



MISSING IN ACTION

Actor Rakul Preet Singh wants to go back to work as she misses being goofy on the sets

LEISURE P2



CURFEW ACROSS VALLEY

A curfew was imposed across the Valley ahead of the first anniv of revocation of J&K's special status

TWO STATES P7



ISAIAS FEAR

Tropical storm Isaias spawns tornadoes and dumps rain during an inland march up US East Coast

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I know brilliant excuses to avoid office and stay at home. Help me with the excuses to avoid work from home.

CM seeks 1-min silence today

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday appealed to people to join him in silent prayer to be organized at 6 pm Wednesday to boost the morale of Covid warriors who work day and night to protect lives of people from the virus. The humanity is going through one of the toughest situations since time immemorial. The pandemic has challenged the human race like never before and every country is facing a serious situation, he said. Stating that India has more than 50,000 cases every day, he said, "it is the highest daily addition by any country in the world." P3

12-year-old saves girl from suicide

Malkangiri: A 12-year-old orphan boy in Malkangiri has become a hero overnight after saving a minor girl from drowning. Bulu Muduli belongs to a tribal community from Balimela town. The girl tried to kill herself after she failed in Class X examination. She went to a bridge near Balimela Power House to commit suicide by jumping into the river. Bulu was passing through the bridge on a cycle and found a crowd. Bulu spotted the girl struggling in the river to stay afloat. Without wasting any time, he jumped into the river. P5

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VAIATION	
SENSEX	37687.91	↑	748.31
NIFTY	11095.30	↑	203.70
DOLLAR	75.28	↓	₹0.15
EURO	88.21	↓	₹0.26
GOLD	₹54,318	↑	₹321
SILVER	₹68,388	↑	₹2640

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP. MAX	30.6°C	31.6°C	
TEMP. MIN	25.3°C	24.4°C	
Humidity	98%	97%	Forecast
Rainfall	21.7mm	13mm	Generally cloudy sky

Outsiders to be barred from Ayodhya today

AYODHYA IS SUPERBLY DECKED UP FOR 'BHOOMI PUJAN' TO BE ATTENDED BY A SELECT LIST OF 175 PEOPLE

AGENCIES

Ayodhya, August 4: Police barricades, yellow banners, walls with a fresh coat of paint and the sounds of bhajan mark parts of Ayodhya as the city awaits its big day Wednesday, when the first brick will be laid for the Ram temple.

Ayodhya is decked up for the bhoomi puja that will be attended at the Ram Janmabhoomi by 175 people, who figure in a select guest list of seers and politicians topped by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Concerned over the spread of coronavirus, the authorities are encouraging others not to come to the temple town, asking them to mark the occasion by celebrating at their homes. The groundbreaking ceremony

will be telecast live.

Roads leading to Ayodhya display hoardings with the picture of the proposed Ram temple and of Ram Lalla, the infant Ram, the deity now housed in a makeshift temple.

Around the town's Hanumanagarhi area - named after a well-known temple which Modi will visit Wednesday - both police sirens and 'bhajans' in praise of Ram are heard.

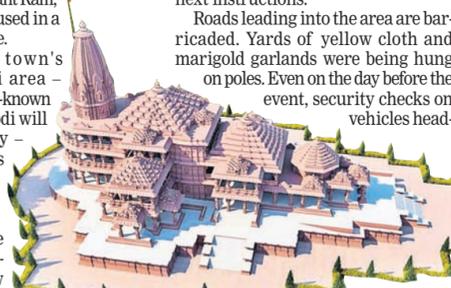
Most of the shops in the locality wear a new

look, with their fronts painted in bright yellow. A large number of policemen were deployed there Tuesday. Some sat in the sweet shops, waiting for their next instructions.

Roads leading into the area are barricaded. Yards of yellow cloth and marigold garlands were being hung on poles. Even on the day before the event, security checks on vehicles head-

ing to Ayodhya begin from adjoining Barabanki district itself on the Lucknow-Ayodhya road. Policemen take down details, including mobile numbers of the travellers.

Senior Superintendent of Police Deepak Kumar said the focus of the force is on maintaining the COVID-19 protocol. "So we are not going to allow any outsider to enter Ayodhya city," he said. Prohibitory orders are also in force and not more than four people will be allowed to gather. "The markets and shops will remain open but with strict adherence to the COVID protocol," he said. Outsiders will be stopped from entering the city, but Ayodhya residents will be allowed in if they produce any identification document.



Vivo, IPL set to part ways

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 4: Chinese mobile phone company Vivo is likely to pull out as the Indian Premier League's (IPL) title sponsor for this year and is in talks with the BCCI for an 'amicable separation' amid rising Sino-India diplomatic tensions.

The one year pullout could be treated as a moratorium period and if the relations improve, BCCI may look at inking a fresh three-year deal with the company from 2021 to 2023 on revised terms. The IPL will be played in the UAE from September 19 to November 10 this year.

"Yes, the discussions are on between BCCI office-bearers (president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah) with the representatives of the company. There is a possibility that Vivo will not be title sponsors for one year," a senior BCCI official told this agency on conditions of anonymity.

Chinese sponsorship became a bone of contention after the BCCI declared it will review the deals following the violent clashes between the armies of both the countries in eastern Ladakh.

The clash, which led to the killing of 20 Indian soldiers, triggered public outrage and led to calls of boycotting Chinese companies and products. While the IPL Governing Council Sunday retained all the sponsors, including Vivo which annually pays ₹440 crore (approximately) as part of a five-year deal lasting till 2022, there is a strong possibility that the company might part ways for a year.

The Board official, the agency spoke to, said that whenever a decision is taken, it will be amicable and the BCCI is not looking at encashing the bank guarantee.



Questions were raised on retention of Chinese sponsors even as the Centre banned close to 60 Chinese apps

Vivo pays an annual ₹440 crore (approximately) as part of a five-year deal lasting till 2022

"In different circumstances, if the sponsors don't keep commitment, BCCI can encash the bank guarantee which it had earlier done in case of errant franchisees. But here, both parties are looking at an amicable escape route," the official said.

There were questions raised on the BCCI's decision to retain Chinese sponsors even as the union government banned close to 60 Chinese apps and social media platforms.

"These are sensitive times and need a cautious approach. Once you had said that you will review sponsorship and then did nothing about it, would raise a question mark over your intent on dealing with the Chinese companies," the official said.

The BCCI is already in talks with a couple of Indian companies who are believed to be interested in a short-term sponsorship deal - one year period.

"It will be difficult to make up the full amount (Rs 440 crore) in such a short time with the tournament being held overseas. Also, there won't be much traction in an empty stadium. But we will come to that once VIVO officially quits," he said.

Imran unveils new map with J&K as part of Pak

AGENCIES

Islamabad, August 4: On the eve of the first anniversary of the revocation of the contentious Article 370 and Article 35A, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan unveiled a new political map which includes the UT of J&K as part of Pakistan Tuesday. Khan has decided to present the new political map at the United Nations as well.

The Imran Khan cabinet approved the new map in which the complete Jammu and Kashmir is shown integrated with Pakistan. The illegal map shows J&K as "Indian illegally occupied J&K - disputed territory - final status to be decided in line with relevant UNSC resolutions." Thereby cocking a snook at the Govt of India.

"This is the most historic day in Pakistan's history," he said while addressing a news conference after chairing the meeting of

federal cabinet, which approved the new map Tuesday. Khan said Pakistan has launched a political map which shows the whole Kashmir region, including "Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir" as part of his country's territory.

In the press conference, Khan said: "Today is a historic day we have launched a new political map of Pakistan which is as per the aspirations of the entire nation as well as the people of Kashmir."

He also said the new map is backed by all political parties of the country. "This map also opposes the Indian government's illegal act of August 5 last year," the prime minister said. "The settlement of Kashmir dispute only lies in the UN Security Council resolutions." Pakistan will continue to make efforts for the people of Kashmir," said Khan adding that the dispute can only be resolved through political means not military.



Man badly beaten up, tonsured, forced to drink urine in Bhadrak

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, August 4: A 35-year-old man was allegedly thrashed, tonsured and forced to drink urine over an old enmity at a village in Odisha's Bhadrak district, police said Tuesday.

Bhadrak District Collector Gyanranjan Das ordered a thorough probe into the incident after the man's wife lodged a complaint.

Such actions are unacceptable in any civilised society. I have asked the officials concerned to conduct a thorough inquiry, he said. Das said he has directed the sub-collector of Bhadrak Pitambar Samal to probe the incident that took place in Baunsbag village in the Thihidi police station area. Police said they are also investigating the matter.

While the incident took place on



Wife and children of the victim

July 29, the wife of the victim filed a police complaint Monday, inspector-in-charge of Thihidi Ramesh Chandra Singh said.

As per the complaint, some miscreants dragged the man out of his house and physically assaulted

him. Thereafter, they tonsured him and also paraded him in the village putting a garland of shoes around his neck, he said. When the hapless man begged for some water, some of the miscreants urinated on his face and forced him to drink it, as per the FIR lodged by police. His wife further alleged that some villagers also assaulted her and snatched the gold ornaments she was wearing, police said.

Singh said a criminal case has been registered against 17 persons but no arrest has been made so far. While an investigation is in progress to ascertain the circumstances that led to the incident, the preliminary inquiry showed it was triggered by an old enmity, he said. Samal said the inquiry ordered by the District Collector is underway to establish the sequence of events.

Pradhan tests Covid positive



POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, August 4: Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Tuesday tested positive for coronavirus and has been admitted to Medanta Hospital.

In a tweet, Pradhan said he has been admitted to hospital after testing positive of COVID-19. Pradhan, 51, had developed COVID-like symptoms Monday and was tested Tuesday.

"After seeing symptoms of COVID-19, I got tested. The report has come positive," he tweeted. "On the advice of doctors, I have been admitted to hospital and I am healthy."

Sources said Pradhan had last week met Home Minister Amit Shah, who was admitted to Medanta Sunday after testing positive of coronavirus.

His staff too had earlier tested positive and has been isolation since. Pradhan is one of the several high-profile names to have tested positive.

Others include Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yeddyurappa and former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit has also been diagnosed with the infection and is being treated at privately-owned Kauvery Hospital.

Trump signs order against hiring H-1B visa holders

AGENCIES

Washington, August 4: In another huge blow to Indian IT professionals eyeing the US job market, President Donald Trump has signed an executive order asking federal agencies to hire Americans and preventing them from contracting or subcontracting foreign workers, mainly those with H-1B visas.

The move came over a month after the Trump administration June 23 suspended the H-1B visas along with other types of foreign work visas until the end of 2020 to protect American workers in a crucial election year.

The H-1B visa, most sought-after among Indian IT professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign work-

ers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

"Today I am signing an executive order to ensure that the federal government lives by a very simple rule, hire American," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office of the White House Monday before signing the order against hiring H-1B visa holders for federal contracts.

Trump told reporters that his administration will not tolerate firing of hardworking Americans in the pursuit of cheap foreign labour. "As we speak, we're finalising the H-1B regulation so that no American workers are replaced ever again. H-1B should be used for top highly



paid talent to create American jobs, not as inexpensive labour programmes and destroy American jobs," said Trump, who was surrounded across the Cabinet Room table with individuals campaigning against job outsourcing. Prominent among them were

Sara Blackwell, founder and president of Florida-based Protect US Workers organisation; Jonathan Hicks, a software engineer in the Tennessee Valley Authority; and Kevin Lynn, founder of Pennsylvania-based US Tech Workers. The H-1B visa has an annual numerical limit cap of 65,000 visas each fiscal year as mandated by the Congress. The first 20,000 petitions filed on behalf of beneficiaries with a US master's degree or higher are exempt from the cap.

The executive order requires all federal agencies to complete an internal audit within 120 days and assess whether they are in compliance with the requirement that only US citizens and nationals are appointed to the competitive service. As a result, the Department of

Labour will also finalise guidelines to prevent H-1B employers from moving H-1B workers to other employers' job sites to displace American workers. Trump's order follows the federally-owned Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) announcement that it will outsource 20 per cent of its technology jobs to companies based in foreign countries.

TVA's action could cause more than 200 highly-skilled American tech workers in Tennessee to lose their jobs to low-wage, foreign workers hired on temporary work visas, the president said.

Outsourcing hundreds of workers is especially detrimental in the middle of a pandemic, which has already cost millions of Americans their jobs, the White

House said in a statement.

Given the current climate of rampant intellectual property theft, outsourcing IT jobs that involve sensitive information could pose a national security risk, it said. According to the White House, Trump's actions will help combat employers' misuse of H-1B visas, which were never intended to replace qualified American workers with low-cost foreign labour.

One of the participants present during the signing of the order told the president that as many as 70 per cent of the H-1B visa goes to people from India.

leisure



JIM CARREY ADMIRES RAPPER KANYE WEST

The *Mask* actor Jim Carrey says rapper Kanye West is one of the great characters of our zeitgeist. Carrey opened up about his admiration for West in an episode of *Real Time with Bill Maher*, reports *people.com*.

HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A FEMINIST: CATE BLANCHETT

Hollywood star Cate Blanchett says feminism is all about equality, adding that true power lies in bringing up other people. "I've always identified as a feminist but I was also a part of the anti-wave against it in the mid-eighties and during the nineties," Blanchett said.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

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

TAURUS
Nostalgia will paint your workplace a bright energetic red today, says Ganesh. All the problems that life throws at you will be deflected by your tough exterior and efficient capabilities. Medals and trophies beckon as you taste success and emerge a winner.

GEMINI
Putting things in order will be your top priority, says Ganesh. You will possibly have a romantic dinner with your sweetheart. Seductive conversations may culminate in sensuous consumption. Your personal feelings will stir up your partner's private thoughts.

CANCER
You think you are smart. You will be most certainly savouring the positive aspects of your life. Sometimes, it is quite possible that you find yourself at the end of your wits. You had better sit together with your spouse and thrash out personality clashes and private quarrels, suggests Ganesh.

LEO
A moment once lost is not going to come back. So, it's about time you realised the value of time, says Ganesh, because time is money. On this day, set everything to a schedule and figure out your tasks right down to the brass tacks.

VIRGO
A sudden bend in the journey of life is important to understand it better, says Ganesh. Excellence will drone on throughout the day today. Top on the list are money matters and your loved ones – not necessarily in that order! Much of your time may be spent in appeasing the Gods.

LIBRA
Get a bigger wallet, since it is very likely that today shall prove to be a money-making day for you. It might be through some sort of a partnership deal that this may happen, predicts Ganesh. Destiny lends you a helping hand and guides you in your goals. But it is your sentiments that may darken your thoughts today.

SCORPIO
It is high time you diverted all your energies towards your object of love, advises Ganesh. Research-oriented work could well be an option too. Ganesh says you are likely to find someone special to talk about those good old times and have a great time.

SAGITTARIUS
Friendship with a few like-minded people is likely to develop today. You shall spend a large share of your time discussing issues like attitude, beliefs and values. Those with you will enjoy sharing their ideas and opinions, and casting them in a new mould.

CAPRICORN
Lack of confidence may leave you glum in the first half of the day, and to add to it, you will be loaded with work that you may have taken up from company other than the one employing you full time, says Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will understand the value of your job. You decide to do away with everything that has been hampering your work till now. You realise you need to set some long-term goals in your career. Grab the opportunity while the intention lasts, says Ganesh.

PISCES
Today is likely to be a day of mixed fortunes, says Ganesh. While a hectic morning and a positively frantic afternoon will see you at your wits' end, a sumptuous dinner with your sweetheart, followed by a sensuous evening, will delight you out of your mind.

Theatre doyen Ebrahim Alkazi no more

A WINNER OF ALL THREE PADMA AWARDS, THE LONGEST SERVING NSD DIRECTOR HAD MENTORED GENERATIONS OF ACTORS LIKE NASERUDDIN SHAH, OM PURI, UTTARA BAKAR AND ROHINI HATTANGADI

New Delhi: Considered the father of modern Indian theatre, Ebrahim Alkazi, the first Director of National School of Drama (NSD) breathed his last here Tuesday following a massive heart attack. He was 94.

An alumnus of Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA), London, Alkazi staged more than 50 plays during his distinguished career and won the BBC Broadcasting Award in 1950.

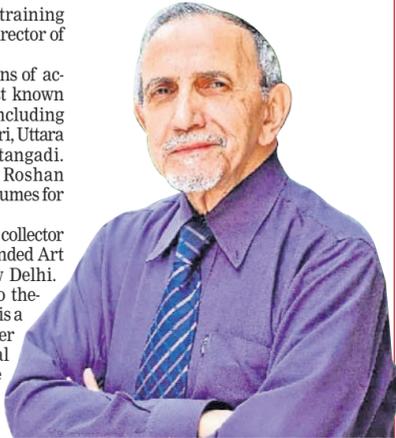
Some of the major plays directed by him include *Tuglaq* (Girish Karnad), *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* (Mohan Rakesh), Dharamvir Bharti's *Andha Yug* besides several Greek tragedies and Shakespeare's works.

Conferred with all three Padma honours, Alkazi was known to be a strict disciplinarian who provided

a blue print for theatre training during his years as the Director of NSD (1962-1977).

He mentored generations of actors and some of the best known talents in the country, including Naseeruddin Shah, Om Puri, Uttara Bakkar and Rohini Hattangadi. Alkazi was married to Roshan Alkazi, who designed costumes for his plays.

Also an art connoisseur, collector and gallery owner, he founded Art Heritage Gallery in New Delhi. His two children are also theatre artists. Amal Allana, is a theatre director and former Chairperson of National School of Drama while Feisal Alkazi too is a theatre director. IANS



Virtual viewers go gaga over multilingual nat'l theatre fest

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput: The three-day online theatre festival organised by Nandanik, a local theatre troupe here, to mark its sixth Foundation Day concluded Monday on a high note.

Even as a couple of webinars, attended by eminent theatre personalities, were conducted to celebrate the occasion, the dramas formed the main attraction of the festival. As many as eight plays in five Indian languages including *Terrorism* (Mime Drama) by Mimic, Kolkata, *Nayeeka* (Odia) by Nandanik, Koraput, *Dhruwaswamini* (Hindi) by Black Soil Theatre, Wardha, *Terav* (Marathi) by Adhyayan Bharati Agro Theatre, Maharashtra and *Bali* (Telugu) by Janapadam Travelling Repertory, Hyderabad were streamed at the festival



A scene from *Nayeeka*, a play based on Ramakant Rath's poems

in premiere mode through Nandanik's Facebook page and shared widely across

multiple platforms. All the dramas were appreciated by the audience for their content and presentation.

All the plays received huge virtual reach, the highest being 8,000 plus and lowest being 400 plus. "We are happy that even during such troubled times, performers from different states came together and supported the cause when theatre has become non-functional," said troupe's secretary Monideepa Gupta. "Online is not an alternative to real theatre, it can never be. But we wanted to create a vibration among theatre artists who are a depressed lot at the moment," said Nandanik's director Sourav Gupta.

Nila Madhab to promote libraries in movies

POST NEWS NETWORK

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha Library Academy, a non-profit making body that promotes library movements in the state, Tuesday conducted its 12th webinar on the theme – *Promoting libraries through movies*.

Several dignitaries including eminent filmmaker Nila Madhab Panda and Odia film actor Chandan Kar attended this virtual panel discussion session as resource persons. "There is a need to transform the traditional libraries into community centres," said Panda. The *I Am Kalam* director also strongly ad-

vocated for opening of small libraries in restaurants. Promising to promote libraries in his upcoming documentaries, the National Award winning film director asked people to visit libraries in large numbers to gain more knowledge instead of going to the temples. Kar, also an IT professional and a philanthropist, explained on how library plays a significant role in shaping one's career and developing the personality. Assuring to back Library and Information Science professionals, the actor urged the participants to make small video clips and post them on social media to promote library movement.

WHEN PREITY was 'scared' of Salman

Mumbai: Actress Preity Zinta has recalled that she was a bit scared of Salman Khan to begin with, and also in awe of the superstar.

The actress shared clips from the song *Aate jaate jo milta hai*, which was picturised on Salman and Preity for the 2000 film *Har Dil Jo Pyar Karega*.

