

SUBSTANCE MATTERS
Actor Aditi Rao Hydari says it is not the language, but the film that matters most to her
LEISURE P2

RAISING AWARENESS
Police in Chhattisgarh's Raigarh district will distribute over 14 lakh face masks to people on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan
TWO STATES P7

RISHI'S NOBLE GESTURE
Rishi Sunak backed a campaign for influential ethnic minority figures to be featured on UK coins
INTERNATIONAL P10

SHORT TAKES
Big B discharged from hospital

Mumbai: Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has tested negative for COVID-19 and has been discharged from the hospital, son Abhishek Bachchan shared Sunday. Amitabh, 77, and Abhishek were admitted to Nanavati hospital after they tested positive for COVID-19 July 11. Talking to Twitter, Abhishek, 44, wrote Amitabh will now be resting at home. In a tweet, Abhishek said he is still COVID-19 positive and will remain under medical care.



Punjab spurious liquor toll now 98

Chandigarh: The death toll in the Punjab hooch tragedy rose to 98 Sunday with 12 more people reported dead in Tarn Taran district after drinking spurious liquor. "In Tarn Taran, the death toll is now 75," Deputy Commissioner Kulwant Singh said. Apart from Tarn Taran, 12 deaths have been reported from Amritsar and 11 from Gurdaspur's Batala, in a tragedy unfolding since Wednesday evening.

TN Governor tests positive

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit has tested positive for COVID-19, but advised home isolation since his infection was mild, a city-based private hospital said Sunday. The 80-year old Purohit was on self-isolation since July 29 after three people in the Raj Bhavan tested positive for the coronavirus. State Chief Minister K Palaniswami, his deputy O Panneerselvam and DMK President M K Stalin among others wished the Governor a speedy recovery.

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	34.5°C	35°C
MIN	26.2°C	25.2°C
Humidity	97%	94%
Rainfall	Trace	Trace
Forecast	Mainly clear sky	

KHURDA GOING GANJAM WAY

With over 200 infections a day, Khurda is catching up fast with Ganjam's daily caseload

POST NEWS NETWORK

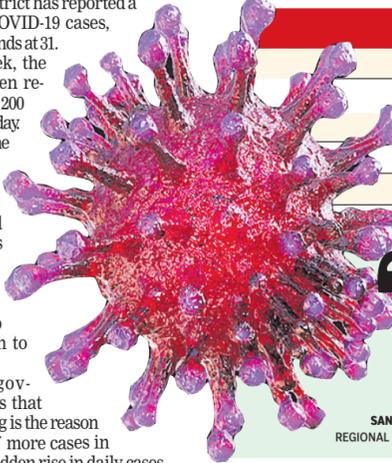
Bhubaneswar, August 2: With Ganjam being the worst-affected district in the state, both in terms of caseload and fatalities, Khurda seems to be catching up fast with a huge surge in fresh cases and deaths. While the district has reported a total of 4703 COVID-19 cases, the death toll stands at 31. In the past week, the district has been reporting beyond 200 infections every day. Meanwhile, the difference between fresh cases detected in Khurda and Ganjam districts has narrowed drastically in the last one week. The gap has come down to 30-50 cases. While the government claims that increased testing is the reason for detection of more cases in the areas, the sudden rise in daily cases has panicked denizens. July 28, Ganjam reported 245 new cases and Khurda reported 194 cases. The difference between fresh cases on the day was merely 51. However, the gap decreased to 30 July 29 with Khurda re-

porting 220 cases and Ganjam reporting 250.

According to experts, the positivity rate in Ganjam seems to be declining. Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) Director Sanghamitra Pati, in a recent webinar, had admitted that the cases in Ganjam are

and said that different districts could see their peak and flattening of the graphs at different times.

Ganjam continues to be in a worrisome situation as the district has seen a total of 10,992 cases and also reported 107 COVID deaths as per the latest information.



DAILY CASELOAD			
DATE	GANJAM	KHURDA	DIFFERENCE
Aug 1	320	218	102
July 31	308	285	23
July 30	368	214	154
July 29	250	220	30
July 28	245	194	51

The positivity rate in Ganjam seems to be declining. The situation in the district is apparently improving as the number of fresh cases is going down

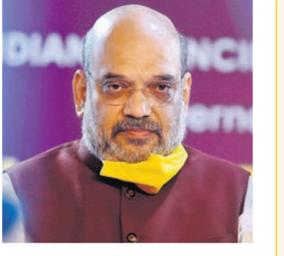
All the districts cannot be compared under one yardstick when it comes to COVID case graph. Various districts could see their peaks and flattening of graphs at different times

ASHOK MOHAPATRA | EX-DIRECTOR, BHUBANESWAR AIIMS

On the other hand, former director of AIIMS, Bhubaneswar Ashok Mohapatra said that the whole state cannot be compared under one yardstick when it comes to the COVID case graph

The detection of new strains of virus in the state has also raised speculations. However, experts tried to allay the fears. "The clades are minor changes in coronavirus. It does not mutate very quickly, and there is no evidence that

Amit Shah contracts corona, hospitalised



AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 2: India's Interior Minister Amit Shah has been admitted to hospital after catching the coronavirus, he said Sunday, becoming the most senior politician in the country to test positive for the disease. Shah, a close aide to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, heads a ministry that has been at the forefront of managing the epidemic. India's coronavirus outbreak is the third worst in the world behind the United States and Brazil, with nearly 1.7 million confirmed cases and 36,500 deaths, according to a Reuters tally. "I request all of you who came in contact with me in the last few days to isolate yourselves and get tested," Shah said in a tweet.

UP minister succumbs to virus

Uttar Pradesh Minister Kamal Rani Varun, the only woman cabinet minister in the state, died of COVID-19 at a hospital here on Sunday. She was 62. The Technical Education minister, who tested positive for COVID-19 July 18 and is the first minister in the state to succumb to the disease, breathed her last at the Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPIMS). She had comorbidities, including diabetes, hypertension and hyperthyroidism, a senior doctor at the hospital said. Kamal Rani, who is survived by her daughter, was cremated at the Bhairu Ghat crematorium here in accordance with COVID-19 protocols.

Shah, 55, said he had got himself tested after exhibiting initial symptoms of COVID-19. "My health is fine but I am being hospitalised on the advice of doctors," he added. An interior ministry spokesman said he was unable to immediately comment on when Shah had last met with Modi.

BLAZING INFERNO



Firefighters watch as flames flare at the Apple Fire in Cherry Valley, California, US

IPL FINAL NOVEMBER 10

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 2: The Indian Premier League's Governing Council Sunday decided to retain all its sponsors, including Chinese mobile company VIVO, and approved COVID-19 replacements in the event to be held in UAE this year. The tournament will be played from September 19 to November 10, the IPL GC decided after a virtual meeting Sunday. "All I can say is that all our sponsors are with us. Hopefully you can read between the lines," an IPL GC member told PTI on conditions of anonymity. Chinese sponsorship became a bone of contention after the clashes between the Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh in June. The BCCI had promised to review the deals in the aftermath of the violent showdown. In another major decision, the IPL GC also approved the women's IPL, a development that was first reported by PTI after

speaking to BCCI president Sourav Ganguly Sunday. Forced out of India due to the rising COVID-19 case count here, the IPL will allow unlimited COVID-19 replacements considering the delicate health safety situation across the globe. "We expect the Home and External Affairs Ministry to give us necessary approvals within another week. The final will be played November 10," the IPL GC member said. **More on P12**

speaking to BCCI president Sourav Ganguly Sunday. Forced out of India due to the rising COVID-19 case count here, the IPL will allow unlimited COVID-19 replacements considering the delicate health safety situation across the globe. "We expect the Home and External Affairs Ministry to give us necessary approvals within another week. The final will be played November 10," the IPL GC member said. **More on P12**

Health Min issues revised guidelines for foreign arrivals

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 2: The Union health ministry Sunday issued a set of revised guidelines for international arrivals which will come into effect from August 8. According to the guidelines, all travellers would need to give an undertaking on the online portal www.newdelhiairport.in that they would undergo mandatory quarantine for 14 days, that is, seven days paid institutional quarantine at their own cost, followed by seven days isolation at home with self-monitoring of health.



Only for compelling reasons cases of human distress such as pregnancy, death in family, serious illness and parent(s) with children of the age of 10 years or below, home quarantine may be permitted for 14 days, the ministry said. The travellers can also seek exemption from institutional quarantine by submitting a negative RT-PCR test report. This test should have been conducted within 96 hours prior to undertaking the journey.

World's highest railway bridge to be ready next year

The construction of Chenab bridge in J&K was accelerated last year under direct supervision of the Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 2: The world's highest railway bridge over river Chenab in Jammu and Kashmir will be ready by next year, and will connect the valley with the rest of India by train for the first time by 2022, officials said Sunday. This is the tallest railway bridge in the world and the maximum designed wind speed for the bridge is 266 kmph, a senior government official said. The construction work of the bridge was accelerated in the last one year under the direct supervision of the top echelons of the central government, the official said. According to the plans, Kashmir will be connected with train by December 2022. The Udhmapur-Katra (25 Km) section, Banihal-

Quazigund (18 Km) section and Quazigund-Baramulla (118Km) section have already been commissioned. The last remaining section, the 111 km Katra-Banihal section is currently under execution. It is targeted for completion in December 2022. The 126 km out of 174 km of tunnels on this section has already been completed. There has been a greater push in the last one year for implementation of various projects under the ₹80,068 crore Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) announced on November 7, 2015, the official said. The package is meant for strengthening socio-economic infrastructure and balanced regional development of Jammu and Kashmir. The programme touches practically every sector and provides for



massive investments in basic infrastructure, another official said. After the reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019, the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir was left with 54 projects under the PMDP with an outlay of ₹58,627 crore. A total of nine projects with an outlay of ₹21,441 crore were transferred to the UT of Ladakh. The work in the PMDP since

June 2018 and particularly in the last one year has been the rapid and unprecedented, the official said. The expenditure on various projects, which was 27 per cent of the sanctioned cost in June 2018, has shot up to 54 per cent in July 2020. The number of completed projects has correspondingly shot up from seven in June 2018 to 17 in July 2020. Bottlenecks, which were holding up as many as nine projects about two years ago, have been removed. Some of the major PMDP projects which have witnessed considerable progress or have been completed in last one year include the Rambagh flyover in Srinagar, which was opened for traffic after a delay of over five years.

Debt-ridden farmer ends life in Bhadrak

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, August 2: Distressed over crop loss amid COVID-19 pandemic and a mounting loan burden, a farmer allegedly died by suicide by hanging himself with a rope inside his house. The incident took place in the wee hours Sunday at Rajualbindha village under Bhadrak Rural police limits in Bhadrak district. The deceased has been identified as Mahendra Das. According to family members, the farmer took the extreme step while they were sleeping. On being informed, police recovered the body and sent it for postmortem. According to a source, Mahendra owned a few acres of land and had

cultivated paddy by borrowing from private moneylenders and banks. He had hoped to repay the debt after a good harvest. Even though the harvest was good, he was unable to sell them amid the COVID-19 induced lockdowns and shutdowns. Lack of cold storages in the area also plays a major role in crop damage. "He had taken a loan of ₹50,000 from private moneylenders for cultivation. But, we suffered huge losses after torrential rain washed away our crops and COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, he was in depression," a family member said. It is alleged that he was under stress as the money lenders were pressurizing him for repayment following which he took to the extreme step.



SEAN PENN SECRETLY MARRIES LEILA GEORGE

Hollywood star Sean Penn has walked down the aisle with actress Leila George, says a close friend of the couple. Philanthropist Irena Medavoy announced the news that the couple recently got married, reports *online.com*. Sean and Leila began dating in 2016.

BRANDY BACK WITH NEW ALBUM AFTER EIGHT YEARS

Singer Brandy has unveiled her seventh album *B7* after an eight-year break. The 15-track album is co-written and co-produced by Brandy. It also has collaborations with Chance the Rapper, Daniel Caesar and her daughter, Sy'rai, reports *variety.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
Boyl! Are you ambitious today or what! You plan meticulously and perform impeccably. However, you will progress at snail's pace. But don't lose heart, as Ganesh shows his blessings on you, dear one.

TAURUS
This is a great day for expressions your ideas and feelings. Ganesh urges you to open up and share hopes and concerns, dreams and aspirations with your others. Romance is in the air.

GEMINI
A fantastic day to enter into all kinds of partnerships. A day to bond with your close friends, open joint accounts, strike deals, and make plans for a bright future, says Ganesh. You will be at the top of your game in almost everything you do.

CANCER
Today, you may find yourself marooned in a sea of emotions, and the tides of turmoil will keep on getting stronger as the day progresses. However, such dire circumstances bring out the best in you, and you will be able to wade through the storm with nothing but patience on your side.

LEO
You may not have a halo around your head, but that most certainly does not deter you from playing the spiritual card today, says Ganesh. On this auspicious day, it is through religious scriptures that you satiate your desire to attain the intangible.

VIRGO
You will take your destiny in your own hands today. You possess the vision to penetrate the masks that people wear to hide their true selves. You will carefully select the friends to spend your time with, and you will also make plans for success.

LIBRA
A wistful day lies ahead of you, says Ganesh. This day, just like 'on the summer day that we flew kites', may be the standard when it comes to wanting to have a better future. Ganesh expects a sea of change in your outlook, thanks to your sweetheart's noble gesture today.

SCORPIO
Dear friends and soul mates will bring you much relief and calm today, says Ganesh. Spend as much time as possible with them. Romantic escapades with your beloved will be heaven in itself. Blood relations will stand true and strong in matters of importance, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
The morning seems to begin on a lazy note today, as your energy level is equal to zero. Thus, you may try to decentralise your activities and divide it between your co-workers. But make sure the responsibilities are delegated in the right hands or you may have to regret your decision.

CAPRICORN
Your outstanding intellectual ability will not only yield exciting results for you, but will also help your close associates who will have progressed a great deal in their career because of your valuable advice, says Ganesh. Scores of problems may come your way, but you will have nothing to worry about.

AQUARIUS
A romantic liaison is headed towards you. Quite naturally, you don't want to be caught dead in a ratty old tee. Today, you want to keep everyone happy and amused, both at home and at work.

PISCES
'Love thy neighbour' is a commandment you may just end up implementing, literally, considering how religious scriptures provide you food for thought today. Spiritual pursuits will keep you occupied. You may also find yourself visiting places of religious significance, says Ganesh.

'Not role's length but substance matters'

Mumbai: Actress Aditi Rao Hydari has appeared in several South Indian films over the past couple of years but her release count in Mumbai film industry has been rather low. The actress says it is not the language or film industry, but the film that matters most to her.

"More than often I am told that now I am focusing on my career in South and have left Mumbai. But I have not gone anywhere. Scripts and opportunities took me everywhere. Why should I say no to a film if the story is exciting? I think we are a generation of actor for whom the length of the role does not matter but substance does," said the *Padmaavat* actor.

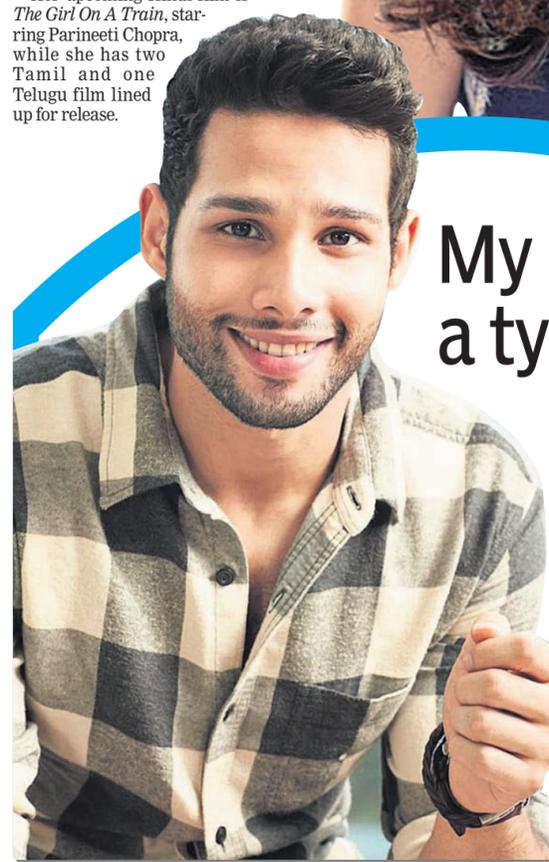
Her last appearance in Hindi cinema was a supporting role in *Padmaavat* that was released in 2018.

In roughly the same amount of time, she had done five films down South, across Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam languages.

Her upcoming Hindi film is *The Girl On A Train*, starring Parineeti Chopra, while she has two Tamil and one Telugu film lined up for release.



Aditi Rao Hydari



My heart's a typewriter: Siddhant

Mumbai: Actor Siddhant Chaturvedi says his heart is like a typewriter and it does not delete.

Siddhant took to Instagram, where he shared a picture of himself, where he is seen shirtless cleaning his typewriter.

Alongside the picture Siddhant, who rose to fame as MC Sher

from *Gully Boy*, wrote: "My heart's a typewriter. It doesn't delete. Yours is a phone. Factory Reset on Repeat."

He recently penned a heartfelt poetry on his journey to success on social media.

Two days ago, the actor took to Instagram, where he posted a picture of himself in what seems like a backseat of a car. He is seen dressed in a black turtle-neck top paired with a brownish overcoat and sunglasses.

On the professional front, Siddhant teams with Deepika in an untitled upcoming film that also stars Ananya Panday.

It's cool to be kind, says Esha

Mumbai: Actress Esha Gupta has shared some words of wisdom on social media and said that it's cool to be kind.

Esha took to Instagram, where she shared a monochrome picture of herself. In the photograph, Esha is seen sporting a sweatshirt with 'cool' written on it. She completed her look with winged eyeliner and kept her hair open.

As the caption, she wrote: "It is Cool to be Kind."

Last month, Esha opened up about how the COVID-19 induced lockdown has been an 'emotional roller coaster' for the actress.

On the work front, Esha was last seen as a police officer in the web series *REJECTX2*.



Protecting forests, wildlife key to combat viral infections: Experts

Bhubaneswar: Rapid degradation of forests and depletion of wildlife that harbours millions of viruses are a couple of significant reasons behind the spread of deadly coronavirus, opined many environmental experts Sunday.

They said this while attending a virtual seminar titled *COVID-19: A Novel Zoonotic Disease*, organised by Odisha Environmental Society (OES).

There is a possibility of spike in such viral infections in the coming decades also, they warned. So, the need now is to reinforce the protection measures for the wilderness areas and the wildlife.

The way to combat the present corona infection, before an effective vaccine is developed, is the strict adherence to the government guidelines, thereby enhancing the society's



WEBINAR BY ENVIRONMENTAL BODY

immunity, added the experts.

Elaborating more on the issue, Ajay Parida, Director, Institute of Life Sciences, Bhubaneswar stated that vaccines are the second most important requirement after clean water for human health.

Presently more than 300 vaccines are available globally for the treatment of 80-odd human pathogens, which wipe out the viruses by synthesising antigens in our blood. While approximately one million viruses exist on earth at the moment, seven corona virus species have been identified. Of them, Covid-19 has come to the forefront just eight months ago.

Parida continued: "In Odisha we have now identified five clades of Covid-19, 19 A, 19 B, 20 A, 20 B and 20 C. If the virus changes its genetic features further soon after the vaccine gets invented, it is going to pose new challenges for the scientific research."

