creditable 11th overnight and eyeing a finals berth at the end of the first three rounds, Angad missed his target thrice on the second day of the qualifying to bow out of contention without a fight. His series of scores read 24, 25, 24, 23, 24. On the other hand, Mairaj was could not improve on his overnight position and ended the competition with scores of 25, 24, 22, 23, 23 for a total of 117.

Satwik-Chirag overpowered

Tokyo: The Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty suffered a straight game loss to world number one Marcus Gideon Fernaldi and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo of Indonesia in their second Group A match at the Olympics Monday. The World No.10 Indian duo could never get into any kind of rhythm and lost 13-21, 12-21 in 32 minutes against the top seeded team. It was their ninth defeat to the Indonesian pair in as many meetings. Sukamuljo and Gideon are now at the top of the group, while Satwik and Chirag are on the second spot. The Indians will look to beat England's Ben Lane and Sean Vandy, who had also suffered a defeat against the famed Indonesians.



INDIA'S SCHEDULE

BADMINTON: Satwiksairaj Rankireddy/Chirag Shetty vs Ben Lane/Sean Vandy (Great Britain) in Men's Doubles Group A Match; **8:30am IST.**

BOXING: Lovlina Borgohain vs Nadine Apetz (Germany) in Women's 69kg Round of 16 Bout; **11:33am IST.**

HOCKEY: India vs Spain in Men's Pool A match; **6:30am IST.**

SAILING: Nethra Kumanan in Women's Laser Radial Race; **08:35am IST;** Vishnu Saravanan in Men's Laser Race; **08:45am IST;** KC Ganapathy & Varun Thakkar in Men's Skiff 49er Race; **11:50am IST.**

SHOOTING: Saurabh Chaudhary/Manu Bhaker and Yeshahswini Deswal/Abhishek Verma in 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Qualification; **05:30am IST** followed by final; Elavenil Valarivan/Divyansh Singh Panwar and Anjum Moudgil/Deepak Kumar in 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team Qualification; **10:45am IST** followed by final.

TABLE TENNIS: Achanta Sharath Kamal vs Ma Long (China) in Men's Singles Round 3 Match; **8:30am IST.**

Sharath through; women's challenge ends in Olympics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tokyo, July 26: India's leading player Sharath Kamal overcame a sluggish start to beat Portugal's Tiago Apolonia in the men's singles second round while the women challenge ended with Manika Batra and Sutirtha Mukherjee losing to their superior opponents at the Olympics here Monday.

The 39-year-old Sharath struggled in the first game but pulled himself up just in time to win 2-11, 11-8, 11-5, 9-11, 11-6, 11-9 in 49 minutes to set up a clash with defending champion Ma Long from China.

Later in the day, Manika's impressive campaign in the women's singles came to an end with a 0-4 loss to 10th seed Sofia Polcanova in the third round.

The star Indian player, who had



Sharath Kamal speaks to his coach after his victory

stunned World No.32 Sunday, did not have the game to challenge the attacking left-hander from Austria. The only Indian left in the fray, Sharath, faces reigning Olympic champion Ma Long of China in the third round Tuesday.

Arguably the greatest player of

all time, Long has won every singles title in the sport, and is the reigning World Champion as well.

However, with the way the 32-ranked Sharath played against his 59th-ranked opponent, it has given him immense confidence going into the round of 32 match against the mighty Chinese.

Sharath is known for his booming forehand winners but an improved backhand allowed him to finish from both flanks. Since Ma Long will be playing his first match, Sharath sees an opening there.

Mukherjee was no challenge to 42-year-old Yu Fu as the China-born bested her in straight sets in the women's singles second round. Earlier, Sutirtha lost her second round match to Portugal's Yu Fu in straight games to crash out of her maiden Olympics.

Archers fail to get past Korean hurdle

TOKYO: Indian archers bowed out of the team events after failing to get past the mighty Koreans for a second time in the Tokyo Olympics here Monday.

Two days after the mixed team was knocked out by Korea in the quarterfinals, the men's trio of Pravin Jadhav, Atanu Das and Tarundeep Rai succumbed in straight sets against their formidable opponents in the same round of eight stage. South Korea went on to win the title by smashing Chinese Taipei 6-0.

The twin blow exposed their pathetic shooting in the ranking round Friday when all the male archers finished outside top-30, handing them tough draws.

Their first-ever Olympic medal hope in archery is fading fast as they will brace for a tougher road ahead in their respective round of 64 individual matches beginning

Wednesday.

The Indian men's team, which won a silver at the last World Championships in 2019, started the day at the Yumenoshima Park with a lot of promise, downing Kazakhstan 6-2.

But the Korean team of London 2012 champion Oh Jin Hyeok, Kim Woojin and 17-year-old Kim Je Deok - the youngest archer at Tokyo Olympics - proved to be too strong against for the Indians.

