



SKY IS THE LIMIT

Actor Radhika Apte says she does not want to get stuck in something convenient or be satisfied

LEISURE P2



GOA COVID TOLL RISES

IMA Goa is concerned about rising number of deaths at the state's only designated COVID hospital

TWO STATES P7



HIROSHIMA HORROR ANNIV

Hiroshima marked the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing on the Japanese city by the US

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Not just money and weapons, Beijing now provides training in cartography too!

SHORT TAKES

Khurda SP Swain contracts corona

Bhubaneswar: Khurda Superintendent of Police (SP) Ajay Pratap Swain has tested positive for novel coronavirus, official sources said Thursday. According to sources, swab samples were collected from all staffers at the district police headquarters after one of them tested positive for COVID-19. The SP Thursday informed that his swab report has come positive. The top cop has no COVID-19 symptoms. He has been advised to go for home isolation.

Fire claims 8 Covid patients in Gujarat

Gandhinagar: A major fire in the ICU ward of a private dedicated Covid hospital in Ahmedabad claimed the lives of eight patients, including 5 men and 3 women in the wee hours Thursday. One seriously burnt patient is being treated while 40 other patients have been evacuated and shifted to the SVP hospital in Ahmedabad. According to information, the fire broke out in the ICU ward of 'Shrey hospital', a dedicated Covid-19 hospital in Navrangpura area. "Eight patients admitted in the ICU ward have died due to burning and asphyxiation," said a senior police official of the Navrangpura police station.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	38025.45	▲ 362.12
NIFTY	11200.20	▲ 98.50
DOLLAR	75.11	▲ ₹0.10
EURO	88.98	▲ ₹0.12
GOLD	₹55,640	▲ ₹542
SILVER	₹75,178	▲ ₹3285

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	29.7°C	31.0°C
TEMP. MIN	25.0°C	23.6°C
Humidity	91%	97%
Rainfall	0.2mm	Nil

Forecast: Generally cloudy sky

RBI hits pause on key rates

■ GOLD TO FETCH HIGHER LOAN AMOUNT

■ INFLATION TO REMAIN ELEVATED IN Q2

AGENCIES

Mumbai, August 6: The Reserve Bank Thursday kept interest rates on hold to contain elevated inflation, even as it allowed banks to restructure some corporate and individual loans.

It also raised the limit of loans that can be availed against gold ornaments and jewellery and announced additional liquidity measures over and above those that have already been taken to reduce the asset-liability challenges in the NBFC sector over the last 3-4 months.

After reducing the interest rate by a total of 115 basis points since February, the six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously in favour of the status quo, leaving repo rate at 4 per cent, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said on the three-day deliberations of the panel.

The committee expects inflation to remain elevated in Q2 (July-September), ease only in the second half of 2020-21 fiscal.

The 115 basis point rate cut this year was on top of the 135 basis points reduction in an easing cycle last year.

"Given the uncertainty surrounding the inflation outlook and extremely weak state of the economy in the midst of an unprecedented shock from the ongoing pandemic, the MPC decided to keep the policy rate on hold," he said.

Das said the central bank would remain "watchful for a durable reduction in inflation to use the available space to support the revival of the economy."

MPC meet highlights

- Policy rate unchanged at 4%, reverse repo at 3.35%
- Loans against gold enhanced to 90% of the value from current 75%
- Select stressed MSME borrowers eligible for loan restructuring
- GDP growth to be negative in current fiscal

₹5,000cr

liquidity support to NABARD to aid agri sector

₹5,000cr

additional disbursement to boost liquidity in housing sector



Given the extremely weak state of the economy, the MPC decided to keep the policy rate on hold



Repo Rate Reverse Repo Rate



The committee, however, unanimously decided to continue to keep its accommodative policy stance "as long as necessary to revive growth".

The RBI allowed banks to restructure loans of companies that were not in default for more than 30 days as on March 1, 2020. Lenders can grant loan exten-

sions of as long as two years with or without a freeze on repayments.

Banks will however need to set aside higher provisioning for such a recast.

There will be separate windows available for a restructuring of loans of Small and mid-size enterprises (SMEs) and individual borrowers who have been impacted by the pandemic.

Das said the limit to which individuals can borrow against gold ornaments and jewellery until March 31, is being increased to 90 per cent of the value from the current cap of 75 per cent.

RBI ending its rate cut spree is being seen as striking a balance between inflation and growth.

Moreover, as inflationary pressures mount and reached as high as 6.09 per cent in June 2020, RBI adopted a wait and watch stance to assess the impact of previous measures on various sectors.

The pause on rate cuts was also on the back of the previous transmission of rate cuts to consumers through mortgage loans.

In response to the cumulative rate cut of 115 bps announced since February 2020, banks have already transmitted 70-90 bps in their home loan portfolio, being the fastest transmission.