Chairman of OES Sundar Narayan Patro emphasized on the protection of the wilderness and biodiversity.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

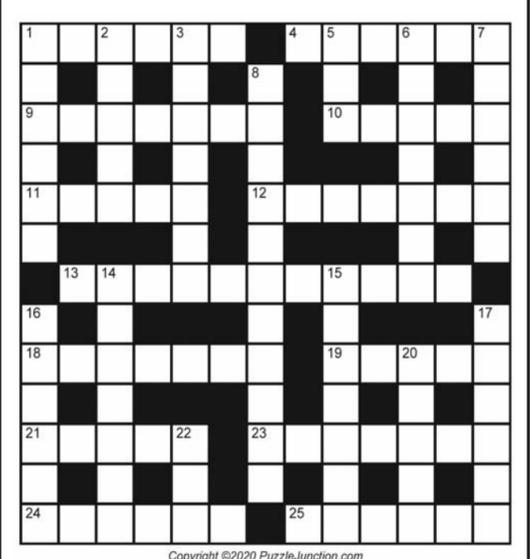


BREVITY



FUN post

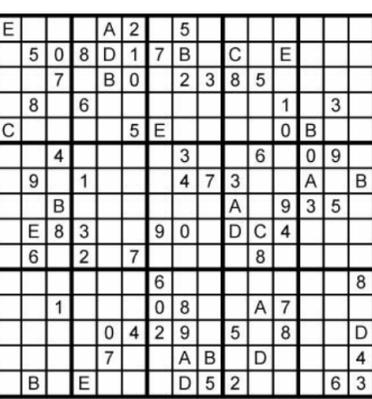
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 In need of exercise
 - 4 Barrel parts
 - 9 Denounce
 - 10 Fragrant oil
 - 11 One way to be taken
 - 12 Native
 - 13 Dictatorial
 - 18 Emotionally stable
 - 19 Hosiery material
 - 21 Precipice
 - 23 Table linens
 - 24 Ancient Greek city
 - 25 Double-cross
 - 5 Argentine aunt
 - 6 Folic acid, e.g.
 - 7 Conifer
 - 8 Self-sufficient
 - 14 Stoker's villain
 - 15 Backslide
 - 16 Melodic
 - 17 Spirited
 - 20 Winter
 - 22 Olympian
- Down**
- 1 Type of hair
 - 2 Sleeper's woe
 - 3 More hopeless

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

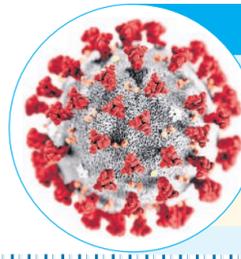


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



OP IMPACT

Grass and creepers have been removed from decorative structures in front of Cuttack railway station a few days after Orissa POST reported the issue



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	1,81,16,035	1,13,93,213	6,90,437
India	17,50,723	11,45,629	37,364
Odisha	34,913	21,954	197

SRIMANDIR RATNABHANDAR

Where are the 'original' keys?

₹22 LAKH HAS ALREADY BEEN SPENT ON A JUDICIAL PANEL TO PROBE THE MISSING KEYS EPISODE BUT EVERYTHING REMAINS INCONCLUSIVE. HOW LONG IS IT GOING TO TAKE MORE, IT HAS ALREADY BEEN 20 MONTHS!

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, August 2: The mystery related to the missing keys of Srimandir Ratnabhandar (treasure house) is yet to be solved even though a judicial commission, constituted to look into the issue, submitted its report around 20 months ago. The state government has spent Rs 22, 27, 918 on the panel to probe the missing keys episode.

Many devotees and locals, meanwhile, have raised apprehension on the safety of ornaments and precious items stored at the Bhitara Ratnabhandar (inner chamber) of the temple treasury.

Servitors of the 12th century shrine usually open the outer chamber of the temple treasury quite a few times in a year to collect ornaments for the Suna Besha (golden attire) rituals of the presiding deities. However, the inner chamber of Ratnabhandar was opened for the last time in 1985, sources said.

The Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee had deliberated on the structural status of the



Ratnabhandar in a meeting March 20, 2018. Some members of the temple panel had raised issues related to the structural status of Ratnabhandar in the wake of major repair work at Srimandir Jagamohan.

The issue had also reached Orissa High Court. The court had directed the Shree

To allay people's concern, the government should open the inner chamber of temple treasury and take stock of the ornaments

DILLIP BARAL | DEVOTEE

Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) to examine the structural status of the temple treasury.

In accordance with the HC order, a 16-member team of experts and senior government officials opened the Bahara (outer

chamber) Ratnabhandar and examined its status April 4, 2018 after receiving the required permission from the state government.

However, the team did not open the inner chamber of Ratnabhandar but examined its status from outside. But, later it came to the fore that the keys to the inner chamber of Ratnabhandar were missing. The issue was raised at a meeting of the Srimandir managing committee May 28, 2018.

The state government had formed a judicial commission to look into the issues related to the missing keys June 6, 2018 after facing criticism from several quarters. Retired Justice Raghuraj Das was appointed as the head of the judicial panel. The commission was told to submit its report within three months.

The SJTA, Puri district administration and some private individuals and organisations had submitted their affidavits to the judicial panel. In the meantime, the then Puri Collector Aravind Agrawal informed the media June 13, 2018 that 'duplicate' keys to the inner chamber

of Ratnabhandar were found from an envelope at the district treasury. In this scenario, the state government had extended the tenure of the judicial panel till December 7, 2018. However, the Raghuraj Das commission had submitted its 324-page final report on the missing key November 30, 2018, sources said.

It is learnt that the state government had spent Rs 22, 27, 918 on the judicial panel to probe the missing key episode. However, the mystery with regard to the missing key remains unsolved.

"The state government did not reveal anything on the missing key episode even though 20 months have passed since the judicial panel submitted its final report. Many people have raised apprehension over the safety of ornaments and precious metals stored at Srimandir Ratnabhandar. To allay people's concern, the government should open the inner chamber of temple treasury and take stock of the ornaments," said Dillip Baral, a devotee.

Parl panel for social security number for migrant workers

The standing committee chaired by BJD MP Bhartruhari Mahtab makes various recommendations in its 180-page report on the Code on Social Security and submits it to the LS Speaker

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, August 2:

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour has recommended allotment of 'social security number' to migrant workers which can help them to get benefits of various social schemes in other states also.

The standing committee chaired by Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP

Bhartruhari Mahtab has made various recommendations in its 180-page report on the Code on Social Security and submitted it to the Lok Sabha Speaker.

"We have submitted our report on the Code on Social Security, 2019, to Lok Sabha Speaker through email," Mahtab said. The committee has suggested for allotting portable social security number to migrant workers. Mahtab said this will help migrant workers to reap benefits of social security schemes across the country.

The panel has made a case for "unemployment insurance and reducing continuous service period to one year from five years for getting gratuity." It also asked to specify the source of funding for running social security schemes enshrined in the Code. It suggested to incorporate "Unemployment Insurance", in

the Code, as recommended by the Second National Commission on Labour (SNCL), for the unorganised sector workers.

According to the report, the committee has requested the Labour ministry to revisit the proposed amalgamation of Employment Exchanges (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act, 1959, with the Code and rather contemplate examining the compliance aspect to the provisions contained in the Act. It said that "the Act provides for reporting of vacancies to the

Employment Exchanges" does not in any way connect with the theme and thrust of social security.

Moreover, just to reduce the number of Acts/legislations, any Act not connected with the subject matter of the Code should not be illogically subsumed in it, the panel opined.

The panel asked the Union ministry to have a look on those labour welfare laws which have been left out

of the amalgamation process irrespective of the abolition, so as to ensure that the merited and principled provisions as contained in such laws are duly incorporated in the code. The panel emphasised upon the need to clearly spell out, either in Preamble or at any other appropriate place, the principles to be followed for provision of social security benefits to all workers in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the Constitution of India and International Labour Organisation Conventions.

The panel suggested that a clear and specific enforcement date needed in the Code to ensure effective provision of social security to all the workers within a definite timeline.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Unemployment insurance and reducing continuous service period to one year from five years for getting gratuity

Specify the source of funding for running social security schemes enshrined in the Code

HC to have a drop box for accepting petitions



Earlier, the court had introduced e-filing system to accept petitions and applications from people as part of an effort to check the spread of novel coronavirus

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 2: Soon the Orissa High Court (HC) will have a drop box on its premises to collect petitions from people amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The court had earlier introduced e-filing system to accept petitions and applications from people as part of an effort to check the spread of novel coronavirus. The HC had also imposed restrictions on the entry of people into its premises in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to sources, people will be allowed to drop their petitions at the box within 10 am and 1 pm. Besides, the petitioners would also submit a written statement describing the gravity of the petitions. The HC has asked people to adhere to the social distancing norms strictly while dropping their petitions at the box.

Meanwhile, the HC has decided to restrict its functioning till August 21. It will take up only the urgent cases, sources said.

In a notification, the court has put emphasis on the e-mail and e-filing systems to accept petitions from people. The court will conduct hearing on urgent cases

through videoconferencing, sources added.

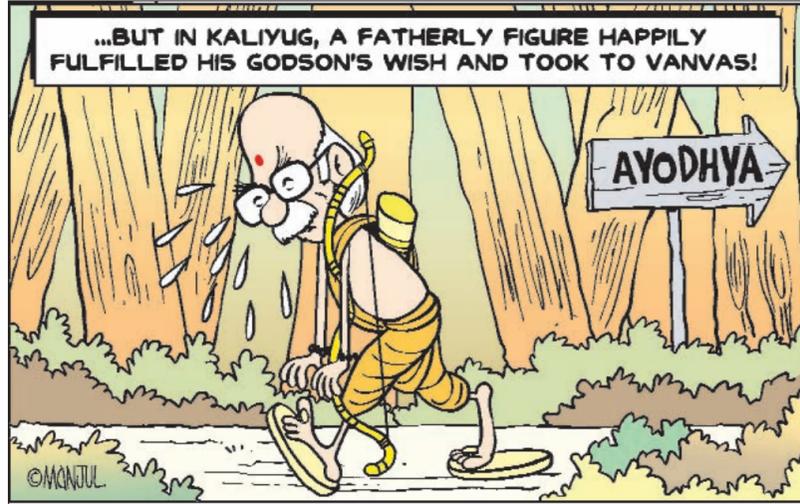
It is learnt that three division benches and four single-judge benches of the HC would conduct hearing on some urgent cases Monday. Chief Justice Mohammad Rafiq, Justice Savitri Ratho, Justice Krushnaram Mahapatra and Justice Sanjay Kumar Mishra will hear cases at the division benches while Justice Sangam Kumar Sahu, Debabrata Das, Justice Sangam Kumar Sahu and Justice Sanjiv Kumar Panigrahi would hear the cases at the single-judge benches.

Guidelines for courts in Cuttack dist

The Cuttack district judge, meanwhile, issued a guideline for all lower courts to conduct hearing on cases amid the pandemic. The courts in Cuttack district will work from 10 am to 1 pm and conduct hearing on urgent cases. The hearing would be conducted through videoconferencing and virtual mode. The court will remain shut on Saturdays and they will work with limited employees.

"If there is no scope for videoconferencing, the courts can conduct physical hearing," said the guideline.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



'Super spreader' infects 41 people in City: BMC

BHUBANESWAR: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Saturday, shared a case study of a super spreader at Unit 1 market who infected 41 persons. BMC Commissioner, Prem Chandra Chaudhary shared the details of the case. The 'super spreader' who ran a shop at Unit-1 market was found COVID positive during a testing camp conducted by BMC officials. "A vegetable vendor who worked at 'Alu Gadi' was tested positive. He first infected some of his family members and then his workers, his workers and labourers. All in all, 41 were found positive. Had they worked taking precautions and used masks, sanitisers and maintained social distancing, COVID-19 positive cases could have been restricted within 2 to 5," Chaudhary said.

It will rain cats & dogs, predicts MeT

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 2: A low-pressure area brewing over the Bay of Bengal is likely to trigger heavy rain in many parts of the state in next few days and make the sea condition rough, prompting the MeT Centre here to advise fishermen not to venture into the sea during the period. The low-pressure area is likely to form over the North Bay of Bengal around August 4, the Meteorological Centre here said Sunday. Under its influence, heavy rainfall

is likely to lash several places with extremely heavy rainfall in some areas. The rainfall activity is likely to continue till August 6, it said.

Heavy rainfall is likely to occur at some places in Koraput, Malkangiri, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Deogarh, Boudh, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Jagatsinghpur districts till Monday under its impact.

Similarly, some areas of Malkangiri, Kalahandi, Boudh, Balangir, Sambalpur, Sonepur, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Deogarh, Angul and Sundargarh districts will experience

heavy rainfall Monday and Tuesday, while heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely at one or two places in Dhenkanal, Jajpur and Kalahandi Tuesday. Heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely to lash some places in Sambalpur, Deogarh, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Bargarh and Keonjhar districts Wednesday it said, adding one or two places in Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Angul and Sonepur districts will also witness heavy rainfall.

On August 6, there will be heavy rainfall at one or two places in Bargarh, Sundargarh and Deogarh, it said.

Opening of gyms premature: Health experts

AVIRAL MISHRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 2: Following a five-month hiatus, gyms in the capital city are all set to open, August 5. However, health experts in the city have called the decision premature owing to risk of spread of infection in confined spaces.

Following the detection of the first Coronavirus case of the state in the capital city, the gyms were asked by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) to shutdown, March 17. However, acting upon the central government's guidelines, the BMC, August 2 allowed operation of the same from August 5.

"At a time when about 100 new COVID-19 cases are being detected in Bhubaneswar daily and the total tally has reached about 3,000, the BMC is opening gyms and yoga centres. This is not only premature but also dangerous. Studies have shown that prolonged exposure in closed spaces with poor ventilation facilitates virus' spread," said Madhu Behera, an infectious disease expert.

Behera also cited examples of the earlier COVID cases in one of the cruise ship 'Diamond Princess' in Japan and clusters that had their origin in churches in South Korea and Singapore. "Studies show that heavy breathing in close proximity such as cheering at clubs, having conversations in bars, and exercising in gymnasiums were results



At a time when about 100 new COVID cases are being detected daily here and the tally has reached about 3,000, the BMC is opening gyms and yoga centres. This is not only premature but also dangerous

MADHU BEHERA | EXPERT ON INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Regular sanitisation of equipments and machines will be done. Customers are asked to bring their own mats. Since working out with masks is not possible we have asked them to wear face shields

ASHISH ROUT | MANAGER, BHUBANESWAR HEALTH CLUB

CASE STUDY

Studies show heavy breathing in close proximity such as cheering at clubs, having conversations in bars, and exercising in gyms were results behind formation of COVID clusters. In addition to being closed spaces with poor ventilation, increased spread of virus through droplets and aerosols emitted during huffing and puffing in gyms also poses serious challenge. A case study on 112 persons in Cheonan city of South Korea found positive of COVID-19 revealed that people were involved in intense aerobic exercises in 12 sports. Published in the journal of Emerging Infectious Disease, the report said "intense physical exercise in densely populated sports facilities could increase risk for infection."

Facing heavy losses, the gym owners, however, welcomed the move. "We had a detailed meet and have decided to revise certain conditions at our gyms," stated Ashish Rout, Manager of Bhubaneswar Health Club here. "Regular sanitisation of equipments and machines will be done. Customers are asked to bring their own mats. Since working out with masks is not possible we have asked them to wear face shields," he added.

SHOPPING MALLS REOPEN



A girl checks dress materials at a shopping mall in Bhubaneswar, Sunday. The authorities have allowed shopping malls to resume business

Covid claims 10 more lives

ODISHA'S COVID-19 TALLY RISES TO 34,913 WITH 1,434 FRESH CASES, DEATH TOLL MOUNTS TO 197

POST NEWS NETWORK/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 2: State's novel coronavirus tally shot up to 34,913 Sunday with 1,434 fresh cases, while 10 more fatalities pushed Odisha's COVID-19 death toll to 197, an official of Health and Family Welfare department said.

The latest COVID-19 cases were reported from 29 districts, with Ganjam topping the list (320), followed by Khurda (218), Rayagada (197), Cuttack (123), Gajapati (91) and Sundargarh (76), said the official.

Ganjam district, Odisha's coronavirus hotspot, also registered the maximum number of four fatalities since Saturday. Khurda (three), Jajpur (one), Sundargarh (one) and Kalahandi (one) accounted for the remaining deaths, the official pointed out, adding that the tribal-dominated Kalahandi district reported its first COVID-19 death.

"Regret to inform the demise of 10 COVID-19 positive patients while under treatment in hospitals," the H&FW department said in a statement.

Another 65-year-old coronavirus positive patient from Gajapati district also breathed his last, but the H&FW department attributed the cause of his death to chronic kidney disease.

Of the 1,434 new cases, 889 people were detected from quarantine centres, said the official, adding that contact tracing and follow-up action have been initiated.

Odisha Sunday registered 681

recoveries. The state Saturday tested 14,608 samples, taking the total number of such clinical examinations conducted to 5,43,316, the official further

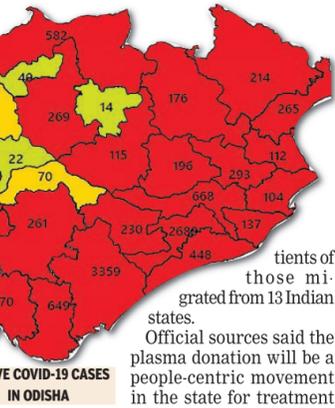
said.

Although the Ganjam district has the highest number of 10,992 covid positive cases, 3,402 active cases and 103 COVID casualties, over 85 per cent of rural Ganjam is in Green Zone and the recovery rate in Ganjam district is much higher than the National Average.

The Ganjam district administration has sealed all the exit and entry points and launched a door to door contact tracing in a bid to contain the spread of coronavirus.

An analysis of the genomes carried out by the Institute of Life Sciences (ILS) here revealed the presence of all five reported clades 19A, 19B, 20A, 20B and 20C of COVID-19 genome in Odisha.

The ILS in collaboration with RMRC had analyzed 225 viral genomes of COVID-19 positive pa-



tients of those migrated from 13 Indian states. Official sources said the plasma donation will be a people-centric movement in the state for treatment

of severe Covid patients. As per the guidelines of H&FW department, a person between 18-60 years of age & above 55 kg, whose prior diagnosis of COVID-19 has been done and has recovered from coronavirus with at least one negative lab test before 28 days can donate plasma.

Bhubaneswar Municipal Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary has claimed that due to active involvement of slum committees and Sachetak Volunteers, the spreading of COVID-19 has been contained in the slums.

He has appealed the citizens to avoid crowding market places, window shopping, sending elderly people to public places and to maintain social distance along with other protocols. The BMC has issued SOP for the

Market associations and Traders for market management.

A report from Puri said Pentkota fishermen colony, a thickly populated area having over ten thousand population became a headache for the administration.

Over fifty persons were found corona positive from the colony and the residents were often resisting shifting of corona positive patients.

The colony has been put under a containment zone. The administration had conducted a number of sensitization camps in the colony to maintain social distance norms and other guidelines to break the covid chain.

Twin cities report 173 fresh cases, 158 recoveries

As many as 173 COVID-19 cases were detected from the twin cities of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar Sunday, official sources said.

