



**HIDDEN TALENT**  
Actor Malaika Arora says a lot of people don't know the fact that she can actually sing  
**LEISURE P2**



**JUDICIAL PROBE**  
UP gov't forms a panel to probe the Kanpur ambush and Vikas Dubey's encounter  
**TWO STATES P7**



**DEMOLITION THREAT**  
The ancestral home of late actor Rishi Kapoor in Pakistan's Peshawar city is facing demolition threat  
**INTERNATIONAL P10**

## Comet Neowise to be visible in Odisha from tomorrow

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** A new comet christened C/2020 F3 NEOWISE, which was discovered by NASA's Near Earth Object Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer telescope, will be clearly visible to the naked eye from July 14, giving new hope to sky-watchers. "C/2020 F3, a comet discovered March 27, will be clearly visible in the north-western sky. It will be visible after sunset for around 20 minutes for

the next 20 days from July 14. People can observe it from naked eyes," said Deputy Director, Pathani Samanta Planetarium here. The comet can be seen by sky-watchers at predawn. "A far better viewing perspective will be available in the evening sky starting around July 14, when it will appear low in the northwest sky (20 degrees from the horizon) for around 20 minutes. In the evenings to follow, the comet will rapidly climb higher in the sky and will be visible for a longer



REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO  
period," said Dr Pattnaik. "Around 30th July it can be seen near Ursha Major (Saptarshi Mandal) at an altitude of 40 degrees and it will be visible for an hour. After July it will fade away very fast and will not

be visible to the unaided eye. A pair of binoculars or a small telescope will enhance its visibility," he added. The comet will make its closest approach to Earth July 22 and it will be at a distance of about 103 million kilometres from earth. Comets are cosmic snowballs of frozen gases, rock and dust that orbit the Sun in a highly elliptical path. When frozen, they are of the size of a few hundred kilometres and may be compared with the size of a small

town. When a comet's orbit brings it close to the Sun, it heats up and melts, thereby releasing a large amount of dust and gases into a giant glowing head larger than most planets. The dust and gases form a tail that stretches away from the Sun for millions of kilometres in the opposite direction. It is likely that billions of comets are orbiting our Sun in the Kuiper Belt and even the more distant Oort Cloud. The current number of known comets is 3,650.

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## Diesel price nears ₹81 after 16 paise increase

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
**New Delhi, July 12:** Diesel price in the national capital Sunday inched towards the ₹81 per litre-mark following a rate hike after a four-day hiatus. There was no change in petrol price for almost two weeks, and it continues to be priced at ₹80.43 per litre. Rates vary from state to state depending on the incidence of local sales tax or VAT. While diesel price

### SHORT TAKES

#### State's COVID tally crosses 13K-mark

**Bhubaneswar:** Odisha's COVID-19 tally Sunday crossed the 13,000 mark with 595 fresh cases, while three patients succumbed to the disease, taking the death toll to 64 in the state, a health department official said. The total number of coronavirus patients rose to 13,121 in the state, he said. Three men, aged 56, 50 and 65, died of the coronavirus infection at a hospital in Ganjam, the worst-hit district in the state. The 56-year-old deceased was diabetic, while the 65-year-old man was suffering from diabetes and hypertension, he said.

#### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



## Cong confronts desert storm in Rajasthan

**AGENCIES**  
**Jaipur, July 12:** Even as the battle of one-upmanship between two Congress camps led by Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his deputy Sachin Pilot plays out in the open, state Congress leaders are busy working the numbers and calculating permutations and combinations to ensure the party's government remains safe. The Congress strength in 200-member Assembly is 102, with its Rashtriya Lok Dal alliance having one MLA. After 6 Bahujan Samaj Party MLAs joined the Congress, the ruling party's score in the House climbed up to 108. Support of 13 Independents, 2 Bharatiya Tribal Party and two CPI-MMLAs, its tally stands at 125.



**CRISIS IN RAJASTHAN**

The battle of one-upmanship between two Congress camps led by Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot and his deputy Sachin Pilot now in the open. State Cong leaders are busy working the numbers and calculating permutations and combinations to ensure the party's govt remains safe. If 20-25 MLAs back Pilot and leave the party, the Cong numbers will fall under 100, while the BJP numbers will touch 100 in the 200-member House.

requested for an appointment with Congress chief Sonia Gandhi to discuss the "challenges faced by his team due to the high-handedness of Gehlot". As he waits for an appointment, Gehlot has been keeping a tab on his MLAs and ministers in Rajasthan and asking about their locations on phone. Security at the inter-state borders has been enhanced and MLA movement continuously monitored. What raises apprehensions in the entire episode is the absence of ministers from the pilot camp at a Saturday night meeting called by Gehlot. One of Pilot's favourites and Tourism Minister Vishvendra Singh has since left for Delhi, though he tweeted that he was to meet his sister. While all eyes are now focused on what all action the Congress high com-

#### Sachin Pilot claims 30 Cong MLAs' support

**JAIPUR:** Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot Sunday declared open rebellion, claiming that he has the support of the 30 Congress MLAs and some Independents in the state Assembly. The statement released on Pilot's WhatsApp group claimed that the Gehlot-led Congress government is in minority now. It said Pilot, who is also the state Congress president, will also skip the Rajasthan Legislature Party meeting Monday morning. "Rajasthan Deputy CM and Congress leader Sachin Pilot not to attend Congress Legislative Party meeting scheduled to be held tomorrow," the message said.

mand will take to keep the MLAs united, eager party loyalists are busy counting and recounting the numbers on their fingertips and assuring themselves that the Gehlot government will survive the political turmoil. A late night report said the Congress has sent its senior leaders Ajay Maken and Randeep Surjewala as central observers to Jaipur to avert the crisis in Rajasthan. The two leaders along with party general secretary in-charge of Rajasthan Congress Avinash Pande will hold discussions with party MLAs, sources said.

Meanwhile, the BJP has 72 MLAs, with 3 lawmakers from alliance partner Rashtriya Loktantrik Party. Party sources confirmed that around 20-25 MLAs could back Pilot and if they leave the party, the Congress numbers will fall under 100 while the BJP numbers will touch 100. So, the situation remains interesting in Rajasthan. On the other hand, BJP state president Satish Poonia told the media that the ongoing crisis within the Congress was created by the party itself and was due to infighting. "We have no role in it," he said. PCC vice-president Archana Sharma told reporters that Gehlot has the num-

bers and the state government is in safe hands. Meanwhile, Pilot is in Delhi and re-

## Govt asks court to stymie any challenge to app ban

**REUTERS**  
**New Delhi, July 12:** The Centre has petitioned the Rajasthan High Court to stop any of the Chinese companies whose 59 apps it recently banned from obtaining an injunction to block the order, according to two sources and the legal filing. India last month outlawed dozens of Chinese apps including ByteDance's popular video-sharing app TikTok, Alibaba's UC Browser and Tencent's messaging app WeChat, saying they posed a "threat to sovereignty and integrity". Two sources with direct knowledge of the filing said the government had presented a so-called



caveat in the High Court of Rajasthan, suggesting it expects one or more of the companies to challenge the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's ban. Such caveats are typically filed to prevent a ruling in favour of companies without hearing the government, lawyers said. The filing, which one of the sources said

was presented Friday, has not previously been reported. "Let nothing be done till the applicants (government) are heard in the matter," said the court filing signed by Additional Solicitor General of India Rajdeepak Rastogi. Guarding cyber space The order to ban the apps was passed to safeguard "the interests of Indian mobile and Internet users and ensure safety and sovereignty of Indian Cyber Space," said the filing, which was seen by Reuters. It was not immediately clear why the government approached the court in Rajasthan and whether there were plans to file similar petitions elsewhere.

## Aishwarya, Aaradhya test corona positive

**Mumbai, July 12:** Actor Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and her daughter Aaradhya have tested coronavirus positive, Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said Sunday. Aishwarya's mother-in-law Jaya Bachchan has tested negative. Earlier Sunday, Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar had said Jaya Bachchan and Aishwarya had tested negative for coronavirus. The mayor's statement came a day after Amitabh Bachchan and son Abhishek Bachchan said they had tested positive for COVID-19 and were admitted to a hospital here. The mayor had said the Bachchan residence is now a containment zone and all residents have been



quarantined for 14 days. Members of the Bachchan family took the rapid antigen detection test, Pednekar said. "I have tested COVID positive. Shifted to Hospital. Hospital informing authorities, family and staff undergone tests, results awaited," Amitabh, 77, tweeted Saturday. "All that have been in close proximity to me in the last 10 days are requested to please get themselves tested," he had added.

## Shutdown lifted in Cuttack; longer night curfew now

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Sunday decided to withdraw the COVID-related shutdown in the city after reviewing the situation and levels of threat from the disease. Addressing a presser, CMC Commissioner Ananya Das said, "We have decided to lift the shutdown after assessing the local conditions. However, we have decided to extend the night curfew hours within the city limits. Currently, night curfew hours begin from 9pm, we have now extended it from 7pm to 5am," she said. The CMC issued a notification in this regard which states that shopkeepers are now allowed to keep their shops open from 5am to 6pm, while shopping malls are allowed to operate with the undertaking of ensuring social distancing. She also requested people to comply with the government rules on COVID-19 management saying "The civic body has been taking a lot of measures to curb the disease and we seek people's cooperation to make them effective." "We have seen that a lot of people are defying the safety norms of COVID-19. I would like to request these people to comply with the orders of the CMC in this regard. Many people are thronging the main markets. This is not advisable," she said. The CMC Commissioner said that the municipal body would take strict actions against the people who do not abide by the government rules in this matter. She said, "In Cuttack the disease has been reported from many clusters and we are taking special measures to curb that."

## Most COVID-19 cases in Cuttack reported from govt hosps

55 PER CENT COVID-19 CASES IN CUTTACK REPORTED FROM AHRCC, SCB

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** The government hospitals in Cuttack, which is considered to be the medical hub of the state, has been responsible for most of the COVID-19 cases reported from the city, the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) admitted Sunday. Addressing a virtual press conference, CMC Commissioner Ananya Das cited data on the source of infections of the pandemic. The official said that till Sunday the city reported 248 cases of the viral disease and, out of these, 120 are from the Acharya Harihar Regional Cancer Centre (AHRCC) alone. On the other hand, 18 COVID-19

cases were reported from the SCB Medical College in the city. According to data made available by her, 57 positive cases were reported from home quarantine and 35 from institutional quarantine centres. Eighteen COVID-19 patients were infected by local contacts. "Out of the 248 cases detected in Cuttack, 120 are from AHRCC alone. One positive patient was detected in the hospital. During contact tracing we did close to 500 tests and ended up detecting 120 cases from the hospital. Many of them have now recovered. SCB Hospital too reported 18 cases," she said. Meanwhile, Das added that arrangements like antigen testing, isolation, and restricted OPD services are done in hospitals to reduce



infections from hospitals. She also talked about the actions taken by the CMC against erring private hospitals for flouting rules regarding coronavirus spread. "We have given the private hospitals guidelines on infection control. We have taken action against

#### SOURCE OF CORONA INFECTIONS IN CUTTACK

HOSPITAL	CASES REPORTED
AHRCC, Cuttack	120
SCB Medical College & Hospital	18
Home Quarantine	57
Institutional Quarantine	35
Local Contacts	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>248</b>

Committees and Sahi Committees in joining hands with the government in COVID-19 management as well as creating awareness. She also assured that all possible steps of surveillance and testing are being undertaken by the civic body to manage the disease. Saurabh Garg, COVID-19 observer for Cuttack, informed the media that two more COVID hospitals are all set to become operational in the district soon. "Right now we have two COVID-19 hospitals in the district. Two more - one at Athagarh and another at Tangi - are all set to come become operational soon. In rural Cuttack we have witnessed 750 cases. We are now ready with 339 COVID Care Centres to tackle the disease better," he said.



## MOSS NOT AFRAID TO PUT UP A FIGHT

Actress Elisabeth Moss feels she has a strong personality and says she is good at 'fighting back'. In an interview with *OK! Magazine*, the 37-year-old actress shared that she is thankful, her parents always taught her to believe in herself, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.

## BRITNEY SENDS MESSAGE TO TROLLS

Singer Britney Spears called out her trolls in the virtual world, insisting that she is happy and being real on social media. The singer, 38, called out her haters on Instagram by using a Bible quote, reports *dailymail.co.uk*.



## FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Feeling sentimental always gets in the way. If things don't go your way, life seems gloom. But take a look at the food on the table, Levi's in the cupboard and your spaniel licking your toes, and you will thank God for a blessed life. You're welcome, says Ganesh.

**TAURUS**  
Expect the confetti to pour and the music to blaze as you indulge in festivity and merry-making today, says Ganesh. Success might knock on your door this afternoon. You thoughts will drip with optimism and your day might end with partying late into the night.

**GEMINI**  
There are indications that you will most certainly guard against going off on a tangent in important meetings today, foresees Ganesh. You are also likely to let your brains on an overdrive to get things done at the workplace. You will have a fabulous dinner with your sweetheart in the evening.

**CANCER**  
Chances are that your day will be filled with a lot of fun and celebration, says Ganesh. In the afternoon, you can expect a breakthrough in a very important business deal. At night, you will be busy partying.

**LEO**  
Shooting off the charts is an understatement when it comes to your liveliness today, says Ganesh. Guess there is just something about today that puts a spring in your step and a smile on your face. But whatever it is, it's good for you.

**VIRGO**  
Partnership deals and money spinning will occupy most of your time as business and work top your priority list, predicts Ganesh. You will face stiff competition and animosity at various levels throughout the day. In the evening, your chances of winning are very bright in cut-throat business competitions.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh predicts a captivating day for you in terms of career. At work, you tend to do the tasks assigned to you with amazing clarity. Later in the day, whatever you say will charm a member of the opposite sex, which comes as a pleasant surprise to you. But beware, says Ganesh, as your outlook may cast a shadow on your thoughts in the evening.

**SCORPIO**  
Work may pile up today unless you work extremely hard to meet your targets, says Ganesh. In business, you may be disappointed with the results you achieve and that may be the cause of anxiety and worry. Support may come in the form of love and affection from a dear one in the evening.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You may just strike the notes of your beloved's heart today. Your presence and presents will make them realise how much you do indeed love them. Expect a trip to posh showrooms and designer shops to buy them expensive gifts. But don't neglect work or your long-term goals, advises Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
It's not every day that you wake up with a positive feeling, one that pushes you to make right everything that has been going wrong around and within you. Today, you may be in one of those high-spirited moods, says Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
Success ahooy! Go on, challenge your friends to a game; or your adversaries to a deadline. Today is your day, says Ganesh. Your image too gets a makeover due to your superhero antics! Enjoy it while it lasts, and before the wheels turn once again.

**PISCES**  
You will feel like King Midas himself today because everything you take up will fructify into something successful and rewarding, says Ganesh. You will be alight with incredible ideas and abuzz with stupendous energy. Feel free to skip the coffee!



## Singing therapeutic for Malaika

**Mumbai:** Actress Malaika Arora says a lot of people don't know the fact that she can actually sing. Talking about her hidden talent, Malaika said: "People don't know the fact that I can actually sing. It is one of the most therapeutic things for me."

She also shared her love for reality shows, saying: "I would never give up hosting reality shows, as I really enjoy working on them." Talking about her bond with her son, the dancing diva said: "I would never check my son's phone without his permission."

"Because that's the pure bond and trust I've built with him," she said in an episode of *Go Fun Yourself*, which streams on Voot. Recently, Malaika has shared a Make in India home remedy to boost immunity. "This is a true blue Make in India home remedy. Age-old traditional, tried and tested homemade immunity booster. Indian gooseberry (Amla), fresh organic turmeric and ginger root with some Apple cider vinegar and a dash of peppercorns is all it takes to make this magic potion," she wrote on social media along with a video showing how to prepare it.



## Farah shares secret behind her double chin

**Mumbai:** Filmmaker-choreographer Farah Khan Kunder Sunday took to social media to pen a heartfelt, quirky birthday wish for her mother: "Life doesn't come with a manual.. it comes with a mother. Happy 75th birthday to mine.. Menka.. gifting me her sense of humour; her strength and her double chin," Farah wrote.

Along with it, she posted a few throwback images of her with her mother from childhood and wed-

ding days. Reacting to the post, actress Aditi Rao Hydari commented: "Happy happiest birthday to her!" Ps-Hahahahahah. Diana Penty wrote: "Hahahaha! Happy Happy Birthday to Faruuu's mummy!" On the work front, Farah recently unveiled the video of the making of the title track of *Dil Bechara*, which is late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's last movie. Farah had choreographed Sushant for the movie. Recalling her experience working with him, Farah wrote: "I wanted the song to be done as a one-shot song because I knew Sushant would be able to do it perfectly." IANS



## Sudhanshu to continue as actor-singer

**New Delhi:** Actor-singer Sudhanshu Pandey says he cannot choose between the two vocations, as he is passionate about both. "I am so fortunate and feel blessed that people have given me love for my acting and singing. I can't really say that I love acting more or singing more. I love both forms of art equally," he said. He says as a performer he should ace in all spheres. "Since I belong to the field of performing arts, I should be

able to do everything and I should do everything equally well," he added. Sudhanshu, who was a member of the popular 2004 band called *A Band Of Boys*, hopes to keep entertaining people. On the acting front, Sudhanshu was recently seen in the web series *The Casino*. The show also features Karanvir Bohra and Mandana Karimi. The 10-episode series tells the story of a rich yet humble boy, Vicky, who is the heir to his father's multi-billion-dollar casino.

## Webinar on developing library leaders

**BHUBANESWAR:** Odisha Library Academy (OLA) Saturday hosted a webinar here on the theme - *Developing Next Generation Library Leaders* - which was attended by more 1,500 participants from across the country.

For the unversed, OLA was launched in 2015 by a group of young professionals to promote Library and Information Science (LIS) education and research in the state. Joining the virtual event as chief speaker, Ramesh C Gaur, Dean & Head - Kalanidhi Division, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA), Ministry of Culture, Government of India spoke about the present state of libraries and li-



**The academy was launched by some youths in 2015 to promote Library and Information Science education and research in the state**

brarians in the country. He lamented that most of the senior positions in many libraries are either lying vacant or being occupied by non-library professionals. He held the librarians, library administrators, and some library associations responsible for it. Gaur, on the occasion, presented a road map to young library professionals to take up future library leadership roles. Some eminent names including Sunil Satapathy from NIT Raipur, Neeraj Kumar from Panjab University, Chandigarh and Meenal Oak from Maharashtra Education Society, Pune had interacted with Gaur and other participants. OLA president Banambar Sahoo from ICMR-RMRC (Bhubaneswar) was the webinar chair while Bibhuti Bhusan Sahoo from IIT, Bhubaneswar along with Basudev Mohanty from Institute

of Physics, Bhubaneswar were the co-ordinators of the event. Brundaban Nahak, RITE, Bhubaneswar along with Niranjana Mohapatra, NCDS Bhubaneswar and Jayanta Kumar Sahu, Sambalpur University were webinar administrators. OLA has been conducting regular webinars and webcasts to assist LIS professionals, authorities of the libraries, information Centers, museums and archives.