While, economic activity had started to recover from the lows of April-May, a surge in fresh infections have forced re-clamping of lockdowns in several cities and states to "level-off" various high-frequency indicators, Das said.

Watery grave for 3 minor siblings in Nabarangpur



POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, August 6: Three minors, including 2 girls, drowned in Tel river near Tohara village in Nabarangpur district Thursday morning.

The deceased minors have been identified as Rashmi Santa (6yrs), Shanti Santa (5yrs) and Dasaratha Santa (4yrs).

According to sources, the three had gone to take bath in the river with their younger brother Dasaratha. The boy was swept deep into the river as he lost control due to carelessness.

In a bid to save him, the two sisters jumped into the water but unfortunately the three could not come out in time and drowned.

Villagers alerted the fire brigade department regarding the incident. On being informed, the fire brigade team of Umerkote reached and recovered the bodies of the minor. The bodies have been sent to Kohra hospital for post mortem.

COVID-19 PACKAGE State gets second instalment

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, August 6: The Union government Thursday released the second instalment of COVID-19 emergency response amounting to ₹890.32 crore to 22 states and Union territories, including Odisha.

According to the ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the amount of the financial assistance is based on the COVID-19 caseload in these States/UTs. The financial aid as part of the second instalment will be used for strengthening of public health facilities infrastructure for testing including pro-

- The amount of the financial assistance is based on the COVID-19 caseload in the States/UTs
- The aid will be used for strengthening of public health facilities for testing

urement and installation of RT-PCR machines, RNA extraction kits, TRUNAT & CBNAAT machines and BSL-II cabinets among others.

The package will also be utilised for strengthening of public health facilities for treatment and development of ICU beds, installation of oxygen generators,

cryogenic oxygen tanks and medical gas pipelines in public health facilities and procurement of bed side oxygen concentrators etc. The ministry also stated that wherever necessary, volunteers registered on the COVID Warriors portal may also be engaged for COVID duties.

Pertinently, the first instalment of ₹3000 crore was released in April to all States/UTs to aid and enable them to ramp up testing facilities, augment hospital infrastructure, conduct surveillance activities along with procurement of essential equipment, drugs and other supplies.

Report on Chinese intrusions vanishes



Denying China is in our territory and removing documents from websites won't change the facts

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 6: A document acknowledging Chinese intrusion into Indian territory was taken down Thursday by the Defence Ministry two days after it was uploaded on the MoD website.

"Chinese aggression has been increasing along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and more particularly in Galwan Valley since May 5, 2020. The Chinese side has transgressed in areas of Kungrang Nala, Gogra and north bank of Pangong Tso Lake on May 17-18," stated the document.

The document said ground level interactions were held between the armed

forces of both sides to defuse the situation. A Corps commanders' flag meeting was held on June 6. "However, a violent face-off incident took place between the two sides on June 15, resulting in casualties on both sides."

Subsequently, said the document, a second corps commander level meeting took place on June 22 to discuss the modalities of de-escalation. "While engagement and dialogue at military and diplomatic level is continuing to arrive at mutually acceptable consensus, the present standoff is likely to be prolonged," the ministry said.

Meanwhile, Congress asked the government why the report mentioning Chinese 'transgressions' in eastern

Ladakh was taken down with party leader Rahul Gandhi alleging that removal of the document from websites would not change facts. The document, was removed Thursday morning following publication of a media report based on it.

"Forget standing up to China, India's PM lacks the courage even to name them," Gandhi tweeted while tagging the news report based on the Defence ministry document.

The ministry report for the month of June had also said the situation in eastern Ladakh arising out of "unilateral aggression" by China continues to be sensitive and requires close monitoring as well as prompt action.

BCCI, Vivo cancel IPL deal for 1 year; may resume later



AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 6: With 44 days left for the 13th edition of the Indian Premier League, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has decided to suspend the partnership with title sponsors Vivo.

This comes after the IPL Governing Council had Sunday decided to retain the company as title sponsors. "The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and vivo Mobile India Pvt Ltd had decided to suspend their partnership for Indian Premier League in 2020," BCCI said in a media release.

The move to retain Vivo Sunday had seen a lot of backlash and there were even trends on social media about boycotting the league and the BCCI felt that it was in national interest to suspend the sponsorship deal as fan sentiments are a priority for the board.

Earlier Monday, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), which is spearheading a movement for boycott of Chinese goods, also criticised BCCI's decision to retain VIVO, the Chinese company, as IPL's title sponsor.

Puri: Devotees might catch glimpse of Holy Trinity soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, August 6: Devotees may soon have the opportunity to get glimpses of Lord Jagannath and his siblings at Srimandir here, said Srijagannath Temple Managing Committee member Ramchandra Dasmahapatra Thursday.

Dasmahapatra claimed that deliberations are on to introduce online registration for devotees to visit the 12th century shrine. However, sources in the Three Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) made it clear that the shrine authorities have not taken any decision on the issue. Many devotees, meanwhile, opposed any move to introduce online registration system

for visiting Srimandir.