While Bhubaneswar reported 118 cases, 55 fresh cases were detected from the Silver City of Cuttack. "Of the new cases in Bhubaneswar, 69 were quarantine cases while 49 were local contact cases. 125 persons who had earlier tested positive for the viral infection recovered Sunday," the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation said in the tweet. The Cuttack Municipal Corporation, on the other hand, said that out of the 55 COVID-19 cases detected in the Millennium City, 49 were quarantine cases, while six were local contact ones. The Silver City also saw 33 recoveries.

VENTING ANGER



Residents of Rausapatna area, a COVID-19 containment zone, protest inadequate basic services in Cuttack, Sunday

Political parties blame each other on COVID

Bhubaneswar: The Congress party Sunday attacked the state government and said that its leaders are rampantly flouting COVID norms. Congress leader Debashish Patnaik attacked the BJD for the recent birthday celebrations of Banki MLA where scores of supporters were said to have assembled. He also said that other BJD MLAs were also seen inaugurating petrol pumps violating norms. Earlier, BJD MP Sasmit Patra had attacked the BJP terming them super spreaders for violating COVID-19 norms especially in the light of the incident of BJP leaders barging into the office of Sambalpur Collector to register their complaint.

Bolangir farmers stare at a 'possible' drought

Against the normal rainfall (in July) of 360.5 mm, the dist received 248.50 mm rainfall



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, August 2: As the month of July recorded rainfall much less than the normal, fears of drought have started haunting farmers in most parts of Bolangir district.

According to reports, the normal rainfall in July should have been 360.5 mm, but only 248.50 mm rainfall was recorded in the month. Loisinga block has recorded the lowest rainfall of 105 mm.

The district has 14 blocks. Except Titlagarh, other blocks like Bangomunda, Bolangir, Puintala and Muribahal have received deficit rainfall.

Farmers in these areas expressed concern over the scanty rainfall that has badly affected the farming activities.

Farmers apprehend a possible spectre of a drought with the monsoon almost doing a vanishing act. Telltale signs of drought were found at several places where farmlands have been left cracked for want of rain. "Paddy saplings have wilted in dry farmlands. The situation will turn worse if the saplings don't find water immediately. In most areas, where we don't have irrigation facilities; paddy cultivation solely depends on rains," some farmers lamented.

They pointed out that the district is a drought prone one. Drought revisits the district every two years, they said.

Farmers said, "Covid-induced shutdowns and lockdowns have already affected our activities. Deficit

RAIN, RAIN COME AGAIN

The dist has 14 blocks. Except Titlagarh, other blocks like Bangomunda, Bolangir, Puintala and Muribahal have received deficit rainfall.

Loisinga block recorded the lowest rainfall of 105 mm

rainfall has badly affected paddy cultivation. At the current situation, saving paddy plants is too difficult." In some areas, several hectares of land were left fallow.

Though some farmers have been included in Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, the compensation they receive as claim for crop loss is quite meagre, they rued.

Sudhir Kumar Parichha, president of the Jila Krushak Mahasangh and Jati Pradhan, the secretary of the farmers' body, have sent a memorandum to the Chief Minister, detailing a charter of demands. The demands include extension of insurance deadline, action against officials having chosen wrong farmers under KALLA and immediate clearance for last years' crop loss.

Congress workers of Puintala block - Umakant Sahu, Sananda Mishra, Jyotish Mugri, Om Prakash Kumbhar and Raj Kishore Babu - have demanded that the deadline of the crop insurance be extended to August 15.

AISF blasts Centre's National Edu Policy

The policy aims to commercialise, centralise and communalise the Indian education sector: AISF

POST NEW NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 3: The All India Students' Federation (AISF) Odisha State Council members Sunday rejected the National Education Policy 2020 as they term it as a step towards commercialisation, centralisation and communalisation of education. The members had started online campaign demanding abolishment of the policy.

Sanghamitra Jena, state president of AISF, said that the policy showcases the government's love for corporate sector and the entrance of private partners in the education sector meant no education for poor. The proposal to setup hundred world-class universities and their tutorial centers in India will be a death knell for Indian universities, Jena added.

"Also the policies' other decisions such as vocational training from sixth class, more emphasis on Sanskrit, less importance to English are some which show low vision of the government."

"The government has overlooked the real issues in the policy such as lack of infrastructure; ailing government schools, shortage of teach-



ers and the alarming rate of student dropouts are not being addressed," she added.

Several members of AISF Sunday protested online against the policy and shared the placards and posters against the policy.

Earlier, the members of All India Democratic Students Organisation (AIDSO) also opposed the National Education Policy 2020. AIDSO president Ganesh Tripathy said that the new policy was approved just for the commercialisation and privatisation of the education sector and not for welfare of students. "Its main focus is only to attract foreign investment." He also said that merging of anganwadi sector with the school curriculum will bring no change in education. Instead of strengthening the areas, they are trying to avoid the problem. "We also oppose the decision of UG education for four years instead of three as it will be of no use," he added.

The CMC Commissioner also

CUTTACK ADMIN IS PLANNING TO RAMP UP COVID-19 TESTING

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 2: The Cuttack district administration has planned to escalate testing for COVID-19 in their jurisdiction by allowing the private sector to expand the testing facilities.

Saurabh Garg, Principal Secretary with the government and COVID observer for Cuttack said, "Earlier we had focussed more on surveillance on influenza and Severe Acute Respiratory (SAR) cases. The surveillance will continue but testing will be strengthened in Cuttack district."

He also said that in rural areas, 13 committees have been formed to ensure antigen and convention testing for the pandemic. Cuttack city has now four mobile collection centres and four fixed collection centres for sample collection.

Ananya Das, Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Commissioner said that the CMC has decided to increase testing facilities for COVID-19 in Cuttack city.

"Private labs which are registered under the Odisha Clinical Establishment Act can do antigen testing as per ICMR norms. NABL accredited labs can now do RT-PCR testing as per ICMR norms. Fever clinics in Cuttack city will be given antigen testing kits based on ICMR norms," she added.

The CMC Commissioner also



said that arrangements have been done to ensure dialysis facilities and arrangement of gynecologist doctors at the Ashwini COVID Hospital to provide other important medical services to the kidney patients and expectant mothers.

According to the officials, the city has now additional 15 Rapid Response Teams which are also collecting samples. The officials also claimed that neither Cuttack city nor Cuttack district has any shortage of beds for COVID beds.

"In COVID Care Centres in the district we have more than 1200 beds. Ashwini COVID Hospital which earlier had 150 beds now has 200 beds. We are also going to add one more 100-bedded COVID

Hospital by the end of this week. There is sufficient bed capacity to tackle the cases of symptomatic and asymptomatic cases," concluded Garg.

The CMC Commissioner meanwhile cited the dates of the new COVID cases detected in the city in the last one week and said that most of the cases were reported from quarantine and containment zones.

"In the last week, Cuttack city saw 336 new cases. Most of them were reported from some clusters. We saw 114 cases from containment zones, 118 cases from home quarantine, 59 cases from institutional quarantines and merely 45 new cases were local contacts," said Das.



THREADS OF LOVE

People buy rakhi from a stall near the Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar on the eve of Raksha Bandhan festival, Sunday

Ward member 'assaulted' in BJD leader's farmhouse

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, August 2: A village ward member of the ruling party and his associate were 'brutally assaulted' at the farmhouse of his own party leader in Jujumura block of this district following a dispute over site selection for a project work, Friday.

The survivor was identified as Amresh Duan, a ward member of the ruling party in Kabrapali panchayat and Indrabalash Sahu under the block.

The accused were identified as



person, Tinku Jauda, 28, Niranjana Sohela, 24, Bali Banchhor, 47,

Debarchan Sohela, 30 and Bangali Khan, 30, the caretaker of the farmhouse.

The matter came to fore after police arrested six persons including the BJD leader who incidentally was the former block chairperson in the area. The police action came after a complaint by Amresh and a video of the incident which went viral in social media.

When contacted, SDPO Tapan Kumar Mohanty confirmed the arrest of Sahu and his associates while stating that a probe is underway.

₹25 LAKH WORTH GANJA SEIZED

BHUBANESWAR: The Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) officials here Sunday claimed to have seized 410 kilogram of ganja worth around Rs 25 lakh from the parcel counter of the railway station here. The officials also arrested two drug peddlers - Sagar Pradhan and Santosh Sahu, both hail from Polasara area of Ganjam have been residing at Budheshwari Colony in Laxmisagar area here, in this connection. Sources said that the accused brought the contraband from Muniguda in Kandhamal and arrived at Bhubaneswar railway station Sunday morning. The peddlers were waiting for the Pursottam Express to transport the products to New Delhi.

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Illegal settlement near DRDO radar station raises concern

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, August 2: Swarnachud hill, located to the north of Nilagiri town in Balasure district, is the tallest one in the district. In view of its height, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has set up a permanent radar station on the hilltop, located about 1,500 feet above the sea level, under the Nilagiri forest range.

The station is under Chandipur-based Integrated Test Range (ITR). During the early 80s, the state government had diverted over 48 hectares of forestland on the hill in favour of the defence for the radar station.

Alarming, scores of outsiders have illegally occupied land at the foothill, which is already a reserve forest and sensitive zone in view of its security importance. Even houses were built atop 20 ft up the hill.

Some retired defence personnel have apprehended dangers to the radar station from the illegal occupants in the area.

Over a hundred people have been living at the foothill, as a survey conducted by the Nilagiri NAC.

There are 251 encroachers living at Station Sahi, Chimney Bhati, Ranipokhari, Nuasahi, Mainsigotha and Panabaraja areas, at the foothill of Swarnachud.

The encroachers have built concrete and asbestos roofed houses in the reserve forest while land encroaching activities and human settlement on the hill are increasing, a report said.

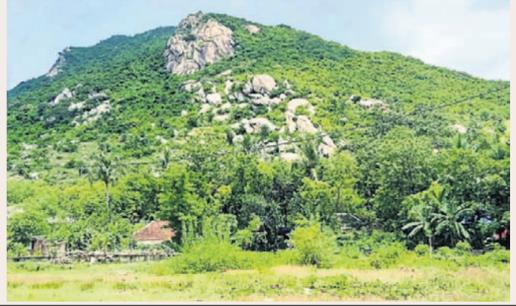
The original settlers were dismayed at the rate illegal settlers have been occupying reserve forestland. Moreover, the area has been a safe haven for criminals com-

ALARMING DEVELOPMENT

■ Scores of outsiders have illegally occupied land on the Swarnachud foothill, which is already a reserve forest and sensitive zone in view of its security importance

■ The area has been a safe haven for criminals committing robbery, snatching and theft on the roads connecting Udala and Balasure town. It was alleged that as illegal human settlement keeps on expanding in forest area, wildlife was threatened

■ Reports said, the encroachers have built concrete and asbestos roofed houses in the reserve forest while land encroaching activities and human settlement on the hill are increasing



mitting robbery, snatching and theft on the roads connecting Udala and Balasure town.

It was alleged that as illegal human settlement keeps on expanding in forest area, wildlife was threatened. Maheswar Behera, advisor of Bayusena Sangh, Balasure, observed, "As Swarnachud hill is the highest one in the district, the Defence Ministry has set up the radar station to keep strict vigil on the movement of enemies from the hilltop."

"If the foothill is illegally occupied by, it will create security hazards to our defence system. Illegal settlers will find it easy to trap the defence-related activities and pass

them on to enemy countries. Given the serious threat, illegal settlers should be immediately evicted from the area," Behera added. Ratan Kumar Patnaik, an official of the Nilagiri NAC, said that 376 illegal settlers were identified in Nilagiri area while 235 of them have been living in the hill area. A plan has been prepared to remove them and resettle them elsewhere. The work has been stalled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nilagiri ranger Munwar Khan said, "Swarnachud hill is a reserve forest. No illegal occupants are allowed inside it. The matter will be investigated and action will be taken."



Upset over administrative apathy, members of a youth association take up repairing of a road at Kudumuluguma panchayat in Malkangiri

OP PHOTO

Biomedical waste treatment plant goes haywire

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, August 2: The state health department's ambitious biomedical waste treatment project set up at Balasure district headquarters hospital has gone for a toss.

Non-biodegradable substances which are used by doctors during treatment of patients need to be sensitively managed as the probable chances of spread of infection from these wastes are higher. The project was entrusted to a private agency, a source said.

It has been learnt that, the agency is being paid over Rs 2,50,000 every month, for treatment of biomedical hazardous wastes. The agency allegedly takes the waste materials



to the Budhabalanga riverside near Kasamila in Balasure town and dumps it there.

Local residents and intelligentsia apprehend that it could give rise to serious air-borne and water-borne

diseases in this region. Notably, commuters from Ballapal, Bhograi and Jaleswar blocks in Balasure district pass through this road every day. On the other hand, liquid waste often mingles with the

Budhabalanga during rainy season, thereby suffocating aquatic animals. Amid a sharp rise in coronavirus cases in Balasure, the district administration paying a deaf ear to such a crucial issue could prove to be disastrous for the town's residents and environment.

"Neglect of the district administration is like leaving denizens to die, where even touching the biomedical hazardous wastes is risky," local legal practitioner Manoj Kumar Nayak fumed.

Chief District Medical Officer Dr Dulal Sen Jagadev said, "I have no such information. However, action will be taken after conducting an investigation into the allegation."

Breach in canal leaves 500 ha sand cast

The whole area appeared like a river with the canal water submerging large tracts of farmland

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jeypore, August 2: A bleak future stared at farmers as hundreds of hectares of farmland were left sand cast following a breach in the dyke of the main canal at Dumuraguda in Ganga panchayat under this block in Koraput district, Saturday evening.

The incident came as a bolt from the blue for the farmers who were reeling under the impact of Covid-19. All their crops were destroyed. The water is supplied to the canal from the Kolab irrigation project.

The incident has come at a time when farmers were midway into their cultivation following relaxation in lockdown norms. They now ponder over how to repay the loans which they had taken for cultivation.

The whole area appeared like a river with the canal water submerging large tracts of farmland. Holding the departmental offi-



cial responsible for the incident, the farmers have demanded the government to intervene and compensate them for the loss.

The dyke collapsed Saturday evening but water is still gushing out of the canal and flowing on the farmland. On being informed, of-

ficials concerned rushed to the spot and closed down the main gate of the canal but that failed to make any impact. The farmers also tried to close the breach in the dyke but in vain. In the absence of monsoon rain, the farmers were planting saplings and beushen-

ing their crops with the help of canal water but that too became a bane for them following the breach in the canal, Saturday. Bighneswar Nayak, an irrigation department official, said lack of funds has stalled the repair work of the canal.

Bargarh man in chains for 8 years; family seeks help

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, August 2: Dayasagar Puri (27) of Ambabhona in Bargarh district, who is mentally challenged, remains tied to a wooden cot with iron chains for the past eight years owing to his family's inability to bear his treatment expenses.

Youngest son of Rameswar and Tapaswini Puri, Dayasagar lives along with his parents, elder brother and sister-in-law near Ambabhona hospital. The family earlier owned 50 decimal of farmland which they have mortgaged and spent on his medical expenses.

"We had taken him to Bargarh district headquarters hospital, Burla-based VIMSAR and another hospital in Raigarh area of Chhattisgarh. By now, we have spent about Rs 3 lakh on his treatment but in vain," Rameswar said. Meanwhile, without adequate treatment amid poor fi-



nancial condition of his family, life has become miserable for Dayasagar. He had a tendency to often move out of his house. Given his mental condition, his family members have tied him with chains to keep him safe at home.

Tapaswini appealed to generous people as well as the state government to extend a helping hand for Dayasagar's treatment.

Sex racket busted in Dhenkanal, 3 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, August 2: Acting on a tip-off, Dhenkanal town police Sunday busted a prostitution racket operating from a guest house in Shasan area of the district.

Police also arrested three persons including the owner of the guest house, his son and a woman for allegedly operating the sex racket and booked them under relevant sections of the IPC. The police also rescued several women from the house. Three others, including a woman, fled the scene.

From preliminary investigation, police came to know that prostitution in the guest house had been going on for some time now and the father-son duo - owners of the house - were running the racket. Several women from various parts of Dhenkanal and Angul districts were part of the racket. Local residents of the area had turned suspicious about their activities and informed the police.

Satkosia: Over 500 croc hatchlings born in July

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bantala, August 2: Crocodiles have given birth to over 500 hatchlings at a gorge in Satkosia Sanctuary along the Mahanadi in Angul district in July this year, forest department sources said Sunday.

They said that the crocodiles had laid a large number of eggs in between the Binikei area of Athmallick sub-division to Kataranga in summer.

The eggs had been laid and protected by the mother crocodiles on the riverbed at Bagadhara Khala, Mahala Diga, Balada Mara, Jharajhari, Majhipada Ghat, Marada and the Old Nature Camp. Sources said that 10 mother crocs had laid the eggs. The number of eggs laid by each crocodile varied from 40 to 70.

Satkosia divisional forest officer (DFO) Ramaswami P said that

they have been maintaining a constant vigil on the area where the eggs were laid. "We have been regularly patrolling the area and keeping a vigilant eye on the eggs. Nobody is being allowed to trespass into the hatching area," informed Ramaswami.

As per the census of crocodiles conducted between January 9 to January 11 this year, Angul forest division had 131 adult crocodiles, Ramaswami informed.

Odisha is the only state in India having all three species of crocodiles - gharial, mugger and saltwater. The state forest department began conservation of these crocodile species in 1975 by establishing three rearing centres - Tikarpada for gharials in Angul district, Ramatirtha for muggers in Mayurbhanj district and Bhitarkanika for saltwater crocodiles in Kendrapada district.



Ganjam death toll mounts to 103, tally rises to 10,992

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, August 2: The COVID-19 death toll in Ganjam district Sunday crossed the 100-mark with four more persons succumbing to the virus, while 320 new cases pushed the coronavirus count to 10,992, an official said.

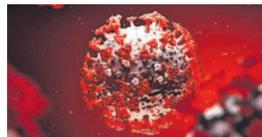
The total fatalities in the district now stand at 103 with the death of four persons, including two females - 94 and 45 - and two males of 57, an official said. While the district reported its first COVID case May 2, the first death case was reported

May 6, when a person from Polasra block died in a quarantine centre.

The district recorded 14 deaths by the end of June, while at least 80 persons lost their lives during treatment in COVID hospital in the month of July. Nine persons died in the first two days of the current month, sources said. In the month of July, Ganjam district had reported 8,892 COVID-19 cases, sources added.

While the death toll in the entire state stands at 197, Ganjam alone accounted for 103 deaths, the official said.

"The entire district is under the



grip of panic as people die on a daily basis," said Gopal Krushna Reddy, a resident of Gandhi Nagar. District administration and health experts, however, said that high incidents of death in Ganjam are due to hiding of symptoms and delayed arrival at the hospital.

"The doctors could not get suf-

ficient time when a person is rushed to the hospital in critical condition," said Ganjam Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange. Most of the deceased had rushed to hospital in critical condition, he said.

"When a patient is under the observation of the doctors from his early stage, the chances of survival of the patients is more," said Sunil Kumar Kotta, a private practitioner. "We have advised the patients to rush to the hospital early," he added.

As fear-psychosis was one of the causes for the patients' reluctant to visit the hospital, district adminis-

tration needs to work out the strategy to build confidence among them, suggested Jayant Kumar Mohapatra, former vice-chancellor, Berhampur University. Opposition BJP and Congress leaders alleged that patients died due to lack of proper treatment. Several patients could not get proper treatment in the COVID hospital for which some of them died, alleged said BJP's former district president Kanhu Charan Pati. Meanwhile, the state government has opened two more COVID Hospitals also started plasma therapy in Ganjam.