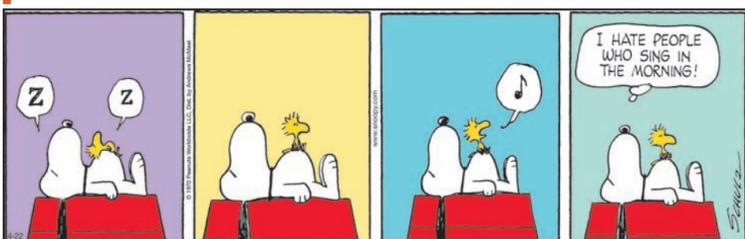
## Odisha's Gully Boy now spotted by Vishal Dadlani

**BHAWANIPATNA:** Lady Luck has finally knocked on the door of Duleshwar Tandi from Kalahandi district who is popular by his stage name Rapper Dule Rock. His talent has been spotted by none other than Vishal Dadlani, a famous Hindi film music director. Expressing surprise for a talent like Tandi going through a difficult phase, the music director recently took to Twitter and wrote, "This is incredible! @DuleRock, if you need help producing/recording/releasing your music, get in touch. I'll do what I can. I am sure we all will!" Tandi, responding to the tweet, said he will remain grateful to the music director for his kind words. Earlier, Odia playback singer



Humane Sagar also helped the tribal rapper. Tandi, a science graduate of Borda village, used to wipe tables and wash plates at a restaurant in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. He had gone there to help his father treat his ailing mother. After his father's death, he had to return home. Moved by the plights of migrant labourers during the lockdown period, he included their sufferings in his raps which instantly struck a chord with the masses.

## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS



## BREVITY



## FUN post

### CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6
7			8		9
10				11	
12			13		14
15	16			17	18
			19		
20		21		22	23
24				25	
26					
27				28	

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**Across**

- 1 Ill will
- 4 Astrological ram
- 10 Rhone River town
- 11 Old photo tint
- 12 Concert venue
- 13 Peaceful
- 15 Squirrels away
- 17 Make a movie
- 20 Large lizard
- 22 Shade of purple
- 25 Pre-entree course
- 26 Tourniquet
- 27 City north of Cologne
- 28 Poplar variety

**Down**

- 2 Choice
- 3 Large drinking vessel
- 5 Stair part
- 6 Delete
- 7 Stylish elegance
- 8 Jittery
- 9 Duffer's goal
- 14 Thorn
- 16 Knitted socks
- 18 Aruba and Tenerife
- 19 Brazilian dance
- 21 Fluster
- 23 Renter's paper
- 24 Query

## SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.

7	B	1	9	6	D	2	5		1	4
			D			4			9	8
D	2	4	A	6		5	9	6		3
5	0		1	4	9				C	
	A			9		8	D	7	0	4
E	4	D		0	B	A			8	6
	C		9	2	3	A	7	6		
	E	8	C			A			1	
2	6	D		7	8		1			
	1			E	4	2	B		7	
A	3	E			1	6	9	0		

## SOLUTIONS

**CROSSWORD**

C	P	T	S	A	M									
B	O	L	E	R	O	T	A	R	M	A	C			
L	B	S	O	V	E	S								
C	O	M	B	T	R	A	V	E	L	S	T	R	A	C
U	L	A	T	H	R	E								
F	R	I	E	N	D	H	R	E	A					
S	A	S	A	S										
O	C	T	E	T	S	T	E	A	L	T	H			
H	L	L	A	S	R									
T	E	M	B	L	O	R	S	P	O	O	R			
M	O	K	H	E	K									
L	E	E	W	A	Y	E	T	C	H	E	S			
S	S	O	D	T	S									

**SUDOKU**

0	9	2	5	E	D	B	A	1	6	C	4	8	8	7
C	A	5	1	8	8	3	4	E	7	D	2	9	0	
4	8	3	7	1	8	3	0	5	2	1	A	E	D	
E	7	6	0	3	0	2	5	8	A	9	8	1	4	
5	1	0	2	A	A	E	7	3	0	8	5	0		
2	3	B	4	7	A	1	8	E	0	6	C	0	3	
3	C	1	9	D	7	B	2	0	E	A	4	5	8	
9	0	A	E	8	5	3	0	6	4	B	7	1	C	2
D	4	8	C	2	B	A	0	9	1	3	5	E	7	6
E	7	3	0	1	5	4	C	D	8	2	0	B	A	
A	6	0	D	9	3	2	E	B	7	1	8	C	4	5
5	3	E	8	C	2	4	1	D	A	9	6	7	0	8
B	8	4	A	1	7	5	3	C	D	0	6	2	E	
7	0	9	4	0	C	A	2	5	8	3	1			
1	2	C	6	5	0	7	8	4	3	9	6	4	1	9

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## BIRD LOVER

A man feeds pigeons at AG Square in Bhubaneswar during the weekend shutdown over Covid-19, Sunday

## WAIT FOR TRAINS

People waiting for trains at Bhubaneswar railway station during the shutdown over novel coronavirus, Sunday



# In 118 days, Covid-19 cases jump 13K times

ODISHA REGISTERS 595 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES SUNDAY

POST NEWS NETWORK

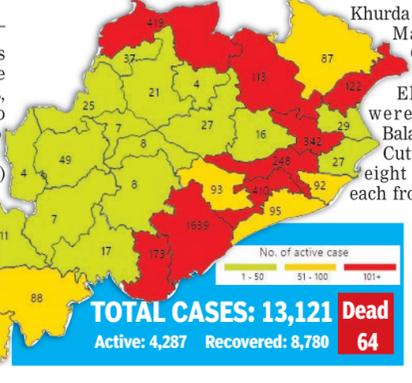
**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** State's Covid-19 tally Sunday crossed the 13,000 mark with 595 fresh cases, while three patients succumbed to the disease, taking the death toll to 64 in Odisha, an official of the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

The total number of coronavirus patients rose to 13,121 in the state, said the official.

Three men, aged 56, 50 and 65, died of the coronavirus infection at a hospital in Ganjam, the worst-hit district in Odisha. "Regret to inform of the demise of three Covid positive cases while under treatment in hospital," the official said.

The 56-year-old deceased was diabetic, while the 65-year-old man was suffering from diabetes and hypertension as well, added the official. Of the 64 deaths reported, Ganjam accounted for 39, while nine were reported from Khurda, six from Cuttack, two from Puri and one each from Angul, Bargarh, Bhadrak, Gajapati, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Rayagada and Sundargarh.

"Two Covid-19 patients, aged 50



Khurda (76), Koraput (44), Malkangiri (36), Gajapati (20) and Mayurbhanj (14). Eleven cases each were reported from Balasore, Bhadrak and Cuttack, 10 from Puri, eight Sundargarh, five each from Jagatsinghpur and Nayagarh, four from Kalahandi, three each from Bargarh and Keonjhar, two each from Kendrapara, Sambalpur and Rayagada and one from Bolangir. Meanwhile, as many as 390 persons who were earlier tested positive for Covid-19 recovered Sunday, the H&FW department tweeted.

The recoveries include 106 from Ganjam, 71 from Cuttack, 38 from Mayurbhanj, 38 from Sundargarh, 25 from Jajpur and 24 from Nabarangpur, 22 persons from Sambalpur, 15 from Khurda, nine from Balasore, six from Bargarh and five from Angul.

Odisha now has 4,287 active cases, while 8,750 patients have recovered from the disease so far.

## COVID STINGS 2 BSF JAWANS OF JATNI CAMP

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khurda, July 12:** Two jawans from Jatni BSF camp in Khurda district have tested positive for the novel coronavirus, Collector Sitanshu Rout said Sunday.

According to a source at the Collectorate, some jawans of the camp were doing their duty at a coronavirus affected area. Swab samples of 245 jawans of the camp were collected since the jawans were sharing rooms with each other. The test report of only two jawans came positive.

The district administration has asked the jawans to undergo self-quarantine for 14 days. Their swab samples will be collected again after five days, collector Rout informed. The state has so far conducted 3,34,527 tests.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# Cuttack cops ensure social distancing

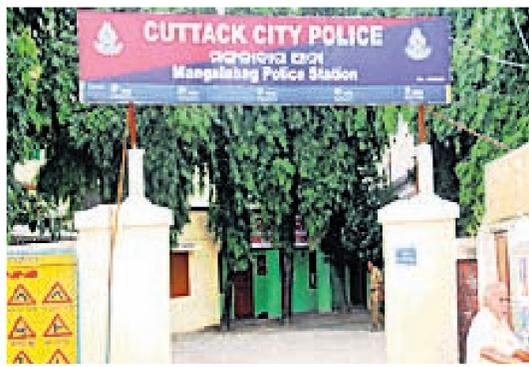
THE POLICE OFFICIALS ARE REGISTERING FIRS AND COMPLAINTS FROM PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE POLICE STATIONS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, July 12:** Many police stations in the Silver City here are reportedly asking people not to enter into their premises for lodging any complaint or FIR after a constable of SCB Medical College and Hospital police outpost was tested positive for the Covid-19.

The police officials are accepting FIRs and complaints from the people outside the police stations. Even, the Diary Charge Officers (DSOs) are discussing issues related to the FIRs with the complaints outside the police stations, sources said.

It is learnt that Covid-19 infection fear has gripped the personnel of Mangalabag police station in the city here. A constable of Mangalabag police station came in contact with the deadly virus while doing his duty



The SCBMCH and Acharya Harihar Postgraduate Institute of Cancer come under our jurisdiction. Some people from these two hospitals have been tested positive for Covid-19. One of our constables has also tested positive for the virus

AMITABH MAHAPATRA | MANGALABAG POLICE IN-CHARGE

We are also asking people not to enter into our police station. There is possibility of our personnel getting infected with the virus

OFFICIAL OF DARGHABAZAR POLICE STATION, CUTTACK

at a police outpost at SCB Medical College and Hospital.

Subsequently, the swab samples of 69 personnel of Mangalabag police station were collected by the Health department. However, the test reports are yet to come, sources said. According to sources, the state government has provided 100 PPE kits to Mangalabag police station. The personnel deployed at SCB Medical College and Hospital outpost were using the PPEs.

"The SCBMCH and Acharya Harihar Postgraduate Institute of Cancer come under our jurisdiction.

Some people from these two hospitals have been tested positive for Covid-19. One of our constables has also been tested positive for the virus. Steps are being taken to save our personnel from Covid-19 infections," said Mangalabag police in-charge Amitabh Mahapatra.

Mahapatra further revealed that they have urged people not to enter into the police station. "We are accepting FIRs just outside the police station," he said.

Similarly, the fear of Covid-19 infection also gripped officials of Darghabazar police station in the

city here. Notably, Cuttack district headquarters hospital popularly known as City Hospital comes under the jurisdiction of Darghabazar police station.

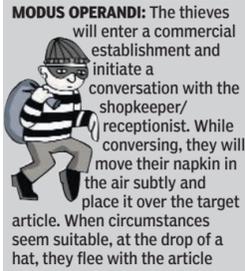
"We are also asking people not to enter into our police station. There is possibility of our personnel getting infected with the virus," said an official of Darghabazar police station.

# 'Napkin' gang continues loot

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** A looters' gang has been targeting shops which are mostly being run by women staffers in the city. The shop owners' associations in Lingaraj, Badagada and Airfield area of the city have also collected all the CCTV footage of the whole technique used by the miscreants to loot mobiles, bags and other valuables from the shops.

The thieves ask the person at the reception desk to show some goods after entering the saree shops or say a 'ladies' corner'. Later, the



miscreants put their napkin on the mobile or other items. Meanwhile,

taking advantage of the preoccupied staff, they pick up the items wrapped in the napkin and leave the shop. Worried over the repeated incidents of stealing, the shop owners' association found the culprits while going through the CCTV footages at the shops targeted by the miscreants.

As per sources, one stationary shop owner near Lingaraj temple also caught one of the gang members, Badal Swain, red-handed and later handed over him to the police. However, police allegedly left the miscreant on the pretext of Covid-19, claimed Swain.

## 3 containment zones in Puri to tackle Covid

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, July 12:** Three localities of the Holy City here were declared as containment zones by the district administration Sunday to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic.

Besides, the district administration sealed a private hospital in the city here after a health staffer was tested positive for the deadly virus.

According to sources, as many as 107 persons from Puri district have been tested positive for Covid-19 in last 12 days.

"An employee of Srikrushna Healthcare Centre has been tested positive for Covid-19. The person concerned has been shifted to a Covid hospital. We have sealed the private hospital after sanitising it," said sub-Collector Bhabatara Sahu.

Sahu further revealed that the person concerned was staying in a rented house at Nabakalebara Road in the Holy City. "To check the spread of coronavirus, the locality has been declared as a containment zone," Sahu said.



CRPF personnel plant saplings during a plantation drive at their regional centre in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

# Pandemic is killing Puri's tourism, hospitality sectors

FROM A HEALTH CRISIS TO AN ECONOMIC DEBACLE, THE PANDEMIC HAS METAMORPHOSED TO THE WORST FORMS. FOLLOWING FANI, COVID-19 COULD SPELL THE LAST NAIL IN THE COFFIN FOR PURI'S TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTORS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, July 12:** The outbreak of novel coronavirus and the subsequent nationwide lockdown to tackle the pandemic have given a bloody blow to the tourism sector in Puri district.

The tourism sector in Puri had sustained extensive damages due to the cyclonic storm Fani that made a landfall on Odisha coast May 3 last year.

Puri district has occupied a special place in the tourism map of Odisha. The district is home to many famous shrines and iconic structures like Srimandir, Konark Sun Temple, Alarnath temple, Baliharchandi and Ramchandi temple. Besides, Chilika lake, Puri and Chandrabhaga beaches, Buddhist structures at Kuruma and heritage crafts village of Raghurajpur attract tourists and visitors from



FANI'S DEBACLE



CORONA SCARE

across the country and abroad.

At least 1,000 hotels and lodging houses have come up in Puri city and its nearby areas to cater to the needs of tourists. Similarly, the city has several tour and travel agencies to provide service to the visitors. Many locals usually earn a livelihood by depending upon the flourishing tourism sector.

"Lakhs of devotees from across

the globe usually visit the Holy City of Puri to pay obeisance to Lord Jagannath at Srimandir. The Sun Temple at Konark has been declared as Unesco World Heritage Site. The golden beach of Puri has been attracting tourists since many years. Tourism sector is the lifeline of Puri district," said a tour operator here.

However, almost all tourist spots

## ILS establishes stable cultures of coronavirus

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** Institute of Life Sciences, Bhubaneswar has successfully established in vitro cultures of coronavirus from the patient samples using vero cells.

The vero cell culture technology is used worldwide to develop inactivated whole cell-based vaccines. Seventeen virus cultures have been established from swab samples originating from different locations of the country with varying virus loads. These virus cultures have been established by the ILS team led by scientists Soma Chattopadhyay and Gulam H. Syed following international protocols and all safety precautions in the BSL 3 facility.

Virus cultures have been sta-

It is a significant development as only three other laboratories from India have reported establishing virus cultures till date

AJAY PARIDA | DIRECTOR, ILS

bilised with multiple passages in Vero cell culture and titres in culture supernatants of 7-9 passage were estimated by Foci-Forming Unit (FFU) assay. Infection of the Vero cells with SARS-CoV2 clinical isolate was also confirmed by immunofluorescence detection of SARS-CoV2 infection. Studies using genome sequencing approaches are underway for understanding stability and de-

tecting any mutation in established cultures.

Ajay Parida, Director, ILS, said, "It is a significant development as only three other laboratories from India have reported establishing virus cultures till date." This has potential application in testing and screening for possible drug targets, formulations as well as possible use in vaccine development. Cultured SARS-CoV2 can also be used in developing antibodies or antidotes, testing of antibodies and identification of effective therapeutic agents.

Parida expressed confidence that this will be a useful resource for the country in the fight against Covid pandemic as well as for future preparedness.

## BIKE LIFTERS' GANG BUSTED, THREE HELD

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** Commissionerate Police busted a bike lifters' gang at Laxmisagar area here late Saturday night. The accused persons were identified as Mahesh Sahu alias Bulu, 25, of Budheswar colony area Samil Singh, 28, of Upasa Sahi under Laxmisagar area and Rabi Behera, 55, of Delanga in Puri. Samil is also involved several other looting incidents in the area.

According to sources, the accused persons Saturday morning had decamped with the motorcycle of a resident of OSCAR colony in Canal road area. Subsequently, police registered a case (160/20) on the basis of the complaint lodged by the victim. Meanwhile, the cops deployed at the blocking point near Jatri Niwas at Cuttack road spotted the miscreants plying on the road during night. The cops who intercepted the accused persons later found the same bike stolen from OSCAR colony.



The dist administration seals a private hospital in the city

According to Sahu, Baliapanda Binayak Sahi of Ward no. 7 in the city has also been declared as a containment zone after some Covid-19 positive cases were found from the locality. Similarly, Kumbharpada Jail Road of ward no. 22 was also declared as a containment zone.

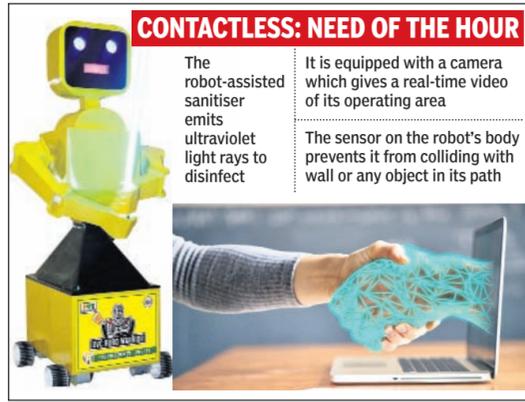
"No one would be allowed to enter or exit the containment zones," Sahu said.

# Sanitiser 'Robo Warrior' does away with human risk

IN THE PANDEMIC, EVERYTHING DIGITAL IS GROWING FASTER THAN IT WAS BEFORE

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Berhampur, July 12:** The state-run Industrial Training Institute (ITI) here has developed an ultramodern robot— UVC Robo Warrior—that would disinfect the surfaces through exposure of UVC light, an official said Sunday.  
According to Rajat Kumar Panigrahy, the institution's principal, the invention will use UVC light to disinfect the surfaces of the public transport system and the isolation rooms occupied by Covid-19 infected or suspected patients.  
"The robot will carry the UVC light to point of disinfection. The movement of the robot is controlled by a mobile phone from a long distance. The robot can emit UVC ray to all the inaccessible points in the field of disinfection. The camera fitted in its eyes sends a real-time video of the area of disinfection to the mobile screen for better control of the robot," Panigrahy pointed out.  
The sensor on the robot's body prevents it from colliding with wall or any object in its path. "Made out of plywood, the robot is portable,

lightweight and low cost. It has a rechargeable battery as well. The cost of developing the robot is around Rs 7,500," Panigrahy concluded.  
Meanwhile, Union Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey took to the Twitter to laud the ITI's initiative  
Automation the way forward?  
In the pandemic, everything digital is growing faster than it was before. Robotic solutions are digital solutions that will grow faster than before. Robots help us avoid close in-person interactions, they can make us more efficient, and they can be better than humans at many things.  
Let's look at some examples.  
**Healthcare**  
In the picture above Beijing-based CloudMinds sent their robots to Wuhan, China to help with the pandemic. These robots can clean and disinfect work areas, measure a patient's temperature, and deliver medicine. Not only are they replacing what a human would normally do, but they can also do it in a way that doesn't risk getting anyone else infected. They are a safer alternative for



**CONTACTLESS: NEED OF THE HOUR**

The robot-assisted sanitiser emits ultraviolet light rays to disinfect. It is equipped with a camera which gives a real-time video of its operating area. The sensor on the robot's body prevents it from colliding with wall or any object in its path.

both the health care provider and the patient.  
Humans will interact with potential patients when needed, but humans don't need to be involved in every part of every transaction.  
**Manufacturing**  
Imagine you have a manufacturing facility. Should you bring in robots like Canon's 3D Machine Vision System to help with your manufacturing, instead of relying only on employees?

What happens when a worker gets Covid-19? Not only does the worker need to quarantine, but everyone they've recently interacted with should as well. One sick worker could prevent many more workers from showing up at work the next day and greatly reduce your manufacturing capacity.  
**Warehouses**  
The work in warehouses can sometimes be very demanding and physically challenging for humans.