According to Dasmahapatra, the residents of Puri city would get the chance to visit Srimandir in the initial phase. Subsequently, devotees from other places would have the opportunity to visit the shrine and pay obeisance to the Holy Trinity. "A blueprint is being devised to introduce an online registration system for devotees. Devotees can register themselves by submitting their identity cards and other details. The shrine authorities would inform the devotees regarding the date and time of their visit to the Srimandir," he said.

It is worth mentioning here that the temple authorities had introduced a set of guidelines for devo-



tees March 16 this year to check the spread of coronavirus. As per the guidelines, devotees were told to wear masks and submit a self-declaration form describing their travel history and health status. Moreover, the devotees were advised to wash their hands before entering into Srimandir and refrain from touching Aruna and Garuda pillars.

However, the shrine was shut for devotees March 20 as there were several problems to enforce the new guidelines. Since then, the shrine doors have been closed for the devotees. However, rituals of the shrine are being performed without any interruption.

It is learnt that closing down of Srimandir has affected the tourism

sector of the Holy City. Most of the hotels and lodging houses are struggling hard to get tourists.

When contacted, SJTA administrator (rituals) Jitendra Kumar Sahu said the temple authorities have not held any discussion to introduce an online registration system. "The temple has been shut for devotees for last four and a half months," he added.

Many devotees, meanwhile, claimed that the online system would create issues for the common people. "Elderly people and many common devotees would find it very difficult to register themselves online to visit Srimandir. The temple authorities should not introduce the online system," said a devotee.



WHEN ALYSSA MILANO FELT SHE WAS DYING

Actress Alyssa Milano has opened up about her battle with Covid-19, saying she felt she was dying. In an Instagram post, the 47-year-old actress revealed that she tested positive, after taking three other tests that had indicated she was negative for the coronavirus, reports *etonline.com*.

NIA DACOSTA TO DIRECT CAPTAIN MARVEL SEQUEL

Filmmaker Nia DaCosta will direct the sequel to the 2019 superhero hit, *Captain Marvel*. With the sequel, DaCosta will be the fourth woman, and the first Black woman to direct a Marvel Studios film, following *Boden*, *Black Widow* and *Eternals*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Expect the unexpected. You may not understand everything that happens, but that's okay, says Ganesh. Avoid too much activity, as you may be too tired to go out in the evening. Put on your sequins and gloss, the stars predict some music and dancing coming your way!

TAURUS
Prepare yourself to handle ordinary situations in an extraordinary way, foretells Ganesh. Today, you will get a lesson in how people work. Before arriving at any crucial decision, explore the pros and cons with a balanced mind, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
Your career is finally on track and your dreams don't look too distant any more. A candlelit dinner with your spouse will leave you wanting for more. And you shall get more. A night to remember indeed. Ganesh, however, warns you to hold your horses or an imminent accident awaits you.

CANCER
Today, you will be keenly observing the games that people play. But your paranoia will work against you. Certain people are likely to use it to manipulate you and influence important decisions. Ganesh advises you to stay level-headed and jump to conclusions only after an unbiased analyses of the situation.

LEO
Ganesh foresees today as a day full of duplicities, as you foster amazing feelings and astonishing fears. It's like you don't know whether to be happy or scared. At work, you may do well to anticipate a sudden turn of events as hectic business activities take their toll on you.

VIRGO
You might spend most of your day at the table today, planning and mapping your future. Keep your partner in the loop while making important decisions. Take the approval of your family as and when required so that no misunderstanding creeps up in the days to come.

LIBRA
Today, you touch a new high when it comes to self-reliance. The pledges and promises you make may tend to perplex people at your workplace. Afternoon may see you taking on other people's responsibilities as well. Your vigour reaches its highest point in the evening, expects Ganesh.

SCORPIO
It seems like a fruitful day in business, and to deal in money matters, foresees Ganesh. On the career front, you may be occupied with important meetings. Things will work out for you if you manage to strike a balance between your ideas and implementation.

SAGITTARIUS
Ganesh foresees that today, you shall be more selfless and careful than ever. You might be slated to make some profit by involving yourself in shared actions. However, it comes naturally to you to mix business with pleasure, and you shall make the most of it.

CAPRICORN
The day bodes well, especially for public servants. An impending business transaction with the government will keep you busy, and suggestions from friends and peers may prove beneficial, says Ganesh. Professionals, however, need to be more proactive, as their expertise will be tested.

AQUARIUS
That is only a reflection and not the moon in your soup bowl! Be reasonable in your expectations, advises Ganesh, and give happiness a chance. You may learn an important lesson from your beloved, while your associates will be friendly.

PISCES
Your peers will be the cause of a few confrontations today. Legal disputes may also arise. Take the advice of your elders to resolve these conflicts. Meditative techniques will help restore your calm, says Ganesh.