Famous opera villain turns welder in Covid times

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhuban, August 2: Like many others who have changed their profession to survive job loss amid the pandemic, Gyanaranjan Sahu - a known name among opera lovers in Dhenkanal district - has been forced to change his.

Gyanaranjan, a resident of Badahat village in ward no-6 of Bhuban NAC, is a known figure among opera enthusiasts. Opera lovers wait with bated breath for his powerful entry onto the stage and appreciate his dialogue delivery and acting skills with big rounds of applause.

Negative characters are his forte. He used to serve in the police department. Bitten by the acting bug during his childhood days, he eventually gave up the job and joined an opera party. In a very short period, he became a house-

hold name. After working with many an opera party, Gyanaranjan is presently associated with 'Swarnamahala' opera party. Narrating about how COVID-19

The work is hardly giving me any satisfaction. Acting seems to be flowing in blood... Like me, all the artistes and technicians associated with opera parties are passing through a tough time

GYANARANJAN SAHU



IN TURMOIL

■ Gyanaranjan used to serve in the police department. Bitten by the acting bug during his childhood days, he eventually gave up the job and joined an opera party. In a very short period, he became a household name

■ It has long been his lifestyle to remain awake all throughout the night and sleep during day hours. With no work in hand, he found the time running slow during day hours

has dealt a blow to his life, Gyanaranjan says "Until the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic, I had never ever faced with problems to run my 10-member family. The money I was earning was enough to meet the family expenses. As of now, restrictions have been imposed on organising opera shows

rendering us jobless for five months now. We have started to feel the pinch."

It has long been his lifestyle to remain awake all throughout the night and sleep during day hours. "With no work in hand, I found the time running slow during day hours. I decided I should join my father and

brother's welding shop at Kali Bazaar before I could be a victim of depression like many others," he says.

"The work is hardly giving me any satisfaction. Acting seems to be flowing in blood. My life minus stage and acting is meaningless. It will be near impossible to live without it. Like me, all the artistes and technicians associated with opera parties are passing through a tough time," Gyanaranjan adds.

Informing that the opera artistes' association and owners' association have taken up the issue with the Chief Minister, Gyanaranjan says unless the government does something for the benefit of opera parties, it's only a matter of time before the pandemic causes a lot damage to the entire opera world.

Never grumble. All sorts of forces enter you when you grumble and they pull you down.

THE MOTHER



RUDDERLESS CONGRESS

The Congress party seems to be in a slumber. Just before the Corona related lockdown was announced, the Madhya Pradesh trouble erupted, which forced Kamal Nath to step down, paving way for the BJP to form its government with some Congress defectors. Recent weeks saw a similar scenario developing in Rajasthan, where Sachin Pilot put the party on notice to try and eject CM Ashok Gehlot and take over himself. As of now, Pilot seems to have failed but the future is unsure.

The interaction senior leaders had of late with the Congress high command about the way forward has seen a fresh bout of accusations and counter-accusations between the old guard and the youth, with those like Shashi Tharoor pitched somewhat in between. The old guard would not lie low, and that's for sure, irrespective of whether or not Sonia Gandhi remains in or relinquishes the post of temporary chairperson of the party. They are agreeable to allow Rahul Gandhi take charge only on condition that they be allowed to retain their rightful place in the party.

It is no secret that the old guard allowed itself to be in a state of self-enforced paralysis during the last Lok Sabha polls, when the Congress party was swept under the carpet in the Hindi belt in particular. They watched as Rahul Gandhi ploughed a lone furrow. Perhaps he was inspired to bark up the wrong tree by the young leaders. Little wonder, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made mincemeat out of the Congress on the campaign front. It has to be admitted that Modi needs Rahul more than the Congress. Also, the inner battles within the Congress may not be a clear demarcation simply between the Old and the New. It is possible that the three Gandhis are now pitched against the rest of the Congress. The party cannot exist without them nor can it thrive with them.

Rahul Gandhi has been noticed to be waging a one man war against the Modi government. The Pappu of yesterday may be talking some sense now and the government also seems to have changed tack on certain issues after Rahul's public utterances. Interestingly, no one from the Congress party seems to be supporting his various stands. Rahul might be aware that he cannot have his way as long as the old guard perched themselves at vantage points. Their support for Sonia Gandhi is open, and their opposition to Rahul is covert. While Sonia is out of hospital after a check-up and fit for now, yet neither age nor health puts her in a position to take the load of reviving the party that's close to crumbling.

Sharad Pawar's advice to Rahul Gandhi to tour the country to energize the party and the nation may have merit in it. The Bhoomipujan in Ayodhya on August 5 is aimed at helping the BJP retrieve its steadily losing ground before the next assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh. On the other side, the Opposition is sitting back, virtually blinking; thanks mainly to the rudderless state of the Congress.

The Congress needs to look into itself. While the party has been on a slow but sure decline for more than 15 years now since UPA I, it has never bothered to introspect and figure out what has gone wrong where. Now is not the time for it to fight the BJP or Modi. It has to think out reasons due to which there is constant internal squabbling that is destroying its base. Without any visible chance of coming to power in most states or at the Centre, the Congress seems to have kept the Self-Destruct button pressed constantly. While Old and New need to realize that they have to reinvent the party from the grass-roots, the Gandhis also must realize that they have lost their dynastic charm and have to settle with a system more democratic and tolerant that will enable them enjoy power by sharing it with those others who prove their mettle at this time of crisis.



Saeed Naqvi

THERE HAS NOT BEEN A DAY FREE OF TENSION IN THE REGION FOR DECADES BUT FOR THIS NARRATIVE LET US CONSIDER JULY 20 AS THE CUT OFF WHEN ISRAELI AIRCRAFT FATALLY TARGETED HEZBOLLAH COMMANDER, ALI KAMEL MOHSEN

As I settled down to write on Libya, the news ticker opened up the whole West Asian vista. IAF pilots flying the first batch of Rafales from the Dassault Aviation Facility in France had barely settled down to relax at the UAE's Al Dhafra airbase, where they were breaking journey, when they found themselves exposed to what they feared might be fatal danger. They scrambled for cover because an Iranian missile landed nearby. They must have heaved a sigh of relief when it was established, without the shadow of a doubt, that neither they nor the UAE were in the Iranian firing line. Iranians, inventive as the Achaemenids have always been, were shooting missiles at a prototype of a US aircraft carrier Nimitz they had floated in the Strait of Hormuz.

The choreography of the exercises clearly caused alarm in UAE, Kuwait and Bahrain where US 5th Fleet is docked. Spokeswoman for the US 5th fleet, Commander Rebecca Rebarich was furious: "The US Navy conducts defensive exercises with our partners promoting maritime security in support of freedom of navigation."

She said, "Whereas Iran conducts offensive exercises attempting to intimidate and coerce." From the Iranian side, Commander of the National Guards, Maj. General Hossein Salami was brazen: "What was shown today in these exercises, at the level of aerospace and Naval Forces, was all offensive."

This exchange is representative of the mood in the entire region. There has not been a day free of tension in the region for decades but for this narrative let us consider 20 July as the cut off when Israeli aircraft fatally targeted a Hezbollah Commander, Ali Kamel Mohsen. Promptly came the Hezbollah response: Zionists should be ready for a suitable retaliation.

Just as the cauldron was simmering, came the startling disclosure by the Hamas political leader, Ismail Haniyeh. He told the Qatari newspaper Al Lusail that major powers had offered \$15 billion in aid for Gaza "provided Hamas gave up armed struggle

FOCUS WEST ASIA

CLASH OF CYMBALS



Tayyip Erdogan who restarted 'Namaz' at Hagia Sophia, has come out, all guns blazing as an unabashed Brother. His clash with Sisi, the oppressor of Brothers in Egypt, will cut the ground from under the latter's feet. That clash has to be avoided by forces which, alas, are these days preoccupied with issues of their own survival

and laid down arms." The offer was rejected.

Facing convulsions within Israel and a possible change of heart on the issue in Washington, the project of inundating the West Bank with settlements, the "settlement project", has gone into a limbo. Occasionally Benjamin Netanyahu shows his oats in neighbouring Syria because of Israeli paranoia about the Iraqi-Syrian road having been opened. This gives Tehran a direct land route to Lebanon via Iraq and Syria, creating deep anxieties in Israel about sophisticated Iranian weapons being ferried to Syria and arch-enemy, Hezbollah. Every now and again Israel panics into aerial bombardment of some such transaction.

Not only is the Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon road link a menace, the Hezbollah, Hashd al Shaabi in Iraq and the Houthis in Yemen, the pro-Iranian arc, are persistently menacing the Saudis and Israel.

In these choppy waters, Jordanian Prime Minister, Omar Razzaz tosses a boulder: he made the startling suggestion that a single Israeli-Palestinian state would be acceptable to Jordan provided

"equal rights were given to both people." This was novel beyond recognition in an area where a two-state solution has been the mantra for three decades.

Not only is the thought absurd in itself, it blissfully overlooks the "Jewish nation state law" passed by the Knesset. The law states that all occupied Palestinian territories belong exclusively to the Jewish people. It is politically impolite to say so in Amman, but the only Palestinian state which the Right wing Israelis will ever concede happens to be Jordan.

Against this varied and disturbed mosaic, the impending Egypt-Turkey confrontation in Libya portends a regional catastrophe. Before I share this catastrophe with you let me seek your indulgence just for one paragraph to share my bewilderment, naively maybe, on an issue I acquainted myself with during my first visit to Libya in 1986 when President Reagan ordered the bombing of Benghazi and Tripoli in which Qaddafi's baby daughter was killed.

In my conversation with him in those tense conditions, he never

forgot to mention his pet project - Great Man-Made River; the world's largest network of pipes, covering a distance of 2,820 kilometers, pumping water from the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System. Qaddafi called it the Eighth wonder of the world. During recent operations, NATO bombed a key segment of the pipelines.

It is universally accepted that this miraculous source of pure, underground water; its cost barely 10 per cent of desalination projects, which will last anywhere between a 100 to 1,000 years, in a region where water security is projected to be a serious problem in the future - why is there no mention of this project in a nation being looted by major powers? Is it happening so stealthily?

Now the Turkish-Egyptian confrontation building up in Libya: it will be like the clashing of the Cymbals, the crescendo in a Wagner symphony. When Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood, was toppled by US-Israeli machinations in 2013 and the then Saudi Crown Prince turned up in Cairo with an offer of \$eight billion to help Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi ascend the Egyptian throne, what was the Saudi motivation? Remember Juhayman al Otaibi and his 400-500 supporters had occupied the Mecca mosque in 1979, virtually the same month as when the Ayatollahs ousted the Shah of Iran.

This internal rebellion by an extreme variety of the Brothers is what Saudis fear more than Iranian Shiaism. Sisi is Hosni Mubarak II reincarnated to keep the Brothers under his heel. To Israel's chagrin, the Brothers are a powerful influence on Hamas, whose links with Qatar are secure. Qatar meanwhile relies on the Turkish army. Notice the linkages?

Tayyip Erdogan who restarted 'Namaz' at Hagia Sophia, has come out, all guns blazing as an unabashed Brother. His clash with Sisi, the oppressor of Brothers in Egypt, will cut the ground from under the latter's feet. That clash has to be avoided by forces which, alas, are these days preoccupied with issues of their own survival.

IANS

WISDOM CORNER

I never made one of my discoveries through the process of rational thinking.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Strength does not come from winning. Your struggles develop your strengths. When you go through hardships and decide not to surrender, that is strength.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

Some people will never learn anything, for this reason, because they understand everything too soon.

ALEXANDER POPE

WORDSWORTH

Tacky

When the British newspaper the Independent headed its front page "Blair condemns 'tacky' Diana industry", it expected its readers to take in that word in its sense of something that is in poor taste, cheap or vulgar. An example quoted in the article is a computer game in which players can drive a speeding Mercedes through a tunnel while being pursued by paparazzi on motorbikes. But tacky in this sense is fairly modern in British usage. It is an American term dating from the 1860s (even older in its meaning of a poor quality horse or poor farmer) that only seems to have made inroads over here in the last few decades and which is still regarded as informal. And nobody seems to know where the word in that sense comes from, which is unsurprising as the whole history of tacky and its root noun tack is enough to confuse anyone. The oldest usage of tack is that relating to the nail, which derives from an ancient Germanic word that is also the origin of the modern German Zacken, "prong; tooth", which entered English via the Old French tache, "fastening, nail". This seems mostly to have had the sense in English of something small or slight in the nail line, a fastener that is used to affix only a light object or to hold it temporarily. So we tack a poster to a board, or tack a seam temporarily with big stitches which can easily be taken out again. There are tin-tacks, thumb-tacks and carpet-tacks, all smallish examples of their kind. We also have the derived sense of something that has been added as an afterthought, tacked on as an addition or rider to something else more substantial. There are related obsolete usages in, for example, coal-mining, a tack there being a temporary prop or scaffolding. Our other main sense of the adjective tacky seems to be derived from this slightly derogatory meaning, referring to some stuff, such as paint, glue or printing ink, which is not quite dry and which tends to stick, but only lightly. So there is a recurring undercurrent in these senses of something insubstantial or temporary. Could it be that the peculiarly American sense of tacky grew out of this feeling of lack of substance or value? It would not be so far-fetched. There are, of course, other senses of tack, of which the one relating to horse harness and the like seems to be an abbreviation of tackle, a word which derives from another Germanic root relating to any sort of equipment, as the OED comprehensively puts it, "apparatus, utensils, instruments, implements, appliances; equipment, furniture, gear."

LOL

Anniversary

On their 50th wedding anniversary and during the banquet celebrating it, Tom was asked to give his friends a brief account of the benefits of a marriage of such long duration. "Tell us Tom, just what is it you have learned from all those



wonderful years with your wife?" Tom responds, "Well, I've learned that marriage is the best teacher of all. It teaches you loyalty, meekness, forbearance, self-restraint, forgiveness -- and a great many other qualities you wouldn't have needed if you'd stayed single."

SPECTRUM LITERATURE

Libya's tale of repression, revolution



Sudha Devi Nayak

'IN THE COUNTRY OF MEN' TALKS ABOUT THE TYRANNICAL AND REVOLUTIONARY REGIME OF COLONEL MUAMMAR-EL QUADDAFI

In the 'Country of Men', the debut novel of the Libyan writer Hisham Matar that was nominated for the Booker Prize 2006 and the Guardian First Book Award, has also garnered a few other international awards. Written in lucid, mellifluous prose, the book set in the late '70s in the picturesque city of Tripolis in Libya, with its sun and sea, ("The sky, the Sun and the sea were painted by God in colours we could all point and say the sea is turquoise, the sun banana, the sky blue..."), talks about the tyrannical and revolutionary regime of colonel Muammar-el Quaddafi.

In the charged political landscape of the times, everybody was expected to be a votary of the revolution and the bunch of dissidents who questioned the rightness of its beliefs were mercilessly dealt with. The novel lives in a small boy's perspective of the world he is living in; in disturbing, unsettling times.

For nine-year-old Suleiman, life is circumscribed within the comfort of a well-to-do and loving home and his friends playing in the hot Sun on the pavement outside their homes and looking at the mulberry trees. He believes in his innocence that mulberries were the best fruit God has created and these trees were planted by angels. Yet, he senses the unrest all around.

He gets a glimpse of his father's clandestine activities he is unable to understand and he experiences with horror and disgust his mother's addiction to drink to forget the unhappiness and humiliation she has endured since girlhood.

He's privy to all her secrets -- the denial of love and independence, a marriage to a much-older man who does not understand her sensitivities. She struggles with her demons of despair and depression. But, in moments of sanity, she's able yet to give love to her son and husband.

Meanwhile, the Revolutionary Committee weeds out liberal thinkers and dissidents as traitors to the regime and Suleiman sees his neighbour and best friend, Karim's father Usthath Rashid, a respectable university professor rounded up by the revolutionaries. His interrogation on the television channels and his brutal treatment and humiliation and his subsequent execution are graphically exhibited. After the ex-

ecution, simply chillingly, "Everybody seemed happy". Suleiman is left wondering why nobody questioned or intervened and he begins to lose faith in the goodness of men.

Next, there is a raid on his own house. They are under surveillance and his father goes into hiding, his books are burnt and finally he goes missing. The family is taken care of by his father's friend Moosa, and fearing the worst as a desperate measure, Suleiman and his mother approach a sympathiser of the Revolutionary movement, Usthath Jaffer. Through his mediation, his father, after denouncing his political convictions, returns a mental wreck, a monster who is afraid to see his face in a mirror and afraid to face his son. Suleiman understands the "dark art of submission." Moosa, served with a letter of deportation, leaves for Cairo; and Suleiman's parents, afraid for his future, send him off to Cairo to be with Moosa; and this, to his utter bewilderment. He leaves in extreme sorrow to a strange land, alone, on a flight missing the two people he loved most. "I suffer an absence, an ever-present absence, like an orphan not

entirely certain of what he has missed or gained through his unchosen loss."

Suleiman grows up to become a pharmacist and there is a file in the embassy in his name for evading military service in Libya. The intermittent calls from his mother keep him informed of their life. After 15 years of his coming away, his father is rearrested on charges of embezzlement. He dies one month after his release, a few days after the ban on Libyans travelling abroad is lifted, never seeing his son.

Having been denied the presence of his son in his life, he looked after his friend Kareem. In this context, Suleiman says, "Perhaps the world is fair and balanced; after all, no one gains, no one loses; or, no one gains and everyone loses equally."

The book ends with the poignant reunion of the mother and her son in Cairo. Hatar raises universal issues of oppression, hate, cruelty and loss that are overcome by the resilience of the human spirit and a humanity that infuses all relationships -- parents and children, friends and neighbours with an endurance born of love.

Covid's good side

Sir, Despite all its hazards, Covid-19 has been a blessing in disguise too. Covid days showed us that a breakdown can lead to breakthrough, despair can lead to hope, stress can turn to fun, and merriment and lethargy can lead to creativity and happiness. The spread of the deadly virus has encouraged a new level of thinking, a new world view and a new horizon of limitless possibilities. It has written a new chapter of humanness, charity, benevolence and kindness. It has ushered in fresh scope for exploration of creativity. Coronavirus may be the mankind's main health hazard now, but we must admit it has a charm of its own. Instead of cursing coronavirus, let us grapple with the stark reality and begin to look at it as a learning time for mankind. Time is a great leveler. Happiness or grief, nothing stays forever. Covid-19 is a mixed bag. Let's look at the sunny side of life.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

TV news, TRP

Sir, Most viewers of TV news channels here are fed up with the style of news presentations. It seems all these channels decide for the story of the day as if there is no other news for the day. News items, panel discussions, special reports and even the fast 100 news stories of the day all roam around the same stale news story. The sole aim of the TV news channels is to compete in the TRP ratings. Fact is, viewers generally do not have any interest in the 'story of the day' of the news channels. Surprisingly the style of reporting by the print-media is totally different with so many wide-ranging news stories covering different aspects. Private news channels have a biased style of reporting. Else, what are they there for? Most of these TV channels have lost their credibility. They are a bundle of vested interests, and self-promotion experts are using this as their best platform to 'tire' the news viewers. This is the time for the Ministry for Information and Broadcasting to effectively promote the national broadcaster Doordarshan. It still has a charm. The private news channels must be forced to re-telecast the main stories of the day given out by Doordarshan. Already, there is a law whereby all the cable-TV and Dish-TV operators should compulsorily telecast the Doordarshan channels, apart from the Lok Sabha TV and the Rajya Sabha TV.