Imagine walking around all day tracking inventory in a warehouse that's larger than a football field.  
In many cases, it may be reasonable for warehouse workers to ask for better working conditions. If management does not address these fears the workers may go on strike.  
**Customer support**  
People working in customer support often have to deal with many mundane, repetitive, boring tasks. Chatbots are becoming better and better at handling lower-level support questions. Bold360 is an AI-powered self-service bot that helps enterprises develop their chatbots.  
**Restaurants**  
The restaurant industry is one of the hardest hit by the coronavirus. It usually requires a human to do the work inside the restaurant, and a human to deliver the food. And yet, consumers do not want human-human interaction.  
A company called Miso Robotics has developed a robot called Flippy that can flip burgers all day long for the equivalent of \$3 per hour. Other robots have been developed to wash utensils and keep the kitchen and dining room areas clean.

# CIC: Can't demand signed copies of online RTI pleas

The Central Information Commission was hearing the plea of an Odisha-based RTI applicant

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 12:** Demanding a signed copy of an online RTI application negates the whole purpose of such a mechanism, the Central Information Commission has said while cautioning the Army to refrain from such a practice.  
Information Commissioner Divya Prakash Sinha held that seeking citizenship proof in case of demand of sensitive information is justified but seeking a signed copy of the application does not seem appropriate as the online portal does not mandate uploading of signatures.  
Sinha was hearing the plea of an Odisha-based RTI applicant who had sought from the Army information regarding implementation of rules under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 in all defence establishments.  
The Army did not provide any information to the applicant, the CIC noted. Akhand approached the Commission with a complaint that the central public information officer (CPIO) of the Army has demanded a signed copy of his online RTI application as well as identity proof before providing him the records.  
"In this regard, it may be noted that as far as CPIO's request for citizenship proof is concerned, the same is not questioned as Commission in its prior decision(s) has held the view that Armed Forces stand on a slightly different footing as there may be instances that involve disclosure of sensitive information, and for such reasons it may be rationale for the CPIO to ask for citizenship proof," Sinha noted.  
He, however, said the facts of the instant case "do not suggest disclosure of sensitive information." A Punjab and Haryana High



## IN NUTSHELL

The applicant approached the Commission with a complaint that the CPIO of the Army has demanded a signed copy of his online RTI application as well as identity proof before providing him the records  
Information Commissioner held that seeking citizenship proof in case of demand of sensitive information is justified but seeking a signed copy of the application does not seem appropriate as the online portal does not mandate uploading of signatures

Court judgment may be referred to the Union vs. Unknown, decided November 2, 2012, which has validated the need for RTI applicants to provide identity proof, he said.  
However, asking for a signed copy of an online RTI application does not seem appropriate as the online portal does not mandate uploading of signatures, Sinha said.  
"...if applicants do so voluntarily by uploading a signed copy of the RTI application under the supporting documents head, it is acceptable but insisting on signed copy of online RTI applications cannot be a norm and delaying the provision of information for want of a signed copy of online RTI application negates the whole purpose of filing an online RTI Application," he said.

# Delhiite all praise for Odisha govt

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** While there have been reports of irregularities and mismanagement at COVID hospitals, a person from Delhi admitted to a COVID hospital in Odisha was all praise for the state government for the arrangements made at the healthcare institution.  
After spending 17 days at the COVID-19 hospital in Keonjhar, the person from Delhi lauded the efforts made by the government. After testing negative, he said, "I never felt like undergoing treatment at a government hospital. The facilities here are better which made me feel comfortable. After talking to the doctor, I was sure that I will recover from the disease soon." The government has really done wonderful thing by setting up the dedicated COVID hospital, he added.



Herdsman escort their cattle on the Bhubaneswar-Puri National Highway to reach a grazing land on the outskirts of the Holy City, Sunday

## BOVINE CARE

# 'Online edu will soon be the new normal' Dhenkanal still struggles for drinking water

More than 1.2 billion children in 186 countries are affected by school closures due to the pandemic



**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** A webinar on online education in the state was organised by a forum of intellectuals here Sunday. Experts and educationists opined that online education is the reality of today's Covid time and we all should accept it and must try to implement it fully.  
In the webinar, the vice chancellor of Utkal University Soumendra Mohan Patnaik, Ravenshaw University vice chancellor Ishan Kumar Patro, Manoj Kumar Mishra, Secretary, Electronics & IT department, MP Amar Patnaik and others were present.  
Patnaik said that online education will only be successful if the students and teachers both use it fruitfully otherwise it cannot be helpful in providing quality education. Both teachers and students need to be aware of its requirement and use.  
On the occasion, Manoj Mishra said that the government is focused on providing quality education online to each every panchayat of the state through digital fiber devices connectivity.  
MP Amar Patnaik said that Covid-19 has forced the world to retreat and the internet has be-

**PARADIGM SHIFT**  
■ Some students without reliable internet access and/or technology struggle to participate in digital learning  
■ This gap is seen across countries and between income brackets within countries  
■ Research shows that on average, students retain 25-60 pc more material when learning online compared to only 8-10 pc in a classroom  
■ This is mostly due to the students being able to learn faster online; e-learning requires 40-60 pc less time to learn than in a traditional classroom setting because students can learn at their own pace, going back and re-reading, skipping, or accelerating through concepts as they choose  
■ While we have yet to see whether this will apply to e-learning post-Covid, it is one of the few sectors where investment has not dried up

come more integral than ever before. Like other sectors, education has also changed dramatically; the Covid-19 has resulted in schools shut all across the world including Odisha. Research suggests that online learning has shown to increase retention of information, and take less time, meaning the changes coronavirus have caused might be here to stay.  
We have to adjust to the new life of less personal touch and more digital touch, the internet supports people to work from home, take online classes, stay in touch with loved ones, and access essential facilities, experts said.

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Dhenkanal, July 12:** Residents of Dhenkanal town strive hard for just a bucketful of drinking water as drinking water projects have faltered.  
Dhenkanal Municipality has already completed 70 years of its formation and the population in this civic area has exceeded 75,000. Shortage of pure drinking water has gripped the civic area.  
As against requirement of 12 million litres per day (MLD) in the town, only nine MLD of drinking water is being supplied these days. Even as river Brahmani feeds in six MLD of drinking water, an intake



well at Mahisapat area under Ward 8 provides three MLD every day.  
Apparently, the shortage of additional three MLD has aggravated the drinking water crisis. Out of 23 wards within Dhenkanal civic body limits, residents of five wards have been deprived of the basic amenity.  
Water crisis has become worse ever at Dandasahi of Kanchan

Bazar, Anandanagar, Banamaliprasad, Town Planning Area, Banjhaakusum, Gajamara and Kutunia. An average, public health department (PHD) supplies drinking water only for one hour in these areas in a day varying according to different zones, local residents said. Nearly 300 tube wells and 221 water stand-posts within Dhenkanal municipal limits have become defunct. At several places, supply pipelines have developed cracks, leading to severe leakage.  
However, the PHD has requested Central Electricity Supply Utility of Odisha (Cesu) authorities for making necessary provision of separate uninterrupted power supply

to the department in order to facilitate water supply during power cuts. Cesu authorities have allegedly taken no step in this regard.  
Dhenkanal PHD additional executive engineer Alekha Bihari Parida said, "At the moment, there is no proposal for supply of drinking water from river Mahanadi. The pipeline laying work halted in five wards following the Covid-19 outbreak, has already resumed. People are suffering more during power cuts and load shedding, as Cesu authorities have not taken any step."  
Local intelligentsia has demanded another intake well on the river Brahmani, which could help resolve the drinking water crisis.



A woman cooks lunch on a road connecting AG Square and Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar during the shutdown over Covid-19, Sunday

## SHUTDOWN & CITY

# 'GET WELL SOON' MESSAGE FOR BIG B

Amitabh Bachchan in his social media post informed his fans about his Covid report Saturday



**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar, July 12:** Internationally renowned sand artist Manas Kumar Sahoo, has conveyed a 'Get Well Soon' message through his sand Animation to the legendary actor Amitabh Bachchan and his son and daughter-in-law Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Bachchan, who have been tested corona positive.  
Manas, encouraging the actors to fight back corona, has portrayed the image of the legend Amitabh Bachchan with a message which says "You are a Fighter; You will conquer Covid-19" in his animation.  
The actor in his social media post informed his fans about the situation Saturday saying— "This evening I have tested Covid positive shifted to Hospital .. hospital informing authorities .. family and staff undergone tests, results awaited .. All that have been in close proximity to me in the last 10 days are requested to please get themselves tested!" (sic)  
Earlier, the artist also paid tribute to veteran actor Jagdeep on his demise at the age of 81 who is well known as 'Soorma Bhopali' from the movie 'Sholay' and other comic roles, he gave tribute to him by a portrait of the actor through his sand animation and with a message— "You'll remain in our heart."

**FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS**  
Acharya Vihar-DayalAgency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Babuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

# Green Mahanadi Mission goes haywire in western Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, July 12:** The state government's ambitious Green Mahanadi Mission aimed at environment protection, checking river-bank erosion, flood control and spreading greenery has gone haywire in Western Odisha allegedly due to fund shortage, a report said.

The scheme having a plan outlay of Rs 5,000 crore was launched June 5, 2018 by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in Sonepur. The scheme had a plan to plant over 5 crore saplings on 41,000 hectare of land on both the islets of the river within a period of five years in collaboration with the forest department.

In Sambalpur district alone, it was planned to plant 12.20 lakh saplings on 16,500 hectares of land comprising forest land, government land and private land.

Observers claim that the project has failed to live up to its expectation in other districts on the Mahanadi distributary region except the urban region of Sambalpur where the project has gained some success. The project has become successful in Sambalpur town due to allocation of more funds.

It is claimed that over 80 per cent of the saplings planted under the scheme on private land has survived. The plantation has led to the creation of a large jungle in Rengali



## IN DISARRAY

The scheme had a plan to plant over 5 crore saplings on 41,000 hectare of land on both the islets of the river within a period of five years in collaboration with the forest department.

The state government had included the Mahanadi Green Mission project in the MGNREGS scheme. However, short supply of funds in 2018-19 and 2019-20 fiscals derailed the project

and Jampali areas comprising 1.30 lakh trees.

Observers have alleged that the inability of the state government in providing required funds has scuttled the project elsewhere. It is alleged that funds stopped coming from the state government after saplings were planted following the programme's launch. As a result, the saplings withered and wilted due to lack of upkeep.

The state government had included the Mahanadi Green Mission project in the MGNREGS scheme. However, short supply of funds in

2018-19 and 2019-20 fiscals derailed the project.

The district administration failed to make payments to the labourers following which they withdrew from the project. Moreover, no funds were sanctioned towards maintenance of the plants. As a result, all the saplings planted in the rural areas wilted. Forest officials said that over 60 per cent saplings have wilted due to the reason.

The forest department had appointed volunteers among the locals naming them as 'Van Doot' and 'Mahanadi Sevak' to plant saplings,

work for their upkeep and conduct awareness drive in the area on environment protection. However, these volunteers withdrew from the project after the forest department failed to pay them honorarium and for other works under the scheme.

DFO Sanjit Kumar admitted that the scheme has failed to achieve its target in rural areas. This year, attempts are being made to meet the objectives and plant new saplings in place of the wilted ones with fresh funds available under the project.

# Farmers seek probe into scam in projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kaniha, July 12:** Minor irrigation projects (MIPs) play a vital role in boosting agriculture, but two such projects in Kaniha area of Angul district have been left neglected since 2004.

The two projects reportedly fail to deliver as their renovation has been botched up. Local farmers expressed displeasure over the fate of the projects.

According to reports, the two irrigation projects are at Kulama panchayat. The state government had sanctioned Rs 70 lakh for their

renovation in 2004. The renovation of the projects was allegedly botched up while the outlet area of the projects has not been done properly. "As a result, water fails to come to the farmlands. The contractor and the officials of the minor irrigation department are responsible for the mess," local farmers alleged.

Local farmers of Kulama had drawn attention of an Assembly House Committee towards the irregularities in the irrigation projects, June 23.

The copies of their complaint against the errant contractor, they alleged, demanding an investigation into the botched-up renovation work of the projects.

Birendra Kumar Jagat, assistant engineer of the Talcher MIP sub-division, said, "The renovation was not botched up. The work was done under the monitoring of the locals and Pani Panchayat members. The project work is yet to be completed while bill of the contractor has not been cleared. The allegation of irregularity is baseless. I welcome an investigation into the work."

They had drawn attention of an Assembly House Committee towards the irregularities in projects, June 23

## 'BOTCHED' RENOVATION

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## GREEN DRIVE



BSF jawans undertaking a plantation drive at their Laxmipur camp in Koraput

OP PHOTO

# 7-day lockdown in Malkangiri, Balimela



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, July 12:** After 35 people in Malkangiri civic body areas tested positive for COVID-19, the district administration announced a seven-day lockdown in two civic areas of the district, Sunday.

District Collector Manish Agarwal directed the authorities of Malkangiri Municipality and Balimela NAC to enforce lockdown in their areas from July 12 to July 19.

Agarwal said that out of 35 positive cases, 20 were detected from Malkangiri Municipality. From the 20 people 19 people have contracted the disease from previous positive cases in a containment zone and one

has no contact/travel history.

On the other hand, 15 cases were reported from Balimela NAC. Out of the 15 cases, 14 cases were infected by the virus due to close contact with previous positive cases of a containment zone.

However, one had returned from Telangana and stayed at a temporary quarantine centre.

Besides the civic areas, another patient with COVID-19

symptoms was reported from Khairput block, the Collector added.

With 35 fresh cases detected in the district Sunday, the total tally of the district now stands at 170. Out of the 170 people, 101 have recovered from the disease.

# Suspected Covid patients avoid seeking medical help

**KABISURYANAGAR:** The coronavirus situation in Kabisuryanagar block and Kabisuryanagar NAC areas in Ganjam district continues to deteriorate with each passing day, if official numbers are anything to go by.

With panic setting in, people here are getting reluctant to go to

hospitals to get their swabs tested, even when they have mild symptoms. Many such persons have said that they are not going to hospitals to avoid contracting coronavirus infection.

The block and NAC areas Saturday reported four and seven fresh COVID-19 positive cases re-

# Man kills self on live video

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khaira, July 12:** A man killed himself on live video Saturday at Mituani village under Sarugaon panchayat in Khaira block in Balasore district.

The 12-minute video went viral within a few minutes. A police team led by Khaira police station sub-inspector Ashwini Behera reached the village Saturday evening, brought down the body and sent it for post-mortem.

The deceased was identified as 38-year-old Pitambar Lenka.

A source in the village said Pitambar's wife had passed away a year ago. While he was working somewhere outside the district, his two children were staying at their uncle's house.



Pitambar had returned home before the announcement of the nationwide lockdown. Saturday, he put his mobile phone on live mode, made a noose and killed himself. The body was seen hanging moments later.

Pitambar's sister Jayanti Rout has lodged an FIR with the police.

While it is being said that the man took to the extreme step after being cheated in love, police have launched an investigation taking various angles into consideration.

# 2 hardcore ultras lay down arms



Maoists Kanna Madi and Lake Punem at the SP office

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, July 12:** Two hardcore Maoists, both carrying cash rewards on their heads, surrendered before Malkangiri Superintendent of Police (SP) Rishikesh Dnyandeo Khilari, Sunday.

The rebels, Kanna Madi and Lake Punem, expressed their desire to lead a normal life and contribute to the development of their area.

Kanna had joined the banned outfit in 2013 and was working as an area committee member of CPI (Maoist). He carried a bounty of Rs 4 lakh on his head. He was suspected to be involved in about 10 cases which included murder, IED blast and exchange of fire with the security forces.

Lake was a party member in the banned organisation which she

had joined in 2018. She was suspected to be involved in a dual murder case and two incidents of exchange of fire. She had a cash reward of Rs 2 lakh on her head.

Explaining the reasons for surrendering, the rebels said they were disillusioned with "hollow" Maoist ideology. The development of their hometowns after the commissioning of the Gurupriya Bridge and the latest call by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and DGP Abhay influenced them to quit the path of violence. Lake was particularly disappointed with the Maoist leaders' behaviour towards women cadres because of persistent gender discrimination.

They will be provided assistance as per the Surrender and Rehabilitation Policy of the state government, the SP said.

# GANJAM TO GET 6 MORE COVID CARE CENTRES

**CHHATRAPUR:** Amid a huge spurt in coronavirus cases, the Ganjam district administration is planning to open six more COVID Care Centres (CCCs) and two District COVID Health Centres (DCHCs) for treatment of COVID-19 patients.

The CCCs and DCHCs will be operational at both government and private buildings.

Two 100-bed CCCs were opened at Sanakhemundi and Patrapur, Sunday. The district administration will avail more than 850 beds in the new CCCs and DCHCs.

All the above information was given by Ganjam Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange on his Twitter account Sunday. He said that preparations to set up the hospitals are in full swing and they will be operational at the earliest.

The CCCs will be opened at Hospital Inpatient care (IPD) of Berhampur BPH College and Hospital, hostel buildings of Berhampur Sarawati Sishu Mandir and at Aska Leprosy Hospital.

Similarly, the DCHCs will be opened at the girl's hostel of Berhampur's Biju Patnaik Homeopathic College, Amit Hospital at Berhampur's Gate Bazaar and Aska Sub-Divisional Hospital.

Kulange stated that he had talked with healthcare workers about the centres and has taken their feedback. Some of their suggestions will be implemented, he said.

Kulange informed that the centres will have trained doctors, ICU wards, ventilators, medical equipment, staff nurses, microbiologists and healthcare workers for proper treatment of COVID patients.

# Raikia, 12 villages are containment zones

**RAIKIA:** Covid-19 infection cases are rising in Kandhamal district while two local cases were detected in Raikia. Such cases have left the administration and people worried. Considering the possible community transmission, the administration has declared 12 nearby villages and Raikia town as containment zones. All the routes to the villages were sealed while 17 villages were declared as buffer zones. Meanwhile, health workers, officials, and ASHAs have launched house-to-house survey to detect suspected cases. It is yet to be ascertained how many people have come in contact with the two infected people. Fears of community spread of the virus prevailed in these villages.

respectively. Till Saturday, the tallies of the block and NAC were 117 and 100 respectively. And the total number of patients so far recovered from both the block and NAC areas is 150. These two areas have so far reported eight COVID-19 deaths including two teachers.

According to locals, suspected

patients not turning up for voluntary swab tests, NAC and the affected panchayat areas not getting disinfected, teams not being formed for disposal of COVID-19 bodies, home quarantined persons roaming free in markets could prove costly for the district administration in the days to come.

# Quail farming makes Angul youth self-reliant

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kaniha, July 12:** A local youth in Angul district has set an example for several others of his generation through quail (locally called Gunduri) farming, and becoming self-sufficient.

Chinmaya Sahoo, belongs to Podagada in Sushruba panchayat under Kaniha block. He did not want to chase after a government job after completion of his studies.

"With limited available fund of my own I started quail farming a few years ago in order to eke out a living. However, my business has reached a satisfactory height and I earn Rs 25,000 to Rs 30,000 every month," Chinmaya said with a sparkle in his eyes.

If the state government support is made available to him, his farming business will certainly flourish further, the youth added.



## HARD WORK PAYS OFF

Chinmaya Sahoo did not want to chase after a government job after completion of his studies.

First starting poultry, he then learnt about quail farming from the internet and started it with only ₹20,000

Chinmaya learnt about quail farming from the internet. He had only Rs 20,000 to start with and borrowed another Rs 60,000 through a self-help group (SHG). The farming started under an asbestos-roofed house, one and a half years ago.

Initially, Chinmaya was into poultry as well as quail farming. Later, he focused only on the latter. He

had visited several other farms in Angul district for this purpose and learnt from their experiences.