I'm not here for fame: Radhika



New Delhi: Actress Radhika Apte says she does not want to get stuck in something convenient or be satisfied, and she is not chasing fame. "I'm not here for fame. I do like the perks sometimes, but I don't take success and failure seriously," Radhika said. "Because these are temporary and all very relative. You can't take either seriously, but you can't just ignore them. They are very important aspects in your journey - you need appreciation, you need to pat your back many a time, you have to love the appreciation as well and you have to also learn from your failure and not get dejected. So, (I have) a balanced approach," she added. Radhika entered the industry with a small role in the 2005 release *Vaah! Life Ho Toh Aisi!* but she is credited for breaking the stereotypical image of Hindi film heroine with her roles in *Phobia*, *Badlapur*, *Manjhi: The Mountain Man*, *Lust Stories*, *Sacred Games*, *Pad Man* and *Ghoul*.

Film, TV world mourn Samir Sharma's demise



Mumbai: The sudden demise of TV actor Samir Sharma has shocked the film and television industry. From Varun Dhawan, Sidharth Malhotra and Karanvir Bohra, a slew of members from film and TV industry posted on social media to express grief over Sameer's death.

"Really sad and unfortunate," Sidharth wrote in his Instagram Stories. Varun Dhawan posted a picture of Sameer on Instagram Stories and wrote: "#RipSameerSharma." Samir allegedly ended his life by committing suicide. He was 44. He was found hanging Wednesday night from the kitchen ceiling of his residence in Malad West. "What

is happening to people, why why why are they doing this... Rest in peace brother," Karanvir tweeted. Actress Sanaya Irani, who worked with Samir in TV show *Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doo?* found the news "heart-breaking". Kritika Kamra tweeted: "I hope they let you rest in peace Sameer Sharma."

Bipasha, Karan set to unite again



Mumbai: Celebrity couple Bipasha Basu and Karan Singh Grover is all set to unite on screen again. The couple will be seen in a thriller titled *Dangerous*, co-starring Suyyash Rai, Natasha Suri, Sonali Raut, and Nitin Arora. The film is written by Vikram Bhatt and directed by Bhushan Patel. "Our fans have been wanting to see me and Karan onscreen again. *Dangerous* was a script that really had me riveted, the twists and turns are sure to leave you astounded and this seemed like the perfect project to collaborate with each other again," Bipasha said. Karan added: "Thriller as a genre always fascinates me, as a viewer and as an actor. I've always enjoyed watching a good whodunit and *Dangerous* promises to leave you guessing until the very end, I'm looking forward to seeing how the audience will react to it." This is the second time Bipasha and Karan unite on screen in a Bhushan Patel directorial after the 2015 horror film, *Alone*.

City artist's bid to combat pandemic



BHUBANESWAR: With the face masks becoming an integral part of everyday lives, many top designers like Louis Vuitton and Masaba Gupta have mobilised their workforce to design attractive Covid protection masks that also spread awareness on the deadly virus. Back home, one Rajkishore Maharana of Lingaraj Nagar in Bhubaneswar area has been in the news recently for his creative designer masks. His artistic skill has won him the first prize in a mask drawing and painting competition conducted by Chitrakara

University in Punjab. Rajkishore's painted masks speak about the enormity of coronavirus and the precautions to be taken to contain the outbreak. Besides, he has also reflected the sufferings of the people during the lock down in his designer masks, said the artist. Some of the messages painted on his masks read - 'Stay Home, Stay Safe', 'Wear Mask' and 'Maintain Social Distancing'. Rajkishore, who has won an award from Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi, is now busy in canvas painting to sensitise people on COVID-19.

Cooking show to promote Odia cuisines

BHUBANESWAR: In a bid to promote Odia cuisines and showcase the culinary skills of homemakers, Odisha Tourism department in collaboration with Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) will start a cookery show on Doordarshan, Bhubaneswar. Titled *Ama Ghara Ama Handisala* (Our Home, Our Kitchen), the programme will be aired every Saturday and Sunday at 1.30 pm from August 15, 2020, according to a release. As many as 40 contestants will participate in show's final round which will witness the presence of several celebrities like actors Kuna Tripathy, Gungun and Madhumita Mohanty, hockey icon Dilip



Tirkey, Odissi exponent Aruna Mohanty, OTDC Director Shreemayee Mishra and Tourism Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi. The programme will be of 31 episodes including the final one. The winner will be given a cash prize of Rs25000 while the first and second runners up will get Rs 15,000 and Rs 10000 respectively. Besides, each participant will be offered a free package of 2-day tour by OTDC at one of its chain of hotels, popularly known as *Panthanivas*. The winners will also get attractive gift hampers from the sponsors of the programme, the release said.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