Subhash Chandra Agarwal, NEW DELHI

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rissagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

157 nCoV centres for patients with no or mild symptoms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, August 2: The Chhattisgarh government has set up 157 COVID care centres with 18,598 beds in the state for treatment of coronavirus patients with no or mild symptoms, an official said here Sunday.

Arrangements are being made to increase the availability of beds for such patients to 25,000, he said. "At present, the state has 157 COVID-19 care centres in different districts with 18,598 beds for treatment of asymptomatic coronavirus patients or those who have mild symptoms," the public relations department official said.

The state government has ordered all the district collectors to increase the number of beds to 25,000 in the COVID care centres, he added. Besides, the state has 29 dedicated COVID-19 hospitals with a capacity of treatment of 3,384 patients at a time, he said.

Sixteen Covid care centres are operational in Dhamtari district, 11 each in Raipur, Jashpur and Surguja districts while 10 each in Balod,



The state has 29 dedicated COVID-19 hospitals with a capacity of treatment of 3,384 patients at a time

Earlier, the health department had allowed, on a pilot basis, asymptomatic COVID-19 patients to undergo treatment in isolation at home while complying with certain guidelines

Bilaspur and Koriya, he said. Earlier, the health department had allowed, on a pilot basis, asymptomatic COVID-19 patients to undergo treatment in isolation at home while complying with certain guidelines, he said. Initially, 285 coronavirus positive patients across 28 districts 50

of them from Raipur district will be allowed to undergo treatment at home, he said.

Till Saturday, the state had reported 9,427 COVID-19 cases. However, 2,762 of them were active cases as 6,610 have been discharged and 55 other have died, he added.

Varanasi weaver makes special mask for PM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Varanasi, August 2: While most weavers in Uttar Pradesh are busy making masks amid COVID-19 pandemic, Bachcha Lal, a handloom weaver in Varanasi has made a special mask with silk and cotton for Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



The mask has 'Jai Shri Ram, Ayodhya Pavitra Dham', embroidered on it and will be gifted to the Prime Minister when he comes to Ayodhya for 'bhumi puja' of the Ram temple August 5.

The mask, however, is unusually large - it is 72 inches long and 22 inches wide. The weaver is aware that Modi usually wears a 'gamcha' instead of mask. "It is a token gift for the Prime Minister and can be used for the deity. After all, almost all deities in Kashi are wearing masks during the pandemic and also to prevent them from pollution," he said. The mask is made in red and gold and has the bows of Lord Ram embroidered on the corners. According to Lal, it has taken him over a fortnight to make the mask which will be sent to Ayodhya through the district officials.

Modi is scheduled to lay the foundation stone of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya August 5 after which the construction of the temple will commence.

LAB TECHNICIAN MURDER CASE

UP govt to recommend CBI probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, August 2: The Uttar Pradesh Government has decided to recommend a CBI inquiry into the kidnapping and murder of a lab technician in Kanpur, Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Awanish Awasthi, said Sunday.

He said the recommendation is being made on the demand of the family of the 27-year-old technician S Yadav. According to the police, five people, including a woman and two friends of Yadav, have been arrested in connection with the case.

Later, the lab technician's sister, Ruchi, "After getting to know from the police that a CBI probe has been recommended, we feel satisfied. We had demanded a probe by the central agency." The lab technician in Kanpur was kidnapped in June and killed within a week of being held captive. His family has claimed that



According to the police, five people, including a woman and two friends of Yadav, have been arrested in connection with the case

Kanpur SSP Dinesh Kumar Prabhhu had said a police probe confirmed that Yadav was murdered by his abductors

Eleven police personnel, including two senior officers, were suspended for laxity in investigation

Rs 30 lakh ransom was paid for his release in the presence of police, but police say that it was not true.

Eleven police personnel, including two senior officers, were suspended for laxity in investigation. Kanpur SSP Dinesh Kumar Prabhhu had said a police probe confirmed that Yadav was murdered by his abductors. He said that several suspects were detained and grilled intensively, and two of them confessed to

the crime. The official said the accused initially tried to mislead the police, but later they disclosed that they kidnapped Yadav, and strangled him to death with a rope either June 26 or June 27 when he attempted to escape. They further confessed that they disposed of Yadav's body in Pandu river, the SSP said, adding that the accused had worked together with Yadav in another pathology lab.

Two minors among three Naxals held in Dantewada

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, August 2: Three Naxals, including two minors, were held after an exchange of fire between security forces and Maoists in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district, police said Sunday.

A 15-year-old girl was among the two minors who were taken into custody, they said.

The face-off took place Saturday evening in a forest near Tetam village under Katekalyan police station limits when a joint team of security forces was out on an anti-Naxal operation, Dantewada Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava said in a statement.

A joint squad of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and local police launched the operation based on a specific input that senior Naxals had convened a meeting of villagers from Tetam, Tela, Jiakorta and other villages in the area in a bid to pressurise them to observe the Martyrs week, he said.

Naxals are observing the 'Martyrs' week' from July 28 to August 3 in the memory of their slain leaders, he said.

When the patrolling team was near Tetam, located around 400 km from the capital Raipur, Naxals triggered IED (improvised explosive device) blasts and opened fire on security forces that led to the gun battle, he said.

On finding that the security personnel were zeroing-in on them, the rebels escaped into the dense forest, he said. Three Naxals, including a 15-year-old girl and a boy aged 16, were detained from the spot.

Later, one of them, identified as Hidma Madvi (23), who was active as a jan-militia member, was arrested, he said, adding detonators, Maoist banners, fire crackers, medicines and items of daily use were also seized from the spot. The detained girl was part of the Chetna Natya Mandli (cultural wing of Maoists), while the boy was active as a militia member, he said.

Release of water by Nepal inundates 61 villages in Bahraich



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bahraich, August 2: Over 60 villages in the Bahraich district here have been inundated following the release of water by Nepal from its three barrages into rivers, a district administration official said Sunday.

The release of water has affected over 1.50 lakh people and damaged 171 houses, he said, adding National Disaster Response Force personnel have been deployed in the area to rescue people.

"Following the release of lakhs of cusec of water by Nepal, at least 61 villages in the district have been inundated. The administration is providing relief to the affected people," Additional District Magistrate Jai Chandra Pandey said.

He added that 61 villages located in Kaisarganj, Mahsi and Mihipurva tehsils with a population of over 1.50 lakh have been affected.

"The condition is very bad in seven villages. As many as 131 kutcha houses have been damaged. Twenty-three flood posts have been made. Apart from this, one motorboat, 179 boats, one platoon of flood PAC and NDRF have also been pressed into service," Pandey said. He also said 48 medical teams along with veterinary teams have also been deployed for relief work.

Medical facilities, vaccination of animals, tarpaulin sheets and food packets are being distributed, he added.

"About 3.15 lakh cusec water was released into rivers from Sharda, Girijapuri and Saryu barrages. The levels of rivers at these places were below the danger mark, but Ghagara was flowing 108 centimetres above the danger mark at Elgin bridge. Along with the barrages, the embankments are also being constantly monitored," said Executive Engineer (Flood) Shobit Kushwaha.

Two colleagues of rape-accused CRPF jawan suspended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, August 2: Two days after a CRPF jawan was arrested for allegedly raping a tribal woman near his camp in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, two of his colleagues were placed under suspension Saturday, an official said.

A woman had, July 29, accused jawan Dulichand, stationed in the

CRPF's Dubbatota camp under Dornapal police station limits, of raping her in July 27, after which he was arrested July 30 and handed over to local police and then suspended.

Two constables who were on sentry duty at the time were suspended Saturday for negligence in discharging duty and a departmental inquiry has been initiated against them, the official

added. The two had not kept a record of the jawan stepping out of the camp on the day of the incident, he said, adding that the camp commander had been shifted to the control room with immediate effect.

He said CRPF (Chhattisgarh sector) Inspector General Prakash D visited the camp and warned personnel that "violation of discipline will be dealt severely".

The IG said the CRPF stood for highest standards of discipline and this incident was an aberration. The IG also met Sukma Superintendent of Police Shalabh Sinha and assured him all help from the CRPF's side in the probe, the official added.

The accused jawan is a resident of Balaghat in Madhya Pradesh and had recently returned to camp from there.

Snake slithers up man's jeans, he stands still for seven hours

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mirzapur (UP), August 2: In an incident that has sent shock waves across the district, a man in Sikandarpur village in Uttar Pradesh's Mirzapur district woke up to realise that a cobra had slithered into his jeans while he was asleep.

The incident took place last week but came to light after a video of the same went viral on social media. Lovekesh Kumar, labourer who was

installing electricity poles and wires, had gone to sleep during lunch time and when he woke up with the cobra in his pants,

he slowly stood up and held on to a pole.

Meanwhile, Lovekesh Kumar told local reporters that, "I am a devotee of Lord Shiva and it was he who saved me. Though I was petrified, I remained calm and the snake did not bite me." He said that he will now fast Mondays' as a thanksgiving gesture to Lord Shiva.

REPORTS CLAIM THAT KUMAR STOOD HOLDING A POLE FOR ALMOST SEVEN HOURS TILL A SNAKE CHARMER WAS CALLED IN

THE SNAKE CHARMER CUT OPEN HIS PANTS AND TOOK OUT THE SNAKE

LOCAL OFFICIALS AND POLICEMEN ALSO REACHED THE VILLAGE ON GETTING INFORMATION

RAISING AWARENESS

Raigarh cops to distribute masks on Raksha Bandhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, August 2: Police in Chhattisgarh's Raigarh district will distribute over 14 lakh face masks to people on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan Monday, to urge the public to make efforts towards containing the spread of COVID-19.

As part of the drive, titled *Ek Rakshasutra Mask ka* (one safety string of mask), the police with the support of volunteers will offer masks to people in every police station area of Raigarh, a senior official said Sunday.

"Right from when the coronavirus outbreak began in March, the Raigarh police have been running several awareness

campaigns to sensitise people about the viral infection. The district witnessed a spurt in cases in the last one month," Raigarh Superintendent of Police Santosh Singh said.

"In view of the present situation, we decided to take up the initiative on *Raksha Bandhan*, celebrated as the bond of protection, since a mask is also a tool for the safety of people," he said.

Till Saturday, Raigarh reported 223 COVID-19 cases and out of these, nearly 100 came to light in the last one month. Under the drive, the target is to distribute around 14.5 lakh masks door-to-door in each police station area Monday with the support of local people, Singh said.



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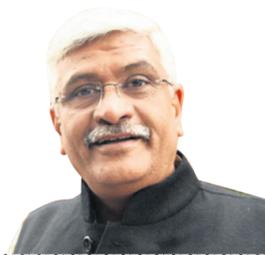
"We have appealed to social and non-government organisations to support the police in the cause, and help in the distribution of masks in their localities while

complying with all the precautionary protocols," he said.

People can also click pictures while distributing masks in their area and share it with police on so-

cial media platforms, he said. On this *Raksha Bandhan*, the police also have urged people to enjoy the festival at home and offer masks as gifts to each other, he added.



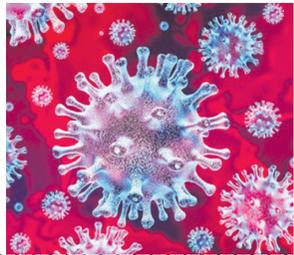


With this ongoing drama in the state, he (Gehlot) wants to eliminate Sachin (Pilot) and others from the party. He is blaming the BJP for this entire crisis and trying to tarnish the image of its leadership

GAJENDRA SHEKHAWAT | UNION MINISTER

STUDY INFO

The assumption that everybody is susceptible to coronavirus may not be true as 80 to 90 per cent people living in the same household where a member is diagnosed with Covid-19 do not get the disease, as per a study by the Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar



of the day quote

NEP will lead to increased segregation of the poor and disadvantaged by creating a 'digital divide'. More than 70 per cent children of marginalised sections may be completely excluded as seen during access to online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will also make the rural versus urban divide even stronger on account of absent or diminished internet connectivity/access to computers in the rural areas

RANDEEP SURJEWALA | CHIEF SPOKESPERSON OF CONGRESS

As a descendant of mother Shabri, who hailed from a deprived section, was a disciple of saint Matang and was an ardent devotee of Shri Ram, it is my good fortune that the temple is being constructed again in my lifetime

CHIRAG PASWAN | LOK JANSHAKTI PARTY PRESIDENT

It is the set of values that are at the core of Indian world view

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | INDIA'S VICE PRESIDENT

DIGVIJAYA'S ADVICE IRKS YOUNG LEADERS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 2: Amid controversy between young and old guards during a meet of Congress Rajya Sabha MPs and chorus of bringing Rahul Gandhi back to the post of party president, senior leader Digvijaya Singh advised that Rahul Gandhi should be more active in Parliament.

"I agree. He is different and wants to do politics differently. We should allow him to do so but then we also would like him to be more active in Parliament and more accessible to people. As advised by Sharad Pawar he should go around India. 'Yatras' are important to connect," Singh said.

Digvijaya Singh was commenting on a video tweet posted by a party worker which said, "As Rahul Gandhi reaches out, we must speak out!" Singh was underlining the former Congress president's inaccessibility which has been often talked by the party leaders and his absence in the Parliament on crucial issues.

But the advice of Singh has not gone down well as he got response from the youngsters in the party particularly MPs close to Rahul Gandhi. One of the MPs considered close to Rahul Gandhi said in anonymity that Rahul Gandhi has already



taken yatras and has been often taking on the government on important issues.

The fresh controversy broke after the younger lot questioned the UPA-2 rule, however, the person concerned, Rajya Sabha MP Rajiv Satav came down heavily on the seniors for the malicious attempts. "The malicious attempt to draw Dr Manmohan Singh into this exchange is reprehensible. To say my observations cast a shadow over Dr Singh's leadership of UPA-2 is a lie, a total misrepresentation of facts. I hold Dr

Singh in high esteem. He is above reproach," he said.

It is said that Rajya Sabha members close to Rahul Gandhi cornered the seniors about decimation of the party in two consecutive elections, a charge countered by veterans who were ministers in the UPA regime. The party Sunday tried to intervene and asked the leaders to stop this on social media.

Congress communication department chief Randeep Surjewala responding to a question during a

Digvijaya Singh advised that Rahul Gandhi should be more active in Parliament

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press conference on Sunday said, "I will advise friends who are playing 'Twitter Twitter' to stop making comments on social media. We have internal democracy and we are not forcing anybody to retire, so keep your views for appropriate party forums."

"In this time of crisis senior leaders who have worked in the government and organisation should stand shoulder to shoulder with Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Manmohan Singh. The responsibility of the senior leaders is to guide the youngsters and promote them and also make way for them," said Surjewala.

Corona crisis looms large over MP police

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, August 2: The coronavirus pandemic is on a sharp rise in Madhya Pradesh and now the police who played an important role in fighting the disease are getting infected. More than 250 policemen and officials have tested positive while over 1,000 employees have been quarantined. This has a direct impact on the efficiency of the police.

Covid has captured almost every part of the state that is why strict measures such as lockdown are being taken to prevent the infection. The police, who are responsible for enforcing the lockdown, are themselves a victim of the circumstances. It has been spreading among the police during their duty hours as they come in contact with suspected corona patients.

Police department statistics are a testimony to the fact that the police force is under the grip of corona. Due to corona several police officials have died in the state, which includes Bhopal police deputy superintendent Prem Prakash Gautam, Indore station in-charge Devendra Chandravanshi, Ujjain police station in-charge Yashwant Pal and as-



tant sub-inspector Kunwar Singh. Police headquarters have also raised concern about the growing corona infection in the police force. According to sources, the state headquarters have given instructions to all officials whose leave has earlier been sanctioned stands cancelled.

According to the new directive, police officials and employees will not leave their headquarters. Under special circumstances, only due to family and health-related needs, they will be allowed to leave the headquarters after seeking permission from the inspector general of police of the zone concerned.

It has also come to the notice of the police chief that officials and employees who are travelling or are returning from other places are not taking necessary precautions.

SHORT TAKES

Gold smuggling: Six more held

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested six more people and conducted searches at six places in connection with the Kerala gold smuggling case, an official said Sunday. The agency has so far arrested 10 people in the case of smuggling of gold through diplomatic baggage addressed to the UAE consulate in Kerala capital Thiruvananthapuram. On July 30, two accused -- Jalal A M of Ernakulam and Said Alavi E of Malappuram -- were arrested for conspiring with the arrested accused Ramees K T, an NIA spokesperson said. On July 31, two more accused, Mohammed Shafi P and Abdu P T, both residents of Malappuram, were arrested in the case, he said.

Bihar flood situation worsens

Patna: The flood situation in Bihar worsened Sunday as water from overflowing rivers inundated fresh areas, while a total of 53.67 lakh people across 14 districts were affected, the Disaster Management Department said here. No fresh casualty was reported and the number of people who died in flood-related incidents stood at 13. The number of people affected by the deluge has gone up by 4.62 lakh since Saturday, though that of the district remained at 14, the department said in a bulletin.

Rhino rescued

Guwahati: A new born rhino, separated from his mother, has been rescued by forest guards in the Kaziranga National Park amid the floods in Assam, a forest spokesperson said. The three-day or four-day old rhino calf was rescued from Mohpora village in the Kaziranga range area Sunday morning, he said.

Three injured

Basanti (WB): At least three persons were injured in a clash at a village under Basanti police station area in South 24 Parganas district Sunday, a police officer said. The three injured were taken to Canning Sub-divisional hospital. Of them, the condition of one, who has bullet wounds in his head, was stated to be serious, the officer said. Sources said that the clash took place at Charbidya village between activists of the ruling TMC and the Yuva Trinamool Congress, the party's youth wing, over control of the area.

Covid digital push: Railways digitises over 12L documents

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 2: In the past four months when the entire country was in various stages of the coronavirus-induced lockdown, the Railways has digitised over 12 lakh documents like letters, bills, office orders, project drawings and more than four lakh files, scrapping their manual handling and reducing not just physical contact between officials but also operational costs.

The use of Railways' e-office has grown manifold since the pandemic hit the country -- the number of e-receipts increased from 4.5 lakhs during March 2019 to March this year, to 16.5 lakhs in April-July this year; the number of e-files increased from 1.3 lakhs to 5.4 lakh during the same periods respectively.

The e-office platform provided by RailTel is a cloud enabled software developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and aims to provide reliable, efficient, and effective ways of handling office files and documents.

"Due to availability of e-office, majority of file work in Railways can continue smoothly without physical presence in offices which is a boon in a time of crisis like this," RailTel CMD, Puneet Chawla said. He said it was a big challenge for the team to complete the work during the lockdown phase as resource movement was restricted. "We couldn't visit the division offices and the implementation work needed to be done remotely and it was very time consuming as well. The crucial part of implementation is the training of officials to handle the platform," Chawla said.

THREAD OF LOVE



Women tie rakhis on the wrists of BSF personnel on the eve of Raksha Bandhan, at Inter National Border Octroi post in Suchetgarh, Jammu, Sunday

Pilot must hold conversation first: Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 2: After Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said he will embrace rebel Congressmen if they apologise to the "high command", the Congress Sunday made it clear that Sachin Pilot must first spell out his position unequivocally and hold a conversation.

The Congress also claimed that its government in Rajasthan was safe and would prove its majority on the floor of the house when the assembly meets on August 14. "Sachin Pilot must come and hold a conversation first. Pilot must come out and state his position clearly and unequivocally first and only then can any talk of his return happen," Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said at a press conference.