"This is one of my favourite songs from one of my most favourite movies. Most favourite because I met my closest and dearest friend @beingsalmankhan during this shoot," wrote Preity. "I started this film a bit scared of him and in awe of him but finished it by falling in love with him and discovering a very precious friend. Thank you Sajid for making me a part of this incredible movie. #HarDilJoPyarKarega #friendsforever #ting."

Har Dil Jo Pyar Karega is a romantic comedy film directed by Raj Kanwar. The film also stars Rani Mukerji. On the acting front, Preity was

last seen on screen in the 2018 film *Bhaiaji Superhit*. The film marked her comeback after a seven-year break.



Rakul misses being goofy on sets

Mumbai: Actress Rakul Preet Singh wants to go back to work as she misses being goofy on the sets. She took to her Instagram stories, where she shared two clips of herself from her photoshoots. In the first video, Rakul is seen wearing a black lacy dress paired with black boots and a bag.

On the clip, she wrote: "Miss being goofy on set".

In the other video, the actress is seen posing in a stunning midnight blue ruffled long gown. She completed her look with a messy bun and a beautiful diamond neck piece.

"And then miss being poised and elegant," she wrote on the second clip.

She will be seen next in Kamal Haasan's ambitious upcoming film *Indian 2*, which co-stars Kajal Aggarwal and Siddharth.

FUN post

PEANUTS



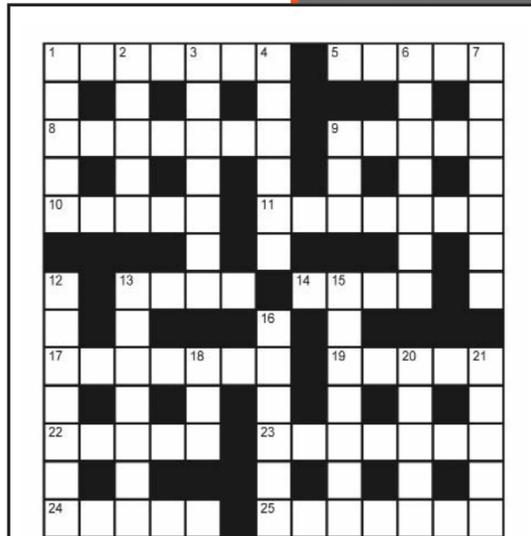
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD



- Across**
1 Forced
5 Mexican money
8 War paint
9 Blasé
10 One of the senses
11 Fibre source
13 Decant
14 Hockey score
17 Tiny detail
19 Evil one
- Down**
22 Speecify
23 Bulldozer
24 Retains
25 Pizza dough turnover
- Down**
1 Small extra-terrestrial body
2 Simplifies
3 Fedora
4 Large lizard
6 Resembling a dream
7 Equestrian gear
9 Cave dweller
12 Poisonous plant
13 Nom de plume (3,4)
15 Eccentric
16 Gulf of Riga locale
18 Water tester
20 Words to remember
21 Audacity

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

T	T	P	S	O	M
ORN	ATE	M	ADRID		
I	C	R	A	I	S
S	P	O	T	V	E
I	A	T	U	R	
Z	I	P	C	O	D
S	E	W	A		
T	O	G	A	S	
L	T	E	L	X	
P	A	T	H	E	T
T	E	U	O	D	
P	E	N	N	E	D
D	S	E	E	S	N

SUDOKU

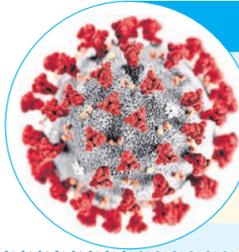
0	A	9	8	4	6	5	B	D	2	7	C	3	E	1
4	8	1	B	C	A	2	9	E	5	3	6	D	7	0
7	D	E	5	9	1	6	3	A	0	8	8	C	2	4
5	2	3	7	E	0	C	4	1	A	D	9	8	B	6
C	B	6	D	2	3	7	0	8	E	4	1	9	5	A
A	S	D	C	0	8	1	7	6	4	E	3	B	9	2
E	3	B	9	A	D	4	8	5	C	6	2	0	1	7
2	4	C	E	1	7	0	D	9	8	A	B	6	3	5
9	1	7	2	6	B	3	A	C	0	5	0	4	8	E
8	6	0	4	3	5	E	2	B	1	0	7	A	D	6
0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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



GYMS TO REOPEN TODAY

A gym in Bhubaneswar being sanitised thoroughly, Tuesday. The gyms are scheduled to reopen for people Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	1,85,44,759	1,17,63,539	6,99,812
India	18,56,708	12,31,554	38,984
Odisha	37,681	24,483	216

Railway Mail Service goes kaput

CHAITALI SHOME, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 4: The Railway Mail Service (RMS) here has remained dysfunctional for the last few days much to the inconvenience of people who want to send crucial official mails or parcels to their loved ones.

The speed post service under RMS, Bhubaneswar which is part of the India Post, developed technical glitches August 1, said RMS sources. Speaking to Orissa POST, Bhubaneswar RMS officer-in-charge, Ganesh Mahapatra, said, "There is a technical glitch that occurred last Saturday which causes booking problems in the speed post service. We have raised the issue with our technical partner TCS and it is up to them to rectify it. Currently, we are helpless. However, one can opt for speed post service at GPO (PMG) and Foreign Post and International Business Centre at Mancheswar and many other counters in the city."



The speed post counter of Bhubaneswar RMS found closed, Tuesday

Meanwhile, many are facing difficulties in postal communication as a crucial wing of India Post has gone kaput. Minati Swain, who reached the RMS for a speed post Tuesday, was disappointed with the state of affairs when she couldn't send some important documents to her sister at Karanjia in Mayurbhanj district.

"What the authorities are doing when they know about the technical issue since last Saturday and it's already Tuesday," said Swain.

Surendra Jena, a native of Rasulgarh area, said, "I had booked a speed post for the UK July 20, but my brother is yet to receive the parcel. Officials said that due to Covid the schedule of international flights has been changed which could have caused the delay. Earlier, I was told that it was the most reliable method of sending articles to your loved ones and now I am waiting when the parcel will be delivered. The officials at Mancheswar have assured me of quick action."

Director of India Post (GPO), Bhubaneswar, Aditya Kumar Nayak, said, "We don't have any issues with speed post booking here besides the RMS segment. If anyone is facing any issues he/she can contact us. We also have a grievance cell where one can lodge complaints

COMMUNICATION WOES

The speed post service under RMS, Bhubaneswar which is part of the India Post, developed technical glitches August 1

RMS authorities said they have raised the issue with technical partner TCS for necessary action

The number of international articles cleared at International Business Centre at Mancheswar has reduced from 200 during pre-Covid period to 20 now

and we will track down issues. The RMS issue is a technical problem which will be sorted out soon."

Notably, the number of international articles cleared at Mancheswar has reduced from 200 during pre-Covid period to 20 now. Except medicines, all articles are cleared immediately. One can register their complaints by visiting www.india-post.gov.in and articles could be tracked, said the authorities.

Rajendra Kumar Mahapatra, in-charge of Foreign Post and International Business Centre at Mancheswar, said, "There are more than 20 speed post hubs in the city and one can book from anywhere. The only advantage the RMS has is 24-hour booking of speed post and registry which is currently unavailable."

Meanwhile, GPO Director Aditya Kumar Nayak said that the technical glitches have been sorted out and normalcy was restored to the Railway Mail Service in the evening.



Uncleared articles at Mancheswar International Business Centre

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



WAR AGAINST COVID-19

Naveen: Not time for complacency

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 4: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday appealed people of the state to join him in silent prayer to be organized at 6 pm Wednesday to boost the morale of Covid warriors who work day and night to protect lives of people from the virus.

The human race is going through one of the toughest situations since time immemorial. The Covid pandemic has challenged the human race like nothing before and every country is facing a very serious situation, Naveen said.

Stating that India has more than 50,000 new infections every day, he said, "It is the highest daily addition by any country in the world. It shows how serious the situation is in our country. There is no room for complacency."

"Tomorrow Odisha will cross 25,000 recoveries. This is a momentous occasion in our fight against the Covid pandemic. Together we have been able to save more lives than in other parts of the country. Our fatality rate is at 0.57 per cent which is lowest in the country. For us every life is precious and saving each person is our mission."

The Chief Minister praised thousands of Covid warriors who work



The Chief Minister called for 1-min prayer for Covid warriors at 6pm Wednesday

round the clock with commitment and dedication. They have sacrificed hugely to keep people safe while some of them have also sacrificed their lives in this deadly fight, he pointed out.

"To honour and commemorate the supreme sacrifices of our Covid warriors, the CM will lead a silent prayer in their memory. He appealed 4.5 crore sisters and brothers of Odisha to join this silent prayer at 6 pm Wednesday," a release from the CM's Office said.

"The prayer will be followed by an oath taking that will remind all of us to act responsibly and strictly follow Covid guidelines to keep ourselves and our families safe," he added.

Plus II results this month: Minister

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 4: School & Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash Tuesday confirmed that the results of Plus II Science and Commerce examinations will be declared in the third week of August while that of the Plus II Arts stream will be declared by August last week.

"Tabulation process of Plus II Science and Commerce streams has started after completion of evaluation process. We expect to declare the results of these two streams by third week of August," Dash said.

Dash further added that answer-sheets of Plus II Arts students are being evaluated and the results of them will be declared by the last week of August.

Cyber crooks dupe software engineer

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 4: A cyber criminal has duped a woman software engineer of around Rs 40,000 on the pretext of buying the techie's used laptop. The victim, Shreechandra Subhadarshini, a resident of Sundarpada area, has lodged a complaint with Airfield police in this regard.

According to sources, Subhadarshini had posted an advertisement on OLX, the popular online marketplace for second-hand items a few days back. Later, one Rajesh contacted her August 2. The accused identified himself as an Army jawan and had used the photo of an Army official with a fake canteen card number.

Rajesh sent a QR code for Google pay to the WhatsApp account of the lady. The accused told Subhadarshini that he would transfer the money to her Google pay account after she scans the code with her mobile number. Accordingly, Subhadarshini scanned the code sent by the accused with her mobile. She received three messages about withdrawal of Rs 39,000 from her account. The phone of the accused was found switched off after the withdrawal. The Airfield police started a probe into the case.

HSC re-evaluation from August 6

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 4: The Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha announced the dates for re-evaluation of answer-sheets of annual HSC Examination, 2020.

Students can apply for verification and re-evaluation of marks from August 6 to 18. The students have to pay Rs 100 per paper (either subjective or objective).

Students can check and apply for re-evaluation on the Board's website - www.bseodisha.ac.in

The BSE will take three months to complete the procedure of re-evaluation and publish the revised certificate-cum-memorandum of marks. The photocopy of the answer sheets will be available on the BSE website.

TRIBUTE TO NANDINI



Activists of Utkal Sammilani pay homage to former Chief Minister Nandini Satpathy on her 14th death anniversary at LIC Square in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

Chief engineers asked to expedite land acquisition

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 4: Expressing concern over delay in implementation of major infrastructure project due to land acquisition issues, the state government asked all chief engineers to expedite the process holding meetings every month.

A number of projects are held up owing to delay in the process of land acquisition. Though in most cases the process of land acquisition has started, the same has been lingering for years together due

INFRA PROJECTS

to lack of follow up action on the part of field functionaries.

Therefore, to expedite the process of land acquisition, the chief engineers asked to arrange all pending land acquisition cases in order of priority. The chief engineer concerned will have to review all important projects held up owing to land acquisition. Wherever required, they have to seek intervention of administrative department to speed up the process of

land acquisition, sources said.

The Works department has decided to engage one officer in the rank of assistant executive engineer in each division as nodal officer to make liaison with local revenue officials as well as district office to expedite the process. Besides, a WhatsApp group will be formed to monitor the issue from the office of the chief engineer.

The superintending engineers of different circles were also instructed to hold monthly meeting to review the progress of land acquisition. Review meeting will be

held monthly to monitor the progress of land acquisition issues with the concerned superintendent engineers/executive engineers through video conference, the source said. Special focus will be given on the centrally sponsored projects to avoid financial liability on the state government owing to delay in the process of land acquisition, they said.

The government has taken this move after receiving repeated letters from Union Ministries to expedite the infrastructure projects including National Highways.

SC: Give medicines, pensions to elderly

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, August 4: The Supreme Court (SC), Tuesday, directed Odisha and other states to provide medicines, masks, sanitisers and other essential goods to elderly people and also provide regular pension to the identified elderly people during the pandemic.



Caregivers at old age homes should be provided PPE kit and the institutions should be properly sanitised, rules the SC

A two-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan and R Subhash Reddy directed all the states to submit their replies to the averments made in the application within four weeks.

"We, in this application, which pertains to Covid-19 crisis, direct that all old age people who are eligible for pension should be regularly paid pension and those identified elderly people should be provided necessary medicines, masks, sanitisers and other essential goods by respective states. Further, as and when any individ-

ual request is made, the same shall be attended to by the Administration with all promptness. The caregivers of those old age homes should be provided personal protection and appropriate sanitisation should also be undertaken in the old age homes," the bench said.

The court observed that it had already given directions regarding issues faced by senior citizens December 13, 2018 which need to be complied with by all concerned including the states.

During the hearing, petitioner in person Ashwani Kumar pleaded the court for certain further directions with regard to elderly people who need more care and protection in this pandemic of Covid 19.

The petitioner submitted that the elderly have already been identified since most of them are getting pension from the states under the different schemes. He submitted to the court that the older people, who are living alone, are worst hit and are not able to get medicines, masks, sanitisers and other essential goods.

"The care givers of these people are also not equipped with personal protection equipment and are also untrained," petitioner submitted. The prayer has also been made for issuing appropriate direction for timely payment of old age pension to all elderly persons who are receiving the pension.

Meanwhile, V Mohana, the counsel appearing for the Union of India, submitted that necessary steps have been taken to give protection to the elderly during this pandemic.

Green-Ag may trigger food crisis: Experts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 4: The Centre has launched a pilot project christened as Green Agriculture (Green-Ag) in an attempt to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases from farm sector.

The pilot project, which was launched in Mizoram July 28 this year, would be extended to states like Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand in the coming days, sources said.

As per the plan, steps would be taken for better management of water in agriculture sector, organic farming and maintenance of biodiversity in farming in 104,070-hectare land in these five states. The Green-Ag pilot project would be launched in Similipal area of Odisha and is supposed to end March 31, 2026, sources said.

However, many agriculturalists have opined that though Green-

Ag project will have some positive impact on environment, it is most likely to affect the output. The experts have raised apprehension that the project may lead to severe food shortage.

Former Vice-Chancellor of Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), Surendra Nath Pashupalak, claimed that farmers cannot apply chemical fertilisers, pesticides and cow dung manure to farmland under Green-Ag technique. As a result, the farmers are most likely to face huge loss on production front.

"A farmer will start reaping the benefits of Green Agriculture after five years of its launch. The farmers may not find it easy to bear the losses for five years. Besides, production cost will go up due to adoption of Green-Ag and the sales will be hit. The new system of agriculture can be successful, if there is provision for compensation to the



SPARKING DEBATE

The pilot project, which was launched in Mizoram July 28 this year, would be extended to states like Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand in the coming days

However, many agriculturalists have opined that though Green-Ag project will have some positive impact on environment, it is most likely to affect the output

The Centre has failed to take steps to provide the just price for paddy to the farmers

farmers," Pashupalak argued.

A senior official of state Agriculture department has opined that Green-Ag project is a good initiative insofar as environment is concerned. "However, only time can tell about the success of the project," he said.

It is worth mentioning here that

the Centre has failed to take steps to provide the just price for paddy to the farmers. As per data, a farmer is now spending Rs 2,403 to produce a quintal of paddy. But, the minimum support price (MSP) for a quintal of paddy has been fixed at Rs 1,868 for 2020-21 financial year.

"The farmers are now bearing a loss of Rs 535 per quintal of paddy. Their loss would rise manifold due to fall in output under Green-Ag project," said an expert.

Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment department secretary Sourav Garg said the state government has prepared a 'climate change action plan' to help farmers to opt for sustainable agriculture. "The Green-Ag project is a good initiative. We will take necessary steps after receiving detailed information on the project," he added.

Notably, a study has claimed that around 6 million tonne greenhouse gases are emitted from farm sector in a year. As per data, the emission of greenhouse gases from agriculture has gone up by 8 per cent within 1990 and 2010.

The emission of greenhouse gases is likely to go up by 15 per cent during 2020 and 2030.

Heavy rain lashes state Cases may increase by 50k in August

DOWNPOUR LIKELY TO CONTINUE TILL WEEKEND: WEATHERMAN



A woman crosses a road in Bhubaneswar as rain lashes several parts of the state Tuesday

Bhubaneswar, August 4: A low-pressure area formed over the Bay of Bengal triggered heavy rain in several parts of Odisha Tuesday and the downpour, coupled with gusty wind, is likely to continue in many areas till the weekend, the meteorological centre here said.

Under the influence of Monday's cyclonic circulation over the north-east Bay of Bengal, the low-pressure area was formed Tuesday, it said. Light to moderate rainfall occurred at most places in north and south coastal Odisha and many places in the state's south interior parts since Monday, while heavy to very heavy rain lashed some places in Puri district.

Under the influence of the low-pressure, surface wind speed reaching 40-50 kilometre per hour is likely to prevail over north Bay of Bengal, and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal for the next two days, the Met centre said.

Similarly, heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely to lash isolated places of Sambalpur, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Bargarh and Sundargarh districts, where the Met centre has issued an orange warning from Wednesday morning to Thursday morning. Heavy rain will also occur at isolated places in Keonjhar, Anugul, Nuapada, Sonapur and Bolangir districts during the period, it said. Some areas of Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts will receive heavy rainfall

on Thursday and Friday, while isolated places of Kalahandi, Bolangir, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Kandhamal, Mayurbhanj and Dhenkanal districts will witness the same Saturday. Under the influence of the low-pressure, surface wind speed reaching 40-50 kilometre per hour is likely to prevail over north Bay of Bengal, and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal for the next two days, the Met centre said.

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 4: As COVID-19 cases continue to rise in state with over 1,000 new cases being reported daily since July 21, Odisha's caseload may increase by 50,000 in August, a senior official said.

However, the director of a prominent research laboratory said, considering the rising number of positive cases now, the pandemic will be stable in Odisha by the last week of August after reaching its peak.

With 29 fatalities in the first three days of August, the COVID-19 death toll in the coastal state has mounted to 216 while the infection tally is 37,681.

"At this stage of the pandemic, numbers will rise. We may add another 50K cases in August with around another 200 deaths," Prof Jayant Panda, technical advisor to the Health and Family Welfare de-



Blood sample being collected from Police Commissioner Sudhanshu Sarangi for sero survey in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

partment, said in a tweet. However, people were asked "not to get worried" as more than 23,000 patients had recovered from the viral infection in the state till now, the official said.

The projection on fresh cases and fatalities in August was made on the basis of the prevailing trend.

The official data released by the health and family welfare department said that the state has been reporting more than 1,000 new cases every day since July 21.

"If the present trend continues, one should not be surprised if about 50,000 more cases are added in the month of August," the official said.

Modalities fixed for assistance to kin

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 4: The state government Tuesday fixed modalities for distribution of monthly financial assistance to be paid to the family member of Covid warriors in case of death in the line of duty.

Finance department Tuesday issued notifications for distribution of Covid warrior family assistance for government employees, ASHA and Anganwadi workers, who die while discharging Covid-19 duty.

In case of death of an ASHA worker in line of duty under active deployment by the state authorities, Covid-19 family assistance of Rs 5000 per month will be provided to the spouse or eligible family

member till he/she reaches 60 years had he/she survived. The monthly assistance in case of an Anganwadi worker is Rs 7,500 while family member of a government employee will receive the monthly salary being paid to the official during the time of death.

The monthly pension will be given in addition to the ex-gratia of Rs 50 lakh announced earlier.