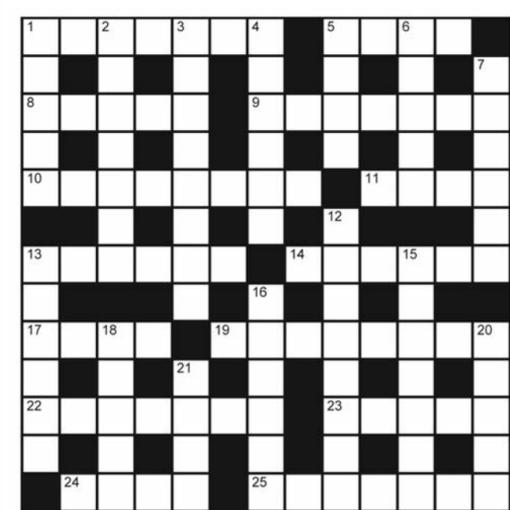


BREVITY



FUN post

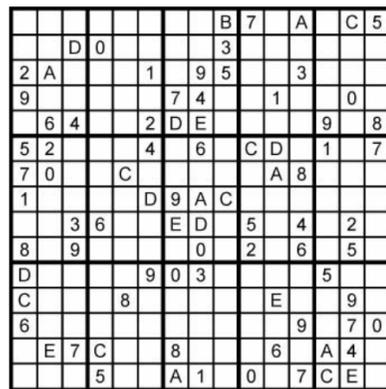
CROSSWORD



- Across**
1 Salad starter
5 Minuscule
8 Excuse
9 Stingy
10 Train depots
11 Rancher's concern
13 Barricaded
14 Potpourri
17 Pro or con
19 Airport area
- Down**
22 Consistent
23 Half of
24 Place to live
25 Fuming
- Across**
4 Alleviating
5 Knight fight
6 Unsophisticated
7 Poorly made
12 Convert code
13 Cream soup
15 Idler's activity
16 Metric weight unit
18 Practice
20 Snooped
21 Lampblack

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

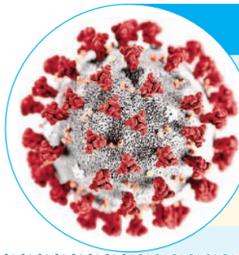


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



SEASON'S BEST

A vendor sells flower saplings alongside a road near Barabati stadium in Cuttack, Thursday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	1,90,90,530	1,22,53,935	7,13,375
India	19, 64, 530	13,28,336	40,699
Odisha	40,717	26,888	235

Fire safety at Covid hosps to be reviewed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 6: The fire safety system at all Covid hospitals and Covid care centres in the state would be examined within 24 hours, said the Director General of Fire Services, Satyajit Mohanty, here, Thursday.

Mohanty's statement came in the wake of the death of at least eight patients in a blaze at a Covid hospital at Ahmedabad in Gujarat in the wee hours of Thursday. Around 50 people have sustained burns in the hospital fire, sources said. "The assistant fire officers and additional fire officers have been directed to examine the fire safety system at all Covid hospitals and Covid care centres (CCCs) in the state. Any loophole in the fire safety system would be conveyed to the authorities concerned. Besides, the hospital authorities would be given suggestions to improve their safety system to deal with possible fire mishaps," Mohanty said.



RAPID ACTION

The development came in the wake of the death of at least eight patients in a blaze at a Covid hospital at Ahmedabad in Gujarat.

Assistant fire officers and additional fire officers have been directed to examine the fire safety system at all Covid hospitals and Covid care centres in the state.

These centres may not have adequate safety measures to deal with fire mishaps

The Fire Service DG further revealed that steps would be taken to ensure adequate fire safety measures at around 40 Covid hospitals and 6,770 CCCs in the state.

Total 67,491 beds have been arranged to provide treatment to the coronavirus infected people. Besides, there are also 1,490 cluster-level temporary medical camps in the state. "Our officials have been directed to examine the fire safety measures at the Covid hospitals and

CCCs within 24 hours," he added.

Mohanty claimed that fire brigade personnel have been engaged to sanitise Covid hospitals and CCCs across the state at regular interval. Notably, the state government has commissioned several dedicated Covid hospitals in Odisha to upscale the Covid management. It has also opened many CCCs to deal with the rising number Covid positive cases in Odisha.

"The state government has tied up with some private healthcare institutions to open dedicated Covid hospitals. These hospitals usually have fire safety system. However, most of the Covid care centres have been opened at stadiums, empty buildings and educational institutions. These centres may not have adequate safety measures to deal with fire mishaps," said a source.

Odisha's GC Murmu appointed new CAG

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 6: Girish Chandra Murmu, a 1985-batch Gujarat cadre IAS officer from Odisha who was appointed as the first Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor last year, has been appointed as the new Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.

The decision came exactly a year after the Union government reorganised Jammu and Kashmir, bifurcating it into two Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Official sources told IANS that Murmu has resigned as the Lt Governor. He will be replacing Rajiv Mehrishi, a 1978-batch IAS officer of the Rajasthan cadre, as the CAG.