Asked about Gehlot's comments that he will embrace the rebels and accept them, after having used some harsh words against Pilot a few days ago, Surjewala said the same were stated out of "hurt feelings and sentiments" due to the conspiracy to topple his government.

"Ashok Gehlot ji has acted responsibly and in a mature fashion in what he has stated," he said.

"It should also set to rest all criticism of some remarks in a way out of his hurt feelings and sentiments, on account of a clear conspiracy in collusion with the BJP to topple his government in the state," the Congress leader said. Asked how many MLAs supported the Congress in Rajasthan, Surjewala said, "We have over 102 MLAs". He has earlier claimed the support of 109 MLAs in the state, which has a total of 200 MLAs.

Gehlot had said Saturday in Jaipur, where the party MLAs have been shifted from Jaipur, ahead of the assembly session, that he has no issues with any of the rebels if they apologised to the party high command.

Hooch tragedy toll rises to 98

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, August 2: The death toll in the Punjab hooch tragedy rose to 98 Sunday with 12 more people reported dead in Tarn Taran district after drinking spurious liquor.

"In Tarn Taran, the death toll is now 75," Deputy Commissioner Kulwant Singh said. He, however, said the administration put the figure at 75 on the basis of the information "received from the field" as the victims' last rites have already been performed by their families in the past a couple of days.

Some of them even didn't come forward for autopsy, he said. Apart from Tarn Taran, 12 deaths have been reported from Amritsar and 11 from Gurdaspur's Batala, in a tragedy unfolding since Wednesday evening.

Officials said some of the families were not even coming forward to report the death of their kin



Officials said some of the families were not even coming forward to report the death of their kin after drinking spurious liquor. A senior police official said they have been persuading them to report the death of their family members. Meanwhile, the Opposition AAP

held protests at several places, including Patiala, Barnala, Pathankot and Moga, against the Punjab government.

The protesters accused the government of "negligence", leading to death of people, mostly belonging to poor families. Aam Aadmi Party MP Bhagwant Mann also went to Tarn Taran and met families of the deceased.

Mann sought a probe by a sitting judge into the matter. The Punjab government has ordered a magisterial probe into the case. Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Saturday had announced the suspension of seven excise and six police officials.

He had described the police and excise department failure to check the manufacturing and sale of spurious liquor as "shameful". The state government has announced ₹2 lakh ex gratia for each of the families of the deceased.

Minister clears air on NEP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, August 2: The Centre will not impose any language on any state through the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Union Minister for Education Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said Sunday.

Nishank's clarification, through a tweet in Tamil, comes in the backdrop of opposition to NEP in Tamil Nadu on the grounds that the policy allegedly imposed Hindi and Sanskrit. In his tweet to former Union Minister from the state Pon Radhakrishnan, Nishank said he was looking forward to the guidance of the ex-central minister in implementing NEP in Tamil Nadu.

"I once again like to insist that the Central government will not impose any language on any state," he said. The M K Stalin-led DMK and many opposition parties in Tamil Nadu have opposed NEP and want a review of the sweeping reforms it has proposed.



Saturday, the DMK chief said the policy was an attempt at alleged imposition of Hindi and Sanskrit and vowed to fight against it by joining hands with like-minded political parties and Chief Ministers of other states. The reforms were not a new education policy but "a glossy coat on the old oppressive Manusmriti," he said.

Shuttered budget hotels, guest houses in Delhi fight for survival

With Delhi witnessing a significant improvement in the COVID-19 situation in July-end, the Kejriwal government last Thursday allowed hotels to resume 'normal functioning'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 2: Hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic, owners of around 3,000 budget hotels and guest houses in the national capital had to let go more than 75 per cent

of their staff and are now staring at bankruptcy with unpaid bills running into lakhs, umbrella groups representing them have claimed.

So severe is the situation that the president of Delhi Hotel and Restaurant Owners Association, Sandeep Khandelwal, claims he himself was being unable to pay his house rent. Even though the Centre had allowed hotels across the country to open their doors to customers from June 8, the Delhi government did not do so considering a large number of COVID-19 cases in that month.

With Delhi witnessing a significant improvement in the COVID-19 situation in July end, the Arvind Kejriwal government last Thursday allowed hotels to resume "normal



functioning". But that was not to be as Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal the next day vetoed the decision, saying the situation continues to be "fragile" and the threat

is still "far from over".

Khandelwal said over four lakh people depend on hotels, guest houses and restaurants for their livelihood directly or indirectly.

"The establishments have remained closed since March 15. Most of the employees have returned to their villages. A few remain to look after the premises. They too, are not being paid their full salaries," he said. Khandelwal, who runs Hotel Grand Imperial in Karol Bagh on a lease, claimed that he has not been able to pay its rent for the last four months.

"I pay ₹7 lakh as rent for the property. Of the 20 employees working at the hotel before lockdown, only three remain. Around 50 families depend on the hotel directly or indirectly," he said.

The association's president said he hasn't been able to earn enough to pay his house rent and car loan EMI. "I represent the budget hotels and look

at the situation I am in. Others are in a much worse condition."

Khandelwal claimed that hotel and guest house owners are being "forced" to pay hefty water and power bills, even though there has been "zero business" in the last four months. According to him, many hotel owners have taken loans from their friends and family members to stay afloat.

"We demand that the government give us some rebate on bills. Many establishments are on the verge of bankruptcy. If they cannot provide any relief, at least renew our fire and police licences and allow us to operate," he demanded. Khandelwal said he has been receiving a lot of calls from his employees, asking when they can return to work.



Do you think we were happy when they (Kashmiri Pandits) were taken away. We always believe that Kashmir is never going to be complete unless the Hindu brethren comes back and live in peace with all of us

FAROOQ ABDULLAH | FORMER J&K CM

SONIA OUT OF HOSPITAL

Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi was Sunday discharged from the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, three days after she was admitted, according to a health bulletin



of the day quote

India's democracy is damaged when GOI illegally detains political leaders. Its high time Mehbooba Mufti is released

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

Actor Akshay Kumar equipped the Mumbai Police with health-tracking devices which will help them deal better with the COVID-19 situation

AADITYA THACKERAY | MAHARASHTRA MINISTER

Saddened by the loss of lives in Punjab due to illicit liquor. State govt needs to immediately take necessary steps to curb such mafias

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

BIHAR COPS TO PROBE DEATH OF SUSHANT'S EX-MANAGER

PATNA CITY SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE, VINAY TIWARI, SUNDAY REACHED MUMBAI TO SUPERVISE THE PROBE BEING CONDUCTED BY THE FOUR-MEMBER TEAM FROM THE BIHAR CAPITAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 2: The Bihar Police team, which is in Mumbai to investigate a case related to Sushant Singh Rajput's death, will also probe the alleged suicide of his former manager Disha Saliyan, and if needed also record the statements of those Bollywood personalities, who were earlier questioned by their Mumbai counterparts, officials said Sunday.

Patna City Superintendent of Police (SP), Vinay Tiwari, Sunday reached Mumbai to supervise the probe being conducted by the four-member team from the Bihar capital. Rajput, 34, was found hanging at his apartment in suburban



Bandra on June 14.

Mumbai Police, who are probing the death case, have so far recorded statements of nearly 40 people, including those from Rajput's family, his cook and people from

the film industry that include filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt, film critic Rajeev Masand, director-producer Sanjay Leela Bhansali and filmmaker Aditya Chopra.

The Bihar Police team is probing a separate 'abetment to suicide' case on the basis of a complaint filed by the late actor's father in Patna.

Inspector General of Police (Patna zone) Sanjay Singh, said, "We are going to investigate the suicide case of Sushant Singh Rajput's former manager Disha Saliyan, and will also question his friend and creative content manager Siddharth Pithani, who was staying with the actor for the past one year."

"Our officials are visiting all pos-

sible places related to this case. They had also visited Rajput's residence and recreated the scene. In the coming days, more people are likely to be questioned in the case," he said.

Saliyan, 28, allegedly committed suicide by jumping from the high-rise building in Malad area here on June 8.

Apart from Rajput, Saliyan had also managed the work of actors like Bharti Singh, Rhea Chakraborty and Varun Sharma. Earlier Pithani had sent an e-mail to the Mumbai Police, alleging that family members of the late Bollywood star pressurised him to give a statement against actress Rhea Chakraborty, an official said.

FORMER DSP'S SON ARRESTED

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gurugram, August 2: A 30-year-old man, son of a former Deputy Superintendent of Police, was arrested for allegedly threatening to blow up the district prison, an official said Saturday.

The accused identified as Ravi Anand Chautala had posted an audio recording on social media threatening to explode the district jail, and had also demanded the release of inmates including his father Dharamveer Chautala who was recently arrested for allegedly supplying mobile phones, simcards and contraband to other inmates while he was deployed as Deputy Superintendent of the Gurugram prison. "Since the matter was extremely serious, we analysed the voice in the audio recording. It matched with the voice of the Ravi. We have alerted our intelligence officers around the jail and apprehended him," said ACP (Crime) Preet Pal Singh Sangwan.

The crime branch of Gurugram police had arrested Dharamveer Chautala, the then deputy jail superintendent, on July 23 along with his aide for allegedly supplying contrabands and mobile phones with sim cards to the inmates of the district prison located at Bhondsi village.

CAA rules: MHA seeks more time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 2: The Home Ministry has sought an additional three months' time for framing rules of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), officials said Sunday. The plea was made before the Department Related Standing Committee for Subordinate Legislation as according to the Manual on Parliamentary Work, the rules for any legislation should be framed within six months of the presidential assent or an extension must be sought.

Covid patients can use smartphones

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 2: The Centre has written to all states and Union Territories stating that smartphones and tablet devices should be allowed for hospitalised COVID-19 patients so that they can interact with family and friends through video conferencing, which would provide them psychological support.

Though mobile phones are allowed in hospital wards, the mis- sive was issued following some representation from the kin of patients alleging otherwise. Director General of Health Services (DGHS) in the Health Ministry Dr Rajiv Garg in the letter to the principal secretaries of health and medical education of states and Union territories said appropriate protocols for disinfecting devices and allotting timeslots can be developed by the hospital concerned to facilitate contact between patients and



their family.

He underlined that administrative and medical teams should be responsive to the psychological needs of patients admitted in COVID-19 wards and ICUs of various hospitals.

"Social connection can calm down patients and also reinforce the psychological support given by the treating team. Please instruct all concerned that they should allow smartphones and tablet devices in patient area so that the patient can video conference with their family and friends," stated the letter issued on July 29.

WATER WOES



Containers placed on a road to collect drinking water from tankers, during Unlock 3 in Kolkata, Sunday

SHORT TAKES

Covid-19 patient ends life

Chandigarh: A 62-year-old Covid-19 patient allegedly committed suicide Sunday by jumping off the fifth floor of the Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) here, police said. He died due to multiple fractures and a head injury, a police official said. The patient, admitted to the GMCH on July 31 after he tested positive on July 29, jumped from the gallery of area 55, a hospital statement said. It said that the man, who had sustained multiple fractures and a head injury, was taken to the operation theatre but he expired there.

Body found

Bulandshahr: The body of a Bulandshahr lawyer, who had been missing since July 25, has been found, police said. Dharmendra Chaudhary's body was recovered from a marble godown in Khurja area on Saturday. Police have arrested Vicky, the godown owner and a close associate of Chaudhary, and two of his domestic helps - Hakimuddin and Amit. A money dispute is suspected to be the motive behind the crime. Chaudhary, in his late 40s, had mysteriously disappeared on July 25 after he left home in Khurja locality to join Vicky, who had hosted a dinner for him at the godown. The family alerted the police after he did not return home till late in the night and his mobile was found to be switched off. On July 26, Chaudhary's motorcycle was found abandoned at a desolate spot, nearly 6 km from his last known location.

Racket busted

Chandigarh: As part of its crackdown against drugs, Punjab Police have busted another Pakistan-backed cross-border drugs and weapons smuggling racket, with the arrest of two smugglers and another BSF constable, posted along the Pakistan border in Tarn Taran district. The Police are working to get the kingpin, Satnam Singh, alias Satta, extradited from Muscat, Oman, where he had fled after he was declared proclaimed offender in two smuggling cases, Director General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta said on Sunday.

Woman killed

New Delhi: A 23-year-old woman, mother of three children, was strangled to death allegedly by her husband in Outer North Delhi's Narela. The accused is absconding after the incident. The police received a call at around 9 a.m. on Sunday that the woman has been murdered. After the police reached the spot at DDA Janta flat in Pocket 11 Narela they found strangulation marks on the woman's body.

Three killed on way to Vizag

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Visakhapatnam, August 2: Tragedy struck a family for second time in 24 hours, as three persons were killed in an accident in Andhra Pradesh's Srikakulam district on Sunday while they were on their way to Visakhapatnam to attend the last rites of a relative who was killed in crane crash at the Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) Saturday.

The car in which they were travelling rammmed into a stationary truck at Kanchilli in Srikakulam district. Nagamani (48), who was coming to Visakhapatnam to see for the last time her son-in-law P. Bhaskar Rao died in the road accident along with her daughter-in-law Lavanya (23) and driver Routu Dwaraka (23).

Police said the accident occurred when the car rammmed into the stationary truck from behind. Nagamani's sons Ishwar Rao and Rajasekar and another daughter-in-law Pytili were injured and were initially shifted to government hospital at Sompeta and later to Srikakulam. The condition of Ishwar Rao is stated to be critical.

KARNATAKA'S CENTENARIAN WOMAN BEATS COVID-19

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chitradurga (Karnataka), August 2: Over a century-old woman recovered from Covid-19 within a week after she contracted the virus from an infected person in Karnataka's Chitradurga, a district doctor said Sunday.

"Siddamma, who is about 100 years old, recovered from the infection and was discharged on Saturday from a Covid designated hospital in the town where she was admitted on July 27 and treated as an asymptomatic patient," district hospital doctor Rangareddy said.

Chitradurga is 205 km north-west of Bangalore. "Though a native of Burujannahatti village in the district, Siddamma was living with her family in police quarters near the state-run hospital in the town. "Siddamma is said to be a mother of 5 children, 17 grand children and 22 great grandchildren," said Rangareddy.

When the news about the grand old lady's dramatic recovery was disclosed in the district health bulletin, local news channels rushed to meet her before she was dis-



charged from the hospital.

"I am not afraid of anything. I did not panic when a doctor in the hospital told me that I have contracted the disease, whose name (corona) I have not heard before. I was given warm water and gruel (ganji) as my diet," Siddamma said in Kannada.

Regarding Siddamma's age being 110 years, Rangareddy said it had to be verified, as there was no record available showing she was born in 1910. "Where were hospitals and birth certificates issued in villages in the country over a century ago?" Rangareddy quipped.

GENDER PARITY

Traffic signals in Mumbai get gender equality boost

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 2: In a national first, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has just made pedestrian signals on a Mumbai road gender-equal - and the move has proved to be a veritable traffic-stopper.

As part of a unique project, two pedestrian signals on the Swatantra Veer Savarkar (SVS) Road from Siddhivinayak Temple to Mahim have inducted female characters -- both in the standing and walking modes - signalling a huge step towards achieving an attitude of gender equality.

The BMC and Mumbai Traffic Police seem quite pleased with the response at the Shivaji Park traffic junction - another novel initiative after they had introduced

the policy of 'Honk More, Wait More' at some heavy-traffic signals or traffic junctions in Mumbai in January 2020.

"It was suggested by some urban planners and we decided to implement it after getting the 'okay' from Mumbai Traffic Police in June. It is neither time-consuming nor expensive and we have decided to change the pedestrian signages on all 240 signals at 18 junctions to depict male-female characters," Assistant Municipal Commissioner (G/North Ward) Kiran Dighavkar said.

The first phase of the project - estimated to cost barely ₹50,000 - involves changing the stencil figures on the signal glass, and has proved to be a refreshing change for the pedestrians patiently awaiting their turn to cross the roads.



Uddhav not invited to Ayodhya

Setting all speculations at rest about Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray attending the Ram Temple Foundation Stone laying Ceremony to be held on August 5, it is clear that he has not been invited to the function. It has also been confirmed that the Shiv Sena chief

whose party had been instrumental in the Ram Janmabhoomi temple movement for 30 long years, has been ignored. This was confirmed by the working president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad Alok Kumar himself. He told a select gathering that "the VHP is deeply hurt by the statement of Uddhav Thackeray for his suggestion that the foundation ceremony be held through video conferencing".

Why no CM, Governor invited

Of the 36 states and UTs, the BJP is ruling only in 12 and is a partner in six others including North East and Bihar. It transpires that many CMs had refused to attend the BJP dominated function during the Covid era. Thus, the Nyas decided to avoid an

embarrassment if only BJP CMs turn up and other give a miss- be Mamata Banerjee, Arvind Kejriwal or Nitish Kumar and others. Since the Sangh Parivar leadership did not want to create a ruckus on this occasion and bitterness, it also decided not to invite any other Chief Minister of the country on this occasion. In order to avoid more controversies the Nyas also decided not to invite any Governor either for the ceremony.

Why Joshi chose Kapil Sibal

Two leading stalwarts of legal profession, Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Kapil Sibal are always at loggerheads. The Speaker of the Rajasthan Assembly C P Joshi engaged Abhishek Manu Singhvi as his counsel in the Rajasthan High

Court. The Speaker wanted to challenge the petition of 19 dissident Congress MLAs petition in the high court. Abhishek Manu Singhvi during the course of the hearing submitted on behalf of the Speaker that he would not take any action against these MLAs until the HC pronounced its verdict. The Speaker was angry as to why such an undertaking be given. He was also upset that the HC overstepped in interim order whereby it "directed" the Speaker not to take any action. How could HC direct the Speaker when the Speaker himself had volunteered not to proceed against the MLAs. An enraged Joshi called up Kapil Sibal immediately over the phone in Delhi and requested him to take up his case. He wanted Sibal to represent him in the Supreme Court which he eventually did.

Posts vacant

With the resignation of Parameswaran Iyer as Secretary Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, there are now three Secretary-level posts vacant in India. The Information and Broadcasting and Ministry of Mines are already vacant of a sort as dual charges are going on for months together. It is believed that I&B post may not be filled very soon and the additional charge may continue to remain with Amit Khare whereas Mines and DWS would require officers with specific professional attributes. Iyer was brought by the PM personally to head this ministry after he had quit the government job. But somewhere he got disillusioned and quit DWS Secretary. It would be a challenging task to fit into the

shoes of Iyer and an uphill task to live up to the expectations of the government.

'Vaccine Warriors' needed

After corona warriors, India now needs an army of "Vaccine Warriors". If doctors and nurses and front line workers are fighting Covid, an army of Vaccine Warriors is being built in the country to develop a vaccine to fight Covid permanently. According to Drug Controller General of India (DGI) and Union Health ministry estimates, the country will require 50000 to 1,00,000 "Vaccine Warriors". The number may even go up as more and more companies may start trials for the most-sought vaccine in human history in India.