Sharing his own experience Chinmaya said that, "Quail birds are purchased for Rs 9 per chick. The birds become worthy to be sold for broiler purposes just within a span of one month. However, each bird (giving maximum 250 gram of meat)

costs about Rs. 45 to Rs 60."

"Moreover, the meat of quail is tastier than chicken. As the bird is a hybrid variety of wild species of quail bird there is nothing illegal in its farming for poultry purposes," Chinmaya expressed.

Quail eggs are sold for Rs 2 each. The birds start laying eggs within 50 days. Quails usually feed on the same cattle feed as other poultry birds.

Chinmaya has already cleared up all his loans taken for quail farming. Following in his footsteps, over 20 youths belonging to Angul and Deogarh districts have started quail farming.

Reacting to this, Kaniha veterinary doctor Kamal Lochan Das said, "The state government has been providing assistance to unemployed youths under several schemes in order to make them self-reliant. Process to provide support to Chinmaya has already begun."

FOCUS SOCIETY

# DUBEY THE TIGER



**Details recede when the larger-than-life figure of Vikas Dubey, a Brahmin, takes on the might of the state which is increasingly in non-Brahmin hands – indeed in Thakur hands. You may not register these facts but ask the Brahmins of Kanpur and they will read out their plaint: Chief Ministers of UP, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh are all Thakurs**

This ignited jealousies, a class war – English medium versus Hindi/Urdu medium; not communal, mind you. This was a crucial divide which amplified itself into two class streams which, believe it or not, in some ways defined independent India. One stream swelled the ranks of “boxwalas”, Civil Service and other high-end careers. The other lot, with an ever expanding base, turned to political activism with a vengeance, not as a cause but a profession. The second cluster became the Bakait’s habitat. In retrospect, everything falls into place, but for a debutante saga-boy, what followed was intimidating. As I came out of Royal Café, I was encircled by a group led by a boy named Atiq who lunged at me even as the menacing figure of Buddha Pahelwan, the Bakait from Nrahi near Hazratganj loomed in the background. Worse was in store but for the timely arrival of Khan Saheb, with Rasheed Ghosi (milkman) in tow. Rasheed knew “Buddhu” Pahelwan. The situation was thus defused. Other than supplying milk to our neighbourhood, Rasheed’s claim to fame was that

he faced murder charges. He acquired a status because of the protection he provided to the poker-den run by the Heartwell brothers in their mini mansion not far from Rasheed’s buffalo shed. Khan Saheb had a word of praise for “Buddhu” Pahelwan’s valour – “no one can attack him from front” – but he romanticised “Nannhe” (Aslam Khan), a legend in Aminabad for his swift knife-movement, a slight, brooding man whose rendezvous was the hair cutting saloon opposite Royal Talkies, popular with Lucknow’s underclass because it screened two Nadia-John Cawas movies, back to back, for the price of one ticket. Like swordsmanship, expertise with Rampur knives was considered manly. Revolvers were effete even though Pyarey Jaani, in his trench coat, had considerable aura in Nakkhas and Chowk, his one hand always on the revolver in his pocket. There was no recorded case of the revolver ever having been used. It was deterrence, Lucknow style. Deterrence had given way to open warfare when I turned up in Mumbai to gauge the aftermath

of the March, 1983 bomb blasts. The driver of the yellow taxi from the Cricket Club of India, obviously from my home turf, Pratapgarh or Rae Bareilly, was averse to giving me his name even though I spoke in his accents. Not a word by way of reaction to the blasts or the pogrom which preceded it. I put it down to my persistence, because quite abruptly he pulled up the taxi by the kerb and turned to me sharply. “Look, we were butchered in the riots, but after the blasts, things have changed.”

“We are no longer ‘dabey huey’ or ‘covering’”, he continued, “enter any suburban train and say ‘Salam aleikum’ and people give you the way.”

The vengeance in his eyes was scary. “The state is too strong”, I said. But it is, I said almost to myself, equally true that a community driven to hopelessness would extract satisfaction from the actions of anybody who gave vent to the community’s choked anger.

In these circumstances, consider Vikas Dubey. In his list of alleged murders there were Brahmins too. But details recede when the larger-than-life figure of Vikas Dubey, a Brahmin, takes on the might of the state which is increasingly in non-Brahmin hands – indeed in Thakur hands. You may not register these facts but ask the Brahmins of Kanpur and they will read out their plaint: Chief Ministers of UP, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh are all Thakurs.

A community which basked for generations in the patronage of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Kamalapati Tripathi, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna and Narain Dutt Tewari, must feel a little sidelined with the arrival of Mulayam Singh Yadav, Mayawati, Kalyan Singh and, now, Chief Minister Adityanath.

Bihar’s Director General of Police, Gupteshwar Pandey put his finger on something while criticising on Primitime TV a tweet which had gone viral: “Dubey was tiger for Brahmins.” In doing so, Pandey was giving even wider currency to a dangerous thought particularly in the context of UP today

*The writer is a veteran journalist and columnist.*

When thou callest another a fool, as thou one must, sometimes, yet do not forget that thou thyself hast been the supreme fool in humanity.

SRI AUROBINDO



## THE WORST GET GOING

For the Congress party, Rajasthan seems to be going the Madhya Pradesh (MP) way. A vertical split in the ruling party in MP brought down the Kamal Nath-led government in late March, days before the nationwide Lockdown was declared. Some reports at the time claimed that the Lockdown was delayed to allow this political event to play out. Current reports are that the Congress would face the same fate in Rajasthan; however it has taken nearly four months of the critical lockdown period to take political matters to a head in the state. It is known that there is no love lost between Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot, and a parting of ways is likely.

To begin with, the Congress leadership alone must take the blame for what’s happening to it on multiple fronts. On the one side, its governments are falling; on the other, its young lot of leaders are either quitting, readying to quit or have started openly airing their desperation about the lack of leadership and guidance at the highest level. It is obvious the Congress is going downhill. Unlike Modi for the BJP, or certain regional leaders like Naveen Patnaik, Jagan Reddy, Mamata Banerjee, Sharad Pawar or even Stalin for their respective parties, who are the darlings of the masses and most candidates contesting on the symbols propped by these leaders win hands down, the Congress today is not only leaderless but seems to be paralysed and directionless. The days of Indira Gandhi and her Garibi Hatao slogan are long gone. Today’s Sonia Gandhi does, indeed, seem like a true foreigner who has absolutely no inkling about the soul of India. The present socio-political-economic crisis that has befallen India is because of her long stint as the backseat driver of the Manmohan Singh government. It is a pity that a party which had been destined to be dissolved immediately after Independence managed to survive so long. What Mahatma Gandhi had desired as the future of the Congress was absolutely correct. However, strong personalities seem to successively revive a dead horse called the Indian National Congress. Today’s Congress leadership should not be misinterpreted as being limited to a mother-son duo. The recent decay in the Congress started more than a decade ago. People like Pranab Mukherjee, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Chidambaram, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Sachin Pilot, Gehlot, Kamal Nath and other such characters left a stench that successfully asphyxiated the Congress. These individuals benefitted at the cost of the party for a very long time. While the going was good, the worst got going. These so-called leaders never tried any course correction or did not bother to speak their minds when national interest should have been primary to them. This silence produced creatures like Ahmed Patel and a bunch of other figures who claimed to represent the minorities which eventually did not make much sense in the greater interest of the Congress or the country. Young or old, anyone who gets political recognition must understand that the political outfit that offers them the recognition must not only be remembered with gratitude but they also have to ensure that every act of that party is pro-people and favouring national interests. Unfortunately for the Congress, the present crop at the helm knows only how to ‘take’. The party’s culture did not teach them how to ‘give’. This translated into the actions of these Congress leaders while they were dealing with subjects that had great political importance for India. The other sad part of the Congress was that it did not allow local leadership to blossom and grow. The party that once took pride of its mass involvement has now degenerated to appoint moneybags as Pradesh Congress chiefs. Even in a state like Odisha, it is hilarious to observe a huge cutout of the PCC chief looking down while some minor office bearers hold a press conference. A political non-entity, incapable of winning even an Assembly seat for himself, has the audacity to cling to the post of State chief primarily because of reasons that even the common voter understands. If this be the case in Odisha, obviously the same situation is replicated all over. A major reason for this is the attitude of destroying ground level political activists with a convincing political ethos. The downfall of the Congress has not been brought about by the BJP. The party has been decimated by the people of India for the misbehaviour of the leadership.

As far as politicians like Scindia or Pilot are concerned, their urgency to grab office is making their political longevity shaky. There is no doubt that the BJP today is also going the Congress way, fast. There are reports that keeping Bihar and Nitish Kumar as examples, the BJP leadership desires to have non-entities as state Chief Ministers. This is obviously the outcome of the Central leader’s desire that every one down the line must only be a Yes man. This is precisely what Indira Gandhi had started in the Congress and those acts took many decades to bear fruit. Now in these modern times, the results may show up much quicker.

The types of Jyotiraditya Scindia and Sachin Pilot may get temporary reprieve and some solace by joining the BJP and toppling their respective state governments. Apart from the hugely differing political culture between the Congress and the BJP, these young leaders have definitely marred their images in the public mind. In a feudal society where ideologies do not matter to anyone, betrayal is perceived negatively. A case in point is that of Chandrababu Naidu whose flirtations and later distancing with the BJP completely destroyed him. There in Andhra Pradesh, the current Chief Minister Jagan Reddy seems to be playing a smarter ‘blow-hot-blow-cold’ game with the BJP.

The long impasse and later conciliation with the Scindia faction in MP clearly demonstrated what the future portends for that group within the BJP. The story of Aaya Ram Gaya Ram is not new in Indian politics. However, the present voter was hoping that politicians will be guided by their economic and social commitments that they stood for when they were in the party that they represented. The fluidity in Indian political character seems to have returned with force. If the Gandhis really want the Congress to survive as a political instrument to serve the interests of India, then Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka should announce their complete withdrawal from public life. If the mother-son duo would resign from Lok Sabha and party posts, the nation may witness a total political transformation that could help India become a stronger democracy. For one, the people in power will have to stop blaming the past and will be compelled to produce results.

**Piate**  
Tathagata Satpathy



Saeed Naqvi

**A KNEE-JERK RESPONSE TO THE DUBEY SAGA WOULD LEAD US NOWHERE WITHOUT PICKING UP THE THREAD OF A PERENNIAL UNJUST SYSTEM OF WHICH THE POLICE ARE THE CHOSEN CAT’S PAW**

The manner of Vikas Dubey’s murder (encounter) would cause Joey the child in awe of Shane played by Alan Ladd to scream: “that’s not fair – I hate you.” A knee-jerk response to the Dubey saga would lead us nowhere without picking up the thread of a perennially unjust system of which the police are the chosen cat’s paw. It reflects on the rottenness of the system that the real puppeteers, who pull the strings, seek to heap the odium exclusively on the police.

Systemic injustice, the police and “badmen” figure in my experience in two clusters: the peaking of urban terror at the hands of Mumbai’s underworld after the frightening 1993 pogrom and, of course, the badmen of Lucknow during my growing up years. The badman of Lucknow was called Bakait or Badmaash which literally means someone who lives on “ill-gotten livelihood.” That would suggest that they were thieves; which they were not. Honour was an article of faith. They were mohalla or neighbourhood toughs, with clearly demarcated areas of operation. These notional lines, like all frontiers, could be pushed depending on the Bakait’s personality and that of other’s holding contiguous terrains.

At a time when the feudal order was fading away nicely, noiselessly, selling their bungalows to builders and cramming themselves on a floor without fuss, the Bakait served a purpose. He became the unofficial middleman between the retiring gentry, for whom he had an old fashioned respect, and the lower judiciary, the Kutchery, constabulary, and the hangers on, lounging on cane furniture in the unkempt lawns of the new political class.

My exposure to a Bakait was through our driver, Khan Saheb Nazir whose protective instincts for the family came into play when he received word that in the course of growing up, I had audaciously exceeded my brief. I was seen in Royal Café with the well groomed students of Isabella Thoburn College, a revolutionary violation of Lucknow’s gender segregation.

SPECTRUM MARKETS

## Rise and rise of prices in Covid times



Shivaji Sarkar

**THE OFFICIAL VIEW THAT PETROLEUM PRODUCTS ARE USED ONLY FOR TRANSPORTATION AND HIGHER FARES OR FREIGHT CAN MAKE UP FOR THE LOSSES IS A FALLACY**

Rising food prices are adding to the woes of post-corona lockdown recovery. Some states are in quandary whether to allow full opening or continue with half-shut half-open measures. This is adding to supply problems creating artificial shortage. This is a double whammy. Recession has hit not only India but the entire world. The rising cost of transportation, due to unprecedented hike in administered petroleum prices, is telling on the people. With reduced purchasing power, inflation has added not only to the problems of consumers but also of farmers. Despite higher minimum support prices, the farmer has not been able to get even the minimum.

Additionally, since dhabas, hotels and processing plants remain under lockdown the demand for most vegetables or food grains is low. It has a direct bearing on most farm products. For example, corn fetched Rs 2,200 per quintal in 2019 but this year it is difficult to get even one-fourth of the price. So a farmer who earned Rs 20 plus lakh last year, despite better production is content with just Rs 5 lakh. Similarly, potato and other vegetables see a slump. So the price for the consumer is high. The farmer, however, has an earning.

The farm sector is in trouble as input costs have increased manifold. Even irrigating the fields cost more than double as the administered price of diesel is creating new records. People are not beneficiaries of the crash in crude prices to around \$40 a barrel. Taxes and higher prices have acted heavily. The official view that petroleum products are used only for transportation and higher fares or freight can make up for the losses is a fallacy. Any society that pays higher fuel cost suffers more than one way. It erodes income, reduces purchasing capacity and causes overall slowdown at a time when pace in production is a must. So, rising food prices in reality is a pre-corona phenomenon. The latest 20 to 40 per cent rise in prices of vegetables is attributed to higher labour costs and 15 to 20 per cent more transportation costs.

Supplies have reduced by about 15 per cent due to summer rains damaging the vegetable crop. The shortage of labour following reverse migration has increased wages of the labourers. These all reflect in vegetables and other food grain prices. Even prices of rice and wheat have increased in the market despite a massive dole being

given to the poor by the government. It is said that in about 11 states free food grain distribution has not been implemented as planned.

According to official data, 36 states and UTs lifted 6.38 lakh metric tonnes (mt) out of the 8 lakh mt allocated under Atmanirbhar Bharat for May and June for migrant workers. Till June 30, 1.07 lakh mt, about 13 per cent food grain was distributed. Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Ladakh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Tripura distributed not more than one per cent of the food lifted!

The crisis has been building up on the price front since the 2019 General Elections. FCI procured 36 million tonnes prior to that in 2018, the highest since 2012-13, prior to the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. It swelled FCI stocks to 75 million tonnes – 33 million tonnes of wheat and 42 million tonnes of rice, and is estimated to be about one-third of the total production. This has been utilised well for distribution till coming November at a cost of Rs 1.5 lakh crore. But the mismatch in distribution, the market supplies and other factors have con-

tinued to add to the rise in prices. Interestingly enough despite free supplies, the prices have not come down in rural markets either.

The prices of edible oils too have noticed significant rise all over. The village markets have seen spike in locally produced oils. This has happened due to rise in mustard and other oilseeds prices, labour costs, electricity and diesel prices. Overall expelling and freight costs have increased.

In June, the RBI noticed that the inflationary situation has returned since April, when the price index surged by 8.6 per cent from 5.8 per cent in March owing to price spurt of vegetable, cereals, milk, pulses, edible oil and sugar.

The MPC says it is necessary to ease financial conditions further. It has reduced interest rates, which have hurt the depositors, senior citizens and the poor the most. In fact, cut in interest rate has not helped anybody. Rather, it has caused hardships and further reduced purchasing power of the most vulnerable classes. The high income-tax, bank charges, rude bank staff behaviour and tax on deposits are further hurting the economy. –INFA

WISDOM CORNER

- Speak, so that I may see you. **SOCRATES**
- Seek not the favor of the multitude; it is seldom got by honest and lawful means. But seek the testimony of the few; and number not the voices, but weigh them. **IMMANUEL KANT**
- Give a bowl of rice to a man and you will feed him for a day. Teach him how to grow his own rice and you will save his life. **CONFUCIUS**

LOL  
Constant complaining



Surprisingly, the waiter was very patient, he walked back and forth and never got angry. So finally, a second customer asked him why he didn’t throw out the pest. “Oh, I really don’t care or mind,” said the waiter with a smile. “We don’t even have an air conditioner.”

A customer was bothering the waiter in a restaurant. First, he asked that the air conditioning be turned up because he was too hot, then he asked it be turned down because he was too cold, and so on for about half an hour.

Dubey, temple

Sir, The irrationality underlying the purification ritual performed at the Shank Dwar of the Mahakaleswar temple in Ujjain after the dreaded criminal Vikas Dubey entered the temple is glaring. Lord Shiva is The Pure One, The Auspicious, neutral to human sins and virtues, and not affected by the three Gunas of the Prakriti. His presence, chanting of His name, purifies the surroundings. Then how can His premises be polluted by the presence of a criminal? Is not the premises polluted by presence/visit of the officials/politicians who are epitomes of desires, temptations, ego, corruption, criminal records and dishonesty? How can Ganga jal purify the premises of the Pure One from whose matted lock the flowing Ganga purifies the world? Does it mean that purity of the Lord depends on human-conducted purification rituals? Is not the ritual to purify The Pure an act of blasphemy? Unfortunately, the more we claim a civilized status, the clearer we display our stupidity by making a departure from the core of the ‘real’ – the Truth.

Maguni Charan Behera, EMAIL

Poor and liquor

Sir, Most of the middle class and the poor are passing through a difficult situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The daily wage, the private service holder and the small businessmen are facing a problem to manage their families with too little or no income. Vegetable prices are rising in Odisha. But our administration is bringing down the liquor prices. Are vegetables and groceries more necessary for life, or wine?

Santosh Kumar Mohanty, CUTTACK

Tribals, ITDA

Sir, During the 1980s, the government had, in order to ameliorate the plight of tribals, setup Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) to improve their livelihood. Sadly, these have become centres for vested interests to siphon off funds in crores. Recently, there was an incident of such a loot via forged signatures by an official of the ITDA. Earlier, some incidents of loot of funds in crores from MGNREGS and projects relating to plantation, building and road construction, as also for laying electric lines to tribal hostels and educational institutions had raised controversy. The government has failed to act in a proper manner against the guilty. Sadly, even elected tribal leaders are not taking such matters seriously.

Janaki Ballav Dash, MAYURBHANJ

### Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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# Ex-HC judge to probe Dubey episode

UP Governor Anandiben Patel appointed retired Allahabad High Court judge Shashi Kant Agarwal to probe the incidents and submit a report within 2 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, July 12:** The Uttar Pradesh government Sunday constituted a one-member commission to probe the Kanpur ambush and police encounter with gangster Vikas Dubey.

UP Governor Anandiben Patel appointed retired Allahabad High Court judge Shashi Kant Agarwal to probe the incidents and submit a report within two months, according to a government notification.

Any change in its tenure shall be at the behest of the government, it said. The panel was set up under the Commission of Inquiries Act, 1952

and it will be based in Kanpur. Meanwhile, a government statement said the one-member commission will also probe the gangster's relationship with police and people from various departments.

It will suggest ways so as to prevent such a repetition in future, it said. A government spokesperson said the killing of eight policemen in the ambush on the intervening night of July 2 and 3 by Vikas Dubey and his henchmen and the gangster's encounter on July 10 are a subject of public importance.