The concerned district collector or SP, municipal commissioners or commissioner of police, authorised officers of Health and Family Welfare department or Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) will

certify the deployment. District-level medical officer of Health and Family Welfare department will have to certify the cause of death of the employee in active line of duty to be Covid-19 infection.

The assistance will be sanctioned after satisfying certain conditions including proof on engagement of the ASHA/anganwadi worker or government employee for Covid-19 related duties/responsibilities.

The employee should die due to Covid-19 infection. The infection should have occurred while in active line of duty and the concern official should not be on leave from the duty, as per the order.

DEATH OF COVID WARRIORS

BMC allows takeaways in eateries, dine-in in hotels

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 4: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, Tuesday, allowed operations of restaurants, restricted to takeaways only and in-house dining facilities at hotels here following guidelines of the state government under Unlock 3.0.

In an official order, BMC stated that the restaurants in the hotels have to abide by the guidelines of COVID-19 while providing services and will provide services to their in-house customers as per the SOP issued by the centre. Moreover, standalone restaurants will not be allowed to serve food, the order said.

"Standalone restaurants will not cater to dining services at their establishments. They can, however, take home delivery orders. Moreover, Dhabas along the state and the national highways and major roads are also permitted to

offer takeaway services," said BMC Commissioner, Prem Chandra Chaudhary.

The order issued by the BMC has cleared the air on operation of restaurants and hotels in the city. Earlier in the Unlock 3.0 guidelines, the state government had removed restrictions on all commercial activities. With no clear instructions, restaurants and eateries here had started operations in the city until fresh orders were issued by the civic authority.

We witnessed a heavy rush of people compromising all safety protocols including physical distancing when few restaurants opened. Taking note of the situation, and also observing the rising cases of COVID in the city, we decided to prohibit the in-house dining services. We will further observe the situation and basing on that we may allow dining services only after August 31," an official at the BMC said.

Khimji felicitates COVID warriors

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 4: As the pandemic has forced millions of people to stay at home in order to be safe, thousands of warriors continue to work risking their own lives in order to serve and keep the citizens safe and healthy.

Recognising the commendable efforts of these warriors as the true jewels of the society, Khimji Foundation, the philanthropic wing of Khimji Group with flagship brand Khimji Jewellers, has come forward and felicitated five such warriors with 'Khimji Mo Alankar Award'.

Five women COVID warriors from two cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack have been felicitated with Khimji Mo Alankar Award on the popular TV Reality Show Raja Queen, for their unmatched contribution as the real gems in these challenging times.

'Social media key in connecting farmers'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 4: Agriculture Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo Tuesday said that the role of social media is essential in reaching out to the farmers during the ongoing pandemic.

In a virtual meeting with other officials of the department Tuesday, he said that the department is reaching farmers of all types and sending them important information and services through social media platforms and WhatsApp groups which were created for every panchayat.

Around 9.20 lakh farmers have been added to this WhatsApp group. This apart, a toll free helpline number Ama Krushi was also created in which around 8.75 lakh farmers were added.

The department also sent update and message through its official twitter account and through mKisan an SMS Portal for farmers which enables all Central and State government organizations in agri-

Ten COVID-19 deaths had been reported on August 1 and August 2 respectively and nine patients died of novel coronavirus on August 3.

On an average, five persons had succumbed to COVID-19 in July, he said. "Lets not get worried... More than 23,000 patients have already recovered. Lets try to save people from COVID-19," he said.

However, Dr Ajay Parida, the Director of Institute of Life Sciences (ILS), told reporters, "It cannot be said right now as to what would be the total number of positive cases in August as the virus has different strains. "The ILS is a research laboratory under the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, and plays an important role in COVID-19 policy making in Odisha. In Odisha, most of the COVID-19 deaths are linked to pre-existing ailments or comorbidities," Parida said.

Another record tally of nCoV recoveries

POST NEWS NETWORK/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 4: A day after reporting 1,119 recoveries, the state once again registered its highest number of recoveries on a single day, with as many as 1,409 COVID-19 patients having been cured or discharged from several COVID care facilities Tuesday.

"Happy to share that Odisha achieves another record with the discharge of 1409 #COVID19 patients today! The total recovered cases of Odisha now stand at 24482 (sic)," the H&FW department tweeted.

The recoveries include 258 from Ganjam, 218 from Khurda, 128 from Rayagada, 122 from Sundargarh, 121 from Puri and 120 from Gajapati.

On the other hand, state's COVID-19 death toll mounted to 216 as nine more patients succumbed to the infection, while 1,384 new cases pushed its tally to 37,681 Tuesday.

Ganjam district, Odisha's COVID-19 hotspot, reported six of the nine fatalities due to the coronavirus, while Puri, Khurda and Jajpur registered one death each, said the official, adding that another COVID-19 patient died due to other ailments, taking the count of such fatalities to in state to 42.

As many as 889 new cases were reported from quarantine centres, while 495 people tested positive for the infection during contract tracing exercise, said the official.

Ganjam district also reported the highest number of fresh infections at 228, followed by 201 in Khurda and 82 in Sambalpur. New cases were reported from 28 of the 30 districts in the state, the official pointed out.

City sees 149 fresh cases. The Capital city reported 149 fresh COVID-19 cases taking the tally to 3,217, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) said Tuesday.

BJD aims to collect 10k units of blood

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 4: The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is going to organise massive blood donation camps across the state from Kranti Diwas (August 9) to Independence Day (August 15).

The Odisha Mo Parivar wing of the BJD will organise the blood donation camps in all 30 districts of the state under Jiban Bindu programme, said Odisha Mo Parivar's convenor Arup Patnaik here Tuesday.

The party aimed to collect 10,000 unit of blood during this one week drive, he said. During this pandemic, the voluntary blood donation has been affected, which may lead to scarcity.

Therefore, as per the instruction of chief minister, the Odisha Mo Parivar, with help of party MPs, MLAs and other leaders is going to organise the blood donations camps, he added.

BALANCING ACT



A man collects lotus from Bindusagar in Old Town area of Bhubaneswar, Tuesday, as he stays afloat using an inflated tube

Cuttack's ambitious project 'fails' to provide jobs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 4: The district administration's ambitious initiative to provide employment opportunities to around 25,000 returnee migrant workers who have been hit hard by the coronavirus outbreak has reportedly failed to yield desired results.

According to sources, thousands of unskilled and semi-skilled migrant workers have left cities for the district after losing their livelihoods because of the lockdowns that shut many factories and commercial establishments since March this year.

In a bid to ensure employment opportunities to them, the district administration had launched Livelihood Advancement through Knowledge, Self Help and Modern Initiatives (LAKSHMI). Claimed to be one-of-its-kind project in the state, the initiative aimed at honing skills and providing jobs to around 25,000 Odia migrant returnees, said a source. Under the initiative, it was planned to prepare a database of migrant workers returning to Cuttack. The database would con-



File photo of the employment camp at Mahanga

tain past employment details and skill of the returnees. Reputed firms would use the database's data and hold special camps so as to provide employment opportunities to the migrant returnees depending on what skills they have, the source familiar with the initiative pointed out.

"The initiative was launched June 22 and employment drives were conducted at Banki and Damapada areas of the district. Around 300 jobseekers took part in the drives and only 144 of them could be shortlisted for jobs. Similarly, another such drive was held at Mahanga June 26. Of the 315

participants, only 136 were short-listed. Later, similar drives were also conducted at Badamba, Narasinghpur and Nischintacoili. The initiative, however, couldn't proceed thereafter owing to reasons best known to the authorities," the source said.

It added that even as more than a month has passed into the short-listing procedure, little has been done so far. Many applicants have been so far been running from pillar to post to check status of their candidature.

"I was shortlisted for a job during the Mahanga drive. But there's

no update on it so far. I have approached the block office on several occasions to check the status of my candidature. But the officials brushed helplessness," an applicant of Mahanga said requesting anonymity.

With no apparent way in sight, many returnees were exploring options for some opportunities outside the state as the unlock process has begun. "I'm left with nothing. No job. No money. I have to feed a family of three. I had been working as a plumber in Tamil Nadu. Now, I'm planning to speak to the same contractor again. I fear, if I don't get a job within a few weeks, I'll definitely die of hunger before corona," the returnee said.

Asked, Cuttack Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayani, however, attributed it to the deteriorating COVID-19 situation. "Conducting camps for jobs have been shut temporarily to curb spread of the pandemic. All, including those who have been shortlisted for the jobs, have been asked to stay indoors owing to COVID-19. Measures will be taken in accordance with the changing scenario," he said.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

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

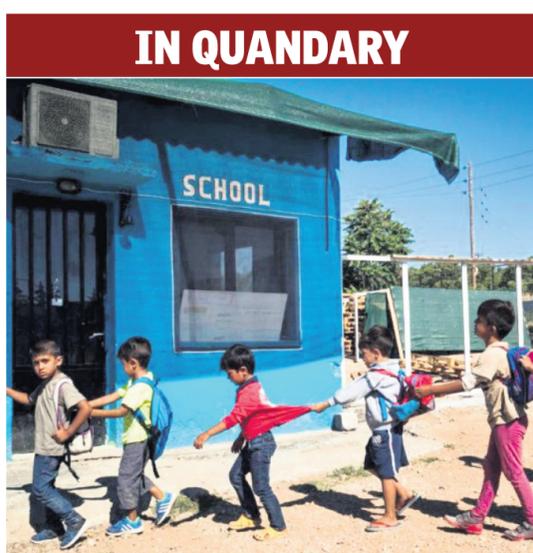
Covid hits edu of migrants' children

ALSO SCHOOLS HERE HAVE BEEN CONVERTED TO QUARANTINE CENTRES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, August 4: Migrant returnees in this district who are struggling for their lives and livelihood due to Covid pandemic are caught in a very sensitive situation over their children's education, a report said.

Their children who are habituated with the style of education at their former work places are finding it difficult to cope with the education



IN QUANDARY

OVER 64,000 MIGRANTS HAVE RETURNED HOME FOLLOWING THE OUTBREAK OF COVID PANDEMIC

AMONG THEM, 30,000 MIGRANTS WERE STAYING WITH THEIR FAMILIES IN OTHER STATES AND COUNTRIES

THEIR CHILDREN ARE FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO COPE WITH STUDIES HERE AS THEY WERE BEING IMPARTED EDUCATION IN ENGLISH MEDIUM

phone for readmission of his sons but he is unable to leave for Surat as the firm where he was working is yet to reopen.

Report from the district administration said that over 64,000 migrants have returned home following the outbreak of Covid pandemic while in reality the number could be in lakhs. Among them, 30,000 migrants were staying with their families in other states and countries.

His children are finding it difficult to cope with the educational system here as they were studying in English and Hindi medium ones at Surat.

Surya Narayan Mohanty, a returnee from Kerala and native of the same village rued. His children are finding it hard to cope with the teaching here being from Kerala.

The reopening of the schools here are in uncertainty due to establishment of the quarantine centres in the schools. Moreover, joining online classes is not possible here due to connectivity issue in the district. He wants to send his children to coaching classes but fearing to do so due to possible fear of Covid infection.

A senior citizen Amarbar Biswal said that Kendrapara district is witnessing regular exodus of residents to other states and countries due to lack of employment opportunities in the district. People here are dependent on agriculture for their livelihood for which the residents are migrating to other states in search of livelihood.

The education of their children has become cause of concern for them after they returned. Many of them have exhausted their earnings in returning home and do not have the money a mobile phone for their children.

This apart, the network problem in remote areas of this district has added to the problem of many in attending online classes and demanded reopening of educational institutions.

When contacted, sub-collector Jyoti Shankar Mohapatra said that online classes have started as the fear of Covid infection is yet to abate. He however, clarified that the any further instruction from the education department will be implemented in the district.

I want to send my children to coaching classes but I am fearing Covid
SURYA NARAYAN MOHANTY | KERALA RETURNEE

taught at their native villages. The continuous lockdown has severely hit the education system and pushed the future of their wards into darkness, the guardians rued.

Sanat Kumar Das, a returnee from Surat and native of Koilpur village under Rajnagar block said, he was working in a Surat based firm and staying with his family there. He returned home May 10 after the lockdown was announced. He has two sons among which the elder was studying in Class-VI while the younger in Class-III in a private school.

Meanwhile, the two have been promoted to the next higher class after publication of the examination results. The school authorities have been regularly calling them over

COVID CLAIMS LIFE OF 54-YEAR-OLD EO OF ASKA NAC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Aska, August 4: The executive officer of Aska Notified Area Council (NAC) Ashok Kumar Panda died of coronavirus infection at a private hospital in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday.

He was 54. He is survived by his widow, only son, elderly parents and siblings.

He was engaged in the management and the rehabilitation of migrant returnees in the quarantine centres in the civic body area. He took a Covid test, July 25 after he felt unwell. The report came out positive following which he remained in isolation in a room in the NAC office and continued to supervise the Covid situation in the area.

He was rushed to the Aska hospital and to the City Hospital in Berhampur after his health condition deteriorated July 30. Later, he was shifted to a private hospital in Bhubaneswar where he succumbed during treatment Tuesday.

Ganjam Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange, special ADM Vishal Singh, PD, DRDA Siddharth Shankar Swain Aska BDO Roshan Satapathy, tehsildar Sadananda Sethy and special officer NAC Jeetendriya Das visited the NAC office and condoled his death.

Meanwhile, nine doctors tested positive for COVID-19, at the Out Patient Service (OPD) service in Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) in Burla.

"In the larger public interest and in view to contain the spread of Covid-19 cases, the medical authorities have closed the OPD of medicine department in VIMSAR, Burla," authorities said. The doctors and hospital staff who had come in contact with COVID-19 infected patients have been asked to undergo 14-day home quarantine. Their swab samples will be sent for testing, informed authorities.

'HERO' 12-YEAR-OLD BOY SAVES GIRL FROM SUICIDE

Bulu jumps into a river to save a girl who had planned suicide by drowning after her academic failure

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, August 4: A 12-year-old boy in Malkangiri district has become a hero overnight after saving a minor girl from drowning. The boy has been identified as Bulu Muduli. He belongs to the adivasi (tribal) community from Balimela town locality in the district.

Sources said that the girl tried to kill herself by suicide after she failed in the matriculation (Class X) examination, July 29. The results of the exams were announced on the same day.

The girl went to a bridge near Balimela Power House with the intention of committing suicide by jumping into the river. At that time, Bulu was passing through the same bridge on his cycle. The girl stopped Bulu and enquired whether he was carrying a cell phone as she wanted



to make a call. Bulu however, left the spot telling her that he did not have a mobile.

When he was returning through the same spot some time later, he found a crowd had gathered. He then came to know that the girl had jumped into the river. Bulu spotted the girl struggling in the river to stay afloat. Without wast-

ing any time, he jumped into the river.

In spite of the strong current, Bulu managed to reach the girl. He then pulled her close to the shore and then others got into the act to pull them on land. By then the girl had lost consciousness as she had consumed a lot of water. Bulu however was okay.

A person who was among the crowd applied cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to drain out water from the girl's stomach. After she responded to CPR and started breathing again, the girl was rushed to the Balimela hospital. Sources said that her condition is stable.

Meanwhile Bulu's bravery was appreciated by all and sundry. Everybody was in awe of the bravery demonstrated by a 12-year-old who risked his life to jump into the river and save the girl.

When will Athamallick get an Adarsha Vidyalaya

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, August 4: It has been alleged that for the sheer carelessness and superfluous actions of Angul education department, Adarsha Vidyalaya (model school) which was proposed to be established under Athamallick block in the district has got entangled in legal complications for past two years.

Notably, Angul, Talcher, Chhendipada, Kishorenagar and Pallahara blocks in the district already have Adarsha Vidyalayas. The basic idea behind establishing such schools was to provide free education to poor and meritorious students in Angul district, as per Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum.



The state government establishes Adarsha Vidyalayas under each block in Odisha. Initially, the department had decided to establish a school at Olatha village of Aida panchayat under the Athamallick block. Later, the decision was changed and proposed model school was shifted to Banamalipur village of Kruttibasapur panchayat. Worthy to note, this decision of

Angul education department was vehemently opposed by the local lawyers' association. A memorandum was submitted in this regard to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik June 29, 2018 through the erstwhile Athamallick sub-Collector.

Another memorandum was submitted by a local outfit Sholapada Kriyanasthan Committee that comprised of ten panchayats under Athamallick block, to the Angul district Collector July 1, 2018.

Local villagers of Pedipathar, Sanahula, Thakuragarh, Kurumapata, Kruttibasapur, Sapaghara, Paikasahi, Kantapada, Maimura and Ambasaramunda panchayats under this block demanded that the proposed model school be opened at Banamalipur village.

PROPHYLACTIC MEASURE



Firefighters sanitise the premises of district headquarters hospital in Angul, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

Karlamunda farmers are fearing drought

POST NEWS NETWORK

Karlamunda, August 4: With monsoon doing a vanishing act, some parts of Kalahandi district stare at possible drought condition.

Farmers of Karlamunda block are a worried lot, because the farmlands are left dry. The block has not yet received sufficient rainfall till the first week of August.

The land has cracked while transplanted paddy saplings have started drooping for want of water.

Paddy cultivation is usually done in 8, 780 hectares in the block. According to reports, the block received 240mm rainfall in June and 117.40 mm in July.

Hundreds of acres of farmland in Karlamunda, Malpada, Pourakela, Gajabahal, Sapalahara, Joradabara and Regada panchayats have been dry without rain.

It was learnt that paddy saplings have wilted in Sisakhal, Dharmakhaman, Kansil, Putigan, Bindhani, Tetengpadar, Bijapati, Siletpada, Terchapall, Karnaikhunti, Dandhibhaja, Bhuernunda and Batikua villages.

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.

Farmers said Covid-induced shutdowns and lockdowns have already affected their activities. Deficit 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.

Utei irrigation project is in the block, but it is of no use for farmers because, the river has little water to feed the irrigation project.

"If it rains in the first week of August, paddy can be saved to some extent," said Gobinda Sahu, a farmer.

Admin apathy prompts Padmapur farmers to fix 20-yr-old check dam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Padmapur, August 4: Farmers of Melaksahi area under Padmapur panchayat under Basudevpur block in Bhadrak district Monday donned the engineers' hat and repaired the sluice gates of the check dam built across the Kanchudi river. The check dam was constructed 20 years ago.

Farmers of Padmapur, Sugo, Edtal, Lunga panchayats under Basudevpur block and Sahada panchayat in Bhadrak block largely depend on this sluice gate for irrigation. In rainy season, the sluice gate not only helps store rainwater but also control flood.

Four of the seven sluice gates of this 20-year-old dam had developed holes caused by rust. Thus, the farmers cannot rely on the water meant to be stored



there. The villagers had then met the district Collector and the officials of the irrigation department on several occasions urging their intervention but to no avail. Owing to lack of water, these farmers were facing a lot of problems in continuing with their agricultural activities which is why they were apprehending a drought-like situation.

The farmers finally stepped forward and decided to do something on their own. Spending over ₹30,000, they bought bamboo poles and finally succeeded in checking the flow of water.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II DHENKANAL, KAMAKHYANAGAR
e-mail:rw.kamakhyanager@yahoo.co.in
No.O-198-
e-procurement Notice No.04/Road Works/2020-21

- Name of the work : Road (P/M) works
- Total No. of works : 08 (Eight) Nos. Packages
- Tender cost : Rs.53.27 lakh to 89.88 lakh (approx.)
- Class of contractor : 'B' & 'A' class (As per Annexure)
- Period of completion : 4 calendar months (As per Annexure)
- Availability of tender : 10.08.2020 at 11.00 A.M. to 18.08.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Last date & time of seeking tender clarification : 16.08.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Date & time of opening of Technical Bid: 20.08.2020 at 11.00 AM.
- Date & time of opening of Financial Bid: 26.08.2020 at 11.00 A.M.