Born in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, Murmu had post-graduated in Political Science from Utkal University in Bhubaneswar. He was hand-picked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking up the challenging job after Jammu and Kashmir became a Union Territory October 31.

Holding a Business Administration degree from the Birmingham University, Murmu is perceived as one of the most trusted serving bureaucrats in the Union government. Before 2014, when Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Murmu was his Principal Secretary and was tasked to monitor all the prestigious projects of the state government.



Covid lock on rural water supply

PROGRESS IN KBK REGION NIL TILL END OF JULY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: Rural drinking water supply projects have been severely affected due to Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns.

The state was able to spend only 10 per cent of the approved amounts for implementation of drinking water supply projects under various schemes till July end.

According to sources at the Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water department, out of ₹ 9841.58 crore allotted for execution of drinking water supply projects, the engineering department personnel were able to spend only ₹976.19 crore till the end of July. It means only 9.92 per cent of the total funds was utilised till July end.

The government has set an ambitious target of executing 1,619 drinking water projects for the current year 2020-21. According to sources, 457 projects - 28.23 per cent - have so far been completed.

Out of 450 drinking water projects worth ₹2,240 crore sanctioned under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), only 105 projects have been taken up whereas 214 of 400 projects under Basudha scheme have been executed till July end, the sources added.

Only 31 out of 250 drinking water supply projects sanctioned under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) have been executed during the period.

Ironically, no project under State Finance Commission (SFC) grant has been implemented so far. Seven



PANDEMIC BLOW

Of the ₹9841.58 crore allotted for execution of drinking water projects, the engineering department personnel were able to spend only ₹976.19 crore (9.92%) till the end of July

Out of 450 drinking water projects worth ₹2,240 crore sanctioned under Jal Jeevan Mission, only 105 have been taken up whereas 214 of 400 projects under Basudha scheme have been executed till July end

No project under State Finance Commission grant has been taken up so far

mega water supply projects worth ₹135 crore are being implemented under this grant, the sources said. Likewise, only one out of 14 projects approved by Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC) has been completed till July end. Around ₹2,732 crore has been approved for these projects, of which only ₹229 crore has been utilised during first four months of this financial year.

The progress in KBK region is nil till July end. Although 22 projects worth ₹40 crore has been sanctioned for the KBK region, not a single project has been commissioned so far, the sources said.

The government has approved ₹1319.48 for execution of 476 water supply projects in the state during this year. However, 106 projects have been completed with an expenditure of ₹158 crore, they said.

The Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water department has asked the engineering staff concern to expedite the work to ensure timely completion of the projects.

Two villages in Odisha declared tsunami ready

UNESCO RECOGNITION

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: Adding another feather to its cap, Odisha has become the first state in the Indian Ocean region to get UNESCO-IOC recognition for making the villages tsunami ready.

Two villages - Noliassahi of Ersama block in Jagatsinghpur and Venkatrapur (Boxipalli) of Rangeilunda block in Ganjam district - have been acknowledged by Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO for greater preparedness to face the tsunami disaster.

A virtual ceremony would be held Friday when awards & certificates will be given to Odisha State Disaster Management Authority and communities, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena said.

The two villages have learnt to live with the disaster by strengthening its disaster preparedness

from the community to the highest levels of administration, he said.

The state set up the first Disaster Management Authority in the nation in the aftermath of the Super Cyclone in 1999 to reduce the vulnerability of the people and build resilience of the community. Since then, Odisha has been marching ahead in the field of disaster management with the core principles set by the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Jena stated.

The state has set high goals for itself to prepare for the natural and human induced disasters in the coming times owing to the climate change scenario.

The recognition by the UNESCO is a great achievement for the state of Odisha for the tsunami preparedness. It would make Odisha a role model for tsunami preparedness. With this award, the state is motivated to make the balance 326 villages and ULBs tsunami ready in a year's time, he added.



A virtual ceremony would be held Friday when awards & certificates will be given to OSDMA and communities

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Chief Secy Asit Tripathy may take VRS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: The state government may very soon effect a minor reshuffle among top level bureaucrats.

Speculation is high at power corridor that the state will see a new Chief Secretary soon.

If sources are to be believed, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy may take voluntary retirement soon to pave way for his immediate junior to be at helm of the state administration. Going by trends, like the last

If Tripathy steps down, his immediate successor will be his batch-mate Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, the Development Commissioner

chief secretary Aditya Prasad Padhi, Tripathy is very likely to opt for voluntary retirement. After taking VRS, Aditya Padhi

was appointed as the state election commissioner (SEC). In the same manner, Tripathy may also get appointment in any constitutional post, the sources said.

Even as a few months are left for 1986-batch IAS officer Tripathy's retirement, it's speculated that he may be appointed as chairman of either Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) or in any other constitutional post like Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC).