Hence, their probe is essential, the spokesperson said, adding that the panel will also investigate all



## SIT REACHES BIKRU VILLAGE

Pradesh additional chief secretary Sanjay Bhoosreddy, who is heading the special investigation team probing the local police's alleged connivance with slain gangster Vikas Dubey, Sunday visited Bikru village near Kanpur where eight policemen were ambushed by the henchmen of the gangster. Bhoosreddy was accompanied by additional DG Hariram Sharma and DIG J Ravindra Gaud who are part of the SIT. The team which arrived here early Sunday will also probe the role of Dubey's sympathisers and political patronisers, said an official. According to the official, the SIT reached Bikru village where they inspected the site of the ambush to get an idea about how the policemen including a deputy SP walked into the trap set by Dubey falling to a shower of bullets fired from rooftops, the official added.

encounters in the period from July 2-3 to 10. Earlier, the Congress had demanded a judicial probe by a sitting Supreme Court judge into the entire episode to bring out the truth and identify those who had "granted protection" to Dubey.

The Congress demanded that the unholy nexus between organised crime and the ilk of Vikas Dubey with those sitting in the echelons of power be probed by a sitting Supreme Court judge, party spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala had said at a press conference. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra too had demanded a judicial probe by a sitting SC judge.

On Saturday, the Uttar Pradesh

government had constituted a special investigation team to probe all aspects related to the slain gangster besides the alleged laxity and role of the local police.

Additional Chief Secretary Sanjay Bhoosreddy is heading the team, which will have Additional DG Hari Ram Sharma and DIG Ravinder Goud as its members, according to an official statement.

The SIT will submit its report by July 31 after looking into all the angles, studying all related documents and spot inspection in Kanpur, it said.

The team has been asked to probe what effective action was taken in all cases lodged against Dubey.

## WINGED MENACE



A man beats a utensil to drive away a swarm of locusts, during the total lockdown imposed by the state government for three consecutive days, in Lucknow, Sunday

# Shiv Sena, NCP churn already choppy waters in Maharashtra

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, July 12:** That the three-party 'Maha Vikas Aghadi' (MVA) government in Maharashtra, which consists of disparate allies like the Shiv Sena, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress, is running a four-legged race is obvious.

But apart from being a clumsy combination due to the clockwork precision that those in the team often find it tough to achieve, such races often see the runners stumbling and having a hard fall much to their embarrassment.

Like it happened with the MVA regarding the transfer of 10 deputy commissioners of police (DCP) in Mumbai, which were announced and revoked within two days after the intervention of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

The state government also had to face embarrassment after the Mumbai police tried to enforce an order meant to ensure that citizens restricted themselves to an area in a 2-km radius from their homes. Barricades and nakabandis set up to implement the diktat issued by Commissioner of Police Parambir Singh led to massive traffic snarls and had to be withdrawn subsequently. The NCP is said to be upset at Uddhav's moves to gradually ease the lockdown restrictions in the state, instead of allowing normalcy to resume sooner. The Congress and NCP are also



## DISPARATE ALLIES

The NCP is said to be upset at Uddhav's moves to gradually ease the lockdown restrictions in the state, instead of allowing normalcy to resume sooner

In what led to a churn in already choppy waters, the NCP sprung a surprise on the Shiv Sena by wooing away five of its corporators from Ahmednagar district

The Sena prevailed on the NCP to ensure that these five corporators were returned to its flock. However, it became obvious that the allies may be acting at cross purposes

# Stop 'playing with lives of students'

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, July 12:** The minister of higher education and technical education of Maharashtra, Uday Samant Sunday, questioned the University Grants Commission's (UGC) guidelines on exams, saying that coronavirus had entered "safe spaces" like Raj Bavan and also infected veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan.

Samant, in a Twitter post written in Marathi, said: "Corona in Raj Bavan .. Corona in Amitabhji .. Corona was able to reach such a safe place .. Will HRD and UGC agree now that conducting exams is playing with the lives of students .. Will Bhushan Patwardhan side with Maharashtra now ??"

Last month, the Maharashtra government cancelled the final year and final semester exams in various universities due to the rising coronavirus cases in the



■ The UGC July 6 had announced that final-year examinations in universities will have to be organised by the end of September, deferring the schedule from July

■ Several states have termed the guidelines unfeasible in view of the Covid-19 situation and some chief ministers have also written to the PM seeking his intervention

which is on the State list, higher education is on the concurrent list. UGC and AICTE directives have to be implemented," Higher Education Secretary Amit Khare told The Hindu.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) on July 6 had announced that final-year examinations in universities will have to be organised by the end of September, deferring the schedule from July in view of a spike in Covid-19 cases in the country.

Earlier, in a letter to Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Samant said that the new UGC, guidelines on exams should be "advisory" not "mandatory".

Several states have termed the guidelines unfeasible in view of the Covid-19 situation and some chief ministers have also written to Prime Minister Modi seeking his intervention.

state but said candidates willing to appear for tests could inform their respective institutions in writing.

On Sunday, after the Delhi government also decided to cancel all upcoming semester and final year

exams in all the state government-run universities, the UGC said that it was not permissible for states to take such actions.

"As per the UGC Act, State governments cannot take this decision. Unlike school education,

# Mission Unlock falters as virus cases spike

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, July 12:** The Maharashtra government's 'Mission Begin Again' plan to slowly let businesses open up in a bid to revive the state's economy, has run into a hurdle with the state government pushing districts and civic bodies into a further lockdown.

The purpose of that plan, launched in June, was to allow businesses to open up simultaneously. But a fresh lockdown has put a question mark on the whole plan as restrictions have made it difficult for businesses to function.

In its latest announcement Friday, the Maharashtra government imposed a lockdown in Pune and the neighbouring towns of Pimpri and Chinchwad from July 13 to July 23. Only milk shops, pharmacies, doctor's clinics and emergency services

are to be allowed.

The announcement comes after a meeting chaired by Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar with senior government officials in Pune. The Thane Municipal Corporation, which had announced a lockdown for 10 days from July 2 to July 12, has also now decided to extend it till July 19.

Aurangabad is also under a lockdown from July 10 to July 19. The Mumbai police has already issued orders that make it difficult for people to travel from one part of the city to another. To make matters worse, neighbouring cities such as Navi Mumbai and Kalyan-Dombivli have all gone into a lockdown.

If you hinder people's movement and also impose stringent conditions, asking them not even to step out for groceries, then how can you



run a business Our employees are finding it difficult to come to work, we are already facing losses. There is no point in allowing businesses to start when you are placing such restrictions, said a Jayesh T, a garment trader from Mumbai.

To give an example of how the new relaxations under Mission Begin Again are not making sense, several shops in the city are shutting down their businesses by 3 pm, even when the state has allowed them to function from 9 am to 7 pm. It doesn't make sense to open your shop and see no customers come. We have overheads to pay like electricity charges, said a shopkeeper from CST.

# Cong to fight UP polls 'under Priyanka Gandhi's leadership'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, July 12:** Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will be the face of the party in the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu said Sunday.

He also made it clear that the Congress will not enter into a tie-up with any political party, but will forge an alliance with the public, democracy, youth, farmers, poor, Dalits, oppressed and deprived people.

UP is her land. She (Priyanka Gandhi) hails from this place. She and her family have an affection for the soil of UP, and for the crores of people of UP. She resides in the heart of crores of people of the state. And undoubtedly under her leadership, the party will contest the UP Assembly elections, he told PTI

in an interview.

Priyanka Gandhi will be the face of our party. The party will become the voice of the people and they will shower their blessings on us, he said.

The UP Congress chief asserted that the public sentiment of UP is that we should form the government under her 'dekhh-rekhh' (monitoring).

(To a question on forging any pre-poll or post-poll alliance during polls, Lallu said, Congress will not enter into an alliance with any political party in UP. We will forge an alliance with the public, democracy, youth, farmers, poor, Dalits, oppressed and deprived people.

ple. On some BJP leaders dubbing Priyanka Gandhi as a 'Twitter leader', Lallu said, This (UP) government is afraid of Priyanka Gandhi. She took to the streets, and fought for tribals of Sonbhadra despite being detained by the state government. The way she is cornering the government on almost every issue, it seems it is feeling

afraid (sarkaar darri hui hai) and entangled (phansi hui hai). Hence, it is speaking in this manner.

When asked as to whether the Congress is lagging behind as far as preparations for the 2022 UP polls are concerned, the UP Congress chief said, The Congress is continuously raising issues, which directly and indirectly impact the public of the state. We are consistently strengthening our voice. The Congress is becoming the voice of the people on various issues, even as the state government is engaging itself in anti-people activities.

He also claimed that since 1989, the time from which the Congress has been out of power in UP, the development of the state has sig-

nificantly declined. You can see for yourself the condition in which the SP, BSP and BJP have ruled this state.

In the past (during the Congress rule), UP was known by its industries, small-scale industries and sugar mills.

Today, on the contrary, a large number of sugar mills are lying closed.

The traditional industries associated with a particular district are also in a bad condition, be it the glass bangles of Firozabad, locks of Aligarh, leather of Kanpur, brass of Moradabad or carpets of Bhadohi. The condition of weavers in the state is very bad, Lallu said.

**We will forge an alliance with the public, democracy, youth, farmers, poor, Dalits, oppressed and deprived people**

AJAY KUMAR LALLU  
UP CONGRESS CHIEF



## AKHILESH ON ONLINE CLASSES

# Poorer students getting step-motherly treatment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, July 12:** Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav accused the Centre of following wrong policies in the education sector, alleging that it had led to chaos.

Schools and colleges are closed because of corona. For online classes, the children belonging to poor families do not have smartphones, Yadav said in a statement. There is a problem of network connectivity at many places, especially in villages.

The online classes are only helpful for those belonging to affluent families and the students belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes are getting stepmotherly treatment from the government, Yadav said.

The SP leader alleged the BJP government did not think about

the livelihood of the teachers and other employees working in the educational institutions that got closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yadav pointed out that there was pressure on the school managements not to take fees during this period, following which he said the guardians who were in a position to pay fees were not doing so.

As a result, he added, over 10 lakh employees were facing immense hardships.

According to Yadav, some private colleges had paid salaries for March and April, while there are others who have not paid the salaries even for the month of March.

This is a serious problem before the people who are dependent on teaching work for their livelihood and some of them are facing depression, he said.





What has happened under Modi rule, China took away Mother India's sacred land RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

OVER 400 CASES HEARD BY NGT TILL JUNE 30

Over 400 cases were heard till June 30 by the National Green Tribunal via video conferencing during the lockdown period, according to official data



of the day quote

China and India stand very differently at the UN, in terms of their perspective and approach SYED AKBARUDDIN | INDIA'S FORMER PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AT THE UN

Just learnt that Amitabh Bachchan has tested Covid-19 positive. His message of Mission Fateh has inspired millions here in Punjab AMARINDER SINGH | PUNJAB CM

The Assam government would allow non-symptomatic COVID-19 positive patients to go for home quarantine only if they sign an undertaking agreeing to certain conditions HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM MINISTER

CORONA CASES NEAR 8.5L, 63% RECOVER

Focussed and coordinated steps taken in tandem by the Centre along with the states through a 'whole of government' approach, bolstered by effective clinical management of Covid after early detection and timely diagnosis, led to a consistent increase in the recovered cases, said the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 12: As India Sunday recorded 8.5 lakh coronavirus cases, the testing per million crossed 8,000 figure with 62.93 per cent patients recovering from the disease, a positive sign amid pandemic.

Focussed and coordinated steps taken in tandem by the Centre along with the states and the Union Territories (UTs) through a 'whole of government' approach, bolstered by effective clinical management of COVID-19 after early detection and timely diagnosis, led to a consistent increase in the recovered cases, said the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

In the last 24 hours, the Ministry, however, said a total of 19,235 people were cured of COVID-19. This has resulted in the cumulative total number of recovered cases rising to 5,34,620 on Sunday. The recovery rate has presently improved to 62.93 per cent, the Ministry said.

As more people are recovering due to all-round efforts, the recovered cases exceed active cases by 2,42,362, it said, adding medical attention is being provided to all the 2,92,258 active cases. The present health infrastruc-

ture dedicated to providing medical attention to the COVID affected includes 1,370 Dedicated COVID Hospitals (DCH), 3,062 Dedicated COVID Health Centres (DCHC), and 10,334 COVID Care Centres (CCC).

For the successful operation of these facilities, the Centre has so far provided 122.36 lakh Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits, 223.33 lakh N95 masks, and 21,685 ventilators to various states and UTs and central institutions.

Enabling factors like removing all impediments for COVID-19 testing and facilitation of widespread testing by states and UTs continues to result in a steady rise in the samples tested every day and during the last 24 hours 2,80,151 samples have been tested, it said.

"The cumulative number of samples tested as of now is 1,15,87,153. As a result of these efforts, the testing per million for India is presently 8,396.4," the Ministry said. A crucial supporting factor in progressive rise in testing numbers is continuous expansion of the country-wide diagnostic lab network, which as on date comprises 850 labs in the government sector and 344 private labs, totalling 1,194 labs.

Covid victim's body carried in auto

The visuals of the body being carried in the three-wheeler in total violation of the guidelines for transporting the bodies of COVID-19 victims, went viral on social media Saturday

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, July 12: In a shocking incident highlighting the utter negligence of health officials in Telangana's Nizamabad town, body of a COVID-19 victim was carried in an autorickshaw.

The visuals of the body being carried in the three-wheeler in total violation of the guidelines for transporting the bodies of COVID-19 victims, went viral on social media Saturday.

The body was seen protruding from both sides of the vehicle as it was kept at the bottom of the rear seat. Neither the autorickshaw driver,

TELANGANA SHOCKER

The body was being shifted from Government General Hospital in the town to the graveyard. Since ambulance was not available at the hospital, the body was carried in a three-wheeler

Protection Equipment (PPE) kits. The incident occurred Friday but the video of the body being carried in the three-wheeler surfaced Saturday. The body was being shifted from Government General Hospital in the town to the graveyard. Since the ambulance was not available at the hospital, the body was carried in a three-wheeler.

Hospital sources said four patients succumbed to COVID-19 on Friday. Both the ambulances at the hospital were pressed into service to carry the bodies. Nizamabad District collector C. Narayana Reddy ordered

an inquiry into the incident and dismissed a municipal employee, who was working on contract basis.

The collector said the relatives of the deceased were not ready to wait for the ambulance and insisted that they be allowed to carry the body in their own autorickshaw. The hospital authorities arranged for a contract municipal employee to accompany the body to the graveyard.

Taking a serious note of the incident, Director of Medical Education Dr Ramesh Reddy directed the hospital superintendent to file criminal cases against those employees handed over the body for transporting it in an autorickshaw.

SHORT TAKES

DMK MLA held

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Police Sunday arrested DMK lawmaker representing Thirupurur, L. Idhayarman, in connection with shooting at an AMMK party worker over a land dispute. According to police, on late Saturday, Idhayarman's father Lakshmiopathi fired three rounds after he and his supporters were attacked by the AMMK party worker's friend Kumar over a land dispute. Lakshmiopathi fired at AMMK worker Thandavamurthy's car in which the assailants were escaping at Thirupurur in Chengalpatu district. The police have seized two pistols one of which was licensed to the DMK lawmaker.

Five killed

Dumka/Giridih: Five persons were killed and one injured after being struck by lightning in Jharkhand's Dumka and Giridih districts, officials said. According to Dumka Sub-Divisional Officer Maheshwar Mahato, lightning struck 30-year-old Somlal Besra and 20-year-old Rajiv Hansda when they were having snacks at a roadside eatery at Makrampur in Masalia police station area. Both of them died on the spot, Mahato said. Shop owner Bablu Das (27) was admitted to a health centre with burn injuries, he said.

Bodies found

Sonarpur (WB): Blood-soaked bodies of an elderly man and a woman were recovered from their residence at Sonarpur in South 24 Parganas district Saturday, police said. Basudeb Ganugli (76) and his step-daughter Sumita Pandit (38) were found in a pool of blood at Sukanta Sarani, when police arrived at the house after a domestic help informed neighbours, they said. The four-year-old son of Pandit has said his parents were engaged in a heated argument prior to the incident, according to a police officer.

Girl ends life

Nagpur: A 19-year-old girl allegedly committed suicide in Nagpur in Maharashtra after her brother refused to allow her to use his mobile phone, a police official said Sunday. A Hudkeshwar police station official said the deceased had been asking her parents to buy her a mobile phone but the family's poor financial condition was a hindrance. "Her brother had a phone but he was not allowing her to use it. They had an argument over it on Saturday and she consumed poison and died in a hospital in the evening. An accidental death case has been registered," he informed.

Ashram owner held for sexual abuse

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Muzaffarnagar (UP), July 12: Children at an ashram in Shukratul, in Muzaffarnagar district, have said that the ashram owner, known as 'Maharaj', would force them to drink alcohol saying it was a "Coronavirus medicine".

The owner of Godiya Math Ashram, Swami Bhakti Bhushan a.k.a Maharaj, was arrested, late on Thursday night after a complaint was filed by child helpline against him. Ten young boys, who were allegedly sexually harassed, thrashed and forced to work as labourers, were also rescued from the ashram, three days ago.

An FIR was also lodged on Thursday against the ashram owner under IPC section 377 (unnatural offences) and under various sections of the POCSO Act.

The children rescued from Godiya Math Ashram were aged between seven and 16 and hail from the states of Tripura, Mizoram and Assam. The children were rescued by a team of state child care helpline and police on Tuesday after a tip-off.

The children had been sent to the ashram by trusting parents with limited means, in hope of giving them a good education. "Maharaj would make us drink 'Coronavirus medicine'. Then he would get naked and lie down, show us dirty films and do bad things to us," a 10-year-old from Mizoram said in a statement to the Child Welfare Committee.

The boy was among 10 rescued earlier this week after a tip-off from a whistle-blower who had been evicted for objecting to the sexual abuse. Medical examination confirmed four of them had been sexually assaulted.

Muzaffarnagar SSP Abhishek Yadav said: "The 'Maharaj' is a resident of Sisauli village. He set up the ashram 12 years ago. He has no prior record. Locals said he had amassed donations in his previous stint as a godman in Chandigarh, which he used to set up his ashram here. The children had been engaged in the construction of the grand two storeyed ashram building."

2 key accused brought to Kerala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, July 12: The two key accused in the gold smuggling case in Kerala, Swapna Suresh and Sandeep Nair, were brought to the state on Sunday a day after being taken into custody by the NIA in Bangalore, as Congress workers staged protests against them at several places.

They were taken to the Aluva hospital in Ernakulam for the mandatory COVID-19 test before being produced in the NIA court in Kochi, official sources said. Congress and BJP attacked the LDF government, seeking to know how the prime accused could flee the state capital when a triple lockdown was in place to check the coronavirus spread.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Saturday took into custody Suresh and Nair, both on the run, in connection with the bid to smuggle over 30 kg of gold using diplomatic channel through the Thiruvananthapuram international airport.

Suresh, a former employee of the UAE consulate in Thiruvananthapuram, and Nair

GOLD RACKET

The National Investigation Agency Saturday took into custody Suresh and Nair, both on the run, in connection with the bid to smuggle over 30 kg of gold using diplomatic channel through the Thiruvananthapuram international airport.

The two were taken into custody a day after the NIA began investigations in the case following a Union Home Ministry order

They were taken to the Aluva hospital in Ernakulam for the mandatory COVID-19 test before being produced in the NIA court in Kochi

Congress and BJP attacked the LDF government, seeking to know how the prime accused could flee the state capital when a triple lockdown was in place to check the coronavirus spread

are among the four people booked by the central agency in connection with the case of smuggling of the gold which arrived in a diplomatic baggage at the airport and seized by the Customs on July 5.

The two were taken into custody a day after the NIA began investigations in the case following a Union Home Ministry order: Sunday, Youth Congress workers held a protest at the Walayar check-post on Tamil Nadu-Kerala border in Palakkad district as the two accused were brought to the state.