Other details can be seen from the website <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>

Sd./- Executive Engineer
R.W. Division-II, Dhenkanal, Kamakhyanager
OIPR-25094/11/0001/2021

Phone No.06821-241026 (O) / 241079(R),
Fax No. 06821-241026/240056
e-mail: eerwss_bnj@nic.in, eerwssbnj2009@gmail.com
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RWS&S DIVISION, BHANJANAGAR-761126
Govt. of Orissa 'e' Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.E.E. RWS&S 20/2020-21
No.O-212:- 1. The Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Bhanjanagar, Ganjam on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in Single Cover system according to the norm of 'e' Procurement system in online mode for providing 100% functional TAP connection for different PWS Schemes in Ganjam District from the eligible contractors as per DTCN.

- Nature of work : Installation of 100% House Connection.
- No. of tender : 26 Nos.
- Tender paper cost : Rs 4000/- to 6000/-
- Tender cost : 5.22 lakhs to 49.73 lakhs
- Class of contractor : D, C, B & A
- Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal upto 5.00 P.M.
- Date of opening of bid : Dt.21.08.2020 at 11.00 A.M.
- Period of completion : 90 (Ninety) days to 180 (One hundred Eighty) days

10. The bidders have to participate in online bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>

Sd./-Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Bhanjanagar
OIPR-25021/11/0006/2021

Admin deaf to illegal stone mining

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, August 4: Wanton blastings in stone quarries have left people fuming in Kishoreprasad area under Gania block of Nayagarh district. But the administration has allegedly failed to curb such illegal activities.

According to reports, stone is illegally being mined in Khalisara mouza. Such illegal activities have been taking a heavy toll on greenery in the locality. Small rocky mounds in the area have been destroyed.

Villagers of Khalisara alleged that mafia has been carrying out stone mining in these mounds, leading to the loss of greenery.



Holes were drilled into stones and they blasted apart to extract stone. The main problem is due to blastings,

stone splinters and clouds of dust settle on the farmlands. These farmlands are covered with a layer of stone dusts and are unfit for farming; they pointed out.

Though the administration

has been repeatedly appraised of the illegal stone mining and its ill impacts on farming and greenery, the issue has not been redressed till date, the villagers rued.

Groundnut and paddy farming is done widely in the area. After blasts, stone pieces and dusts coming out of the mines often damage crops. "As a result, some farmers have stopped this farming. Forests are being damaged by illegal stone mining," they added.

Following complaints from the local people, the administration had sealed a stone crushing unit in the area.

Locals further alleged that in reality, the said sealed crusher unit is running while stone is supplied from the nearby quarries.

They alleged that whenever the locals oppose the stone mining and operation of the stone crushing units, they are threatened.

Tehsildar Mitali Patra said, "Following complaints about the illegal blastings and operation of the stone crushing unit, the administration has initiated action."

"If people again alleged about such illegality, I will get the matter probed and action will be taken," he added.

ODISHA LIFT IRRIGATION CORPORATION LTD. (A GOVT. OF ODISHA UNDERTAKING)
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, LIFT IRRIGATION DIVISION, KEONJHAR
NOTICE INVITING TENDER e-Procurement
Bid ID No. 04 EELID (KJR/ 2020-21) Dt. 30.07.2020

No.CAD-320- Executive Engineer, Lift Irrigation Division, Keonjhar on behalf of OLIC invites tender through e-procurement in shape of Percentage rate bids in single cover system for the work: Installation of 27 Nos. new L.I. Project & Revival of 8 Nos. defunct L.I. Project in different blocks of Keonjhar district as described in the table below from the contractors having valid license as mentioned below. The bids should be submitted only online in the website: www.tenderodisha.gov.in

- Name of Works: Installation/ Revival and energisation of River Lift Irrigation Projects with supply of materials on Turnkey basis.
- Total No. of Package: 32
- Approximate Estimated Cost: 19.79 lakhs to 53.07 lakhs.
- Class of Contractor: As mentioned against each Package.
- Period of Completion: 90 days for all Projects from the date of issue of work order.
- Other details as follow:-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability for bidding	Tender On-line	Last date & time of seeking Clarification	Date and time of opening of tender in the Office of the Executive Engineer, L.I. Division, Keonjhar
1	2	3	4	5	6
Executive Engineer L.I. Division, Keonjhar	04EELID (KJR-2020-21)	From 10.08.2020 at 10:00 hrs.	To 20.08.2020 upto 17:00 hrs.	18.08.2020 upto 17:00 hrs.	21.08.2020 at 11:00 hrs.

Authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders, increase or decrease the quantities without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Executive Engineer, L.I.Division, Keonjhar
OIPR-32156/11/0003/2021

“ The happiness you give makes you happier than the happiness you receive.

THE MOTHER



Forgotten Kashmir

It's been a long year since 5 August 2019 for the people of Kashmir. While many in India may not have had the good fortune of personally witnessing the beauty of Kashmir with its snow, trees, mountains and streams, many old movies showcase the land as it used to be. In the recent past, the only mention of Kashmir has been in context of terror related activities or military oppression by the state. These extremes, no doubt, must have taken their toll on the local populace. Last year on this date, Article 370 was abrogated and the state went under a military enforced lockdown and the outside world had no idea of what was taking place within. While we Indians are impatient with the Covid related lockdown and are worried about the crumbling economy, we should pause for a moment and think of what would be the mental state of the people and the economic situation of Kashmir in this long, dark and unending tunnel of clampdown that has been forced on the Kashmiris. A state dependent primarily on visiting tourists, exports of fruits and handicrafts has had all its sources of revenues come to a complete halt.

Many Indian youngsters today are extremely unaware of Kashmir's history. Formerly the kingdom of Kashmir was never, strictly speaking, an integral part of India as we know it today. While the major population was Moslem, the king had always been a Hindoo. Prior to partition in 1947, unlike in Bengal or Punjab, no plebiscite was held in Kashmir to figure out where those people wanted to go. In other words, the Kashmiris were not asked which country they wished to join. However, as history tells us, after the British granted independence and divided India into two parts, hordes of tribals and Pakistan army recruits invaded Kashmir and had reached the outskirts of Srinagar. The then king Hari Singh, the grandson of Raja Ranbir Singh, sent a desperate SOS message to the Indian government to help save his people. The Indian army went in and altered the situation. However, Pakistan still claims Kashmir should be a part of that country because it has a majority Moslem population.

India, on the other hand, exhibits the instrument of accession signed by Hari Singh in 1947 as the sole evidence required to call Kashmir its own. Torn between the demands and pulls of these two neighboring countries, the beauty of Kashmir has been bruised and wounded many times over in the past few decades. Although external invasion from Pakistan was a constant threat from the partition days, Kashmir has been experiencing a very brutal period since the advent of militancy into the valley. While abrogation of Article 370 was hailed by many as a decisive action that would make the valley peaceful again, reality is very different. For instance, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) claims a 42 percent decrease in recruitment by militant organizations of Kashmiri youth, the media reports and personal experiences of Indian military commanders tell a different story. According to them, the violence in the valley has grown in the past year and recruitment of disgruntled youths has been higher in percentage. What we in the rest of India do not realize is that the information outflow from Kashmir has been completely taken over and controlled by the Union government. Thus, no truth emanates from that state.

Added to this is the plight of entrepreneurs, students, doctors and citizens in general who have been deprived of internet services for the past year. While we talk of Online schooling for our children in Covid times, the concept is beyond the dreams of Kashmiri children who have no access to internet nor to schools and colleges since past 12 months. On the other hand, doctors and health workers allege that the state has been abandoned in the times of Covid crisis, with little to no medical resources or backup and no access to high speed internet and telecommunication services. It is easy to criticize and condemn them as being anti-India radicals yet we would not be just if we do not observe how the Indian system is dealing with the Kashmir problem. For instance, the Supreme Court seems to have enough number of judges and plenty of time to hear a mere contempt matter concerning Prashant Bhushan but hasn't found time yet to hear the urgent issue of constitutionality of the J&K Reorganisation Act and withdrawal of 4G services and the misuse of preventive detention powers in Kashmir.

The Kashmir imbroglio seems to be an unending torture with the continuation of central rule, without an elected government, in the newly formed Union Territory. Abrogation of Article 370 was a well known agenda long dreamt of by the ruling party of India, the BJP. Unfortunately, the 21st century may not be the appropriate time to use military force and subjugate a people for long in a democracy. Kashmir has always been bleeding India. The recent initiatives have not stopped that bleeding. The wounds have gotten deeper and the despair leading to anger may last for generations. The question that comes to mind is whether an economically weakened India can really afford to continue this military clampdown into eternity.

WISDOM CORNER

“What the superior man seeks is in himself; what the small man seeks is in others.”
CONFUCIUS

“A man's work is nothing but this slow trek to rediscover, through the detours of art, those two or three great and simple images in whose presence his heart first opened.”
ALBERT CAMUS

“When restraint and courtesy are added to strength, the latter becomes irresistible.”
MAHATMA GANDHI

WORDSWORTH

Taghairm

The Oxford English Dictionary has more than 100 words for various methods of divination (mostly ending in -mancy). Techniques include inspecting the entrails of animals, studying the appearance of water in a basin or the look of one's urine, watching the movements of mice, observing the cries of birds, or reading random sentences from a book. Of them all, this one is possibly the weirdest. When investigating anything historical to do with the Scots, Sir Walter Scott usually pops up. He describes the method in a scornful footnote to his Lady of the Lake: The Highlanders, like all rude people, had various superstitious modes of inquiring into futurity. One of the most noted was the Taghairm. A person was wrapped up in the skin of a newly-slain bullock, and deposited beside a waterfall, or at the bottom of a precipice, or in some other strange, wild, and unusual situation, where the scenery around him suggested nothing but objects of horror. In this situation, he revolved in his mind the question proposed; and whatever was impressed upon him by his exalted imagination, passed for the inspiration of the disembodied spirits, who haunt these desolate recesses. The method is well recorded, though with variations from place to place. The same name has been applied to a more barbarous custom, in which live black cats were spitted and roasted over a fire, their dying wails supposedly calling a cat-spirit, sometimes called Big Ears, who would grant one favours. The word, in Scots Gaelic, refers to a summons or invocation.

LOL

MATHEMATICIANS

Story goes that Newton, Pascal and Archimedes are playing hide and seek. Archimedes starts to count, Pascal hides in a bush, and Newton draws a square on the ground and



steps into it. Archimedes finds Newton first, of course, but Newton replies, “Nope. One Newton on one square meter is equal to one Pascal.”

MORE SHIPS, MORE TRADE

FOCUS COMMERCE



Ashok Mahapatra

WITHOUT SHIPPING, ONE HALF OF THE WORLD WOULD STARVE AND THE OTHER HALF FREEZE, AS NEITHER FOOD GRAIN NOR OIL CAN BE TRANSPORTED IN BULK BY ANY OTHER MEANS WITHIN REASONABLE LOGISTICS COST

Economy is defined as the system of trade and industry by which the wealth of a country or region is mobilised and used. In its broader term, this could also be viewed as a social domain that emphasises the practices, discourses and material expressions associated with the production, use and management of resources. As the situations of any two regions are not similar, the economies are also not identical. No country in the world produces everything; nor does any have all the natural resources that would satisfy its requirements.

History validates that empires and civilizations were built on the strengths of thriving trade. Nearer home, the Kalinga, Pallava and Chola kingdoms had thriving maritime trade across the oceans. Maritime transport plays a big role in boosting global economy, it carrying over 90 per cent of material for trade in the safest, cost-effective and environmentally friendly way. Without shipping, one half of the world would starve and the other half freeze, as neither food grain nor oil can be transported in bulk by any other means within reasonable logistics cost.

History has left lessons for us on how to prepare for post-Covid scenario. As the Second World War was unfolding, the United States (US) was grappling with the after effects of the Great Depression. Although the US was isolationist by nature, they recognised that the British Empire was shaking under its own weight, and prepared to step into the vacuum. To do so, the US built the military and industrial infrastructure that would allow it to dominate the world economy. Apart from building the manufacturing base, Americans also ensured that port infrastructure was in place so that seaborne trade could move seamlessly and efficiently. In addition, hinterland connectivity with ports was provided so that both raw material and finished goods could move efficiently. Alongside all the physical logistics infrastructure, they updated the legal and administrative framework to protect US business.

After the war, the Bretton Woods Conference (United Nations Monetary and Financial



History validates that empires and civilizations were built on strengths of thriving trade. Nearer home, the Kalinga, Pallava and Chola kingdoms had thriving maritime trade across the oceans

Conference) to regulate the international monetary and financial order ensured the dominance of the US dollar in the international economy. Concurrently the US enacted the Marshall Plan to assist all European countries in their economic redevelopment. This benefited the American economy as the money was used to buy goods from the US, which had to be shipped on American vessels. By 1953, Western Europe was standing on its feet again. Similar investments in Japan ensured that Japan's industrial production level recovered to pre-war levels by 1951.

Under the colonial rule, India was basically an agrarian economy, employing nearly 85 per cent of its population to supply raw materials to the British. They made use of our labour without creating any industrial production base here worth mentioning. This meant that on the eve of Independence, India was groping in the dark to meet the aspirations of an emerging nation. With limited resources available, we focused inter alia on poverty reduction, food security and employment creation through a controlled economy, and starting hydroelectric power projects. The government of the day was fairly successful in achieving its priorities. However, in the bargain, the bigger picture of building and sustaining the infrastructure necessary to promote and boost trade received less priority.

While not undermining the action required to combat the present pandemic, India needs to concurrently prepare for the post-Covid

world order. Notwithstanding the problems relating to land acquisition and the bureaucratic hurdles, building the physical infrastructure is probably the easiest, though this is also the costliest part. The real challenge lies in reforming the legal and bureaucratic infrastructure upto acceptable international standards and practices. Most of the maritime related laws are archaic - dating back to the colonial period; they are in fact over a century old. When the Indian Ports Act was enacted, it included provisions relating to the safety of ships since there were no international regulations for the same. Since then, several international conventions for safety, security and protection of the environment have been adopted and incorporated into the Merchant Shipping Act. As a result, ships in Indian ports must comply with both acts, they having different standards and supervising authorities. This results in additional compliance burden.

Our maritime administrative structure has not changed since Independence. Governmental rules of business must be reformed to provide a business-friendly environment and prevent different departments from protecting their own turf. Furthermore, the government should dispense with the operation and management of ports, and this be left to the private sector. Governmental involvement should be restricted to ensuring national safety, security, and protection of environment. Not all international standards have been

incorporated into Indian law. Our laws must also have a modern framework capable of adapting to international standards revised periodically through a tacit amendment procedure in international conventions. Unless international laws are incorporated into national legislation, sub-standard ships will be able to call in Indian ports while Indian ships trading internationally must comply with latest international regulations.

Indian Shipping tonnage has increased from 0.19 million tonnes in 1947 to 12.7 million tonnes. By contrast, Singapore today has a share of over 96 million tonnes because of business-friendly regulations and adoption of modern technology. The Indian-registered ships can also be commandeered in times of crisis or armed conflict to evacuate refugees and citizens from conflict zones as well as to carry goods and equipment. Thus, it would be in our national interest to provide the appropriate environment to encourage both national and international ship-owners to register their ships in India and reduce our dependence on foreign flag ships.

The world has moved a long way since 1947 and countries are competing to provide business-friendly legal and administrative infrastructure - like single window clearance, EDI, minimal governmental human interface, and simple legal requirements to further their economies. The political and bureaucratic class must recognise this and discard our colonial legacy once and for all by reforming maritime administrative and legal system to enhance our economy. Trade unions must also collaborate with authorities to increase business efficiency so that movement of goods becomes cost effective. This will boost the economy.

While continuing with efforts to manage the pandemic, India needs to concurrently reform its physical, administrative, and legal infrastructure to project the country as the preferred investment destination. All it needs is political and bureaucratic will. Once that is done, then sky is the limit.

The writer is Director (Retired), Maritime Safety Division, International Maritime Organisation, at the UN.

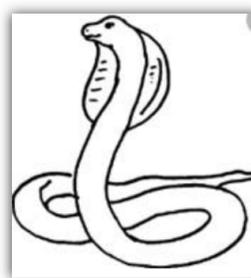
IN JEST THIS

Safe rides for snakes in Odisha

If I were a snake, there is no other state I'd want to be in other than Odisha. About one-third of the land in Odisha has been classified as forest land, so I'd have plenty of space to slither around without running into humans. But if I happened to stray from the forest, the humans would be eager to rescue me and return me to my home.

Odisha is truly a paradise for snakes, and if you don't believe me, just look at all the snake rescues taking place around the state. Just a few days ago, a woman found a snake coiled up in her scooter cabinet. According to a report, the woman was about to start the scooter when she spotted the snake and 'jumped out of her skin.' I don't blame her for jumping out of her skin, because I would have jumped out of my skin, my hair and my clothes.

What was the snake doing on her scooter? It was obviously hoping for a free ride. It had heard that people in Odisha do not harm snakes, but give them rides back to their



natural habitat. This is exactly what happened to the snake. The woman called Snake Helpline and volunteers from the Bhubaneswar-based organisation rescued the snake and released it near the banks of River Mahanadi.

Snakes hoping for rides can be quite sneaky. In early July, a seven-foot cobra crawled into the engine of a parked car in Sindhekela area of Bolangir district. According to local media, a snake charmer was summoned and he managed to rescue the snake. I am not sure if the snake

really wanted to be rescued, but at least it managed to get a ride. It was released in the nearby forest.

About a week ago, a King Cobra that was about 15 feet long was rescued from an abandoned well in Burujhari village of Ganjam district. Volunteers from Snake Helpline were summoned to rescue the reptile. This lucky snake didn't just get a ride to the forest, it also got a check-up. I wouldn't be surprised to learn that it also got a meal, a bath and an astrology reading.

I don't know how many snakes the volunteers of Snake Helpline have rescued over the last few years, but it probably numbers in the hundreds, if not thousands. I admire their dedication to this dangerous task. When I spot a snake, I don't think about the words 'rescue' and 'release.' I think of another word beginning with 'R' - RUN!

A few other words come to my mind: 'scream' and 'hide.' Volunteers of Snake Helpline do

not believe in needlessly harming animals. That's why they practise 'rescue' and 'release.' But I hope that when they release these snakes into the forest, they have a good talk with the snakes.

Volunteer: "Here you go. I brought you home."

Python: "How can I repay you? Can I give you a hug?"

Volunteer: "No hugs please. Just make me a promise. Please promise that you will stay in the forest. We do not want to keep rescuing you."

Python: "But I enjoy the rides. Can you come to the forest and give me rides?"

Volunteer: "No, I cannot. But can you promise not to return? You are causing a lot of fear in people."

Python: "I am a snake. That is my hobby."

Volunteer: "So you enjoy scaring people?"

Python: "I like to see them jump out of their skin. It's an amazing sight, seeing humans shedding their skin like snakes do."

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, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Odisha districts

Sir, Since Independence until 1992, there were 13 districts in Odisha. With 17 new districts added in two years (1992-94), there now are 30. We have a small district, Deogarh, with 3.1 lakh population and a big district, Ganjam, with 35 lakh population as per the 2011 Census. This looks odd. Keeping BMC under Khurda DM results in a communication gap as is evident from the issue of a BMC bulletin and a district bulletin. Now is the time to review and have optimum number of districts to have best administrative efficiency and reduce administration cost. This can be done by merging adjoining small districts and bifurcating big districts. The average per-district population of UP, Bihar or Maharashtra is 32 to 34 lakh; for Odisha, it is 16 lakh.

Gopal Mittal, Pahal, BHUBANESWAR

Young scientist

Sir, It is a proud moment for us that a Bangalore-born scientist Swati Mohan played a key role in developing a less hazardous landing technology for a spacecraft launched by NASA's Perseverance Mission to Mars. This technology is developed to counter the 'Seven minutes of the terror' phase during landing in which the spacecraft has to drop its speed from 12,000 kmph to 0, in order to achieve a smooth touchdown on the Red planet.