If Tripathy steps down, his immediate successor will be his

batch-mate Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, who is presently serving as Development Commissioner.

Sources further said that to start the process, the government has recently transferred Raj Kumar Sharma from Steel and Mines department and posted as Agriculture Production Commissioner (APC).

Sharma may become the new Development Commissioner as other senior officers like GVV Sharma, TS Pandey and Nikunja Kishore Sundryar are on Central deputation, as per speculations.

'Enough scope for agri entrepreneurs'

Bhubaneswar: Agriculture Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo Thursday said that there is enough opportunity for local agri-entrepreneurs in agriculture and allied sectors. The minister directed the officials to create opportunities for agri-entrepreneurs in agro industry sector in each block through Agricultural Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited (APICOL). Sahoo said this at a virtual meeting with the APICOL and Orissa Agro Industries Corporation Limited officials. He said that in every district the district manager should look for opportunities and facilities for agro industry and must try to attract more and more youngsters towards it.

Validity of Mo Bus passes extended

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: The Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT), Friday, announced extension of validity of all its physical and online passes for Mo Buses namely Bhubaneswar Pass and Magic Pass until further notice owing to spread of the novel coronavirus.

Issuing a statement, the CRUT said physical pass holders, who bought the pass at Master Canteen terminal and CRUT office will have to get the validity extended at the terminal on all official working days between 10am and 6pm. Meanwhile, the last day for extension of physical pass is set August 14.

Breastfeeding safe now but take precautions, say AIIMS docs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: Doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar Thursday claimed that breastfeeding during the Covid-19 pandemic is safe but preventive measures should be taken by the mothers.

WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK

The experts said that available research shows transmission of Covid-19 through breast milk is highly uncommon and hasn't been reported till date (as per advisories from Unicef and WHO).

Several neonatal, community medicine specialists from AIIMS

and Unicef, Odisha in a media interaction tried to allay the fears against the practice of breastfeeding by mothers. Most of them even advised to continue with breastfeeding even if the mother is Covid positive.

"There is no evidence of vertical transmission of coronavirus from mother to child from breastfeeding. We at our hospital have seen three such cases of Covid positive mothers giving birth to kids and nursing them. It is quite safe but the mother must practice safe hygienic practice like washing hands and wearing masks while nursing the child," said Dr



Pankaj Mohanty, Associate Professor, Department of Neonatology, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar:

SAFE PRACTICES

- Always wash hands with soap and water before and after contact with the infant
- Routinely clean surfaces, which the mother has been in contact with, using soap and water
- If the mother has respiratory symptoms, use of a face mask when caring for the infant is recommended
- Maintain physical distancing with other people and avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

The doctors said that newborns should not be isolated from the mothers after birth.

Dr Swayam Pragyan Parida, Associate Professor, Community Medicine Department from AIIMS, Bhubaneswar said, "There are several myths doing the rounds at this time of pandemic which include bar on breastfeeding if mother is sick or Covid positive but the fact is it depends upon the kind of illness and in fact, mother's milk itself acts as a treatment to the child."

Dr Sonu H Subba, Head Community Medicine and Family Medicine, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, said that Covid-19 pandemic has added the post partum depression of many new mothers.

Saurav Bhattacharjee, Nutrition Specialist from Unicef, Odisha said that breastfeeding prevents the new-

borns from several diseases and must not be shunned.

"Breastfeeding in the initial phases of a kid helps in boosting their immune system which can help them in fighting against diarrhoea, pneumonia and many other diseases besides ensuring their overall mental and physical well-being. The healthcare workers must counsel mothers for breastfeeding post birth especially during the pandemic time," he said.

August first week is observed as World Breastfeeding Week every year to improve the practices among the mothers of small children and enable the creation of a supportive environment for successful breastfeeding of babies.

'Hospital on Wheels' for non-Covid patients in Ganjam

AGENCIES

Berhampur, August 6: With several hospitals turning away non-Covid patients, amid the surge in coronavirus cases, the Ganjam administration has launched mobile health units to provide them basic medical services at their doorsteps.

The initiative—Hospital on Wheels—will be of great help to those in need of immediate treatment, especially in the rural parts of Ganjam, among the worst-affected districts in the state, a senior official said.

Five mobile health units, each consisting of at least one doctor, a pharmacist and other health-care workers, will provide medical aid to those suffering from ailments other than Covid-19. District Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange said.

"If any patient exhibits symptoms of Covid-19, doctors will advise him or her to undergo swab tests. The patient will be shifted to a Covid Care Centre or a hospital if he or she tests positive for the disease," the Collector said.

Two mobile units will cover the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) area, and the rest will cater to patients in three subdivisions—Berhampur, Bhanjanagar and Chhatrapur, Kulange said.

"The doctors at the mobile health units will attend to patients suffering from diseases other than Covid-19, much like what is being done at the clinics of Urban Primary Health Centres in the BeMC area," the Collector explained.