The Congress workers staged a protest at Paliyekkara Toll plaza

in Thrissur district and also gathered near the Aluva hospital. The opposition party has been demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan over the case as the woman was found employed in the state I-T department and sacked after her name was linked to the smuggling bid.

Leader of the Opposition in the assembly Ramesh Chennithala on Sunday lashed out at the state government, seeking to know how the key accused escaped to Bengaluru from Thiruvananthapuram, where a triple lockdown has been implemented from July 6.



A wild deer crosses the National Highway-37 in search for safer place near the flood-hit Kaziranga National Park in Nagaon district of Assam, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

Shiv Sena (Taksali) chief arrested

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, July 12: Punjab Police Sunday arrested Shiv Sena (Taksali) chief Sudhir Suri over a viral video clip allegedly denigrating women and inciting enmity between different groups, after a nearly 1,300-km chase that ended in Indore in Madhya Pradesh.

Two police teams, comprising 11 personnel of Amritsar (Rural), arrested Suri, said Director General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta, adding a manhunt had been launched for him after the release of a video with alleged derogatory remarks against women, followed by a Facebook video in which he had subsequently claimed that the objectionable video clip was a voiceover by some other person using his name.

The DGP said on July 8, after the first video went viral and was heavily criticised both in India and abroad, the police in Amritsar had booked Suri under various sections of the Indian Penal Code.

LESS POMP BONALU FEST CELEBRATION A LOW-KEY AFFAIR THIS YEAR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, July 12: The famous Ujjaini Mahankali temple in Secunderabad wore a deserted look as the annual festival Bonalu was celebrated sans the devotees Sunday due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Telangana's Animal Husbandry Minister T. Srinivas Yadav along with few other officials made the offerings to the goddess on behalf of the state government while the temple priests conducted the rituals. All the roads leading to the temple were barricaded by the police to prevent people from gathering for the festival. The government had asked the people to celebrate Bonalu at home.

Some devotees including women were seen trying to proceed towards the temple but were stopped and sent back by the police. Srinivas Yadav said the devotees should understand that religious gatherings were banned to



contain the spread of COVID-19.

"We have taken this measure for the safety of the people. They should celebrate Bonalu at home," he said. The temple, which used to be thronged by thousands of devotees every year, wore a deserted look. This is said to be the first time in the temple's history that devotees have not participated in the celebrations.

Officials said restrictions around the temple would continue till Monday when Ranganam ritual will be performed. The elephant procession will not be conducted this year. The month-long festival began on June 25 with the celebrations at the Sri Jagadamba temple atop the historic Golconda Fort.

INCREASING SUICIDAL TENDENCY

66 children killed selves during lockdown in Kerala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, July 12: At least 66 children have ended their lives in Kerala since the COVID-19 lockdown began on March 25 with youngsters facing stress unable to bear the unprecedented situation where schools are shut and friends are out of reach to share their woes.

According to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, there has been an increasing instance of suicidal tendencies among children in the state due to various reasons, including parents scolding them over mobile phone use and failure to attend online classes.

This has prompted the government to launch a tele-consultation facility for children facing stress and also cautioning parents against



hurting their sentiments while being concerned about welfare of their wards. It has also ordered a study into the issue.

"Among the children an increasing instance of suicidal tendency is being witnessed which

will become an extremely serious social issue. Since March 25, when the national lockdown was imposed, 66 children, below 18 years of age, have ended their lives due to various reasons", Vijayan said. A mother scolding her child for

not attending the ongoing online classes, or a parent questioning a child for downloading a sleazy video on the smart phone and the constant rift between the parents were among the reasons which triggered the suicidal tendency, he said.

As the schools have not yet reopened due to the lockdown, the children are unable to meet their friends and share their problems. Vijayan said though the parents were intervening keeping in mind their child's welfare, it was essential to ensure that the young minds were not hurt in the process.

Health Minister K K Shailaja said under the psychosocial support assistance, her department has so far reached out to 68,814 children and 10,890 children have been given counselling. The changes in the behaviour of their

children should be noted by the family members and if they find something amiss, the district psychosocial help desk should be informed, she said.

A 15-member team of Students Police Cadets will be constituted in each of the 14 districts to help the children needing any assistance, police sources said. Education should not be a competition, but a means to gain knowledge, Vijayan said.

A society's future lies with the children and it is the duty of the society and the government to ensure their physical and mental well being. Taking a serious view of the situation, the state government has constituted a committee headed by Free and Rescue Services DGP R Sreelekha to conduct a study on child suicides in the state.

## of the day quote

The Left government in Kerala is "inefficient, corrupt and believes" in violence

JP NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

The garbage of corruption under the dynasty's carpet is crystal clear. This has caused chaos in the Congress. Arrogance of these merchants of corruption proves that there is something fishy

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | UNION MINISTER

The world is seeing that if a successful battle has been fought anywhere across the globe against the coronavirus it is India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### MP Congress MLA joins BJP

**Bhopal:** The opposition Congress Sunday got another jolt as its MLA from Bada Malahara Assembly segment, Praduman Lodhi, joined the ruling BJP in Madhya Pradesh. Lodhi met former Chief Minister Uma Bharti around noon. Later, he met Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and state BJP chief VD Sharma and was formally admitted to the BJP. It will necessitate bye-election for another Assembly seat.

### Two UP ministers test Covid+

**Lucknow:** Two more Uttar Pradesh Ministers -- Chetan Chauhan and Upendra Tiwari -- have tested positive for coronavirus in Lucknow. They had undergone COVID-19 tests, which were positive. Last week, ministers Rajendra Pratap Singh and Dharam Singh Saini too had tested positive and are undergoing treatment. Leader of Opposition Ram Govind Chaudhary has also been hospitalised after testing corona positive

### Maoists blow up 12 buildings

**Chaibasa:** Twelve buildings of the Jharkhand forest department were blown up by suspected Maoists in West Singhbhum district, police said Sunday. According to Superintendent of Police Indrajeet Mahatha, a group of armed Maoists had barged into the buildings in Berkela forest area of the district on Saturday night and asked all staffers to vacate the premises. Several employees were also beaten up by the miscreants, and warned of consequences if they informed the police, he said.

### Two arrested

**New Delhi:** Delhi police have arrested two men for allegedly cheating people mainly women and senior citizens by cloning their ATM cards. According to police, many complaints were received in outer Delhi areas prompting it to act. A police team later zeroed in on two suspects and the duo were arrested.

### Man killed

**Mumbai:** A 24-year-old man was killed after his motorcycle skidded on the Santacruz-Chembur Link Road (SCLR) here, police said Sunday, adding that the pillion rider sustained injuries. The deceased Suresh Thakur was working with a private blood bank, he said. Thakur lost his control over the motorcycle due to the slippery road on Saturday evening, the official added.

# CONG EXPERIMENT TO WOO PATELS IN GUJ

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ahmedabad, July 12:** After pursuing KHAM for more than three decades, the Congress in Gujarat has made a change in its focus and now plans to woo the Patel community into the party-fold.

As per the change of strategy, the party has appointed Hardik Patel, leader of the Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS), as working president. Hardik Patel thanked the party for his appointment, here on Sunday, and said he had been given the opportunity despite being from a humble background.

"As the working president of the Gujarat Congress, I have been given a challenging responsibility. It also shows the party promotes people with humble background," he said. "I pay my gratitude to Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi and the Congress. Will fight to save democracy and the Constitution. All issues related to Gujarat will be given priority and in 2022 the Congress will come back to power with two-thirds majority," Patel tweeted.

The tactical shift towards the



Patel community could be attributed to failure of the pro-KHAM (Kshatriya, Harijan, Adivasi and Muslim) stand, piloted by then Chief Minister Madhav Singh Solanki, to yield the desired political result. The party failed to return to power as the Patels, who account for 12-14 per cent of votes, sided with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The Covid-19 pandemic should not be seen only as a disaster but also as a "corrector" that prepares the society for the next challenge by requiring us to "repurpose our lives"

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

## KARNA MINISTER TESTS COVID+

Karnataka Tourism Minister CT Ravi Sunday said he has tested positive for coronavirus, the first minister in the state to get the infection



# Decision on Monsoon session soon: Joshi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 12:** Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said a decision will be taken "very shortly" on when to start the monsoon session of Parliament.

Both Houses of Parliament were adjourned sine die March 23, nearly two weeks before schedule, as the budget session was curtailed due to the coronavirus pandemic. "There will be monsoon session. But when...it will be decided very shortly," Joshi said.

He said with regard to the monsoon session, the time in hand is till September, and many a times the session has been called by August-end. However, the minister accepted that COVID-19 cases were witnessing a surge.

"As far as COVID is concerned, it is on the surge now. Let's wait how it unfolds further," he said. The productivity of Lok Sabha was about 90 per cent and that of Rajya Sabha was 74 per cent in the budget



session, the minister had earlier said in an official statement.

The budget session commenced on January 31 and was scheduled to conclude on April 3. Both the Houses adjourned for recess on February 11, and reassembled on March 2. The first part of the Budget Session yielded a total of nine sittings of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, and in the second part, there were 14 sittings of both the Houses.

The minister had said the session was curtailed with consensus among all parties in view of the COVID-19 outbreak. During the session, a total of 19 bills (18 in Lok Sabha and one in Rajya Sabha) were introduced, the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry had said in the statement.

# 3 siblings end life

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lakhimpur (Uttar Pradesh), July 12:** Unable to reconcile to the demise of their mother, three siblings -- two men and one woman - ended their lives in a suicide pact.

The incident happened Saturday. The bodies of the three were found hanging in the dining room when the police broke open the door. Their father had found the door locked when he came home and then informed the police.

One of them was a former school teacher and another an ex-employee of a private company. The siblings had quit their jobs after their mother's death. According to police, a suicide note found on the bodies said the siblings were "unable to bear the loss of their mother". The two brothers, including one who was disabled and their sister allegedly took their own lives when

their father -- a retired engineer of the agriculture department -- was not at home.

The father, Aditya Prakash Awasthi, 60, told police his wife had died of illness in September last year. Since then, his three children

Preeti, 25, Gagan, 35 and Pawan, 30, were disturbed. While Pawan had been employed in a private company in Lucknow, Preeti was working as a school teacher.

"They quit their jobs after my wife passed away. I apparently could not fill the void left by her death as all my children were very close to her," said Awasthi. SHO Kotwali police station Ajay Mishra said that neighbours told police that the siblings had stopped socializing after their mother passed away and kept to themselves. "It appears to be a case of suicide and a suicide note was also found. Bodies have been sent for autopsy," he said.

## TRAGIC END

## FEW TAKERS



A rickshaw-puller waits for passengers on Heritage Street near Golden Temple, during the lockdown on weekend imposed by the Punjab government as a preventive measure against coronavirus in Amritsar, Sunday

# Fight over mask claims girl's life

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati, July 12:** A fight over face mask claimed the life of a 19-year-old girl in Andhra Pradesh's Guntur district, police said.

The incident occurred on July 3 but came to light on Sunday. Karnati Fatima, who sustained head injuries while trying to save her father, succumbed at the Government General Hospital in Guntur on Saturday.

According to police, an argument over not wearing facemask led to the shocking incident in Rentachintala of Guntur district.

Some youth had taken objection to a man, identified as Karnati Yalamandala, moving around in their neighbourhood without wearing facemask. This led to an argument between them.

A few days later the youth were spotted without facemasks in a market by Yalamandala's relatives. This led to a heated argument and then a clash between the two sides on July 3.

When the youth attacked Yalamandala with sticks, his daughter tried to save him. She sustained head injuries and was shifted to the Government General Hospital in Guntur. She died in the early hours of Saturday. On a complaint by the girl's father, police booked four youth for murder and arrested them.

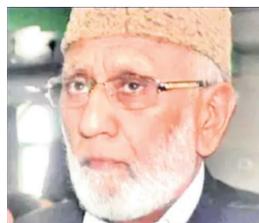
Last month, police in Nellore district arrested a government official on the charge of brutally assaulting a differently-abled woman colleague in office after she advised him to wear a face mask.

The incident had occurred in the Tourism Department's office in Nellore on June 27 but came to light three days later, after the shocking visuals recorded on CCTV surfaced on the social media.

Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) had announced the suspension of Deputy Manager C.A. Bhaskar.

# Separatist leader detained

*J&K police chief Dilbagh Singh said that Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai and some members of the banned Jamaat-e-Islami have been detained and are likely to be booked under the stringent PSA which enables authorities to detain any individual for one year without trial*



tion Sadder.

Jammu and Kashmir Police chief Dilbagh Singh said that Sehrai and some members of the banned Jamaat-e-Islami have been detained and are likely to be booked under the stringent PSA which enables authorities to detain any individual for one year without trial.

Sehrai, a former Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) leader and a hardliner, is the chairman of TEH which was previously headed by headline separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani.

TEH is a constituent of Hurriyat Conference which was headed by Geelani till he resigned from the amalgam last month.

Sehrai is believed to be eyeing heading the Geelani-led Hurriyat Conference, a conglomerate of 26 separatist parties. This faction of the Hurriyat is different from the one led by Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, who has favoured dialogue as a means to end the violence in Jammu and Kashmir. Sehrai's son, Junaid Sehrai, a divisional commander of Hizbul Mujahdeen, was killed in an encounter in Nawakadal area of the city in May this year.

The officials said several other JeI cadres are being picked up ahead of the first anniversary of the revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. The Centre on August 5 last year abrogated Article 370 of the constitution which gave Jammu and Kashmir special status and divided the erstwhile state into two union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

A similar crackdown on separatist and JeI leaders was launched by the police ahead of the Centre's move last year. Most of the top separatist leaders are either under house arrest or in custody.

## IMPROVING PASSENGER COMFORT

# Rlys to launch 20 innovations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 12:** The Railway Board has decided to implement 20 innovations by its employees to make train journeys safer and improve passenger comfort - such as a bell warning to alert travellers minutes before a train departs, real-time CCTV monitoring inside coaches, printing of unserved tickets through mobile applications - on a mass scale.

The Railways launched a dedicated portal in 2018 to solicit the good ideas attempted by its employees across zones, aiming to implement some of them across its network. Since then, zonal railways have uploaded their entries on the web portal. From September 2018 to December 2019, of which the Board has identified 20 for initial mass scale implementation across the railway network, according to an order is-



sued by it on July 10. An official said that an order has been issued to all zonal general managers and production units to gear up for the implementation of these ideas.

Most of the 20 innovations are aimed at technical improvements to boost safety. The North Central Railway has developed a vehicular system for ultrasonic flaw detection of rails, which is currently done manually. The Malda division of Eastern Railway has used pyrometers to monitor speed and temperature of tracks.



## Telangana tops in Covid cases

In a surprising development, Telangana emerged on top of the coronavirus cases in terms of percentage. It pushed Maharashtra to the second slot and Delhi as its growth rate skyrocketed while in other states the situation is on the decline. This is worrying the Centre which had been nudging Telangana to conduct more tests. The number of Covid cases in Telangana is 17357 only compared to Maharashtra's 1.86 lakh. But these states have undertaken

record tests since February and due to sustained efforts, cases are on the decline.

## How Modi used UPA era Act

The Opposition parties led by Rahul Gandhi have been criticizing the Prime Minister for usurping the powers of states while dealing with Covid pandemic. But they forgot that the Disaster Management Act (DMA) under which Modi took over these powers was enacted during the UPA regime itself in 2005. Interestingly, Modi as Gujarat Chief Minister had opposed the proposed Bill and alleged that the UPA wants to swallow powers of the states. But he was the lone voice in his own party as the then Central BJP leadership was in a state of coma after the sudden defeat in 2004 parliamentary polls. When the coronavirus pandemic broke out in 2020, Modi invoked the same 2005 Act to declare coronavirus as national epidemic and vested complete power to fight it under the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

## Why Shah was late

Suddenly Amit Shah is in the fore-front of fighting the battle against Covid. But it's a wrong popular notion that Home ministry is nodal agency to handle the Corona pandemic. But it's not. The Act clearly says the MHA is responsible for response, relief and preparedness for natural calamities and man-made disasters. But not 'drought and epidemics' which will be handled by the NDMA directly under the Prime Minister. The NDMA website reveals that Amit Shah is not even a member of the NDMA.

## Shake-up on cards

For the first time the Modi government has decided to set up a separate Recruitment Board for the public broadcaster. The CEO who is appointed by the government from the administrative service will be made redundant with the constitution of the board. The CEO has not even been made a member of the

recruitment board. It is clear the CEO will be appointed by the new board. A beginning was made on July 1 when Jagdish Upasane, senior journalist was appointed as its chairman. The 5-member recruitment board for will recruit persons for the various TV channels, Radio division and other institutions under it. Upasane will have a scale of pay less than that of a Joint Secretary to the government of India. A former journalist and Director Bharat Prakashan Jagdish Upasane has been named as the chairperson of the recruitment board. The government is set to appoint new chairman of the Prasar Bharti Board also after A Surya Prakash retired a few months ago.

## When PMO was furious

The PMO was furious to learn that a leading Public Sector Bank had the audacity to purchase luxurious Audi cars. The bank management purchased not one but three latest model Audi cars for its senior most officers. Highly placed sources

in the PMO say that the Finance Ministry was immediately contacted by a Joint Secretary level officer and all hell broke in North Block. The Department of Financial Services (DFS) under the Finance Ministry issued a rather unusual advisory to the heads of all Public Sector Banks. They directed the PSUs that it was necessary to take appropriate measures to ensure "productive use of their financial resources for core business activities". In its June 17 letter, the DFS asked state-owned banks to defer avoidable expenditure, including purchase of staff cars and refurbishment of guest houses. Of course, it gave them some liberty that expenditure could be incurred in cases where it is highly unavoidable. DFS has also directed the banks to postpone expenditure on decorative, non-functional items for the interiors in non-customer facing premises like administrative offices and back offices, and refurbishment of guest houses. The heads of PSU banks are extremely unhappy with the leading bank chief that they all would have to suffer due to its folly.



It is the first time that the WHO has acknowledged that the airborne route contributes to the spread of this (Covid) disease  
WENDY BARCLAY | VIROLOGIST

## JOE BIDEN WINS LOUISIANA PRIMARY

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden has won the primary in the state of Louisiana. The former Vice President won with 82.2% of the vote, leading Senator Bernie Sanders, who received 5.3%, with 1% of precincts reporting



## of the day quote

It's not about wanting to cut ties with China. It's that China is itself becoming a very unreliable and rather dangerous partner

IAIN DUNCAN SMITH | FORMER SECY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS OF THE UK

My thoughts go to Istanbul. I think of Santa Sophia and I am very pained

POPE FRANCIS

People could be fined if they refuse to be tested for coronavirus

SCOTT MORRISON | AUSTRALIAN PM

# Prachanda says he will not allow NCP to split



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kathmandu, July 12:** Amid the political turmoil in Nepal, the ruling communist party executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' said Sunday that he will not allow the party to split and any attempt from anywhere to weaken its unity would hurt the fight against the coronavirus pandemic and natural disasters.

Addressing the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) members in his hometown Chitwan, Prachanda said that he was determined to keep the party unity intact. "It is natural to have differences of opinion, dispute and debate in a big party, but I will not allow the party to split," he said. "If there is a dispute in the party, there are proper procedures to resolve it."

His remarks came amid speculation that the NCP could split after top party leaders, in-

cluding 'Prachanda', demanded Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli's resignation, saying his recent anti-India remarks were "neither politically correct nor diplomatically appropriate." Prachanda also advised the party cadres to abide by the party principles and not to run from one camp to another at the time of the crisis.

"Don't describe some leaders within the ruling party as anti-national and others as nationalist," he said, in an apparent reference to Prime Minister Oli's recent state-

ment that some of the ruling party leaders are aligning with the southern neighbour to remove him from power after his government issued a new political map incorporating three Indian territories. The party and the government worked together to issue the new map, he pointed out.