Murali M. Mallareddy, VISAKHAPATNAM

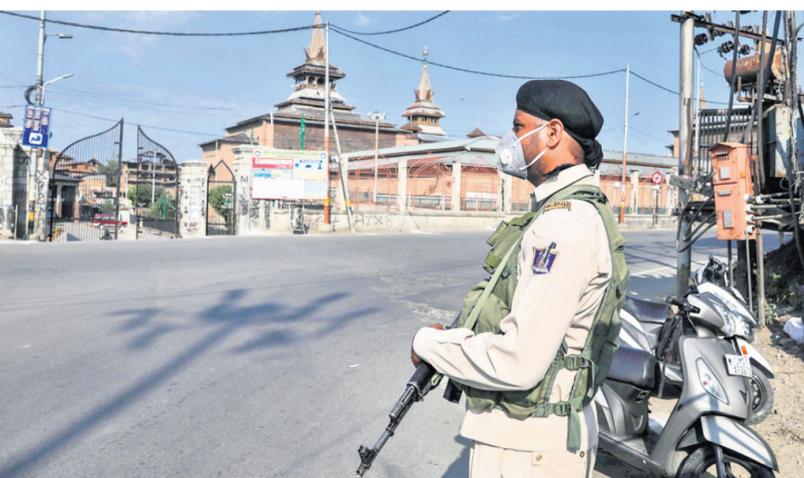
Defunct e-governance

Sir, During the last 20 years, the government spent more than Rs 20,000 crore of public money to digitise and improve e-governance through several agencies by giving them work contract. NIC, OCAC and some other technical expertise agencies are engaged in infusing e-governance system for speedy citizen services but with little effect. Several departments neither have email address nor mobile numbers. This, when the government is advising people not to visit offices during the pandemic. Several public service departments neither have email service nor a published mobile number. Most of the government websites are not attended to and not updated. They are there for the show. I recently wrote an email to the Canada PM's Office about the wellbeing of my cousin, a student in Canada University. Within hours, I received a reply from his press secretary. Here, we have more than eight secretaries in the CMO but we hardly ever got a reply from the CMO though they are acknowledging every mail.

Janaki Ballav Dash, MAYURBHANJ

Curfew in Valley on anniv of Art 370 repeal

'Promises proved to be a mirage'



A CRPF jawan stands guard along a street on the first day of the two-day curfew in Srinagar, Tuesday. Jammu and Kashmir government has imposed curfew in Srinagar and restrictions in other parts of the Valley August 4 and 5 to prevent protests on the anniversary of Article 370 abrogation

SRINAGAR: CPI(M) leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami Tuesday said all the promises made by the Centre at the time of abrogating Article 370 last year proved to be a mirage.

"It has been a year since BJP government scrapped J&K's special status under Article 370, 35A demoted the erstwhile state into two Union Territories. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah justified the decision on the floor of the house, that it would end decades-long militancy, separatism and corruption in the region and bring development, jobs and prosperity," Tarigami said in a statement on the eve of first anniversary of revocation of Article 370.

the population by arbitrarily booking its people and detaining youth under draconian laws like UAPA, PSA," he asked.

Tarigami also questioned the government over its claims of job creation and investments in the region when Article 370 was revoked. "The reality is that lakhs of people have lost their jobs due to the lockdowns and uncertainty in the region. Forget about development and creating new employment opportunities, thousands of daily-wagers, casual labourers, scheme workers and others have been denied wages for months together," he added.

The Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference Tuesday said the Union government's decision to revoke special status of the erstwhile state was not acceptable to the masses.

Ahead of the first anniversary of the revocation of provisions of article 370 on August 5 last year, the party said the day would be remembered as a "sad day".

"Decisions taken on and after August 5 (2019) are not acceptable to people. These decisions have been thrust on the people of Kashmir and are bereft of any acceptance or legitimacy amongst the masses," the party said in a statement.

The reality is that lakhs of people have lost their jobs due to the lockdowns and uncertainty in the region

MOHAMMAD YOUSUF TARIGAMI | CPI(M) LEADER

AGENCIES

Srinagar, August 4: A curfew was imposed across the Valley Tuesday as authorities apprehended violent protests in view of plans by separatists and Pakistan-sponsored groups to observe August 5, the first anniversary of revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status, as black day.

Police and CRPF personnel were deployed in strength across the Valley to ensure that the plans of the separatists to disturb peace did not succeed, officials said.

They said police vehicles, fitted with public address systems, went around localities announcing imposition of strict curfew for two days.

"People are requested not to violate the law and stay indoors," the police said.

olate the law and stay indoors," the police said.

Barricades have been set up at hundreds of places in Kashmir, including Srinagar city, to regulate movement of essential services and emergencies while concertina wires have been also laid, the officials said.

The authorities had announced Monday that the curfew would be imposed in Srinagar and other parts of the Valley in view of the inputs about violent protests endangering public life and property as the separatist and Pakistan-sponsored groups were planning to observe August 5 as a 'Black Day'.

An order issued by Srinagar district magistrate Shahid Iqbal Choudhary said any such mass gathering would also be detrimental to efforts related to COVID containment.

Choudhary said the movement and assembly of people have been prohibited to avoid the spread of infection, particularly in the wake of a recent spike in cases.

"Therefore, after having considered the material facts in said report and examining the situation in backdrop of prevailing factors, I, District Magistrate, Srinagar, by virtue of powers vested in me u/s 144 Cr PC hereby order complete restrictions on public movement/curfew in territorial jurisdiction of District Srinagar," the order read.

However, medical emergencies and movement of staff on COVID-19 duty with pass/valid cards shall be exempted from the restrictions, the order said.

COVID SURGE: MOST OF KASHMIR IN 'RED ZONE'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, August 4: The Jammu and Kashmir government has classified the districts into red, orange and green zones depending on the severity of COVID-19 spread in the areas and declared the entire Kashmir region, except Bandipora, as a "red zone".

The categorisation has been done to implement restrictions after August 5, when the current phase of lockdown in the union territory ends, according to an order issued by the chairperson of the State Executive Committee.

The order declared all districts of Kashmir, except Bandipora, and Ramban district of Jammu as red zones. Kathua, Samba, Bandipora, Reasi, Udhampur, Poonch, Rajouri and Jammu districts are in orange

zone and Doda and Kishtwar are in green zone.

The Lakhanpur containment zone on the national highway will be a red/containment zone with a 500-metre buffer, the order stated.

It said the classification of districts has been done after a detailed review of the COVID situation with top officials, and it will be reviewed periodically.

The review included the recent spike in new cases in view of the movement of people to J&K and between districts.

Tuesday, Jammu and Kashmir recorded 390 COVID-19 cases, taking the total number of infections to 22,396. Ten fatalities in the last 24 hours pushed the death toll from the disease to 417, officials said.

They said all the 10 deaths were reported from Kashmir Valley.

AFGHAN PRISON TERROR ATTACK

Kerala doctor among IS suicide bombers

15 people, including Kallukettiya Purayil Ijas, had fled Kerala to join the terror group in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 4: Of the 11 ISIS suicide bombers involved in the Afghanistan prison break terror attack that left 39 people dead Monday, one was a doctor from Kerala.

Official sources told IANS that the ISIS suicide bomber has been identified as Kallukettiya Purayil Ijas, a physician and resident of Kasargod in Kerala.

Sunday evening, as per official sources in Kabul, 11 ISIS terrorists stormed the Jalalabad prison to break free their cadres, killing 39 people. In a fierce gun-battle which lasted for almost 24 hours, the Afghan security forces killed all the 11 attackers.

Ijas, according to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) which has been investigating his case, went to Afghanistan to join the Islamic State's Khorasan Province branch of Daesh, the global Islamist terror group, in 2016.

As per the NIA chargesheet in the case, Ijas had gone to Afghanistan along with his pregnant wife Refeela. While Ijas at the time was



33 years old, his wife was 26. Sources said Refeela and their child are in the custody of Afghan authorities.

In July 2016, a parent from Kasargod had lodged a police complaint, stating that his 30-year-old son Abdul Rashid was missing along with his wife Ayisha (Sonia Sebastian) and child for almost two months after they had gone to Mumbai.

Around the same time, 14 other cases of missing people, including Ijas, were registered by their parents and relatives in the police station of the same area. Preliminary

Ijas, according to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) which has been investigating his case, went to Afghanistan to join the Islamic State's Khorasan Province branch of Daesh, the global Islamist terror group, in 2016.

As per NIA chargesheet, Ijas had gone to Afghanistan along with his pregnant wife Refeela. While Ijas at the time was 33 years old, his wife was 26.

The NIA probe revealed that Abdul Rashid, Yasmeen and others were involved in activities to further the objectives of the ISIS in Kerala and other places of India

with her child.

As per the Kerala police, Yasmeen was actively aiding Abdul Rashid in his activities, including raising funds to support the ISIS. The case was handed over to the NIA after she was arrested.

The NIA investigation revealed that Yasmeen "was highly influenced and radicalised with the pro-

jihadi ideology" and recruited the main accused Abdul Rashid. She "compelled her husband to divorce her and upon her compulsion, her husband pronounced third talaq in the month of Ramadan, 2015. Immediately after the third talaq, she had left her place of work at Kollam and gone to the house of Ijas at Kasargod for attending the secret, pro-ISIS classes conducted by Abdul Rashid," the NIA chargesheet said.

The NIA investigation revealed that Abdul Rashid, Yasmeen and others were involved in activities to further the objectives of the ISIS in Kerala and other places of India. Fifteen people, including Ijas, had fled from Kerala to join the terror group in Nangarhar province in Afghanistan.

Though the NATO and Afghan forces claim to have killed most ISIS members in Nangarhar, sources said many escaped from the area unscathed. In the chargesheet, the NIA listed Ijas, a resident of Hamsa Nagar, Thekkepuram, near the government hospital in Padana, Kasargod, as an accused and absconder in the case.

NIA opposes bail plea of Swapna Suresh

AGENCIES

Kochi, August 4: Strongly opposing the bail plea of Kerala gold smuggling accused Swapna Suresh, the NIA Tuesday alleged in a special court here that she along with four co-accused had illegally brought in gold worth over ₹100 crore through diplomatic channel since November last year.

In a detailed counter to the bail application moved by Suresh, the National Investigation Agency, probing the sensational case, also submitted that she had knowledge that the smuggled gold would be used for subversive activities and threaten the country's security and monetary stability. "The accused A-1 to A-5 (Sarith, Suresh, Faisal Fareed, Sandeep Nair and Ramees) and others colluded and conspired to make use of this channel and smuggle gold along with the materials genuinely required by the foreign diplomats at consulate of UAE in Thiruvananthapuram.

"Hence, instead of sending just the materials required by Consulate staff, co-conspirators including

GOLD SMUGGLING CASE



Fareed in UAE packed gold into various materials neatly hidden and submitted the baggage to the Air Cargo authorities at UAE," the NIA said. On earlier occasions, since November, 2019, when such baggage reached Thiruvananthapuram Airport, Sarith collected it and handed over to Nair who in turn had taken it to his house and other places, opened it with the help of

Ramees and other associates, the agency said. "The gold is then handed over to persons known and directed by A-5 to be used in lieu of cash for unlawful activities including funding of such activities," the NIA said and submitted that using this process, the five accused had smuggled in gold around 20 times since November, 2019. "The total quantity of gold smug-

gled is to the tune of approximately 200 kgs, which is worth more than ₹100 crores," it said in the counter.

Asserting that intensive investigation was required in the case to add value to the prima-facie findings that the gold smuggled could have been so used for anti-national activities, NIA said apart from Fareed, who is currently in UAE, other persons from the foreign country were also involved in such smuggling during earlier occasions.

"The petitioner also knew about the antecedents of all the accused while she transacted with them. It is also learnt during investigation that the initial money required for obtaining gold was funded by various persons with dubious antecedents and the money was sent abroad through hawala channel. The source of gold smuggled from UAE is also under investigation," the agency said in the counter. The NIA said there was prima facie evidence to the effect that the accused intentionally committed the act which will fall directly under Section 15 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Kerala decision to entrust cops with contact tracing draws flak

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, August 4: The Opposition Congress led UDF Tuesday slammed the Kerala government's decision to entrust major responsibilities of Covid containment from the health department to police, saying this would create "police raj" in the state.

In an open letter to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Opposition leader in the assembly Ramesh Chennithala said it was surprising that the government handed over major responsibilities such as identification of containment zones, monitoring of those in quarantine and contact tracing, from the health department to police.

"There is no doubt that this will lead to law and order issues, police atrocities and human rights violations," he said, adding that in short the state would witness 'police raj'.

With COVID-19 cases continuing to rise in Kerala, the LDF gov-



ernment had Monday decided to bring in stringent measures to contain the spread and had entrusted police with the task of contact tracing and enforcing quarantine protocols.

"This is a health emergency and not a law and order issue. The Health department should lead Covid prevention activities," the Congress leader said and alleged that the

Chief Minister has "insulted" health officials with the decision. Pointing out that the deployment of commandos in nearby Poonthura had backfired, Chennithala noted that the COVID-19 pandemic should be handled with empathy and compassion. BJP leader K Gopalakrishnan also attacked the government, saying lathis are not a solution to overcome the covid crisis.

Meanwhile, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) flayed the decision, saying the government's decision cannot be justified.

This is a job of health workers, the IMA said in a statement here. Kochi City Police commissioner Vijay Sakhrae, who has been appointed the nodal officer, said police would only assist the health workers.

There is no doubt that this will lead to law and order issues, police atrocities and human rights violations

RAMESH CHENNITHALA | LEADER OF OPPOSITION



India as a whole, the testing rates are much lower compared to some of the countries, who have done well like Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan. Even the United States is testing a huge number of people. So we need to have some benchmark and every public health department needs to have benchmarks on what is the rate of testing per lakh or per million, what is the test positivity rate

Soumya Swaminathan | CHIEF SCIENTIST OF WHO

BIHAR FLOODS: OVER 11,000 EVACUATED

More than 11,000 people have been evacuated by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) from flood-affected areas of Bihar so far, a spokesperson of the central force said Tuesday



of the day quote

Congratulations to all successful candidates of the UPSC Civil Services Exam 2019. May you have a bright future in serving the people of our great nation. Those who didn't qualify, try harder. With determination, you shall succeed

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

Lord Shri Ram's temple is coming up in Ayodhya. Me and my family have faith in God and that is why we have decided to donate ₹21,000 for the construction of Ram temple. I hope that the temple would usher in Ram Rajya in India and Gujarat

HARDIK PATEL | GUJARAT CONGRESS LEADER

Several battles were fought and hundreds of people sacrificed their lives for the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. It will be a red-letter day in the history of India when Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays the foundation stone for it tomorrow

TRIVENDRA SINGH RAWAT | UTTARAKHAND CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Ex-Tripura min booked

Agartala: A case was filed against former Tripura health minister Sudip Roy Barman for visiting a COVID Care Centre here allegedly without authorisation, police said Tuesday. Wearing a PPE kit, the BJP MLA visited the COVID Care Centre set up at the Bhagat Singh Youth Hostel on Sunday and distributed fruits among the patients. A suo motu case was filed against Barman under the Epidemic Diseases Act at the Capital Complex police station for visiting the COVID Care Centre without permission, a police officer said.

Jailbreak plan foiled

Thane: A jailbreak bid by nine inmates using a ladder made of cut and rusted toilet pipes tied with drawstrings and elastic sourced from undergarments was foiled in Thane district, police said Tuesday. The incident came to light when prison officials during a routine inspection found the 25-foot ladder on a loft between a newly-constructed toilet and an eating area, after which a probe began to find out who had built it, said an official.

Gehlot's brother skips ED summons

New Delhi: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's elder brother Agrasain Gehlot skipped Enforcement Directorate summons for a second time Tuesday in a money-laundering case, citing health issues, officials said. He was first summoned to appear on July 29, but he had sought exemption on health issues. Officials said Agrasain Gehlot did not appear before the investigating officer Tuesday as well on the ongoing health grounds and has now been asked to appear next week in Delhi.

Online Lok Adalat to be held in Raj

Jodhpur: The state legal services authority is gearing up for the online Lok Adalat to be held across Rajasthan August 22. Chairman of the Jodhpur District Legal Service Authority (DLSA) Vishvabandhu said the Lok Adalat will be held online as a pilot project amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and depending upon the results further strategy would be planned.

NOT LINKED TO SUSHANT'S DEATH: AADITYA

AGENCIES

Mumbai, August 4: Maharashtra minister Aaditya Thackeray Tuesday said he and his family are being targeted for no reason in actor Sushant Singh Rajput death case and stressed he is nowhere related to the matter.

The Shiv Sena leader said dirty politics is being played following the death of the Bollywood actor and without naming anyone, added that the allegation being levelled is political stomach-ache stemming from frustration.

The tourism minister said he is a grandson of Shiv Sena founder the late Bal Thackeray and will not commit any act that will hurt the image of Maharashtra and his family. In a statement he shared on Twitter, Aaditya Thackeray said the Maharashtra government is making all the efforts to combat COVID-19 and perhaps those who are sulking due to the



MVAs popularity have started playing the dirty politics in connection with the death case.

Mud-slinging is being indulged in against me and the Thackeray family for no reason in connection with Sushant's suicide. This is a kind of political stomach-ache stemming from frustration. It is blot on humanity to seek mileage out of someone's death. In fact, I am nowhere related to this episode,



Aaditya Thackeray asserted. He said Bollywood is an important part of Mumbai and thousands of people are dependent on the film industry for employment.

The 30-year-old son of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said he shares cordial rapport with many people from Bollywood and added it is no crime. Aaditya Thackeray further said Rajput's death is unfortunate and equally shocking and added the Mumbai Police are probing the matter in detail.

The Maharashtra Police are reputed in the world. But those who do not believe in law are stoking dust of baseless allegations to divert the probe.

As a grandson of Hinduhrdaysamrat (King of Hindus' heart) Balasaheb Thackeray, I want to tell, that I will not com-

'BETTER LATE THAN NEVER'

NEW DELHI: "Better late than never," said the Lok Janshakti Party on Tuesday, hours after the Bihar government recommended a CBI probe into the case of actor Sushant Singh Rajput's alleged suicide. LJP president Chirag Paswan earlier in the day spoke to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, reiterating his party's demand to hand over the case to the central agency. He also wrote another letter to Kumar over the issue. It was his second letter to Kumar as he has been speaking in favour of a CBI probe in the case, days after Sushant's family suspected a foul play in his death. Kumar said in a statement that the Bihar government has decided to recommend a CBI inquiry in the case after the actor's father made a request for it. "Better late than never," the LJP tweeted.

mit any act that will harm the reputation of Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena and the Thackeray family. Those who are making baseless allegations should understand this, he said.

'Only 0.27% patients on ventilators till August 3'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 4: The Union Health Ministry Tuesday said that as many as 18,000 ventilators have been supplied to hospitals across the country till now and that only 0.27 percent of coronavirus patients are on them.

Addressing a press conference, Ministry Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said that at no point has the country reached the one percent mark on patients using ventilators in the last six months. "As many as 18,000 ventilators have reached the states till now. Yesterday, 0.27 percent of the total active cases were on ventilators across the country," he told reporters.

This comes at a time when the country has logged more than 18 lakh cases and is nearing 40,000 deaths due to the deadly virus. However, the silver lining is the recovery rate which is twice the number of active cases.

Rajesh Bhushan said that even though the virus has spread to new areas, still 82 percent cases are limited to only 10 states and 50 districts account for 66 percent of the case load in the country. According to the data pro-



vided by the ministry, 68 percent of coronavirus deaths were reported among the male population and 32 percent among the female population. Besides this, almost 50 percent deaths are in the age group of 60 and above and 37 percent in the 45 to 60 age group.

Bhushan said that the country had ordered more than 60,000 make-in-India ventilators pursuant to the onset of the pandemic, competitively priced at ₹1.5 lakh to ₹4 lakh as compared to foreign ventilators priced at ₹10 lakh to ₹20 lakh.

Out of the 60,000 ventilators being procured, 50,000 are funded by the PM Cares fund which comes to about ₹2000 crore, Bhushan said, adding that they come with GPS chips to track them.

'SUSHANT WAS MURDERED'

BJP MP Narayan Rane Tuesday claimed that actor Sushant Singh Rajput was murdered. The former Maharashtra chief minister, who made the sensational claim at a media briefing here, did not offer any evidence to support it. Rane also claimed that Sushant's former manager Disha Salian was also killed, and indicated that her murder may have been preceded by her rape. He claimed the post mortem report mentioned injuries to her private parts.