In pursuit of a sixth men's team title from nine Olympics, the Korean men's team enjoyed a flying start, shooting 10 perfect 10s from 12 arrows while missing only two in the first two sets to apply early pressure.

India were let down by Guatemala City World Cup gold medallist Das who failed to repeat his brilliant show earlier against Kazakhstan. He could not find a single 10 in the three sets.

MEDVEDEV SHOWS NAGAL EXIT DOOR

TOKYO: Sumit Nagal was blown away by World No.2 Daniil Medvedev's thunderous strokes and serves in the men's singles second round as India's tennis challenge all but ended at the Tokyo Games, here Monday.

The Russian did not even need his 'A' game as he cruised to a 6-2, 6-1 win in just 66 minutes against 160th ranked Nagal at court 1 of the Ariake Tennis Centre.

The gap between a world class Medvedev and Nagal, who is still struggling to play the ATP Tour events regularly, was pretty clear. The Australian Open runner-up easily controlled the game even as Nagal tried hard.

Nagal had earned his moment under spotlight when he took a set off Swiss great Roger Federer at the 2019 US Open on his Grand Slam debut.

Nagal began by dropping his serve in the very first game of the match when he netted a backhand and match ended when his forehand sailed over the baseline on match point while serving to stay in the contest.

Medvedev's powerful strokes from the baseline overwhelmed Nagal, whose game was not enough to trouble a much superior opponent.

The Indian managed to hit a few winners but they were very few. The match ended when Nagal dropped his serve in the seventh by hitting a forehand long.

Nagal had won his first round against Uzbekistan Denis Istomin for India's first men's singles win at Olympics in 25 years.

Sujit century secures ECORSA victory

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Sujit Lenka (174 n o, 152b, 17x4, 3x6) scored a splendid century to help ECORSA register a 38-run win over Kendrapara in their Kalahandi Cup OCA Inter-District cricket tournament at the KIIT Stadium here, Monday.

Kendrapara won the toss and invited ECORSA to bat. ECORSA gleefully accepted the offer and made the most of it posting a challenging 265/7 in their 50 overs.

Sujit batted with ease as Kendrapara bowlers hardly posed any threat to him. He was ably supported by Girija P Rout (52, 91b), Bikash Parida (3/57) was pick



OTHER RESULTS	
Khurda beat Nuapada by 8 wickets; Standout player: Aum A Narayan 5/21;	Bej (5/17);
Boudh beat Kalahandi by 2 wickets; Standout player: Sobhandev Behera (7 n o & 2/13);	Nabarangpur beat Malkangiri by 9 wickets and 44 overs to spare; Standout player: Sudhansu S Nayak (5/13);
Nayagarh beat Deogarh by 97 runs; Standout player: Badal Bhol (33 & 3/22);	Ganjam beat Angul by just one run; Standout player: Om T Munde (61 n o & 2/25);
Bhubaneswar A beat Balasore by 91 runs; Standout player: Ansuman	Dhenkanal beat Bhadrak by 32 runs; Standout player: Mustak Beg (6/20).

of Kendrapara bowlers. In response, Kendrapara were bowled out for 227 with eight balls to spare. Satya R Samal (81, 83b) and Akash Chandra Nayak (68, 103b) bat-

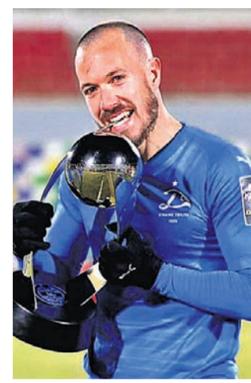
ted brilliantly, even though they ended up in the losing side. Alok K Mangaraj (2/40) and Jayant K Behera (2/49) picked up two wickets each for the winners.

Victor Mongil joins Odisha FC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Odisha FC reached an agreement with Spanish defender Victor Mongil which will see the Indian Super League (ISL) winner playing for the Bhubaneswar-based side in the eighth edition of the League.

The 29-year-old started his youth career with Spanish club Valladolid and went on to play for their B team before representing the main team in 2011-12 season. He then played for different clubs in Spain including Atletico Madrid B before signing for Georgian professional club FC Dinamo Tbilisi in 2019. Victor helped Dinamo Tbilisi win the title in



Georgia and also represented the club in the UEFA Europa League.

The experienced centre-back signed for ATK in the January transfer window of the 2019-20 season of the ISL in which the Kolkata-based side clinched the title. He again returned to Dinamo Tbilisi after his stint with ATK in 2020. Victor also has the experience of representing the Spanish U17 national team.

In his message after joining the Club, Victor said, "I am very excited and happy to join Odisha Football Club. I am looking forward to having a wonderful time on the pitch for OFC and will definitely make the fans feel proud. C'mon Odisha, see you soon."