Earlier in the day, addressing a meeting of the District Disaster Management Committee in Chitwan, Prachanda said that the political activities should not affect the government's response to the coronavirus crisis and natural disasters. "Any attempt from anywhere else to weaken the party unity would not be in favour of the people," Prachanda was quoted as saying by The Rising Nepal.

He urged the entire political parties, civil society, media and one and all to engage in a combined battle against the COVID-19 crisis and natural disasters. Oli and Prachanda have held over half a dozen one-on-one meetings in recent days, but the two leaders are nowhere close to a power-sharing deal.

Meanwhile, the ruling party is divided on one-on-one talks between Oli and Prachanda, with a senior party leader saying that prolonging the issues will not serve anybody's interest.

The meeting of the NCP's 45-member powerful Standing Committee to decide Oli's fate was scheduled to be held on Friday. But it was postponed for a week at the last moment, citing floods and landslides that killed at least 22 people.

## SHORT TAKES

### Quake hits north China

**Beijing/Shijiazhuang:** Beijing and several other cities in northern China were jolted after a 5.1-magnitude earthquake and moderate tremors hit Hebei province's Tangshan city Sunday. The quake struck Guye district at 6:38 AM Beijing time, the China Earthquake Networks Centre (CENC) said.

### All poll rallies cancelled in SL

**Colombo:** All election rallies of Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa have been cancelled temporarily, the SLPP announced Sunday, following a spike in coronavirus cases in the country. The parliamentary elections in the island nation are scheduled for August 5.

### Spain holds two regional elections

**Ordizia (Spain):** Over 4.4 million Spaniards in two northern regions are voting in regional elections Sunday amid tight security measures to avoid more outbreaks of the coronavirus. Regional authorities in both the Basque Country and Galicia have prohibited over 400 people who have tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19 from going to polling stations to vote.

### Pak to boost trade activities

**Islamabad:** Pakistan has opened two more key trade routes with neighbouring Afghanistan to promote business and trade activities after months-long closure due to the coronavirus pandemic. Pakistan and Afghanistan share 18 crossing points.

### Thousands march in UK

**London:** Some 5,000 people took to the streets of UK's Brighton city in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, the media reported. Large crowds of demonstrators set off from the city's Palace Pier on Saturday afternoon, with many carrying signs that read "Decolonise everything" and "Defund the police", the Metro newspaper reported.

### 10 more killed in Nepal landslides

**Kathmandu:** At least ten people were killed Sunday in landslides caused by incessant rains across Nepal, taking the total number of fatalities due to landslides to 54 in last three days. Landslides and floods triggered by continuous heavy rains for the past three days have hit 19 districts across Nepal.

## FOR A CAUSE



Demonstrators march during a protest in memory of Breonna Taylor in Los Angeles.

PTI PHOTO

# Johns Hopkins sues Trump

AGENCIES

**New York, July 12:** Johns Hopkins University has joined a growing list of prestigious higher education institutions in the US suing the Trump administration over its "cruel" decision not to allow foreign students to take online-only courses this fall semester.

On Monday, the Trump administration announced new rules for international students for the upcoming fall semester (September to December) that requires them to take an in-person class to remain in the country. Many American universities have scaled back or eliminated in-person classes due to the raging COVID-19 pandemic. Johns Hopkins University (JHU) filed a lawsuit in federal court Friday, pushing back against the Trump administration order that would abruptly rescind accommodations for online learning during

## FOREIGN STUDENT ROW



the COVID-19 pandemic for the nearly 5,000 international students at the university and thousands more across the country.

Johns Hopkins said the policy change sending international students back to their home countries if they don't enroll in in-person classes, "suddenly and unexpectedly" plunged Johns Hopkins, and virtually all of higher education in the United States, into chaos.

Hundreds of thousands of Indian students in the US will be affected by the decision of the Trump administration. According to a re-

cent report of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), there were over 1,94,000 Indian students enrolled in various academic institutions of the US in January this year.

The JHU's complaint, filed in US District Court in Washington, D.C., seeks a temporary restraining order against the proposal by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), stating that it is "arbitrary and capricious," unlawful, and a reversal of earlier guidance upon which months of careful planning is based.

The Baltimore-based private institution joins other well-known schools such as Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the University of California system in filing litigation to stop the US government from enforcing the new rule.

## Trump finally wears a mask

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Washington, July 12:** US President Donald Trump was seen wearing a mask while visiting a military hospital near Washington, D.C., the first time he did so on camera since the coronavirus pandemic broke out in the country.

"I'll probably have a mask," Trump told reporters Saturday ahead of his trip to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, where he visited injured soldiers and medical workers tasked with containing the coronavirus, Xinhua news agency reported.

"I think it's a great thing to wear a mask. I've never been against masks but I do believe they have a time and a place." Trump has been refusing to wear a mask himself since the pandemic broke out, citing his good health and frequent negative tests for the virus.

"I have no problem with a mask. I don't think you need one when you're tested all the time, everybody around you is tested, you're quite a distance," he said Thursday. Even Republican lawmakers have advised him to do so publicly so as to curb the spread of the contagion. Regretting the fact that



Trump has been a latecomer to wearing a mask during the pandemic, which has raged across the US since March and infected more than 3.2 million and killed at least 1,34,000

the "simple lifesaving practice" of wearing a mask has been politicised to showcase whether one supports Trump or not, Republican Senator Lamar Alexander said June 30 that he had "suggested the president should occasionally wear a mask even though there are not many occasions when it is necessary for him to do so."

Trump wore a mask behind the scene in late May during a visit to a Ford factory in Michigan.

# Nearly 6L vote in Hong Kong pro-democracy primaries

REUTERS

**Hong Kong, July 12:** Hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong residents turned up over the weekend to vote in an unofficial primary election held by the city's pro-democracy camp as it gears up to field candidates for an upcoming legislative poll.

The primaries were held two weeks after Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law on the semi-autonomous territory in a move widely seen as chipping away at the "one country, two systems" framework under which Britain handed Hong Kong over to China in 1997. It was passed in response to last year's massive protests calling for greater democracy and more police accountability. Throngs of people lined up at polling booths in the summer heat to vote despite a warning last week by Hong Kong's constitutional affairs minister, Eric Tsang, that the primaries could be in breach of the new national security law because it outlaws interference and disruption of duties by the local government.

Organisers dismissed the comments, saying they just want to hold the government accountable by gaining a majority in the legis-



lature. The new law prohibits what Beijing views as secessionist, subversive or terrorist activities or as foreign intervention in Hong Kong affairs. Under the law, police now have sweeping powers to conduct searches without warrants and order internet service providers and platforms to remove messages deemed to be in violation of the legislation.

On Friday, police raided the office of the Public Opinion Research Institute, a co-organiser of the primaries. The computer system was suspected of being hacked, causing a data leak, police said in a statement, and an investigation is ongoing. Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp, which includes multiple parties, is attempting to join forces

and use the primaries as a guide to field the best candidates in the official legislative election in September. Its goal is to win a majority in the legislature, which is typically skewed toward the pro-Beijing camp. To hold the primaries, pro-democracy activists had raised money via crowd funding. They pledged to veto the government's budget if they clinch a majority in the legislature.

Under Hong Kong's mini-constitution, known as the Basic Law, the city's leader must resign if an important bill such as the budget is vetoed twice. Organisers said Sunday that nearly 600,000 people voted at polling booths set up across the city, exceeding organisers' estimates of a turnout of 170,000.

## THE HAVELI HAS TURNED INTO A GHOST BUILDING, RESIDENTS OF THE AREA SAID

# 'Kapoor Haveli' in Pak faces demolition threat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Peshawar, July 12:** The historic ancestral home of late Bollywood actor Rishi Kapoor in Pakistan's Peshawar city is facing demolition threat as the current owner of the house is adamant on building a commercial complex on the site worth crores.

In 2018, the Pakistan government decided to convert the "Kapoor Haveli" in Qissa Khwani Bazar in Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province into a museum, heading to a request by Rishi Kapoor who died recently at a hospital in Mumbai. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had assured Rishi Kapoor that the Pakistan government will convert the actor's house into a museum. Due to its dil-

apidated condition, the building can collapse anytime, they said. The state of the building is deteriorating with each passing day due to ecological impacts, torrential rains, earthquakes and wind storms.

The haveli is currently owned by Haji Muhammad Israr, a wealthy jeweller in the city. The provincial government wanted to buy the haveli keeping in view its historic importance and conserve it in its original shape for the tourists. Israr, however, wants to demolish the building and construct a new commercial building at this prime location. He made three/four attempts in the past to demolish the building but could not do it as FIRs were registered against him by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa heritage department. There were reports that the provin-



cial government has failed to convert the building into a museum due to differences with its owner over its price. Israr, the owner of the haveli, has denied that he had any issue with the government over the price of the property, estimated to be over Rs 5 crore. He said he simply wanted to demolish the

haveli and construct a huge commercial market at the site. "I have sufficient money to cater to my needs. I supply around 3 to 4 maund (120kg-160kg) gold a week to Peshawar's biggest jewellery market," he said.

Local residents fear that the building may automatically collapse un-

less the government takes timely action to conserve it. "It is a matter of concern that the 'Kapoor Haveli' which we consider as the pride of our city is in dilapidated condition and is fast heading to the disappearance because of being ignored," said Mujeeb-ur-Rehman, a resident of Dhaki Nalbandi where the palatial house is located.

Mujeeb said that he was a teenager when late Rishi Kapoor and Randhir Kapoor had visited their ancestral home in the early 90s. Shakeel Waheedullah, Secretary Cultural Heritage Council Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, expressed regret over the dilapidated condition of the house. The "Kapoor Haveli" was built by Basheswarnath Kapoor, the father of Hindi film industry pioneer Prithviraj Kapoor.

## PAKISTAN RESTORES BANK ACCOUNTS OF SAEED, HIS 4 AIDES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, July 12:** Pakistan has restored the bank accounts of the outlawed Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief and the 2008 Mumbai terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed and his four top aides, a media report said Sunday.

Saeed, a UN designated terrorist whom the US has placed a \$10 million bounty on, was arrested July 17 last year in the terror financing cases. He was sentenced to 11 years in jail by an anti-terrorism court in February this year in two terror financing cases. He is lodged at the Lahore's high-security Kot Lakhpat jail.

## US Navy welcomes 1st Black female Tactical Aircraft pilot

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Kingsville (US), July 12:** The US Navy has welcomed its first Black female Tactical Aircraft pilot.

"MAKING HISTORY!" the US Navy tweeted Thursday in response to a post that Lt. j.g. Madeline Swegle had completed naval flight school and would later this month receive the flight officer insignia known as the "Wings of Gold". The Naval Air Training Command tweeted that Swegle is the Navy's "first known Black female TACAIR pilot".



Madeline Swegle

According to Stars and Stripes, Swegle is from Burke, Virginia, and graduated from the US Naval Academy in 2017. Officials said she is assigned to the Redhawks of Training Squadron 21 in Kingsville, Texas. Swegle's milestone comes more than 45 years after Rosemary Mariner in 1974 became the first woman to fly a tactical fighter jet, according to news outlets.

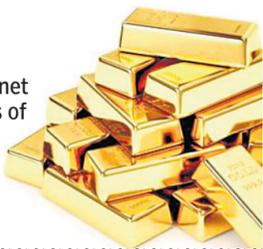


**The earnings announcements have begun after a washout quarter for most industries. This uncertainty combined with profit-booking happening after the recent rally, means that volatility is expected to continue in the markets**

VINOD NAIR | HEAD OF RESEARCH, GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

## GOLD ETFs ATTRACT ₹3,500 cr IN H1

Gold exchange traded funds (ETFs) saw hefty net inflows of over ₹3,500 cr in the first six months of 2020 as investors continued to hedge their exposure to riskier assets amid the COVID-19 crisis. In comparison, investors had pulled out ₹160 cr from this asset class in Jan-June 2019



## of the day quote

Going forward, we need the legislative backing to have some kind of a resolution corporation, which has to deal with resolution and revival of stressed financial firms. The regulator will continue to take necessary measures, continue to engage with the management of NBFCs to identify the vulnerabilities

SHAKTIKANTA DAS | GOVERNOR, RBI

When we went for technology selection, we had two options: either to go for European technology or the Chinese technology. Chinese, as we all know, is the cheaper technology but a stable one as well. We chose to go with Foton back in 2017 based on the fact that we wanted to get products quicker, suitable for India

AMAN GARG | DIRECTOR, PEMPSL

Major ports have among them about 1,10,000 hectare land. A chunk of this will be used for developing industries and industrialisation for port-led development in the country. We are in the process of identifying port-led industries

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | MOS FOR SHIPPING

# 'FY21 GDP growth to be in negative territory'

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 12:** With economic activities coming to a halt amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown, the Indian economy is expected to record a negative 4.5% growth rate in the current financial year, according to the FICCI's Economic Outlook Survey.

The minimum and maximum growth estimate stood at (-)6.4% and 1.5%, respectively, for FY21, it said. The quarterly median forecasts indicated 14.2% contraction in the gross domestic product (GDP) in the first quarter of FY21, it added.

The signs of an impending slowdown have been sharply accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdown. The COVID-19 pandemic has severely hit global as well as domestic growth.

The current round of survey,

conducted in June, drew responses from leading economists representing industry, banking and financial services sectors.

Economic activity-wise annual forecast indicated a median growth of 2.7% for agriculture and allied activities for FY21. Agriculture seems to be the only sector with a silver lining.

There's an apparent upside as far as performance of monsoon was concerned this year with enough water in reservoirs, it said.

The rural sector, supported by a steady agriculture performance and hopefully a limited number of COVID-19 cases, will be a key demand generator this year, as per the survey.

Further, the direct income support through the PM-KISAN and increased allocation to MGNREGA were helping the returnee migrants,



## LOCKDOWN EFFECT

- The Indian economy is expected to record a negative 4.5% growth rate in the current financial year, according to FICCI's Economic Outlook Survey
- Economic activity-wise annual forecast indicated a median growth of 2.7% for agriculture and allied activities for FY21
- The industry and services sectors are expected to contract by 11.4% and 2.8%, respectively

lending support to the rural economy, it showed.

The industry and services sectors are expected to contract by 11.4% and 2.8%, respectively. "Weak demand and subdued capacity utilisation were manifesting into a drag on investment, and the pandemic has further extended the timeline for recovery," it said.

Even though activity in some

sectors, like consumer durables and FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods), is gaining traction, most companies are still operating at low capacity utilisation rates. Labour availability and feeble demand remain major issues.

Therefore, fresh investments would be difficult to come by in the near-to-medium term, the survey predicted.

Absence of demand stimulus, a second wave of the pandemic and continuation of social distancing and quarantine measures would weigh heavily on growth prospects, it said.

"With demand and investment outlook muted, robust government expenditure has been the only saviour. Nonetheless, growth is likely to bottom out after the second quarter of FY21," FICCI survey said.

## 'Capture FASTag details before vehicle registration'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 12:** The government Sunday said it has decided to ensure capturing of FASTag details while registering or issuing fitness certificate to vehicles all over the country.

In a letter addressed to NIC, with copies to all the states and UTs, the ministry has informed that full integration of National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC) with VAHAN portal has been achieved, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said in a statement.



The VAHAN system is now getting all information on FASTags through VIN/VRN (vehicle identification number/ vehicle registration number), it added.

FASTag employs radio frequency identification (RFID) technology for making toll payments on national highways directly from the prepaid or savings account linked to it.

A prepaid tag, fixed on vehicles' windscreen, allows automated deduction of toll charges, and lets any vehicle pass through a toll plaza with zero human contact.

"As such, the ministry has asked to ensure capturing FASTag details while registering new vehicles, as also while issuing fitness certificates to vehicles plying under national permit," the statement said. The fitment of FASTag in new vehicles at the time of sales of vehicles of category M and N, was made mandatory in 2017.

But the integration with bank account or they being activated was being avoided by citizens, which would be checked now.

# US remains India's top trading partner in 2019-20

According to commerce ministry's data, the bilateral trade between the US and India stood at \$88.75 billion in 2019-20 as against \$87.96 billion in 2018-19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 12:** The US remained India's top trading partner for the second consecutive fiscal in 2019-20, which shows increasing economic ties between the two countries.

According to the data of the commerce ministry, in 2019-20, the bilateral trade between the US and India stood at \$88.75 billion as against \$87.96 billion in 2018-19.

The US is one of the few countries with which India has a trade surplus. The trade gap between the countries has increased to \$17.42 billion in 2019-20 from \$16.86 billion in 2018-19, the data showed.

In 2018-19, the US first surpassed China to become India's top trading partner. The bilateral trade between India and China has dipped to \$81.87 billion in 2019-20 from \$87.08 billion in 2018-19. Trade deficit



between the two neighbours have declined to \$48.66 billion in 2019-20 from \$53.57 billion in the previous fiscal. The data also showed that China was India's top trading partner since 2013-14 till 2017-18. Before China, UAE was the country's largest trading nation.

India is also considering certain steps like framing technical regulations and quality control orders for host of items with a view to cut import dependence on China and

boost domestic manufacturing.

Trade experts believe that the trend of widening trade ties between New Delhi and Washington will continue in the coming years also as both the sides are engaged in further deepening the economic ties. Presence of Indian diaspora in the US is one of the main reasons for increasing bilateral trade, Biswajit Dhar, professor of economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, said. "Presence of Indian

diaspora is creating demand for Indian goods such as consumer items and we are supplying that. A balanced trade deal will further boost the economic ties," Dhar said.

India and the US are negotiating a limited trade pact with a view to iron out differences at trade front and boost commercial ties.

Professor at Indian Institute of Foreign Trade Rakesh Mohan Joshi said that although the trade pact will be mutually beneficial for both the countries, India should be a bit cautious while negotiating the pact with the US in areas such as agriculture, dairy and issues related intellectual property rights.

Ludhiana-based Hand Tools Association President S C Raihan said there is huge potential to boost bilateral trade between the countries on account of increasing anti-China sentiment in both the nations.

## SHORT TAKES

### Ericsson hopes to win contracts

**New Delhi:** Amid heightened anti-China sentiments in India, Swedish telecom equipment maker Ericsson has said it hopes to win contracts in the Indian telecom market on the strength of its technology leadership, and added that as a practice, the company does not base business plans on matters not under its control. Ericsson India head Nitin Bansal said that the company remains "very confident" of its technology prowess.

### Insurance sector sees 18.6% drop

**New Delhi:** Hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic, the life insurance sector witnessed an 18.6% drop in the first year premium to ₹49,335 crore in the April-June quarter of the current financial year, according to a report by CARE Ratings. The overall sum assured also declined 12.9% to ₹8.8 lakh crore in the June 2020 quarter, compared with ₹10 lakh crore (which was an increase of 17.6%) in the corresponding period of the previous year.

### Tsuzuki to set up plant in Haryana

**New Delhi:** Model Economic Township Ltd (METL), a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd, on Sunday said Japanese company Tsuzuki will set up a manufacturing facility at its Jhajjar-based (Haryana) location. The company has entered into an agreement with the Japanese firm in this regard, METL said in a statement. Tsuzuki will manufacture steering knuckle for the automobile industry at Reliance MET, it added.

### So far, FPIs pull out ₹2,867 cr

**New Delhi:** Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) have pulled out ₹2,867 crore from Indian markets in July so far, mainly on account of profit booking after surge in Indian equities. The overseas investors pulled out a net ₹2,210 crore from equities and ₹657 crore from debt segment, taking the total net outflow to ₹2,867 crore between July 1-10, according to the depositories data. The latest withdrawal has come after investment of ₹24,053 crore by FPIs in domestic markets in June.