No monkey business allowed in Ayodhya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ayodhya, August 4: Ahead of the groundbreaking for the Ram temple in Ayodhya, the authorities here have taken stock of every possible threat - including that from monkeys.

An official said scores of workers will keep watch in the area around the Ram Jannabhoomi so that Ayodhya's monkeys don't get anywhere near the venue of the bhoomi puja, in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate Wednesday. Devotees going for a darshan of Ram Lalla at the makeshift temple are used to making their way to the deity through a caged gangway, partly because of the monkey menace.

An official from the government's Information department told PTI that municipal authori-

ties and the animal husbandry department have been asked to "keep the premises safe from monkeys". They will use catapults and wooden batons to shoo away any monkey spotted in the neighbourhood. But the most effective weapon will be gram and fruit, he said.

These will be offered to the monkeys some distance away from the site to keep them busy. Sanitation workers, home guards and animal husbandry department employees will be on the job, the official said.

ties and the animal husbandry department have been asked to "keep the premises safe from monkeys". They will use catapults and wooden batons to shoo away any monkey spotted in the neighbourhood. But the most effective weapon will be gram and fruit, he said.

These will be offered to the monkeys some distance away from the site to keep them busy. Sanitation workers, home guards and animal husbandry department employees will be on the job, the official said.

'Disposed PPE could be turned into biofuel'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Dehradun, August 4: Plastic from used personal protective equipment (PPE) can and should be transformed into renewable liquid fuels, according to Indian researchers.

The study, published in the journal Biofuels, suggested a strategy that could help to mitigate the problem of dumped PPE - currently being disposed of at unprecedented levels due to the current Covid-19 pandemic - becoming a significant threat to the environment.

The research from the University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES) in Uttarakhand shows how billions of items of disposable PPE can be converted from its



polypropylene (plastic) state into biofuels - which is known to be at par with standard fossil fuels. "The transformation into biocrude, a type of synthetic fuel, will not just prevent the severe aftereffects to humankind and the environment but also produce a source of energy," said study lead author Dr Sapna Jain from UPES.

There is high production and

utilisation of PPE to protect the community of health workers and other frontline workers of Covid-19. The disposal of PPE is a concern owing to its material i.e. non-woven polypropylene. "The proposed strategy is a suggestive measure addressing the anticipated problem of disposal of PPE," Jain said.

Once these plastic materials are discharged into the environment they end up in landfills or oceans, as their natural degradation is difficult at ambient temperature. They need decades to decompose. Recycling these polymers requires both physical methods and chemical methods. Reduction, reuse and recycling are the three pillars of sustainable development that can help to prevent the disposal of plastic in the environment.

DAILY GRIND



A hand rickshaw puller looks for customers on a city street during monsoon rain in Kolkata

PTI PHOTO

Two septuagenarian women raped in Kerala

AGENCIES

Kochi/Kannur, August 4: In two separate horrifying incidents, two septuagenarian women were raped in Kerala's Ernakulam and Kannur districts-one of them brutally—and doctors have described her condition as serious, police said Tuesday.

In the first incident, a 75-year-old woman was raped at a village near Kolenchery in Ernakulam district Sunday. Four people have been taken into custody. She was allegedly raped at another person's residence at Pangode village, police said. Doctors at the private medical

college hospital, where the elderly woman is being treated, have confirmed that she was subjected to brutal rape. In the other case, a 75-year-old woman, who was staying alone at her home at Maruthayi in Mattannur in Kannur district, was allegedly raped by her neighbour, police said. Earlier, Kerala Women's Commission Chairperson M C Josephine, who visited the woman at the hospital, wrote to the government urging it to bear the woman's treatment expenses.

The incident, which occurred between July 27-30, came to light after the woman, who is a spinster, informed her neighbours, police said.

Dead woman walking in Bulandshahr, cops book kin

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 4: A day after a supposedly dead woman walked into a Uttar Pradesh police station there has been a major development.

The Bulandshahr police is set to file a case against the mother and brother of Warisha, after they identified a body in a suitcase as hers but then she turned up alive. The family also tried to falsely implicate her in-laws in a dowry case.

"We are registering a case against the mother and brother of Warisha for trying to implicate her in-laws in a dowry death case by falsely identifying the body of a woman found in a suitcase in Ghaziabad July 27. "We have scrapped the 304 B section of IPC from the FIR after it was found that Warisha was alive, other charges as per the statement would remain intact," said SSP Bulandshahr, Santosh Kumar Singh. The development comes after police in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad found a woman's body stuffed in a suitcase. They shared photographs on social media as part of an identification drive. A woman and her son from Aligarh came forward and identified the victim as 24-year-old Warisha.

According to them, Warisha went missing from her in-laws' house in Bulandshahr on July 23. They then took the body to Aligarh, where the burial took place July 29.

However, the mystery deepened on Monday when Warisha, who was assumed dead, came to the police and narrated her story to a police constable in Aligarh.

It was then that the police realised that the woman in the suitcase was someone else who is yet to be identified.

Covid new 'enemy' for BSF men guarding frontiers in NE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

The BSF troopers, who are deployed on the over 1,880-km-long border with Bangladesh in the region, spanning the states of Assam, Tripura, Mizoram and Meghalaya, are now bearing the brunt of Covid-19 with over 1,000 personnel infected so far

Agartala/Aizawl/Shillong, August 4: After malaria, Covid-19 has become the new enemy for Border Security Force (BSF) troopers guarding the international frontiers in northeast India.

According to official records, since last year, only two BSF men died in northeastern states due to malaria against a large number killed for the past many years until 2018.

A senior BSF official, however, said that a majority of the infected personnel have already resumed duties following their recovery. As per the official, the BSF jawans and some officials are getting infected as they come to the region from various states in north and south India.

"The BSF men, after completion of their leave period or when they are transferred, have to move



by train or by air for their destinations. During transit or in their hazardous duties along the borders, the jawans come in contact with the dreaded virus," the BSF

official, who did not want to be identified, told IANS. The highest number of BSF personnel (360) infected positive for Covid-19 in Tripura followed by 350 in Mizoram

and 300 in Meghalaya. Many family members, including children, of the BSF personnel were also infected.

Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga even made a plea to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure suspension of Central Paramilitary Forces (CPMF) movement into the state till August 31. Zoramthanga, in his letter to Modi, expressed serious concern over rising Covid-19 cases among the security personnel. "Around 70 per cent of 501 Covid-19 cases in Mizoram are from the military and paramilitary forces," he said.

An official of Mizoram government said that infection of Covid-19 among the CPMF was discussed at a meeting Monday attended by the top officials including Chief Secretary Lalnunmawia Chuaung and

Director General of Police S.B.K. Singh. According to the health officials of Mizoram and Meghalaya, besides the BSF men, a large number of personnel belonging to Assam Rifles and the National Disaster Response Force were also testing positive for coronavirus. Some Indian Army personnel have also tested positive in Nagaland and other northeastern states.

Following the request of the Tripura government, a three-member central team, led by G.K. Medhi, Professor and Head of the Department of Community Medicine of the Shillong-based North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health & Medical Sciences, submitted their report after a 11-day visit to study the source and other aspects of the coronavirus infection among BSF troopers in Tripura.

of the day quote

Need to make delivery of justice speedier, affordable M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

There should be criticism, but it should be positive, constructive and suggestive. We welcome criticism. We take it positively and we have always incorporated suggestions in the past PRAMOD SAWANT | CHIEF MINISTER OF GOA

Gang-rapes are happening, people are being beaten up in Gurgaon. There is no police available for them, but 1,000 policemen are deployed for the security of 19 MLAs. The legislators should first give up the Haryana police's security, and friendship and hospitality of the BJP, return home and only then will the dialogue take place RANDHEEP SURJEWALA | AICC SPOKESPERSON

SHORT TAKES

4 held in Tripura spitting case

Agartala: Four people in Tripura were arrested Tuesday for allegedly abusing and spitting on a woman doctor at a health facility here, police said. There was an additional government advocate among these four who had earlier tested Covid positive. They were arrested after the completion of their seven-day institutional quarantine.

2 jailed ex-Mins' test Covid+ve

Ranchi: Jailed former Ministers Enos Ekka and Raja Peter along with 52 other inmates of Birsamunda central jail here have tested positive for coronavirus, officials said Tuesday. Officials said that Chief Minister Hemant Soren and his wife Kalpana underwent a COVID-19 test for the second time Tuesday after 17 members of his staff tested positive for the disease.

Jawan shoots dead two colleagues

Raiganj (WB): A BSF jawan allegedly shot dead two of his colleagues in West Bengal's North Dinajpur district Tuesday morning, officials said. BSF Constable Uttam Sutradhar shot dead Battalion Commandant Mahendra Singh Bhatti and Constable Anuj Kumar following a scuffle, police said. The incident took place in Bhatun village near the India-Bangladesh border in Raiganj police station area, they said.

CBI books six SBI officials

New Delhi: The CBI has booked six State Bank of India officials and Nashik-based real estate firm Sun Infrastructure for allegedly cheating the bank to the tune of ₹23.86 crore and recovered ₹50 lakh in cash from one of the accused during searches, officials said Tuesday.

Woman killed by wild elephant

Korba: A 55-year-old woman was killed by a wild elephant in Chhattisgarh's Surajpur district, a forest official said Tuesday. The victim Kiuli Bai was returning home after working in a paddy field Monday evening when she was attacked by a tusker near Jhinga village under Pratappur forest range, divisional forest officer (Surajpur division) J R Bhagat said.



We will send 11 silver bricks for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya on the behalf of citizens of Madhya Pradesh KAMAL NATH | MADHYA PRADESH CONGRESS PRESIDENT

SPICEJET GETS HEATHROW SLOTS, FLIGHTS FROM SEPT 1

Airline major SpiceJet has secured slots at Heathrow Airport, London, to operate flights from September 1



Won't spare the guilty: Punjab CM

AS MANY AS 111 PEOPLE HAVE DIED IN THE HOCH TRAGEDY THAT TOOK PLACE IN TARN TARAN, AMRITSAR AND GURDASPUR'S BATALA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, August 4: Under fire from the opposition over the spurious liquor tragedy that has claimed over 110 lives, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Tuesday said no one will be spared if found complicit in the hooch deaths.

HOCH TRAGEDY

Describing the deaths in the hooch tragedy as "sheer murder", the chief minister said he would now allow the "killers" to get away with it. As many as 111 people have died in the hooch tragedy that took place in Tarn Taran, Amritsar and Gurdaspur's Batala.

The chief minister said he would finish off the liquor mafia in the state. "No one, whether a politician or a public servant, will be spared if found complicit in the hooch deaths," said the Chief Minister.

He said the entire force of the Punjab Police would crack down on the mafia. Promising the strictest action in the matter, Singh said, "111 deaths have taken place because of spurious liquor. The entire police force and the Excise department have been put on the job, and I want this job to be finished in the next two days." Some unscrupulous elements took advantage of the police focus on



AMARINDER SINGH

battling the COVID pandemic to satiate their greed at the cost of the lives of Punjabis, the CM said in a statement here.

While the state government was busy battling COVID-19, which has claimed 449 lives in the state so far, the liquor mafia seized the opportunity to play with the lives of our people, he added.

"This is sheer murder, and the killers will not get away with it," the CM said. Singh said his government was with the families of the deceased in their hour of grief, and asserted that he would leave no stone unturned to ensure justice for them. Slamming the opposition for "exploiting" the tragedy for their "petty political interests", the CM

Heavy rains batter Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 4: Heavy showers in Mumbai and neighbouring areas crippled normal life and disrupted rail and road traffic here Tuesday, with essential services workers like nurses and other medical staff treating COVID-19 patients also finding it difficult to reach hospitals.

Several areas in the city and suburbs received more than 200 mm rainfall since Monday night and heavy showers were likely to continue for next 48 hours, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Local train services, which are currently being operated only for those engaged in essential services, were suspended on some routes in Mumbai and suburbs in the morning due to water-logging on rail tracks. Some roads near Byculla, Dadar and Mahalaxmi were inundated and traffic police had to divert traffic from those areas. Water was seen gushing on a road in suburban Kandivali in the morning as rains pounded the city.

Several houses in low-lying areas like Kurla, Sion and parts of Bhandup were flooded due to the heavy downpour, a civic official said. A landslide on the Western Express Highway, a major north-south arterial road, in suburban Kandivali affected vehicular movement from the western suburbs towards south Mumbai, though



IMD red alert for Mumbai, Maha districts

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a red alert for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Pune, Nashik and some other parts of Maharashtra for Wednesday. The red alert was issued for the second consecutive day. Rains have been lashing Mumbai and adjoining districts since Tuesday night. "The red alert of extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places has been issued for Wednesday. The probability of it is very likely, which means it could actualise up to 75 per cent," an IMD official said here.

there was no casualty, officials said. Water-logging outside the civic-run Nair Hospital in central Mumbai, where several COVID-19 patients from the city are being treated, posed a problem for its medical staff.

"Nurses and other medical staff have been struggling to reach the hospital due to water-logging in the premises and elsewhere, a resident doctor from the hospital said. Suburban train services on the harbour line were stopped in the morning due to water-logging on rail tracks while services on the western and central lines were

also affected, a civic official said. "Due to high tide resulting in water logging at Wadala and Parel suburban services are suspended on main line and harbour line. However, shuttle services are running between Vashi and Panvel & Thane and Kalyan-beyond," Central Railway's Chief Public Relation Officer Shivaji Sutar tweeted.

The Bombay High Court adjourned its virtual hearings in various cases as many staff members could not reach the court in south Mumbai, an official said. The high court will hear the matters on Wednesday, an official said.

Thin line between free speech, contempt: SC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 4: Taking up the 2009 contempt of court case against lawyer Prashant Bhushan, the Supreme Court said Tuesday that there is a thin line between free speech and contempt, adding that the issue now is how to save the system's grace and bring the matter to an end as well.

A bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra asked Senior Advocate Rajeev Dhavan, representing Bhushan, to suggest ways to resolve this matter. Justice Mishra told Dhavan: "Can you suggest some way to avoid this rigmarole? You can resolve it." In response, Dhavan said that Bhushan had already provided an explanation on the matter.

After a brief hearing on the matter through videoconference, the hearing was turned into in-camera proceeding. But before

that happened, the bench had asked Dhavan for solution to the case. The contempt case pertains to Prashant Bhushan's comments on the judiciary during an interview to the Tehelka magazine in 2009. In response, Justice Mishra had replied that the court would have to resume the hearing. When Sibal pleaded that he needed time to prepare, Justice Mishra said the court would give him enough time for the purpose.

Dhavan too had said that time was required to go through the records and prepare for the hearing. He pointed out that Senior Advocate Ram Jethmalani, who appeared for Bhushan earlier, had passed away last year.

Incidentally, the same bench has also issued notice to Prashant Bhushan July 22 in a suo motu case taken up by the apex court over his two tweets in connection with the higher judiciary.



Lawyer Prashant Bhushan

GEARING UP



A worker carries a model of Ram Mandir on his head on the eve of the foundation stone laying ceremony of the temple in Ayodhya, in Prayagraj

Silver coin for every guest in Ayodhya

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ayodhya, August 4: Every guest who is invited for the 'bhumi puja' ceremony for the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya Wednesday, will be gifted a silver coin as 'prasad'.

The silver coin, on one side, has the image of Ram Darbar which includes Lord Ram, Sita, Laxman and Hanuman and on the other side is the insignia of trust.

The guests will also be given a box of 'laddoos' and a photograph of Ram Darbar.

According to sources, over 1.25 lakh laddoos, called 'Raghupati



laddoos' will be distributed to guests, residents of Ayodhya and others on August 5.

All the guests who are coming from other districts or state, have been asked to reach Ayodhya by

Tuesday evening because the borders of the district will be sealed in the evening.

A total of 175 people have been invited to the Sri Ram Temple Trust for bhumi puja, including about 135 saints who will come from different parts of the country. There is a code on every invitation card, which is designed for security. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will Wednesday the function at Ayodhya, the Prime Minister's Office said.

Former deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani, Dr Murali Manohar Joshi and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh will not be attending the ceremony.

GYMS SET TO REOPEN AMID PANDEMIC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 4: Gyms and fitness centres Tuesday geared up to open their doors after almost five months with managements busy fine-tuning operational details such as hourly sanitisation, spacing out equipment to ensure social distancing and minimising staff in accordance with government guidelines.

Thousands of small gyms and bigger chains will welcome customers to 'fitness in the COVID era' Wednesday though outlets in states where lockdown rules have not been relaxed will continue to be closed.

After the crippling losses and layoffs, the Ministry of Home Affairs' July 30 notice allowing gymnasiums and yoga institutes to reopen from August 5 was a huge relief, said gym owners. On Monday evening, the Health Ministry issued its guidelines and establishments are quickly making sure that everything is in

place before they reopen for business. Several states and cities, including Delhi and Maharashtra, will continue to keep gyms shut. Maharashtra has reported 15,842 COVID-19 deaths and Delhi 4,004, according to Union Health Ministry figures Monday.

The ministry's 'Guidelines on Preventive Measures to Contain Spread of COVID-19 in Yoga Institutes & Gymnasiums' also suggests staggered visits by members and instructs that equipment, including cardio and strength machines, be placed six feet apart wherever possible. It also says visors should be used as far as possible while exercising. Before exercising, people have to get their oxygen saturation checked. If below 95 per cent, they should not be allowed to exercise, the notification says.

The fitness industry was among the first to take a hit with gyms across states shutting down rapidly even before the nationwide lockdown began on March 25, leav-



ing thousands of trainers and support staff unemployed.

According to Gympik, a health and fitness aggregator, there are approximately 20,000 gyms across the country, including neighbourhood workout centres as well as nationwide chains like Gold Gym and Cultfit that have multiple centres in a single city alone.

These centres offer facilities like strength, weight and cardio train-

ing, alongside yoga and Zumba classes, and cater to over 10 million gym goers, it estimates.

Shalini Bhargava, director at Mumbai's JG's Fitness Centre is not looking at opening her facility immediately with the Maharashtra government extending the lockdown till August 31, but is prepping for it. "Most of our existing clients have been calling to get an idea of the time slots, rules and

safety measures that will be followed. All the government guidelines were expected, so we are completely prepared," Bhargava said.

Machines and gym equipment have been spaced out, sanitisation machines have been installed, and fitness sessions have been moved to the open air terrace. Fitness enthusiasts have been missing their workout sessions at the gyms but are wary of stepping into one.

Gurgaon-based Chetna Beniwal, for instance, would visit the gym five days a week before the lockdown. Given the continuing spread of the disease, she said she has decided to continue to work out at home. "My major concern is using the same equipment and machines that other people have been using. Besides, I have been working out at home using a mat and a few weights, and it feels like a better alternative to gyms. Unlike her, Mumbai-based Ankit Doshi said he can't wait for the gyms to reopen in his state.

Section 164 of the Cr.P.C.," said the plea.

The plea added, "The petitioners (social workers) along with the survivor had sought bail from the CJM (Chief Judicial Magistrate), Araria, who vide order dated July 17 granted bail to the survivor but denied bail to the petitioners. The order of the CJM is unsustainable in law as it is contrary to the settled bail jurisprudence as laid down in a catena of judgments of this court."

The petitioners contended that the FIR registered in Araria was not maintainable in law as there was a statutory bar against the police investigating criminal contempt of court. "The inclusion of provisions from the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 in the FIR reveals the non-application of mind and arbitrary exercise of authority which unfortunately is writ large over the entire proceedings against the petitioners," the plea added.

international

of the day quote

The US has been escalating its actions against Chinese journalists. The US should immediately correct its mistake and stop its actions. If the US persists, China will take a necessary and legitimate response to safeguard its rights



WANG WENBIN | SPOKESPERSON, CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY

I beg people not to create chaos at this time. We are solving these problems together. I support changes that are needed and I am not in conflict



PRAYUTH CHAN-OCHA | PM, THAILAND

On some estimates, 70 pc of people with the disease are asymptomatic, so if you are only testing people with symptoms you are losing the majority of people from your testing strategy



TONY BLAIR | FORMER UK PRIME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Again lockdown in Philippines

Manila: Millions of people in the Philippines returned to a COVID-19 lockdown Tuesday, after doctors warned a surge in new coronavirus cases could push the country's healthcare system to collapse. Stay-at-home orders are now in place in Manila and the four surrounding provinces of Laguna, Cavite, Rizal and Bulacan on the island of Luzon until August 18, reports the BBC.