The right to protest is the lifeblood of democracy and violence is the erosion of the foundation of democracy

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER

BIG INCREASE RECORDED IN AMAZON FIRES

Official figures from Brazil have shown a big increase in the number of fires in the Amazon region in July compared with the same month last year, it was reported Sunday



of the day quote

Many countries that believed they were past the worst are now grappling with new outbreaks. Some that were less affected in the earliest weeks are now seeing escalating numbers of cases and deaths. And some that had large outbreaks have brought them under control

TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL

We urge Hong Kong authorities to reconsider their decision to suspend elections

MIKE POMPEO | US SECRETARY OF STATE

North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs undermine our shared strategic interest in peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula

STEPHEN BIEGUN | DEPUTY SECRETARY OF US STATE

Tropical storm Isaias lashes Florida

Isaias was downgraded from a hurricane to a tropical storm Saturday afternoon, but was still expected to bring heavy rain and flooding as it crawled just off Florida's Atlantic coast



ASSOCIATED PRESS

St. Petersburg, August 2: Bands of heavy rain from Isaias lashed Florida's east coast Sunday while officials dealing with surging cases of the coronavirus kept a close watch on the weakened tropical storm.

Isaias was downgraded from a hurricane to a tropical storm Saturday afternoon, but was still expected to bring heavy rain and flooding as it crawled just off Florida's Atlantic coast. "Don't be fooled by the downgrade," Florida Gov Ron DeSantis warned at a news conference after the storm — pronounced ees-ah-EE-ahs — spent hours roughing up the Bahamas. Upper-level winds took much of the strength out of Isaias, said Stacy Stewart, senior hurricane specialist at the National Hurricane Center in Miami. The storm also slowed down considerably. "We were expecting a hurricane to develop and it didn't," Stewart said Sunday. "It's a tale of two storms. If you live on the west side of the storm, you didn't get much. If you live east of the storm, there's a lot of nasty weather there." Florida is

on the west side of Isaias.

Authorities closed beaches, parks and virus testing sites, lashing signs to palm trees so they wouldn't blow away. DeSantis said the state is anticipating power outages and asked residents to have a week's supply of water, food and medicine on hand. Officials wrestled with how to prepare shelters where people can seek refuge from the storm if necessary, while also safely social distancing to prevent the spread of the virus.

In Palm Beach County, about 150 people were in shelters, said emergency management spokeswoman Lisa De La Rionda. The county has a voluntary evacuation order for those living in mobile or manufactured homes, or those who feel their home can't withstand winds.

Isaias is piling another burden on communities already hit hard by other storms and sickness. The storm's maximum sustained winds declined steadily throughout Saturday, and were at 65 mph (100 kph) by Sunday morning, the US National Hurricane Centre said at 8 am EDT. The storm's centre was located 40 miles (70 kilometres) east-southeast of West Palm Beach.

OLI, PRACHANDA AGREE TO MEET TODAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, August 2: Nepal's embattled Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and the ruling party's executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' have agreed to hold another round of talks Monday as nearly three-hour long meeting Sunday failed to resolve their differences, a media report said.

"Talks are positive between the two leaders. There was discussion whether to summon the party's Secretariat, Standing Committee or the Central Committee meeting. The meeting also dwelled on holding the party's unity general convention," the Prime Minister's Press Adviser Surya Thapa was quoted as saying by My Republica.

"The two leaders are yet to reach any consensus," Thapa said. The meeting between the two top leaders of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) came six days after Prime Minister Oli postponed the party's Standing Committee meeting July 28.

The Standing Committee meeting has fallen uncertain as differences between the two top leaders continue to exist, the paper said.



During Sunday's meeting, the prime minister was accompanied by his close confidante Subash Nembang, who has been working as a mediator to resolve the differences between Oli and Prachanda. Prachanda was accompanied by senior leader Jhala Nath Khanal. The two leaders are scheduled to hold talks again Monday to find a way out to the current stand-off, the paper said, citing sources. Quoting party insiders, it said the two leaders have held discussions as per the proposal put forth earlier by the party's Vice Chairman Bam Dev Gautam.

Oli and Prachanda have held at least nine meetings in recent weeks to sort out the differences between

them. But, as the Prime Minister did not accept the condition of a one-man-one-post, the talks failed. Oli has refused to give up his post as prime minister as well as a co-chairman of the NCP. "Although there was no agreement, the meeting broke the silence between the two leaders that existed almost for a week. We are hopeful that some solution could be found in the next meeting," said a leader close to Prachanda. Gautam had proposed that Oli be allowed to stay as prime minister for the remaining term of the House of Representatives (HoR), that is, two-and-a-half years, and chairman of the party until the unity general convention that Oli has proposed to hold by mid-

December. Similarly, Prachanda should be given the responsibility as the party's Chairman with all executive powers until the unity general convention of the NCP is held.

Gautam also proposed that Oli be allowed to run the government independently even though the Chairman will have all executive powers. He, however, proposed holding consultation in the party before taking any decisions on issues of national and international importance.

A bitter internal feud has been brewing in the ruling NCP since the last few weeks after top party leaders, including Prachanda, demanded Oli's resignation, saying his recent anti-India remarks were "neither politically correct nor diplomatically appropriate."

They are also against Oli's autocratic style of functioning.

The differences grew further after Oli said 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 of Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura.

SHORT TAKES

SA hits 500,000 Covid infections

Johannesburg: South Africa has surpassed 500,000 confirmed coronavirus cases, but President Cyril Ramaphosa Sunday said he sees "promising signs" that the rapid growth of cases has stabilised and that the country's strained health system is managing to cope. Health Minister Zwelini Mkhize announced 10,107 new cases Saturday night, bringing the country's cumulative total to 503,290, including 8,153 deaths. South Africa has now tallied more than 50% of all reported coronavirus infections in Africa's 54 countries.

IS bride's case goes to SC

London: The case of Shamima Begum, a British resident who ran away in 2015 to become an Islamic State (IS) jihadi bride and is now fighting to return to the UK from Syria, will go to the Supreme Court, it was reported. On Friday, the Court of Appeal decided that the case raised a point of law of public importance that only the Supreme Court can resolve, reports the BBC.

Quake jolts Philippines

Manila: An earthquake measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale jolted Maguindanao province in southern Philippines Sunday, authorities said. The Philippine Institute of Seismology and Volcanology (Phivolcs) said the quake, which struck at 1.08 a.m., hit at a depth of 543 km, about 13 km southeast of Cotabato City, reports said.

North Korea slams South Korea

Seoul: North Korean media outlets Sunday lashed out at South Korea over a recent US decision to lift restrictions on Seoul's use of solid fuel for its space rockets, slamming the move as being contrary to the South's calls for peace. Seoul and Washington revised the missile guidelines between the two countries July 28 to lift a decades-old ban on the South from using solid fuel for space rockets, a move expected to lead to the country developing space rockets and launching spy satellites to monitor North Korea, reports said. South Korea is still prohibited from firing solid-fuel ballistic missiles with the range of over 800 km under the alliance accord first signed in 1979.

SpaceX guiding astronauts to 1st splashdown in 45 years

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cape Canaveral (US), August 2: The first astronauts to ride a SpaceX capsule into orbit headed toward a retro-style splashdown in the Gulf of Mexico Sunday afternoon to close out a two-month test flight.

It will mark the first splashdown in 45 years for NASA astronauts and the first return in the gulf. Unlike Florida's Atlantic coast, already feeling the effects of Tropical Storm Isaias, the waves and wind were calm near Pensacola in the Florida Panhandle.



Test pilots Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken departed the International Space Station on Saturday night, and awoke to a recording of their young children urging them to "rise and shine" and "we can't wait to see you." "Don't worry, you can

sleep in tomorrow," said Behnken's 6-year-old son Theo, who was promised a puppy after the flight. "Hurry home so we can go get my dog."

Their atypical ride home by Elon Musk's SpaceX company — the first commercially built and operated spacecraft to carry people to and from orbit — was expected to be fast, bumpy and hot, at least on the outside. The Dragon capsule, named Endeavour by its crew, was to go from a screaming orbital speed of 17,500 mph (28,000 kph) to 350 mph (560 kph) during re-entry in the atmosphere and finally to 15 mph (24 kph) at splashdown. Peak heating during descent: 3,500 degrees Fahrenheit (1,900 degrees Celsius). Top G forces: four to five times the force of Earth's gravity.

A SpaceX recovery ship with more than 40 staff, including doctors and nurses, was poised to move in at splashdown, with two smaller, faster boats leading the way. To keep the returning astronauts safe in the pandemic, the recovery crew self-quarantined for two weeks and were tested for the coronavirus.

SpaceX expected it to take a half-hour for the ship to arrive at the capsule and additional time to lift it out of the water onto the deck.

SAFETY FIRST



A teacher, who created a 'hug kit' using plastic covers, embraces her student in the Miguel slum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

ONLY 34% APPROVE TRUMP'S HANDLING OF PANDEMIC: POLL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, August 2: Only 34 per cent of Americans approve of US President Donald Trump's handling of the novel coronavirus pandemic, according to a new poll.

The ABC News/Ipsos poll, whose results were released on Friday, also found that the US public broadly disapproves of the President's handling of other recent crises such as the nationwide protests following the death of African American George Floyd, reports Xinhua news agency.

According to the poll's result, "just over a third of Americans (36 per cent) approve of President Trump's handling of the response to the protests across the country". "Specifically, a majority of Americans (52 per cent) believe the deployment of federal law enforcement to cities with protests have made the situation worse," it added.

Israel showers India with goodwill greetings on Friendship Day

The Israeli embassy in New Delhi this year again hit upon a famous Bollywood number to convey their warmth towards the Indian people

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jerusalem, August 2: Israel Sunday showered India with goodwill greetings Friendship Day, peppered with a Bollywood hit number; with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin also congratulating Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the people of India on the occasion.

Rivlin tweeted in English and Hindi his message tagging Modi. "Happy Friendship Day to our dear friends in India!", the Israeli President wrote. "Mitratva Divas par meri or se aapko aur bharat ki janta ko bahut bahut badhai," he wrote in Hindi.

The Israeli embassy in New Delhi this year again hit upon a famous Bollywood number from Amitabh Bachchan-starrer Yaarana to convey their warmth towards the Indian



people sharing a montage of joint meetings and collaborations between the two sides. "Tere jaisa yaar kahan, kahan aisa yaarana (There is no friend like you, there is no friendship like ours)."

"May our #Friendship & #GrowingPartnership strengthen even more in future!" a tweet from the official handle of the Israeli

embassy said. Last year, Israel had greeted India on friendship day with a Twitter message that featured the song 'yeh dosti' from Bollywood blockbuster Sholay, sharing a montage on meetings between Modi and his Israeli counterpart, Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Israeli mission also called upon followers to "share a picture telling us what makes (this) friendship so special". Israel's Ambassador in New Delhi, Ron Malka, thanked India for being "such a great friend", emphasising that this growing partnership "is stronger than ever in times of a global pandemic".

He was referring to the ongoing cooperation going between the two countries in developing a rapid testing solution for COVID-19 that is expected to provide results within 30 seconds.

Sunak calls for Mahatma Gandhi, non-white icons on UK coins

Rishi Sunak has written to the Royal Mint Advisory Committee that recommends themes and designs of coins, supporting a campaign called 'We Too Built Britain', which seeks representation of non-white icons on British currency

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 2: UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak Sunday backed a campaign for influential ethnic minority figures to be featured on a set of UK coins to celebrate Britain's diversity.

Mahatma Gandhi is in the running as an influential Commonwealth figure, as the UK's Royal Mint considers the plans as part of commemorating the 150th birth anniversary year of the Indian independence movement leader. Others in the race also include

Noor Inayat Khan, who was the first Indian-origin World War II spy for Britain, and Khudadad Khan, the first soldier of the British Indian Army to become the recipient of the prestigious Victoria Cross, the highest military award for gallantry in the face of the enemy given to British and Commonwealth forces.

"Yesterday [Saturday] I wrote to the Royal Mint urging them to consider how to celebrate the achievements of BAME [black, Asian and minority ethnic] individuals on UK coinage," said Sunak in a statement issued on social media Sunday



The move follows a letter to the Indian-origin finance minister from the "We Too Built Britain" campaign calling for a set of coins en-

titled "Service to the Nation".

In response to the campaign, led by Indian-origin Conservative Party candidate Zehra Zaidi, Sunak issued a letter to the chair of the Royal Mint Advisory Committee (RMAC), Lord William Waldegrave, to task the Sub-Committee on Themes to consider recognising BAME contributions on the nation's coinage. "Black, Asian and other ethnic minority communities have made a profound contribution to the shared history of the United Kingdom," reads Sunak's letter to Lord Waldegrave.

"For generations, ethnic minority groups have fought and died for this country we have built together; taught our children, nursed the sick, cared for the elderly; and through their enterprising spirit have started some of our most exciting and dynamic businesses, creating jobs and driving growth," it reads. "I know you are already seeking to fully consider diversity in future coin design and I very much welcome these efforts. I hope this campaign reminds us of the importance and urgency of doing so," it adds.

Zaidi's We Too Built Britain campaign is keen for the former Special Operations Executive (SOE) agent Noor Inayat Khan, a descendant of the Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan, or Mary Seacole, a British Jamaican Crimean War heroine, to be recognised on coinage as reflective of ethnic minority female contributions of British history.

"We propose a specific next theme of service to the nation by black, Asian, and other ethnic minority people, both in military conflict and on the home front," Zaidi's letter to Sunak read.

business



The real estate sector is contributing significantly to Karnataka's economy. Under these circumstances, the sector and buyers need support. A slight reduction in the stamp duty will promote the property buying activities

CR JANARDHANA | PRESIDENT, FKCCI

2/3RDS OF UK FIRMS 'FULLY OPERATIONAL'

Two thirds of British businesses say they are now "fully operational" after the coronavirus lockdown, up from half in June, according to a survey. A further 21% of the firms, polled in the first half of July by the Confederation of British Industry, said they were partly operational



of the day quote

India can emerge as the next hub for manufacturing TV not only for the Indian markets but also for the global market. This step (banning TV imports) is definitely in the right direction and will help in creating a global hub

SUNIL VACHANI | CHAIRMAN, DIXON TECHNOLOGIES

There will be huge (mobile phone) production of around ₹11 cr, huge export of around ₹7L cr and great employment opportunity for 3 lakh direct and 9 lakh indirect people. I personally thank all the companies that have helped

RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD | UNION TELECOM AND IT MINISTER

We have decided to cover individual loans given to doctors, chartered accountants for business purposes under the credit guarantee scheme

DEBASISH PANDA | FINANCIAL SERVICES SECRETARY

RAKSHA BANDHAN

Sweets industry may incur ₹5K cr loss

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, August 2: The country's sweets industry would suffer an estimated financial loss of ₹5,000 crore during this Raksha Bandhan festival due to the coronavirus pandemic, an industry association claimed.

A national federation of sweet makers says that sales of sweets on this Raksha Bandhan are expected to be halved due to the alleged mismanagement of the administration in different states in addition to the epidemic hitting customers. This may cost the sweets industry about ₹5,000 crore. The director of the Federation of Sweets and Namkeen Manufacturers, Ferroz H Naqvi, Sunday told PTI, "Sweets worth around ₹10,000 crore were sold across the country on Raksha Bandhan last year. This figure is expected to come down to around ₹5,000 crore this time as the purchasing power of the customers is already affected due to the economic crisis arising out of COVID-19."

There has been a lot of confusion in many districts of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and some other states about opening of sweet shops on Saturday and Sunday falling just before Raksha Bandhan (Monday). As a result, sweets could not be manufactured and stocked adequately to meet the festive demand." He said that the government's mismanagement on Raksha Bandhan has increased the problems for the sweets industry. These problems could have been mitigated by a timely decision by the administration about opening of shops, he said.



Sweets worth around ₹10,000 crore were sold across the country on Raksha Bandhan last year. This figure is expected to come down to around ₹5,000 crore this time as the purchasing power of the customers is already affected due to the economic crisis arising out of COVID-19

FEROZ H NAQVI | DIRECTOR, FEDERATION OF SWEETS AND NAMKEEN MANUFACTURERS

makers can prepare accordingly.

Meanwhile, Indore's district administration in an order issued late Saturday, citing instructions received from the state government regarding the festival of Raksha Bandhan, said that sweets-namkeen shops besides those selling puja items can be opened Sunday.

However, in an order earlier Wednesday, the administration had clarified that according to the instructions of the state government, the Sunday curfew will remain enforced in the district August 2 and normal business activities will not be allowed.

There is a lockdown across the state on Sundays to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

But local politicians were constantly demanding that shops should be allowed to open in Indore on this Sunday due to festival-related needs.

PRIORITY PLANS

Trai poses more questions to Airtel, Voda Idea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 2: Not satisfied with responses submitted by Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea on priority plans, regulator Trai has shot off additional "technical" queries to both the telcos and asked them to explain their stand August 4, a source said.



The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) wants the two companies to substantiate their claims that the contentious priority offerings, which are under the regulator's lens, have neither deteriorated experience of other network users nor violated any norms.

Another source said that Bharti Airtel has been asked over two dozen questions, including if limits for data speeds have been set for platinum and non-platinum users, and about the levels of throughput for platinum users. Trai sent out fresh set of questions to both Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea on July 31, and the operators have been asked to respond to the questions on August 4.

E-mails sent to Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea did not elicit a response.

AGARBATTI PRODUCTION

Gadkari approves scheme to make India 'self-reliant'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 2: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has approved an employment generation programme proposed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission to make India self-reliant in agarbatti production through the use of locally-made machines by manufacturers and trained workers.



The 'Khadi Agarbatti Aatmanirbhar Mission' aims at creating employment for the unemployed and migrant workers in different parts of the country, hand-holding artisans and supporting the local agarbatti industry.

The current consumption of agarbatti in the country is approximately 1,490 MT per day. However, per day production of agarbatti in India is just 760 MT. The deficit is met through imports primarily from China and Vietnam.

HEALTH INFRA

AIIB in talks with govt for financing \$8bn scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 2: The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is in discussion with the Indian government for financing an \$8-billion scheme for improving health infrastructure at the district level to make the country better prepared for the future healthcare challenges.

The Beijing-based multilateral funding agency had earlier approved a financial assistance of \$1.2 billion for India to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The Government of India has discussed about its ambitious scheme of strengthening the health infrastructure. It entails building health infrastructure in every district including upgrading of testing facilities with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)," AIIB Vice President DJ Pandian said.



FIGHTING COVID

The Beijing-based multilateral funding agency had earlier approved a financial assistance of \$1.2 billion for India

The World Bank and ADB are also involved in the discussion with the Health Department

For AIIB, India is the largest borrower, which accounts for 25% of the total lending by it so far

It is an \$8-billion project, he said, adding that the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) are also involved in the discussion with the Health Department of the Government of India. The Finance Ministry is trying to put up a financing plan for this ambitious scheme and the minute details are being worked out, he said. If things work out, the financing by the AIIB can be cleared this year itself on a fast-track basis, he added. With regard to COVID-19

assistance, Pandian said the AIIB has approved two loans of \$500 million and \$750 million, respectively.

The first loan of \$500 million sanctioned in May was towards building a resilient health system that can effectively treat COVID-19 patients and prevent its spread, he said.

A \$750 million loan was approved in June to help the government strengthen its battle against the adverse impact of COVID-19 on poor and vulnerable households.

'LIQUOR SALES DECLINE UP TO 60% IN MAY-JUNE'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 2: States which imposed more than 50% COVID-cess on liquor after the resumption of retail trade post lockdown witnessed an average 59% decline in sales in May and June due to higher tariffs, a report by trade association CIABC claimed.

States as Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, J&K and Pondicherry which had imposed a COVID-cess of 50% and above reported a decline of 66% in May and 51% in June compared to the year-ago period, the report by Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies said. While, states as Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Kerala and Jharkhand, which had imposed a COVID-cess between 15-50% reported an average decline of 34% in sales, the report stated. However, states where up to 15% ad-



ditional cess was imposed, witnessed only 16% decline in May and June, which includes Uttarakhnad, UP, Telangana, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Assam, Chandigarh (UT), Madhya Pradesh, Goa and Punjab.