# NBFCs, HFCs tap special liquidity window for financing

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 12:** The finance ministry Sunday said financing requests of close to ₹10,000 crore have been received under the special liquidity scheme worth ₹30,000 crore for stressed NBFCs and HFCs whose financials further deteriorated due to the COVID-19 crisis.

The scheme was launched on July 1. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has provided funds for the scheme by subscribing to government-guaranteed special securities issued by a trust set up by SBI Capital Markets Limited (SBICAP).

"RBI has also issued a circular to NBFCs and HFCs on July 1, 2020 itself on the Scheme. SBICAP has re-



ceived 24 applications requesting about ₹9,875 crore of financing as on July 7, 2020 which are being processed," the finance ministry said in a statement.

The first application has been approved and the remaining are also under consideration, it said.

The Investment Committee of Special Liquidity Scheme (SLS) Trust has approved investment of

up to ₹200 crore in commercial paper issued by the applicant.

Non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and housing finance companies (HFCs) came under stress following a series of defaults by IL&FS group firms in September 2018. During the latest review of the Atmanirbhar Bharat package by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, progress of various schemes was discussed, including the ₹3 lakh crore credit guarantee scheme for the MSME sector hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Banks have sanctioned loans of about ₹1,20,000 crore under the ₹3 lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for the MSME sector, the statement said.

# Paradip Port Trust launches export and import services

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Paradip, July 12:** Aimed at bringing down the logistical expenses of its customers, Paradip Port Trust (PPT) Saturday launched export and import (freight) services at the port, a top PPT executive said.

A container ship harboured in the afternoon at Paradip International Cargo Terminal (PICT) to mark the

beginning of this service, PPT Chairman Rinkesh Roy informed.

"A container vessel named MV Damu Bhum with 150 empty containers reached here from Port Klang in Malaysia. All empty containers will be unloaded from the ship and it will start for Malaysia again with 23 goods-laden containers. In turn, the ship will further proceed to Europe," Roy said



while inaugurating the service.

This service will benefit hundreds of small entrepreneurs who

will be able to import goods at comparatively lower costs.

Earlier, container ships used to harbour at ports elsewhere and goods were transported to Odisha through inter-port surface transport system.

The imported goods can now reach Paradip directly with the inauguration of this service, a PPT official said.

# Bajaj Allianz GIC introduces 'Corona Kavach Policy'

**B**ajaj Allianz General Insurance, India's leading private general insurer has rolled out its standard COVID-19 health indemnity policy, "Corona Kavach Policy, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance." This policy is as per the guidelines issued by IRDAI June 26, 2020 to introduce a health indemnity product that addresses the basic health insurance needs of insuring public related to COVID-19.

The sum insured of this policy is between ₹50,000 - ₹5 lakh and the customer can opt for this policy for a period of three and half months, six and half months and nine and half

months. The premium for the base cover ranges between ₹447 to ₹5,630 excluding GST, depending on the age of the person, sum insured & policy period opted.

Similarly, for an optional hospital daily cash cover on benefit basis the premium is between ₹3 to ₹620 excluding GST, which varies as per age of the person, sum insured and policy period opted. So for instance, if a person between 0-35 years wants to opt for a base cover with sum insurance of ₹50,000 for three and a half months, the customer needs to pay ₹447, excluding GST. It is mandatory to opt for base

- ▶ Premium for the base cover ranges between ₹447 to ₹5,630 excluding GST, which varies depending on the age of the person, sum insured & policy period opted
- ▶ Premium for Hospital Daily Cash optional covers between ₹3 to ₹620 excluding GST depending on the age of the person, sum insured & policy period opted



cover which entails COVID-19 hospitalisation expenses, home care treatments, AYUSH treatment, pre-hospitalisation of up to 15 days and

post-hospitalisation expenses of up to 30 days. A customer can also opt for an optional hospital daily cash cover on benefit basis along with the

## EXAMPLES FOR REFERENCE PURPOSE

Please note that the below premium amounts are excluding GST  
**Illustration 1:** For a family of 3 aged 25, 40 and 50 years, on individual sum insured of ₹3 lakh each, total premium without GST would work out to ₹7,235 for a nine and a half month policy.  
**Illustration 2:** For the same family for floater sum insured of ₹3 lakh, total premium without GST would work out to ₹6,873 for a nine and a half month policy.

base cover, wherein the company shall pay the insured person 0.5% of sum insured per day for each 24 hours of continuous hospitalisation. This policy has a waiting period of 15 days and can be opted on individual and family floater

basis. Bajaj Allianz General Insurance has more than 6,500 network hospitals and that coupled, with in-house health administration team, it aims to be there for its customers in the times of their need and offer them seamless service.



**'Online grocery market can exceed \$3bn sales in 2020'**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 12:** The Indian online grocery market could exceed sales of \$3 billion (about ₹22,500 crore) in 2020, a substantial 76% jump over the previous year, Spencer's Retail Chairman Sanjiv Goenka said. The preference for online delivery of products became more visible following the COVID-19 outbreak, he added.

Spencer's Retail, part of the RP-Sanjiv Goenka (RPSG) Group, had acquired online supermarket and grocery store Nature's Basket in July 2019. Consumers opted to buy essentials and other products from home in a bigger way than they had done in the past, he said.

"The result is that India's online grocery market could exceed USD 3 billion in sales in 2020, a substantial 76 per cent increase over the previous year following a demand spike for the home delivery of fresh produce," Goenka said in his address to shareholders in the company's Annual Report for 2019-20.

With increased access to smartphones and low data costs, shoppers now prefer an omni-channel shopping experience, he added. Spencers Retail is attractively positioned to capitalise on the omni-channel opportunity, he said.

"The company did not just respond to this sectoral inflexion point with a relevant mobile application and home delivery; it invested in enhancing proximity to consumers through phone call-based delivery, Chatbots and WhatsApp-driven product delivery using its stores as hubs," Goenka said.

## BIZ BUZZ

### UK plans to create 'freeports,' cut taxes

**London:** British Finance Minister Rishi Sunak is preparing to introduce sweeping tax cuts and an overhaul of planning laws in up to 10 new "freeports" within a year of the UK's becoming fully independent from the European Union in December, Reuters said. Sunak will open the bidding for towns, cities and regions to become freeports, which would place them outside UK customs territory, in his autumn budget later this year, the newspaper said, citing a copy of the plans it said it had seen. Sunak plans to confirm the successful bids by next spring and introduce major tax and regulatory changes in those areas at next year's budget, Reuters added. They include research and development tax credits, generous capital allowances, cuts to stamp duty house-purchase tax and business rates, and local relaxations of planning laws.



### JSW Steel cuts capex plans by 45 pc to ₹9k cr

**New Delhi:** Concerned over uncertain market conditions, JSW Steel has decided to reduce its capex target for 2020-21 by about 45 per cent to ₹9,000 crore against its earlier plan of spending ₹16,340 crore. At 9,000 crore, the capex target is about 12 per cent lower compared to the company's ₹10,200-crore spend during 2019-20. In the company's annual report, JSW Steel CMD Sajjan Jindal said the company has undertaken a detailed exercise to prioritise all planned and discretionary spends. The objective is to conserve liquidity, ensure that strategic projects which are in advanced stages of completion are commissioned on priority basis, he said.



SHORT TAKES

Jersey without social message

**Washington:** NBA star LeBron James has said his thoughts on social justice can't be contained on the back of a basketball jersey. The Los Angeles Lakers superstar won't wear one of the NBA-approved social justice messages on the back of his jersey when competition resumes later this month in the Orlando bubble. "It was no disrespect to the list that was handed down to all the players," James said Saturday in a conference call from Florida. "I commend anyone that decides to put something on the back of their jersey. It's just something that didn't seriously resonate with my mission, with my goal," he added.

Marriage plans

**New Delhi:** Star Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan has revealed his marriage plans. He has said he will tie the knot only once the country lifts the World Cup, cricket's biggest prize. "Afghanistan cricketer Rashid Khan will only get engaged and then marry once Afghanistan win the World Cup," Pakistani journalist Saj Sadiq said in a tweet Sunday. The 21-year-old cricketer reportedly made this comment during an interview with 'Azadi Radio'. Last month, Rashid lost his mother who died after a prolonged illness. In an international career spanning over four Tests, 70 ODIs and 48 T20Is, Rashid has picked 23, 133 and 89 wickets respectively.

Chauhan tests +ve

**New Delhi:** Former India cricketer and Uttar Pradesh Cabinet Minister Chetan Chauhan has tested positive for COVID-19. The matter came to light through tweets of two other former Indian cricketers, Aakash Chopra and RP Singh. "Chetan Chauhan ji also tested positive for #COVID-19. Sending best wishes in his direction too...get well soon, sir," Chopra tweeted. "Just heard about @Chetan Chauhan ji. He has tested positive for #coronavirus. Praying for his speedy recovery," Singh wrote. The 72-year-old underwent COVID-19 test Friday and tested positive. Known to be a gritty player, Chauhan played 40 Tests between 1969 and 1978 and scored 2,084 runs.

Brooklyn engaged

**London:** Brooklyn Beckham, son of retired soccer superstar David Beckham and fashion designer Victoria Beckham, and American actress Nicola Peltz have announced they're engaged. Brooklyn and Peltz both posted the news on their Instagram accounts Saturday. "Two weeks ago I asked my soulmate to marry me and she said 'yes'," Brooklyn wrote. "I am the luckiest man in the world. I promise to be the best husband and the best daddy one day," he added. Peltz said in her post, "You've made me the luckiest girl in the world. I can't wait to spend the rest of my life by your side," she added.

Hair-raising talk

**New Delhi:** Former Indian opener Gautam Gambhir recently went down memory lane and revisited the time when he shared room with veteran wicketkeeper-batsman MS Dhoni. "We were roommates for more than a month and all we used to talk about was hair. He had long hair and how he would maintain that hair and all that stuff would be our discussions," Gambhir said. "We remember sleeping on the floor, because we had a very small room. We removed the bed to make it look big," Gambhir added.

CR7 saves Juve

**Rome:** Atalanta held Juventus to a 2-2 draw here Saturday showing what it takes to tackle top tier teams. Juventus needed two penalties from Cristiano Ronaldo - including a 90th-minute equaliser - to prevent Atalanta from winning its 12th straight match in all competitions. Duvan Zapata gave Atalanta the lead before Ronaldo equalised for the first time after the break.

# AFTER WINNING MEDALS FOR INDIA, SHOOTER JITU GETS INTO ARMY GEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 12:** Not content with bringing home only sporting laurels, one of India's most accomplished shooters, Jitu Rai, has taken to serving the nation as a newly-promoted Subedar Major in the Indian Army. He is currently posted in Manipur. He brushed up his knowledge on one of India's most sensitive regions before taking off for the northeast. Prior that Rai was posted in Manipur. It's been a month since Rai joined his regiment - 11 Gorkha Rifles. "You must have read it (insurgency in the northeast), I read about it and I know we have to be on guard all the time. I am immensely proud about that. I love my job, how many people get such opportunities," Rai

said Sunday. As a 'fauji', he is also keeping a tab on the developments on the Indo-China border and. Without any hesitation, he said he will be ready to go to the front if the call comes. "This is what Subedar Major does, they lead teams at the front where they play a critical role. I am always ready to serve the Indian Army, serve India," said the 2016 'Khel Ratna' awardee, who was honoured with the 'Padma Shri' this year. To a question on fear, Rai's

prompt retort was, "No, there is none." Rai's wife and 14-month-old son are currently stationed in Indore. "I miss them very much but then this is what I have chosen to do. I love doing this. I speak to them regularly and I will go and meet them again when I am allowed to take leave." Winner of multiple medals at top international events, including World Championships, Asian and Commonwealth Games, the Olympian is at ease in his new assignment. And the passion for the new job has made shooting secondary. "Army is first priority at the moment and shooting is second. But I

do my daily practice and carry my pistol wherever I go," Rai said. Though he has not been able to taste success in shooting for a while, Rai is continuing to practice hard and has his eyes trained on a comeback. "I will train hard for a comeback into the national team and also aim for the Olympics," Rai, who reached the final of the Rio Games in 2016, added.

I read about insurgency and I know we have to be on guard all the time. I am immensely proud and honoured that I am getting to serve the nation  
JITU RAI



# A Sterling affair



GOALSCORERS ALL: (From left) Manchester City's Raheem Sterling, Gabriel Jesus and Bernardo Silva celebrate after the game

AGENCIES

**Brighton, July 12:** Raheem Sterling struck a hat-trick as Manchester City crushed Brighton 5-0 at the AmEx Stadium in the Premier League game played Saturday. Second-placed City had lost their previous three away

games but never looked likely to extend that streak against a Brighton side that struggled from the outset. Sterling, who has now netted 27 goals in all competitions, opened the scoring in the 21st minute when he collected a nod-down from Gabriel Jesus outside the box and superbly drove it into the bottom

corner. Jesus made it 2-0 just before the break, turning in from close range after Rodri had headed a corner goalwards. City took total charge in the second half, with Kevin De Bruyne striking the post in the 51st minute and two minutes later Sterling heading in a fine curling cross

AT A GLANCE

Man City 5	Brighton 0
Liverpool 1	Burnley 1
Sheffield 3	Chelsea 0

from Riyad Mahrez. Bernardo Silva made it four and then Sterling bundled in the fifth in the 81st minute, the ball bouncing in off his head after he had fallen to the floor. The result ensures that City, on 72 points, will finish in the runners-up spot. However, they will have to wait for the decision Monday from the Court of Arbitration of Sport (CAS) to find out if they will be able to compete in next season's Champions League.

City have been banned from European competition for two years by UEFA but appealed to CAS in a bid to overturn the decision. "We've qualified for the Champions League which was the minimum requirement for the club. We won it on the pitch and hopefully Monday UEFA will allow these players to play next season. They deserve to be in the Champions League," said City manager Pep Guardiola.

However, Chelsea's bid to qualify for the Champions League took a beating Saturday when they went down 0-3 at Sheffield United. Striker David McGoldrick scored two goals for Sheffield while Oli McBurnie got the other one for the hosts. Chelsea stayed in third place, but could get overtaken by Leicester and Manchester United if they win their games in hand over the next two days. In another game played on the day Premier League Champions Liverpool were held to a 1-1 draw by Burnley. It cost them the record of maintaining a home all-win record in the title campaign.

# Vidal keeps Barca in La Liga title campaign

AGENCIES

**Barcelona, July 12:** Arturo Vidal scored for Barcelona to sneak past feisty Valladolid 1-0 and keep the pressure on leader Real Madrid as the Spanish league approaches its climax. Barcelona closed to within one point of Madrid, who have a game in hand, as they try to defend the title they have won for two consecutive years. Vidal scored in the 15th minute after being set up by Lionel Messi, who, like most of his teammates, had a discreet outing at Valladolid's empty José Zorrilla Stadium.

Real Madrid play at Granada, Monday. Their final two matches are against a Villarreal fighting for a Champions League berth and a Leganes trying to avoid relegation. Barcelona have games against Osasuna and Alaves. Madrid holds the tie-breaker if they finish level on points. "We will give it our all, and then wait and see," Vidal said after the game. "It doesn't depend on us. If it is not meant to be, then on to the

## Griezmann ruled out

**Barcelona:** Barcelona forward Antoine Griezmann is set to miss his side's final two La Liga games after sustaining a thigh injury during Saturday's 1-0 win over Real Valladolid. Griezmann came off at half time and a statement from Barcelona said Sunday he had injured his right thigh. The club did not say how long the France striker would be out for although newspaper 'Sport' said he would be sidelined for three weeks.

Champions League (in August)," he added. Barcelona dominated from kick-off and attacked at will down the right side through Nelson Semedo. However, Semedo, Puig, and Messi all missed chances early on before Vidal got the winner. Other than his assist for Vidal, Messi was limited to a pair of shots, including a free-kick that Masip palmed over his bar.



FINE STRIKE: Arturo Vidal, watched closely by Lionel Messi (left) scores Barcelona's only goal against Valladolid

## INDIA TOUR OF AUSTRALIA IN 2020

# Ganguly wants quarantine period reduced for players

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 12:** BCCI president Sourav Ganguly wants a shorter than mandated quarantine period for the Indian team when they travel to Australia for a Test series this year as 'we don't want the players to go that far and sit in hotel rooms for two weeks'. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the rules of the game. Players have to be in quarantine for two weeks and be tested for the virus before they can take the field. But Ganguly is hoping that the Indian team will get some relaxation during their tour of Australia, comprising four Tests, including a day-night game. "...we have confirmed that tour. In December we will be coming. We just hope the number of days in quarantine gets reduced a bit," Ganguly said during an online programme, Sunday. "Because we don't want the players to go all that far and sit in hotel rooms for two weeks. It is very depressing and disappointing." And, as I said Australia and New Zealand have been in good position except Melbourne (regarding virus infections). So from that point of view we will be going there and hopefully the quarantine days will be less and we can



This will be a milestone series. So everyone will have to be match fit when they land in Australia  
SOURAV GANGULY

get back to cricket," the former India skipper added. Ganguly also said that the Australia series will be career-defining for Indian skipper Virat Kohli. "I have been in touch with him, telling him 'you have got to stay fit. You haven't played cricket for six months'. You have got to make sure your best bowlers are ready for the tour and fit. Whether it's (Mohammed) Shami, whether it's (Jasprit) Bumrah, whether it's Ishant (Sharma) or (Hardik) Pandya, they have to be at the top of their match fitness when they land in Australia," he added.

## STAR SPRINTER FEELS PLENTY OF TIME LEFT TO QUALIFY

# Hima not fretting about Olympics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 12:** Star sprinter Hima Das is not losing her sleep over qualifying for the Olympics. She has included cycling and a bit of cricket in her 'medium-intensity' training regime while taking care to avoid the sweltering summer heat. With no competitions lined up in the near future due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Hima is taking it easy. "There are no immediate competitions and so we are neither doing low level training nor intense. We are just doing medium intensity training. Let us see when we pick up our training," Hima who is currently at NIS Patiala said Sunday.



Hima Das winning the 400m gold at the U-20 World Championships in 2018

There is no use worrying about qualification for Tokyo. There is plenty of time still left. First let us pray for the end of the pandemic  
HIMA DAS

It is very hot here and so we do only morning training. In the evening we have spare time and I do cycling (in the velodrome) and even do bowling with cricket balls. I try to enjoy life as much as I can. My motto is 'be positive and be happy'," added the reigning junior World Champion in 400m. The pandemic has pushed back the Tokyo Olympics by a year and the international season stands suspended till November 30. However, Hima is not fretting over it. "I am not worried about it (Olympics qualification), it will only create tension. There is a year

The 20-year-old Hima, known as 'Dhing Express', is the first Indian woman to win a gold medal in the World Championships and holds the national record (50.79 seconds) in 400m. A lower back injury has been troubling her for some time, leading to speculations that she may not run 400m in future and switch to 200m. "I am recovering (from the injury). I will do whatever is decided by my coach and the AFI. They will decide (which one I will run)," Hima said when asked about her injury.

## RESUMPTION TIME

# Rijiju to talk with state counterparts for sports activities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 12:** Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju will hold discussions with sports ministers of all states and Union Territories from July 14 to figure a way forward as sporting activities begin to resume amid the gradual lifting of the COVID-19 lockdown. The two-day online meeting will review the actions taken during the pandemic. "India is in the second phase of unlock now and it is important to have a dialogue with the states to align the way forward for sports and youth related activities," Rijiju said in a statement Sunday.

The national camps of athletics and weightlifting have restarted. Boxers will resume training in the next couple of weeks amid strict health safety measures. "During the lockdown, activities of both youth affairs and sports have continued keeping in mind the larger goals that have been set," Rijiju said. The minister also spoke about the online classes that received good response from athletes. "In sports too, despite closure of on-field training, online training has been conducted for athletes of all levels as well as for coaches, Rijiju informed.