Lawsuit against the White House

Washington: A lawsuit has been filed against the White House over the lack of a sign language interpreter at the US administration's COVID-19 briefings, according to media reported. The lawsuit was jointly filed in a district court in Washington, D.C. by the National Association of the Deaf and five differently-abled Americans. The Hill news website reported Monday. It accuses President Donald Trump's administration of a First Amendment violation and the plaintiffs have argued that the captions carried on video of the events lack details that would be conveyed by a sign language interpreter.

Balochistan extends lockdown

Quetta: The government of Pakistan's Balochistan province has extended the 'smart lockdown' enforced to curb the spread of the coronavirus till August 17. A notification from the provincial government on Monday stated that the "threat of the coronavirus still exists and restrictions on social distancing and precautionary measures are required to be put in place for the safety of human lives".

Pak to mark Aug 5 as Day of Exploitation

Pak will also change the name of its main Kashmir Highway in the capital Islamabad to Srinagar Highway 'in solidarity with the Kashmiri people'

AGENCIES

Islamabad, August 4: Pakistan will be marking the one-year anniversary of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) August 5, 2020, with rallies, protests, events, speeches and commemorations, declaring the day as 'Youm-e-Istehsal' (Day of Exploitation). "It was when Indian government abrogated Article 370 and 35A and changed the special status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories," a representative of the government said.

The Pakistan government will also be changing the name of its main Kashmir Highway in the capital Islamabad to Srinagar Highway

in solidarity with the Kashmiri people. Prime Minister Imran Khan will be heading to Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan administered Kashmir and will be addressing the legislative assembly.

Kashmir solidarity rallies will be taken out in major cities of Pakistan and across the Pakistan administered Kashmir.

Ahead of the big day and activities, Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, along with Defence Minister Pervez Khattak and National Security Advisor Moeed Yusuf visited the Line of Control (LoC) to express support and solidarity with the Kashmiri residents. Qureshi was taken to the Chirikot



sector of the LoC where he was briefed about the security situation and the ongoing conflict, which Pakistan calls India's ceasefire violations.

"Kashmiri people have rejected Indian government's August 5 actions last year," said Qureshi, adding

that "for the first time in 50 years, the UN Security Council held meetings on the Kashmir issue".

"Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) role is appreciable. OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir has raised its voice against the Indian illegal actions and endorsed Pakistan's stance on the issue," he said.

Qureshi said India is isolated on the Kashmir issue as it has put hundreds of thousands of Kashmiris in a lockdown for an year.

"India is isolated, Iran has kicked out India from its port of Chabahar, Nepal has also claimed its territory and what happened with India in Ladakh, the world also saw it," he said.



Tories face pressure to sack rape 'accused' MP



The lawmaker was taken into custody at a London police station August 1, but was released on police bail until later this month

AGENCIES

London, August 4: Calls to suspend a lawmaker from the UK's ruling Conservative Party grew over allegations that he raped a young House of Commons (lower house of Parliament) researcher.

The name of the accused politician in his 50s is being kept under covers while London's Metropolitan Police is conducting an investigation into the allegations, reports Xinhua news agency.

The alleged victim, who is in her 20s and worked as a parliamentary aide, made a formal complaint to police of rape and sexual assault last week.

The lawmaker was taken into custody at a London police station August 1, but was released on police bail until later this month.

He was accused of coercing the woman into having sex with him while they were in a relationship,

and

The ruling Conservative Party said it will not suspend the lawmaker while investigations are ongoing.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Nadhim Zahawi, also Minister for Business and Industry, told the BBC Monday that Conservative Party's Chief Whip Mark Spencer will wait to take an action until the police have concluded their investigation.

There were also calls on social media sites for the politician to be publicly named as well as suspended.

The victim told The Times newspaper Monday she was devastated that her alleged attacker has not suspended from the party yet.

The main opposition Labour Party said that it sent a terrible message that senior figures were able to secure protection through their Westminster status.

Conservative Party's Chief Whip Mark Spencer will wait to take an action until the police have concluded their investigation

NADHIM ZAHAWI | PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

Musk to 'check' pyramids

AGENCIES

Cairo, August 4: One of Egypt's top government officials has invited multi-billionaire tech mogul Elon Musk to visit the country and see for himself that the great pyramids were not built by aliens.

Tesla and SpaceX CEO Musk earlier tweeted: "Aliens built the pyramids obv (obviously)" which was retweeted more than 88,000 times.

Musk also tweeted follow-up messages after his initial post. "The Great Pyramid was the tallest structure made by humans for 3,800 years. Three thousand, eight hundred years," he posted, sharing a Wikipedia link about the Great Pyramid of Giza.

This prompted Egypt's Minister of International Co-operation, Rania al-Mashat, to reply to Musk: "I follow your work with a lot of admiration. I invite you & SpaceX to explore the writings about how the pyramids were built and also to check out the tombs of the pyramid



builders. Mr. Musk, we are waiting for you". Egyptian archaeologist Zahi Hawass also responded in a short video in Arabic posted on social media over the weekend, claiming that Musk's argument was a "complete hallucination".

"I found the tombs of the pyramids builders that tell everyone

that the builders of the pyramids are Egyptians and they were not slaves," he was quoted as saying by Egypt Today.

It is estimated that this pyramid was made from 2.3 million blocks of rock, weighs 5.9 million tonnes and it is one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

INDIANS WITH VISIT VISAS CAN'T TRAVEL TO UAE YET: ENVOY

AGENCIES

Abu Dhabi, August 4: Indian citizens were still not allowed to travel to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on visit visas until there is clarification on the travel protocol, Indian Ambassador Pavan Kapoor.

"At this point, it is not clear whether the UAE is allowing people to come on visit visas or not. We are awaiting clarity on that. Also, the government of India is yet to decide whether to allow people to travel on visit visas," he told Khaleej Times Monday.

The envoy confirmed that airlines are not carrying passengers with visit visa as of now. Khaleej Times had reported that Dubai has started issuing visit visas to more countries, including India, starting July 29. Though there was no official announcement, travel agents and Amer centre confirmed it.

UN chief calls for 'bold steps' to revive Covid-hit education

THE PANDEMIC HAS AFFECTED MORE THAN 1 BILLION STUDENTS WORLDWIDE

AGENCIES

United Nations, August 4: The Covid-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption to education in history and prolonged school closures could further entrench inequalities in access to learning: UN chief Antonio Guterres said Tuesday, underlining the need for "bold steps" to address the crisis.

Describing education as "the key to personal development and the future of societies," the secretary-general issued recommendations to resume classes in a policy brief launched alongside a new global campaign called "Save our Future", reports Xinhua news agency.

"As the world faces unsustainable levels of inequality, we need education -- the great equalizer -- more than ever," he said in a video message.

"We must take bold steps now, to create inclusive, resilient, quality education systems fit for the future."

The pandemic has affected more than 1 billion students worldwide.

Despite efforts to continue learning during the crisis, including through lessons deliv-

ered by radio, television and online, many are still not being reached, according to UN estimates.

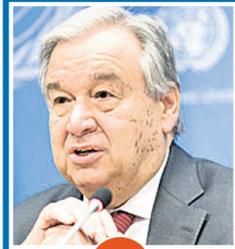
Guterres said that "learners with disabilities, members of minority or disadvantaged communities, as well as refugees and displaced persons, are among those at highest risk of being left behind".

Even those students who can access distance learning also face challenges, as success depends on their living conditions and other factors such as fair distribution of domestic duties, Guterres cautioned.

A learning crisis existed even before the pandemic, the secretary-general said, as more than 250 million children were out of school.

"Now we face a generational catastrophe that could waste untold human potential, undermine decades of progress, and exacerbate entrenched inequalities," Guterres said.

"The knock-on effects on child nutrition, child marriage and gender equality, among others, are deeply concerning."



As the world faces unsustainable levels of inequality, we need education - the great equalizer - more than ever

ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN CHIEF

Has NK readied nuke devices for ballistic missiles

AGENCIES

United Nations, August 4: North Korea is pressing on with its nuclear weapons program and several countries believe it has "probably developed miniaturized nuclear devices to fit into the warheads of its ballistic missiles," according to a confidential U.N. report. The report by an independent panel of experts monitoring U.N. sanctions said the countries, which it did not identify, believed North Korea's past six nuclear tests had likely helped it develop miniaturized nuclear devices. Pyongyang has not conducted a nuclear test since September 2017. The interim report, seen by



Reuters, was submitted to the 15-member U.N. Security Council North Korea sanctions committee Monday.

"The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is continuing its nuclear program, including the production of highly enriched ura-

nium and construction of an experimental light water reactor. A Member State assessed that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is continuing production of nuclear weapons," the report said.

North Korea is formally known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). North Korea's mission to the United Nations in New York did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the U.N. report. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said last week there would be no more war as the country's nuclear weapons guarantee its safety and future despite unabated outside pressure and military threats. The U.N. report said one country,

which it did not identify, assessed that North Korea "may seek to further develop miniaturisation in order to allow incorporation of technological improvements such as penetration aid packages or, potentially, to develop multiple warhead systems."

North Korea has been subjected to U.N. sanctions since 2006 over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump have met three times since 2018, but failed to make progress on U.S. calls for Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons and North Korea's demands for an end to sanctions.

business

of the day quote

With the changing trend of preference for personal mobility, our consistent efforts are towards fulfilling the customer needs and meeting the market demand

TARUN GARG | DIRECTOR (SALES, MARKETING & SERVICE), HYUNDAI MOTOR INDIA

Currently, the Indian TV industry imports most of the raw materials and has a value addition of only 10-12%. However, with this investment and Partnership with Google, Kodak TV aims to increase value addition to 50-60%

AVNEET SINGH MARWAH | FOUNDER AND CEO, SSP

Currently, data centres in the top 8 cities occupy 7.5 mn sq. ft. space and an additional 10 mn sq. ft. space is likely to be added over the next 2-3 years. Immediately after India went into a lockdown mode, there was a 25-35% increase in data centre capacity usage

SHOBHIT AGARWAL | MD AND CEO, ANAROCK CAPITAL

SHORT TAKES

SAIL's July sales up 50%

New Delhi: State-owned SAIL has said its total sales grew by about 50% on year to 15.83 lakh tonnes (LT) during July 2020. The company had registered sale of 10.59 LT steel during the same month last year. Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) said in a statement. "SAIL attained a sales volume of 15.83 LT in July 2020 which is its best ever performance in the month of July and an impressive growth of about 50% over July 2019 sales which was 10.59 LT," it said.

CIL trade unions serve strike notice

New Delhi: Five trade unions of Coal India have served notice for a one-day strike August 18, the state-owned company said on Tuesday, adding that efforts will be made to avert the strike. "Five trade unions of CIL...served notice of one-day strike in CIL and its subsidiaries on August 18, 2020..." the public sector undertaking (PSU) said in a filing to BSE. Efforts would be made to avert the strike, it added.

Jagdishan to be HDFC's new CEO

Mumbai: Sashidhar Jagdishan, the 'Strategic Change Agent' at HDFC Bank, will succeed Aditya Puri as the CEO and MD of the country's largest private sector lender from late October. HDFC Bank Tuesday said the appointment of Jagdishan has been approved by the RBI for three years starting from October 27. Puri has led the bank since its founding more than 25 years ago.

Wisefunding enters India

New Delhi: The UK-based fintech firm Wisefunding Tuesday said it has entered Indian market, and will tie-up with banks and NBFCs to provide credit risk assessment solutions for targeted lending to SME sector. Wisefunding has launched its AI backed cloud-based credit risk assessment tool targeted for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), it said in a release. The existing models in lending sector are not specific to the SMEs, largely non-technology based and have low prediction accuracy, it added.



A shift to being a market-based economy from a nationalised system has led to simmering tensions between the RBI and the government and questions over the central bank's independence

VIRAL ACHARYA | FORMER DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RBI

COKE FOCUSES ON LOCALISATION

Beverage major Coca-Cola has unveiled 2 new brands to mark its entry into the nascent immunity-boosting beverages category in India. The firm under its master brand Minute Maid, introduced new brands which claim to deliver some of the daily essential nutrition requirements



Fuel demand may take 6-9 months to reach normal levels: IOCL

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 4: India's fuel demand may take 6 to 9 months to rebound to normal levels as several states impose lockdown to curb the spread of coronavirus, Indian Oil Corp (IOC) Director-Finance SK Gupta said Tuesday.

Fuel sales had fallen by a record 45.8% in April when a nationwide lockdown was in place to check the coronavirus infections. Lockdown restrictions have been progressively eased beginning May but now several states are imposing lockdown to curb record daily infection rates. Speaking at an investor call on first-quarter earnings, Gupta said

LOCKDOWN IMPACT

Fuel sales had fallen by a record 45.8% in April when a nationwide lockdown was in place to check the coronavirus infections

After making a smart recovery in May, fuel sales have dipped from the second-half of June

Diesel, which accounts for two-fifths of the overall petroleum product demand in India, fell 13% to 4.85 million tonne in July

New lockdowns are hitting the country's economic recovery as there appear no signs of the infection rate slowing

It was difficult to predict the demand recovery rate given the rising infections in India and around the world. "It may take 6 to 9 months to return to normal," he said. After making a smart recovery in May, fuel sales have dipped from

the second-half of June.

Diesel, which accounts for two-fifths of the overall petroleum product demand in India, fell 13% to 4.85 million tonne in July from the previous month and by about 21% from a year earlier, according to provisional PSU sales data.

Petrol sales fell 1% to 2.03 million tonne in July from June, and by about 11.5% from a year ago, while jet fuel sales in July rose 4% from the previous month to about 218,000 but fell 65% from July 2019 as air travel curbs continued.

The only fuel that has consistently seen a rise in demand is cooking gas LPG which at 2.27 million tonne was 10% more than June and

3.5% higher than a year ago sales, the data showed.

A tough initial lockdown was imposed beginning March 25 but dreams of a V-shaped recovery after it was eased in May have been obliterated by a surge in cases and new lockdowns.

Last week, IOC Chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya had stated that demand would begin to rebound only by year-end.

New lockdowns in India had knocked capacity utilisation at refineries down from 93% in early July to 75% by the end of the month but it was predicted to stabilise in the coming months.

"The numbers of locked down

states are now announcing, that is taking its toll on the demand numbers," he had said July 31. "One thing is sure, we aren't going back to the normal times at least in the near future." New lockdowns are hitting the country's economic recovery as there appear no signs of the infection rate slowing.

Gupta said a capital spending of ₹26,233 crore is planned in fiscal year 2020-21 (April 2020 to March 2021). Of this, around ₹4,200 crore is planned to be spent on refinery upgrades and pipelines, ₹5,000 crore on marketing infrastructure, ₹2,200 crore on petrochemical projects, and ₹5,000 crore on group companies.

CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME

Banks sanction ₹1.38L cr loans to MSMEs: FinMin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 4: The Finance Ministry Tuesday said banks have sanctioned loans of about ₹1,37,586 crore under the ₹3-lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for MSME sector, hit hard by the economic slowdown due to COVID-19 pandemic. However, disbursements against this stood at ₹92,090.24 crore till August 3 under the 100 per cent ECLGS for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

The scheme is the biggest fiscal component of the ₹20-lakh crore Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in May. The latest numbers on the ECLGS, as released by the Finance Ministry, include disbursements by all 12 public sector banks (PSBs), 23 private banks and 30 non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).

Last week, the government widened the scope of the ₹3-lakh crore MSME credit guarantee scheme by doubling the upper ceiling of loans outstanding to ₹50 crore and including certain individual loans given to professionals like doctors, lawyers and chartered accountants for business purposes under its ambit. The scheme is now applicable for com-



Under the ECLGS, the loan amounts sanctioned by PSBs increased to ₹ 72,820.26 cr, of which ₹52,013.73 cr has been disbursed as of August 3

panies with an annual turnover of ₹250 crore as against the earlier ₹100 crore and the maximum amount of guaranteed emergency credit line (GECL) funding under the scheme doubled to ₹10 crore.

"As of 03 Aug 2020, the total amount sanctioned under the 100 per cent Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme by #PSBs and

private banks stands at ₹1,37,586.54 crore, of which ₹92,090.24 crore has already been disbursed," the finance minister said in a tweet.

Under the ECLGS, the loan amounts sanctioned by PSBs increased to ₹72,820.26 crore, of which ₹52,013.73 crore has been disbursed as of August 3, she said.

At the same time, private sector banks have sanctioned ₹64,766 crore and disbursed ₹40,076 crore.

"Compared to 23 July 2020, there is an increase of ₹7,094.75 crore in the cumulative amount of loans sanctioned & an increase of ₹10,025.23 crore in the cumulative amount of loans disbursed by both #PSBs and private sector banks combined as on 03 Aug 2020," Sitharaman said.

NITI Aayog suggests ways to boost demand



AGENCIES

Mumbai, August 4: With the economy going through a slowdown, the NITI Aayog is of the view that India's GDP may contract around 5.1% in the current fiscal. In a recent presentation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Finance Ministry, it has suggested ways to boost demand, specifically in the key sectors of automobiles and real estate.

As per NITI Aayog, the long-awaited scrappage policy should be brought in to help the automobile sector. It has also recommended removal of cess on automobiles. In a bid to revive demand in the realty sector, it has suggested reinstatement of the subvention scheme which was disallowed last year. Further, the think tank has also recommended government spending as private expenditure and investment is likely to take a backseat in the current scenario.

NITI Aayog, in its presentation, also noted that manufacturing sector growth and capacity utilisation was severely low even before the nationwide lockdown was implemented. Among several other recommendations, the think tank also recently suggested the creation of a Dak Bank - postal bank - by merging the regional rural banks, among other recommendations to the government.

'Covid fallout a rising risk for Indian ABS'

Moody's, said that recent structural changes and the credit enhancement build-up has partially offset the growing credit challenges

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 4: The fallout of the coronavirus pandemic is raising risks for Indian asset-backed securities, rating agency Moody's Investors Service said Tuesday.

However, the agency said that recent structural changes and the credit enhancement build-up has partially offset the growing credit challenges.

"The high take-up of coronavirus-related payment moratoriums and the economic downturn triggered by the pandemic are disrupting the cash flow of ABS transactions and as a result, are raising liquidity risks," Dipanshu Rustagi, a Moody's Assistant Vice President and Analyst, said in a statement.

Accordingly, for Indian auto ABS that Moody's rates, and are mostly backed by commercial vehicles, 70-100% of underlying loans are currently on payment moratoriums, as are 55-65% of loans in Indian micro, small and midsize enterprise (MSME) loan ABS.

"Meanwhile, the economic downturn is increasing risks for borrowers and consequently likely to trigger a deterioration in asset quality at least through the remainder of the year," Rustagi said.

Specifically, slowing growth is dampening demand for freight



As per the statement, a further risk lies in the financial deterioration evident at many Indian financial institutions that sponsor ABS

transport for commercial vehicle operators, while also weighing on the earnings and profitability of most MSMEs.

As per the statement, a further risk lies in the financial deterioration evident at many Indian financial institutions that sponsor ABS deals, since the credit quality of Indian ABS is dependent on sponsors' ongoing servicing of securitised portfolios.

"At the same time, most rated Indian ABS have amended the payment structures between April and June, partially offsetting the rising liquidity risks," the statement said.

"In addition, Indian ABS benefit from credit enhancement build-up, which provides protection against loan losses."