While Pan India, there was a decline of 25% and 15% respectively in May and June this year, totalling to 4.37 crore cases. It was 5.87 crore cases in 2019 in the same month. After the retail sales of liquor were resumed after six weeks of closure in May, several state governments facing shortage of financial resources imposed a higher tax on alcoholic beverages.

NITI Aayog suggests creation of Dak Bank

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 2: In a bid to further deepen financial inclusion in the country, the NITI Aayog has suggested the creation of a Dak Bank (postal bank) by merging the regional rural banks, among other recommendations to the government.

In a recent presentation to the Prime Minister's Office and the Finance Ministry, the NITI Aayog has suggested the over 1.5 lakh post offices in the country should be made outlets for the proposed Dak Bank, sources said.

Further, the think tank has also suggested easier norms for granting bank licenses.

In another major recommendation, it has suggested privatisation of three banks, Punjab & Sind Bank, UCO Bank and the Bank of Maharashtra, said people in the know.

The suggestion comes at a time when a new disinvestment policy is in the works and the government is already considering bringing the banking and insurance sec-



tor under its ambit.

The likelihood of the government going for privatisation of public sector banks has also drawn criticism and protests for bank workers' unions.

In the banking space, with the latest merger of public sector banks coming into effect in April, India currently has 12 public sector banks, down from 27 in 2017.

During the announcement of the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' economic package in May, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said that the Centre will come up with a new Public Sector Enterprise Policy, and open up all the sectors to the private sector.

BIZ BUZZ

ByteDance agrees to divest TikTok's US ops

New York/Washington: China's ByteDance has agreed to divest the US operations of TikTok completely in a bid to save a deal with the White House, after President Donald Trump said on Friday he had decided to ban the popular short-video app, two people familiar with the matter said Saturday. US officials have said TikTok under its Chinese parent poses a national risk because of the personal data it handles. ByteDance's concession will test whether Trump's threat to ban TikTok is a negotiating tactic, or whether he is intent on cracking down on a social media app that boasts it has 100 million users in the United States. Trump told reporters onboard Air Force One late Friday that he would issue an order for TikTok to be banned in the United States as early as Saturday.



BSNL rolls out 'Bharat Air Fibre' in Maha

New Delhi: State-run BSNL Sunday launched 'Bharat Air Fibre' services at Akola in Maharashtra allowing the residents of Akola and Washim districts to get wireless internet connections on demand. The service is part of the Centre's 'Digital India' initiative which aims to provide wireless connectivity in the range of 20 km from the BSNL locations benefitting people in the remote areas. The air fibre service was inaugurated by Sanjay Dhotre, Union Minister of State for Communications and IT. BSNL is providing the "Bharat Air Fibre Services" through local business partners of BSNL from Akola and Washim districts and these services will give fastest internet connectivity in quick time, said an official statement.

Fitch cuts US credit outlook to "negative"

Washington: Fitch Ratings, a US credit rating agency, said that it has lowered the country's economic outlook to "negative" from "stable" due to high budget deficits, but kept its overall rating at the highest "AAA" level. The downgrade is due to the ongoing deterioration in the US public finances and the absence of a credible fiscal consolidation plan amid the COVID-19 pandemic, said Fitch Ratings in a statement, Xinhua news agency reported Saturday. "There is a growing risk that US policymakers will not consolidate public finances sufficiently to stabilize public debt after the pandemic has passed," said the statement. Fitch expected the US economy to contract by 5.6% in 2020 and recover by 4% in 2021, with the massive fiscal policy response averting a deeper downturn, according to the statement.

This monsoon, boost financial immunity against diseases

Every year we look forward to monsoons as a source of relief from the scorching heat. But this year's monsoon is a bit different. Given the pandemic, looms a fear of getting infected by the virus, the spread of which might increase during the humid rainy season. Not only COVID, but monsoons are also a season where a host of other communicable diseases, either vector borne like Malaria, Dengue etc. or the ones spread through exposure to contaminated water like typhoid, jaundice etc. are on a rise. As a doctor I would suggest one to work towards boosting immunity against such diseases and take on a preventive stance by putting proper hygiene checks in place.

But as a financial advisor, I would urge considering investing in a financial safety net against the treatment costs that one may incur, in case of an infection. This is where a health insurance

policy should roll into our budget plans. A health insurance pays up in the wake of a health emergency by taking care of one's hospitalisation and treatment expenses. There are several options to choose from, which can be broadly classified under the below two categories:

360 DEGREE PROTECTION FOR INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY

In case of any infection claims, there are many expenses like investigations, consultations, medicines etc. prior to hospitalisations and even after discharge. Including the above expenses the average cost of hospitalizations due to infections is in the range of 40,000 - 50,000. In the current pandemic situation, we have noted



RASHMI NANDARGI

In the current pandemic situation, we have noted that the hospitalisation expenses are further more due to higher sanitisation & investigation expenses. Without any insurance cover this would be an added expense in this economically challenging situation

that the hospitalization expenses are further more due to higher sanitisation & investigation expenses etc. Without any insurance cover this would be an added expense in this economically challenging situation. Basic health insurance policies take care of all the hospitalisation, pre & post hospitalisation expenses. There are a range of policies that are available and we must choose what fits our requirements in terms of the treatment costs that we might incur.

DISEASE/INFECTION SPECIFIC COVERS

In our internal data trends we saw 82.3% growth in monsoon related ailments last year. Furthermore, viral fevers are on the rise and have increased manifold in past 2-3 years while claims for dengue seeing an increase of by almost 100%. These are staggering figures and the absence of a health insurance protection means that all these expenses will be incurred directly by the patient through personal savings or by relying on friends or family

for help. Insurers today have disease specific covers that indemnify in case of one gets diagnosed with any of these diseases. That is to say, upon paying a one-time nominal premium, the insurer pays the coverage that one has opted for upfront post contracting the disease.

In the current times when a health crisis is looming on our heads, let's be proactive in terms of securing not only our hygiene but also our financial safety nets. A health insurance ensures us a life of dignity in the wake of a financial emergency in terms of hospitalization and related expenses and hence is an ideal tool to invest in. What masks are to us, a good insurance is to our pockets - both an ideal protection as well as a social security tool. Let's stay insured, and stay protected! (Dr Rashmi Nandargi, Head - Retail Health Underwriting, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance)

SHORT TAKES

1st home loss for Juve in two years

Turin: Serie A champions Juventus suffered their first home league defeat for over two years when they finished the season Saturday by losing 1-3 against AS Roma. The Turin side were last beaten on their own ground in a Serie A match by Napoli in April 2018. However, the loss did not dent their title hopes. Juventus rested several regulars including Cristiano Ronaldo but went ahead with a Gonzalo Higuain goal in the fifth minute. Nikola Kalinic headed Roma level and Diego Perotti put the visitors ahead from a penalty before half time. Perotti added the third in the 52nd minute following a dazzling run by Nicolò Zaniolo.

Fan favourite

New Delhi: Indian captain Sunil Chhetri has been voted as the favourite player of the AFC Asian Cup 2019, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) said Sunday. The Indian player edged out Eldor Shomurodov of Uzbekistan in the final by a 51-49 per cent margin of votes in a fan poll conducted by the AFC. "19 days, 561,856 votes. The #AsianCup2019 favourite player has been decided. Congratulations Sunil Chhetri!" said AFC in its tweet announcing the result. The 35-year-old Chhetri scored twice during the group stage of the Asian Cup last season. He got both his goals in the game against Thailand which India won 4-1.

Kyrgios pulls out

Sydney: Nick Kyrgios has withdrawn from the US Open because of concerns over the coronavirus and in honour of the 'hundreds and thousands of Americans' who have died from COVID-19. The Australian announced his decision in an Instagram post Sunday. The US Open tennis tournament is scheduled for August 31 to September 13. "I will not be playing this year at the US Open. I'm sitting out for the people, for my Aussies, for the hundreds and thousands of Americans that have lost their lives, for all of you. It's my decision," Kyrgios said in the Instagram video. Women's World No. 1 Ashleigh Barty has also opted out of the Flushing Meadows Grand Slam event.

Name proposed

Mumbai: Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) Apex Council member Nadim Memon has demanded that three blocks of the north stand at the Wankhede Stadium here should be named after former India captain Dilip Vengsarkar. "My proposal (to) name north-stand A,B,C blocks in the name of Dilip Vengsarkar our Mumbai cricketer, played for India in 116 Test matches and captain, played for Mumbai..." Memon wrote in an e-mail sent to MCA president Vijay Patil and all Apex Council members. "It will be an honour and respect to the cricketer of Mumbai," added Memon. Currently, two stands of the Wankhede Stadium are named after batting greats Sunil Gavaskar and Sachin Tendulkar.

Support for boss

London: Gianni Infantino can remain FIFA president and should not be forced from power while under criminal investigation, the world football's governing body said Sunday. A Swiss special prosecutor opened a criminal case into Infantino's conduct Thursday over his meetings with the country's attorney general who has been leading a sprawling investigation into football corruption. "There is nothing preventing the president from performing his duties," FIFA said in a statement. "He will continue to fully assume his functions within FIFA," it added.

Good show

Silverstone: India's Jehan Daruvala jumped six places in an action-packed final three laps to finish fourth in the sprint race here Sunday, his best result so far in the FIA Formula 2 Championship. It was a much-needed result for Daruvala, who had to endure slow starts in the earlier races due to clutch issues. In the sprint race, Daruvala started 12th on the grid.

ARSENAL WIN FA CUP FOR RECORD-EXTENDING 14TH TIME, QUALIFY FOR EUROPA LEAGUE

Glory for Gunners

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, August 2: The only time Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang looked uncertain was when it came to collecting the FA Cup. Two goals from the forward had turned around the final for Arsenal. They sealed a 2-1 victory Saturday over Chelsea in the first FA Cup final to be staged without fans.

Aubameyang had to pick up the trophy himself on the field as captain. Taking the base as well, no wonder Aubameyang

dropped it. "I saw him walking with the bottom bit attached," Arsenal defender Rob Holding said "and I was like, 'You need to take that off!'"

Winning the record-extending 14th FA Cup does at least give Arsenal a spot in the Europa League, after missing out on qualifying through the Premier League after an eighth-place finish. Never before had the FA Cup final been staged in August, and never before without fans.

Chelsea's celebrations in the night were short-lived. It had been the dream start for Christian Pulisic, who has been a revelation since the three-month shutdown of football ended in June. Set up by Olivier Giroud's back-heeled flick, Pulisic slotted in from close range after five minutes for his 11th goal in all competitions. The American emulated compatriot Carli Lloyd,

who netted in the Women's FA Cup final in 2017 for Manchester City. While

Lloyd got to pick up the trophy after a 4-1 victory over Birmingham, this showpiece ended in agony for Pulisic. He pulled up a minute into the second half with a hamstring injury, shouting in pain. He had to be helped off the pitch, with

support either side while he grimaced.

By that time Arsenal was already level. Aubameyang had been dragged down by Chelsea captain Cesar Azpilicueta before equalising from the penalty spot in the 28th minute. A year into this pandemic-disrupted, longest-ever English season, Azpilicueta hobbled off injured in tears before half time.

With Chelsea unsettled by the injuries to Azpilicueta and Pulisic, the Gunners took control and Aubameyang chipped goalkeeper Willy Caballero from close range in the 67th. "We allowed him in easily,"

2 Chelsea players out

London: Chelsea manager Frank Lampard conceded that skipper Cesar Azpilicueta and winger Christian Pulisic won't be fit for their UEFA Champions League clash against Bayern Munich next weekend. The Premier League club had lost the first leg 0-3. Both players suffered injuries during the FA Cup final defeat at the hands of Arsenal. "On the injuries, Lampard says Azpi and Pulisic have hamstring strains which need scanning but they won't be fit for next weekend," Chelsea's Twitter post read.

Chelsea manager Frank Lampard said. "He is a top-class player and the second goal is the sort of speed and quality from a player of his level. Moments like that from Aubameyang obviously finish you off," he added.



Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang



SHINING STARS: Arsenal footballers rejoice with the FA Cup after winning the final beating Chelsea, Saturday

IPL cannot change Dhoni's aura: Nehra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 2: Mahendra Singh Dhoni at this year's IPL can be a talking point but the tournament cannot be a selection trial for the enigmatic former India captain, according to former India pacer Ashish Nehra.

Dhoni has retired from Test cricket and has not played for the country in the limited overs format since last year's World Cup, where India ended semifinalists. Dhoni's comeback and retirement has been a matter of intense speculation. His much-awaited comeback is expected to be with CSK at the upcoming IPL.

"For me, MS Dhoni's game never came down," Nehra said on a TV chat show. He knows how to run the team, he knows how to push youngsters forward. All these things I don't need to repeat. However, I don't think this IPL will make any difference in Dhoni's stature or his aura as a player," said the 41-year-old Nehra, who played 17 Tests and 120 ODIs. "I don't think a tournament like the IPL should be Dhoni's

Best MSD moment for opener Rohit

New Delhi: India's white-ball vice-captain Rohit Sharma has said that his most special moment with wicket-keeper-batsman Mahendra Singh Dhoni remains when he hit his first ODI double century. Rohit scored the first of his three ODI double tons November 2, 2013 in Bangalore against Australia. "Best moment with MS (Dhoni) was my first double hundred, he was batting with me and we had a long partnership," said Rohit in a video that he tweeted as part of a question and answer session on Twitter with fans on the occasion of 'Friendship Day'.

selection criteria, it's probably just a talking point."

Nehra said Dhoni would remain the first choice of any captain, if he is available.

"If you're a selector, you're a captain, you're a coach and Dhoni...if he is ready to play, he will be my number one name on the list," Nehra asserted.

Hamilton races to victory in British GP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Southampton, August 2: Lewis Hamilton held firm to win the British Grand Prix here Sunday despite a puncture on the last lap. It was Hamilton's 87th career win and the triumph helped him move within four of Michael Schumacher's Formula One (F1) record.

The championship leader's record-extending seventh Silverstone win saw him finish six seconds ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen, who unexpectedly moved up a place after Hamilton's Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas sustained a puncture with three laps left.

With Hamilton so far ahead, Verstappen went in for a tyre change in a bid to gain an extra point for the fastest lap but that pit stop ultimately cost him victory because Hamilton's front left shredded with half a lap to go. Verstappen swallowed up most of the 25-second gap but ran out of time. Charles Leclerc finished third for Ferrari.

When his tyre melted, Bottas had to come back for a tyre change and dropped out of the points altogether into 11th spot and 30 points behind Hamilton in the title race.

WRESTLING AT THE 2021 OLYMPICS

Bajrang predicts good show

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, August 2: Asian Games gold medalist Bajrang Punia is confident of Indian wrestlers performing well and winning medals at the Tokyo Olympics next year. The Olympics scheduled for this year has been postponed to 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The star grappler said India's performances at the World Championships showed wrestlers are in good form.

"I think we will win three to four medals from wrestling in the Tokyo Olympics. The World Championship is a tougher tournament than the Olympics but we performed well there. So I think Indian wrestlers are in top form which makes them strong contenders for a medal haul in Tokyo," Bajrang said during an online chat show.

Along with Bajrang (bronze, 65kg), Deepak Punia (silver, 86kg), Vinesh Phogat (bronze, 53kg) and Ravi Kumar Dahiya (bronze, 57kg) also won medals at the 2019 World

Wrestling Championships in Kazakhstan. In the process they qualified for the Tokyo Games.

The 26-year-old Bajrang said he would have lived a normal village life if he had not pursued wrestling.

He also rated his first World Championship medal as the most memorable accolade of his career so far.



Bajrang Punia

The 65kg category is the toughest segment in the world. There are very good wrestlers in this group. They can overcome anyone on their day

BAJRANG PUNIA

The Haryana boy had an impressive outing at the 2013 World Championships where he won bronze at the age of 19.

Bajrang is aware about the competition around when he will be at the Tokyo Olympics. "I feel 65kg is the toughest category in the world. There is no wrestler who has successively won World Championships titles or Olympics gold medals. There is always a new champion in every edition. There are strong wrestlers in this category who can beat anyone on their day," informed Bajrang.

LOCKDOWN EFFECTS HAVE HIT THE SPORT OF SWIMMING BADLY, SAY TOKYO HOPEFULS

Swimmers suffer mental agony due to closed pools

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 2: Their resumption of training still on hold due to government guidelines, elite Indian swimmers have said the continued restrictions on use of pools will not only affect their performance in the next few years but is also taking a toll on their mental health.

Swimmers in India have not entered the pools since March 25. The latest Ministry of Home Affairs guidelines on the third phase of easing lockdown restrictions still prohibited the use of swimming



pools till August 31.

Srihari Nataraj, who achieved the 'B' qualification mark last year in the 100m backstroke event with a national record 54.69 seconds said this forced break has pushed back the careers of swimmers by almost a year. He said the effects of which will be felt in the Tokyo Olympics and the next Asian Games.

"Had we been training, all of us would have made substantial

progress. Now it's going to take us at least 3-4 months to make the same amount of progress, setting us back by almost an entire year," Nataraj said. The 19-year-old needs to bring his timing down to 53.85 seconds to be sure of a Tokyo Olympics spot. He said he could have achieved the time if he was training.

Kushagra Rawat, who also achieved the 'B' qualification mark in the three events of 400m, 800m and

1500m freestyle, said the lack of training opportunities was also affecting the Indian swimmers mentally. "Swimming pools have opened all over the world, so it keeps playing on our mind that they (who have started training) have improved their timings while we haven't even been in a pool for four months," Rawat pointed out.

The Swimming Federation of India (SFI) has been asking for permission for the Olympic hopefuls to resume training since May, but to no avail.

Nataraj, Virbhawal Khade, Sajan Prakash, Rawat, Aryan Makhija and Advait Page are the six swimmers who have achieved the 'B' qualification mark in their respective events for the Olympics and are aiming for the 'A' standard.

Out of them, Prakash and Makhija have been lucky enough to resume training as they are abroad. However, Nataraj, Rawat and Khade do not have any plans to go outside for training.

'Bhoomi puja' for shuttlers' centre done

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 2: The government of Odisha is keen to promote the sport of badminton and make India a powerhouse in the sport. Now to spread the sport of badminton across Odisha, the state government in association with chief national coach Pullela Gopichand and Dalmia Cement (Bharat) will be setting up a Badminton High Performance Centre with eight courts inside the Kalinga Stadium.

The facility which will be built at a cost of ₹45 crore will have all modern facilities and will be capable of hosting national and international events.

The 'bhoomi puja' for the centre was performed Sunday in presence of officials from Department of Sports and Youth Services, Odisha. The centre will also have boarding and lodging facility for 40 players and eight coaches. It will also have a sitting capacity of 500 spectators.

THE BADMINTON CENTRE WILL HAVE 8 COURTS
THERE WILL BE ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE FOR 40 PLAYERS AND 8 COACHES
THE CENTRE WILL BE BUILT AT A COST OF ₹45 CRORE

"India's sporting landscape has been changing for the better. It's heartening to see people taking sports as a full-time career. As a corporate committed to all round development of the nation. So we are honoured to work in line with the vision of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to project Odisha on the international badminton map. We are also thankful to Shri Pullela Gopichand for his immense guidance, support and meticulous planning, which will help us tap into the immense talent pool," a company official said in a release Sunday.