BIZ BUZZ

Export ban on ventilators lifted

New Delhi: The government Tuesday lifted the export ban on all ventilators to push the outbound shipments of the product. "All ventilators including any artificial respiratory apparatus or oxygen therapy apparatus or any other breathing appliance/device are made free for export," the directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) said in a notification. The ban was imposed March 24 to ensure domestic availability to fight COVID-19 pandemic. The group of ministers on COVID-19, August 1, considered and agreed to the proposal of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to allow the export of made-in-India ventilators. An official statement, issued on August 1, has said that this decision came on the heels of India continuing to maintain a progressively declining low rate of case fatality of COVID-19 patients, which means that fewer numbers of active cases are on ventilators.

Nokia to set up robotics lab

New Delhi: Nokia will set up a robotics lab at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore for research on socially-relevant use cases based on 5G and emerging technologies, the company said Tuesday. Nokia Center of Excellence (CoE) for networked robotics will promote interdisciplinary research involving robotics, advanced communication technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) to develop socially relevant use cases in areas like emergency management, agriculture and industrial automation, a statement said. "Nokia has announced collaboration with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), the country's leading institute and university for research and higher education in science and engineering, to establish the Nokia Centre of Excellence (CoE) for networked robotics," it added. The centre will promote engagement and cooperation between academia, start-ups and industry ecosystem partners in research and development of various use cases.



Adani Ports SEZ to list \$750 mn bonds on India INX

New Delhi: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (SEZ) will list \$750 million foreign currency bonds on India International Exchange (India INX) Wednesday, the bourse said. The bonds will be listed on India INX's Global Securities Market, which connects global investors with Indian and foreign issuers. Interest on bonds is payable at 4.20% p.a. and the bonds will mature in August, 2027, a statement said Tuesday.



'Auto dealers need to invest more in digital resources'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 4: With COVID-19 changing consumer behaviour, automotive brands that further digitise the car-buying experience are better poised for post-pandemic success, suggests new insights from Google.

Expectations are changing, and now more than ever people want the ability to buy and engage with the brand from the comfort of their home, Nikhil Bansal, Head of Industry, Automotive, Google India, said in a blog post Monday.

As a result of the pandemic, there is a rise in consumers' desire for their own personal mode of transportation. Online intent for automobile purchases in India is back to pre-lockdown levels after a 30-35% drop. The India Auto Pulse report also



Social distancing requirements make online discovery even more attractive to car buyers. Thus, auto dealers should invest in digital platforms and upskill their sales teams to secure digital consumers

NIKHIL BANSAL, HEAD OF INDUSTRY, AUTOMOTIVE, GOOGLE INDIA

found that over 45% of consumers have plans to buy a new car sooner, despite some markets reporting a recession. But over the years, the window to influence purchase decisions through offline efforts has gotten smaller.

Four out of every five people living in India who are considering buy-

ing a car said they would use an online purchase option if it were available, according to the Auto Pulse report.

Moreover, nearly a third of all potential buyers would buy a car sooner if they had an online option and could avoid visiting a dealership, it added.

According to Shashank Srivastava, Maruti Suzuki's Executive Director of Sales and Marketing, web-based sales inquiries have risen from 3% to 39% over the last three years, a finding that suggests car buyers want auto dealers to make it easier for them to purchase from home.

"As walk-ins to showrooms have significantly reduced, we are working with auto dealers to engage with customers on digital platforms," said Shashank.

Tarun Garg, Hyundai Motor India Ltd's Director of Sales and Marketing, said online car research has gradually increased over the last two years. "Social distancing requirements make online discovery even more attractive to car buyers. Therefore, auto dealers should invest in digital platforms and up-

skill their sales teams to secure digital consumers," Bansal said.

"To start, set up a digital desk at your dealership. Think beyond online bookings and consider personalising the digital and in-dealership experience for your customers by being helpful and supportive.

"Include options for virtual consultations, online loan processing, online insurance, or online after-market services for customers who feel more comfortable staying at home," Bansal added.

One can also provide links to credible third-party reviews and pre-empt customers' concerns and questions that can be shared via email, he said, adding that auto dealers should also consider alternatives for people who do not want to visit a physical dealership.

NEXA BECOMES 3RD LARGEST RETAILER OF PASSENGER CARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 4: Maruti Suzuki's premium retail brand Nexa has become the third largest retailer of passenger cars in the country and currently has a market share of 11 per cent, according to a senior executive.

Nexa contributes more than 20% of Maruti Suzuki's annual volumes, grossing over 30,000 units per month even in this downturn.

"Today, Nexa is the third largest retail automobile channel with a market share of 10-11%. At present, Nexa contributes close to 20 per cent of our overall sales. With Nexa, we are able to attract modern urban consumers," Maruti Suzuki Executive Director for Marketing and Sales Shashank Srivastava told PTI.

Maruti Suzuki has a 51% share in the domestic passenger car market.

Since the launch with the sole brand S-Cross, Nexa now sells five premium models of Maruti. Nexa started operations in July 2015.

In October 2016, it rolled in the Baleno, the premium mini SUV, which was followed by Ignis, a hatchback in January 2017. In April 2017, it launched the premium sedan Ciaz, and in August 2019 the XL6, a crossover MPV, was rolled out.

At present, there are 370 Nexa showrooms across 200 cities.

"Nexa marks the first initiative by a car maker here to go beyond selling cars by creating a new format of retail experience. In these five years, Nexa, with its intelligent brand associations and unique customer experiences, has delighted over 1.1 million customers as it completed five years in July," Srivastava said.

SEVEN-DAY QUARANTINE FOR KIN WHO BREACHES BIO-BUBBLE DURING IPL

VIRUS TEST ON EVERY 5TH DAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 4: Indian players and support staff will have to return negative for COVID-19 at least five times before they start training in the UAE and subsequently will be tested every fifth day during the IPL, according to a draft prepared by the BCCI.

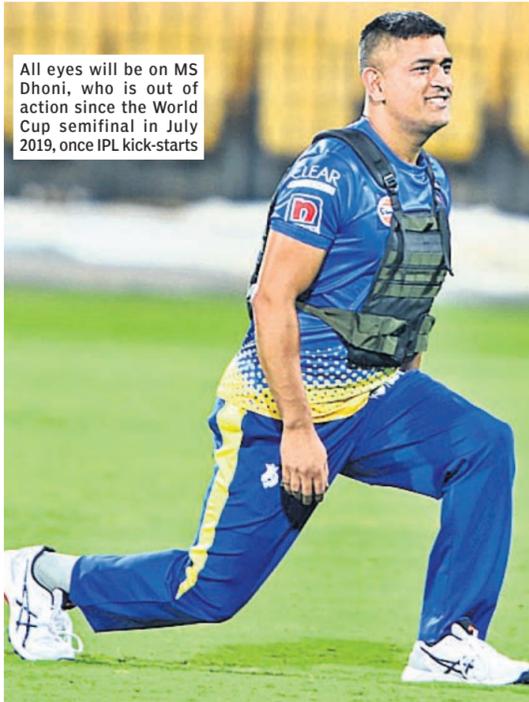
A BCCI official told this agency that all Indian players and support staff will have to undergo two COVID-19 RT-PCR tests, 24 hours apart, a week before joining the 14-day quarantine period with their respective teams in India.

If any individual tests positive, he will go into a 14-day quarantine. After the quarantine, he will be required to undergo two more COVID-19 RT-PCR tests within a space of 24 hours and if they come negative, that person will be cleared to fly to UAE for the IPL beginning November 19.

"Following their arrival in the UAE, the players and support staff will have to return at least three negative tests during a week's quarantine and if they are negative, they can enter the bio-bubble and start training.

"There could be minor changes to this protocol depending on the feedback from the teams but there will not be any compromise on players and team officials' safety," the official said.

During the first week in the UAE, the players and team officials will not be allowed to meet each other in the hotel and they can only do so after they test negative thrice, following which they will be cleared to enter the tournament bio-bubble and start training.



All eyes will be on MS Dhoni, who is out of action since the World Cup semifinal in July 2019, once IPL kick-starts

What happens to foreign players who fly in directly to the UAE? "All overseas players and support staff also need to undergo two COVID-19 RT-PCR tests before flying in to the UAE and can only fly if the tests are negative. If not, then the same 14-day quarantine period and two negative tests to be able to fly to the UAE," said the official. The players and support staff

will be tested day one, day three and day six of their quarantine in the UAE and after clearing that, they will be tested every fifth day during the 53-day event.

Over and above the BCCI testing protocol, the teams can do more tests on their own and additional tests may also be conducted under the rules put in place by the UAE government.



The teams have been told not to fly out before August 20 so that they can carry out the necessary testing protocols and the quarantine drill if needed.

The BCCI has left it to the teams to decide on the travel of partners and families of the players but they too will have to follow strict bio-secure protocols if they wish to accompany the cricketers and support staff.

The families will not be permitted to meet anyone outside the bio-bubble and will have to practice social distancing while interacting with other families and the players, that too with a facemask on.

"The families will also not be allowed to enter the PMOA (players and match officials area) and field of play at any time during the training and matches.

"And anyone who breaches the bio-secure protocols, will have to be in self-isolation for seven days and return two negative tests on day six and seven to be allowed to re-enter the bio-bubble," the official added.

Forced out of India due to the rising coronavirus case count here, the IPL will allow unlimited COVID-19 replacements considering the delicate health safety situation across the globe.

'Be specific in communication'

Former cricketer Anjum Chopra believes BCCI is thinking of women's cricket, but says the board needs to communicate in a certain way

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 4: Former India women's team captain Anjum Chopra firmly believes that the BCCI has a plan for women's cricket but she wants the Board to communicate its ideas more specifically.

Speaking to this agency, Chopra, who is now a successful broadcaster, said the BCCI is thinking in earnest about the progress of women's cricket.

"It's not that the BCCI is not thinking about women's cricket. I only think they need to be more specific in communication about women's cricket," Chopra told this agency.

"I firmly believe that they must be thinking about women's cricket but the communication all this while has been very specific to men's cricket."

The latest trigger for criticism of BCCI was India's withdrawal from a tour of England in September owing to logistical issues arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chopra concedes it was 'not nice' but Indian players' participation in the women's IPL, in November, will still be useful preparation for next year's ODI World Cup.

"It is heartening to see women's cricket making headlines. They should have been a part of that England tour and it did not feel nice initially but the women's IPL, irrespective of the format, will be helpful for World Cup preparations. Any form of cricket is good preparation," Chopra said.

"Missing out on a tournament is not nice, but logistically there may have been issues. And you can't send an under-prepared team.

"If you see in isolation we may have missed out on an opportunity to play in England. The more the



Anjum Chopra along with Supernovas' skipper Harmanpreet Kaur just before a Women's T20 Challenge game in 2019

CRICKET WAS ON PAUSE BUTTON...ONCE CRICKET RESUMES AND PLAYERS ARE BACK ON THE PARK, EVERYTHING IS GOING TO GET PICKED UP. IT MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME TO GET STARTED AS EVERYTHING STARTS FROM ZERO. THE AWARENESS THE WOMEN'S GAME HAS CREATED, I HOPE IT STAYS. THEY WILL JUST RESTART, NOT START AFTER THE PANDEMIC
ANJUM CHOPRA

girls play the better it is, before playing a tournament of the stature of World Cup. The assurance from the president is a very good thing."

Chopra welcomed the Sourav Ganguly-led BCCI's decision to hold the women's event in the UAE alongside the IPL, which will run from September 19 to November 10. The women's IPL will coincide with the business end of the men's league.

"I am definitely happy, it's always nice to be part of any cricket anywhere across the world. They should have been nearing the final stages of the preparation for the World Cup by now, but because of the pandemic things did not go as planned," she added.

Starc doesn't regret missing IPL

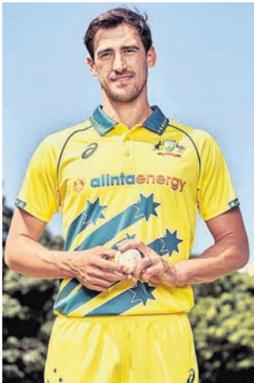
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Melbourne, August 4: Left-arm Australian pacer Mitchell Starc doesn't regret giving the IPL a miss this year, saying he is comfortable training for the upcoming summer season.

Starc had pulled out of the lucrative T20 event to focus on the T20 World Cup in Australia which was postponed last month due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I know hindsight is a wonderful thing and now the IPL is on at a different time but no, I wouldn't change it," the 30-year-old, who played for Royal Challengers Bangalore for two years, was quoted as saying by Cricket.com.au.

"I'm happy to spend that time when the blokes are at the IPL in September I'll be getting ready for a summer. The IPL will be around next year and if I feel the urge or people want me around I'll definitely consider it, but as of this year I'm very comfortable with the decisions I've made."



Starc was bought by Kolkata Knight Riders in the 2018 IPL auction but was ruled out of the season due to an injury and was eventually released in November. The lanky pacer is currently training with his NSW state teammates and waiting for a confirmation for Australia's white-ball tour of the UK.

"It's still very much up in the air which is the way of the world at the moment. It's changing day by day. We're having weekly meetings about the challenges of the tour and where this all sits. We've got another one on Thursday to see if there's any progression on that," he said.

"All the players are preparing to play and planning to go. It's now up to Cricket Australia and the government on both sides as to whether we jump on that plane. In terms of the cricket, we'll just get ready for the series."

Australia's tour of England, comprising three T20s and as many ODIs, is scheduled to begin September 4, pending clearance.

Federer surprises rooftop tennis girls

REUTERS

Milan, August 4: Two Italian girls whose rooftop tennis video went viral have received a surprise visit from Roger Federer.

The video of Vittoria Oliveri and Carola Pessina playing on the rooftops of neighbouring buildings in Finale Ligure during the COVID-19 lockdown garnered over 10 million views.

The girls thought they were preparing for another media interview when they were asked about their favourite players.

"Roger Federer: If I were to meet him, I would jump on him, or I would be starstruck," Vittoria, 13, said. "I would like to have Federer's elegance while playing and (Rafa) Nadal's power," 11-year-old Carola added.

The girls were then left wide-eyed and speechless when Federer came out from behind a curtain. The 20-



time Grand Slam champion later played some rooftop tennis with the girls before inviting them for lunch.

"I nearly fainted when he showed up," Vittoria was quoted as saying by 'The Times'. "He figured out the distances pretty fast and started playing shots between his legs from one roof to another, which was

amazing. I didn't think he was real. I thought it was a mannequin."

Federer also told the girls he had arranged for them to go to a summer camp at the Rafa Nadal Academy. "Personally, for me, that was a very special moment in my career as a tennis player to surprise a fan, or children, like I was able to with Carola

Top tennis resumes

Palermo: Tour-level tennis resumed after a five-month enforced break Monday, and players at the Palermo Ladies Open had to handle their own towels and not shake hands of opponents. The strict rules because of the coronavirus included no showers on site, and no autographs or photos with fans. Players in the singles main draw come from 16 European countries and Argentina. A limited number of fans were allowed into the 1,500-seat stadium court. They watched sixth-seeded Donna Vekic of Croatia beat Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands 6-1, 6-2 in the first official match — for men or women — since early March.

and Vittoria today," Federer said.

"I have played in many cool places around the world, but this one is definitely up there for me as a special experience. We showed that we can play anywhere and have fun with it."

Casillas hangs up gloves

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, August 4: Former Spain and Real Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas officially announced the end of his playing days Tuesday, more than a year after his last match.

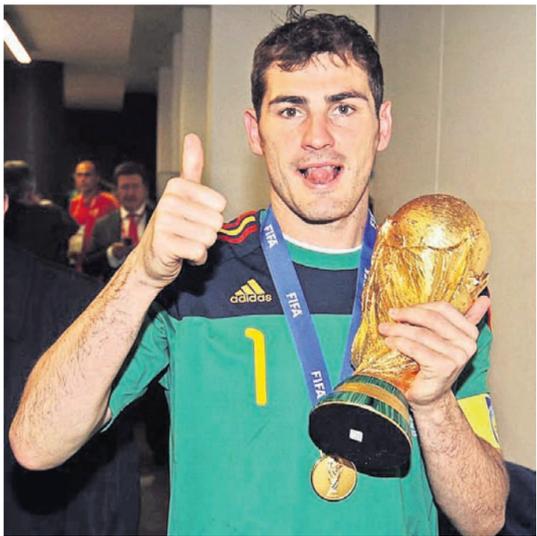
The 39-year-old Casillas was with Portuguese club Porto but hadn't played competitively since a heart attack in May last year.

"What is important, is the path you travel and the people who accompany you, not the destination to which it takes you," Casillas said on Twitter.

"With hard work, you will always arrive where you want. I can say, without a doubt, that it has been the path and the destination that I've always dreamed about," Casillas said announcing his retirement was one of the 'hardest' and 'most difficult' days of his career.

His contract with Porto ended after the team defeated Benfica last weekend to win the Portuguese Cup. He didn't play but celebrated with his teammates and lifted the trophy.

Casillas joined Porto in 2015 after helping Real Madrid win five Spanish league titles and three Champions League tro-



Iker Casillas led Spain to the FIFA World Cup triumph in 2010

phies. He also helped Spain win one World Cup and two European Championships.

Real Madrid called Casillas 'one of the biggest legends of our club and of world football' and 'the best goalkeeper in the history of Real Madrid and Spanish football'.

"Today one of the most important footballers in our 118 years of history calls it a day as a professional player, a player we love and admire, a goalkeeper who has made the Real Madrid legacy bigger with his work and exemplary behavior both on and off the pitch," Real Madrid said in a statement.

"He was formed here and defended our shirt for 25 years, becoming one of our most emblematic captains of all time."

Casillas played 725 matches with Madrid's first team over 16 seasons, winning 19 titles. He joined the club at age 9. With Porto, Casillas won two Portuguese league titles, in addition to the Portuguese Cup and a Super Cup.

He played 167 matches for Spain and won the U-20 World Cup. Casillas this year contemplated running for the presidency of the Spanish soccer federation but withdrew his candidacy amid the pandemic.

Ronnie breaks WC record with 108-minute win

REUTERS

Sheffield, August 4: Five-time champion Ronnie O'Sullivan was in imperious form at the World Snooker Championship when he beat first round opponent Thepchaiya Un-Noh of Thailand 10-1 in 108 minutes to set the record for the fastest match in Crucible history Monday.

O'Sullivan, who led 8-1 at the close of play Sunday, stayed true to his nickname 'The Rocket' when he won the two frames needed in less than 30 minutes to become the first man to win a match in under two hours.

The record was previously held by England's Shaun Murphy who blanked China's Luo Honghao 10-0 in the first round last year in 149 minutes but O'Sullivan smashed the record by 41 minutes, after which he brushed aside his achievement.

The Englishman will play Ding Junhui of China in the second round. O'Sullivan courted controversy before the tournament when he said players were being treated like 'lab rats' at the World Championship as he questioned a decision to allow spectators into the Crucible Theatre amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, when coronavirus infections started to spike in the country, the British government made a U-turn on its decision to allow fans to attend selected trial events, designed to 'stress test' new guidelines on a return to regular live sport.

Man United all set to land Sancho: Report

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Dortmund, August 4: Manchester United are close to landing England winger Jadon Sancho from Borussia Dortmund in a five-year deal, according to media reports in Germany.

Sancho, who left Manchester City to join Dortmund in 2017, is set to link-up with his former team's cross-town rivals in a multi-million pound deal.

According to German outlet BILD, the two clubs are in advanced talks regarding Sancho's transfer and a fee in the region of 108 million pounds is being reported. Dortmund is set for a huge profit considering they acquired his services for just eight million pounds from City.

This amount will make him the most expensive player in the history of the club. Currently, Paul Pogba tops the chart after United parted ways with 89 million pounds to bring him back to the club from Juventus in 2016.

It is also being reported that Sancho will be earning in excess of 300,000 pounds per week, which will make him one of the highest earners not just at Old Trafford but also in the Premier League.

Sancho, despite being just 20, caught the eye of top European clubs because of his consistent performances for Dortmund. He scored 20 goals and assisted 19 times across competitions this season and also played a pivotal role in the team finishing second on the Bundesliga table.