Lauding the initiative, health activist Suresh Chandra Sahu said many ailing residents in the remote areas, who do not have access to medical facilities amid the pandemic-induced restrictions, will benefit from the move.

"While residents of the BeMC area can visit a nearby clinic for treatment, those living in the rural parts do not enjoy any such facility. The mobile units will be able to bridge the gap to an extent," he said.

Aditya death: CB may conduct polygraph test

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: The Crime Branch, which is probing the death of motivational speaker and social activist, Aditya Dash, is likely to conduct polygraph test on a few persons linked to the case.

A senior official of the three-member special team of the CB said that the lie detection test may be conducted on the suspects to establish the truth.

Besides, as a part of its investigation into Dash death case, the CB team may once again interrogate Aditya's wife and his friends Bikash, Pappu and Pritam.

State records biggest single-day spike

POST NEWS NETWORK/AGENCIES

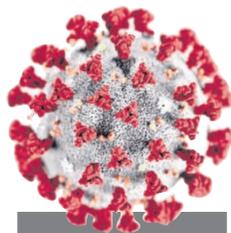
Bhubaneswar, August 6: State's Covid-19 tally surged past the 40,000-mark Thursday with the biggest single-day spike of 1,699 cases, even as 10 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 235, an official of Health and Family Welfare department said.

Ganjam district, Odisha's coronavirus hotspot, reported three deaths while Sundargarh reported two and Bhadrak, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, Nabarangpur and Nayagarh reported one death each.

A 45-year-old coronavirus positive patient from Ganjam breathed her last, but the cause of her death was attributed to 'other health conditions', said the official, adding that Nabarangpur district reported its first Covid-19 fatality.

The state Thursday registered a total of 1,699 fresh cases, raising the tally to 40,717, the official pointed out. The latest Covid-19 cases were reported from 29 districts, with Ganjam topping the list (268), followed by Khurda (220), Sundargarh (178), Cuttack (105) and Sambalpur (101).

Altogether 1,073 people were detected positive from quarantine centres, the official said, adding that contact tracing and follow-up action have been initiated. Meanwhile, as many as 1,150 persons who had ear-



1,699 fresh cases push Odisha's COVID-19 tally to 40,717; death toll mounts to 235 with 10 more fatalities

SCB AAHAR CENTRE TO RESUME OPS TODAY

Cuttack: After a gap of 40 days, the Aahar centre at Sriram Chandra Bhanja Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) will start serving meals to the needy Friday.

The Aahar centres at SCBMCH and some other hospitals in the Silver City here had been closed for people soon after some employees of these health institutes were tested positive for novel coronavirus, sources said.

The recoveries include 290 from Ganjam, 197 from Khurda, 121 from Rayagada, 76 from Sundargarh, 47

Health dept staffers among 118 test +ve

As many as 118 persons, including 10 employees of the H&FW department, have been tested positive for novel coronavirus, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) said Thursday.

Of the fresh cases, 71 were from quarantine centres and 47 were local contact ones. "10 employees of the Health & Family Welfare department who were linked with an earlier positive case were tested

positive for Covid-19," said the civic body, adding that 90 more persons who had earlier tested positive for the viral infection have recovered.

With this, the Covid-19 tally in Bhubaneswar stands at 3,472. The City has 1,301 active cases, while 2,151 persons have so far recovered from the infection. The virus has till date claimed 18 lives in the Temple City.

Aahar centres at the cancer hospital and Sishu Bhawan would serve 650 plates and 450 plates respectively.

It is learnt that members of some women self-help groups (SHGs) will assist Akshaya Patra Foundation to manage the Aahar centres at the above said hospitals. "The Aahar centres will strictly follow the Covid-19 guidelines of the government while serving meals to people," said an official.

The recovered cases in state now stand at 26,887.

Cuttack inching towards new 'Covid-19 hotspot'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: The Silver city and Cuttack district at large are witnessing a spurt in novel coronavirus cases at a time when other hotspot districts have started reporting less number of cases.

In the last one week, there has been a surge in the cases, more prominently in Cuttack city. This comes after the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) announced ramping up tests through more antigen tests, allowing private clinics to do the test and also introducing two more mobile testing vans.

The city, which saw just 22 cases July 30, reported 143 new cases of Covid-19 August 4. The infection graph seems to have taken a northward trend since the first week of August.

The Cuttack district, which used to report cases below 55 by July end, also started reporting cases above 100 every day since August 1, the data from the Health and Family Welfare department said.

Data suggest that most of the cases from the district are reported from the Cuttack city alone. The district has reported a total of 2,731 con-

COVID CASES IN CUTTACK

DATE	NEW CASES IN CITY	NEW CASES IN DIST
July 30	22	28
July 31	43	54
Aug 1	55	122
Aug 2	87	89
Aug 3	91	121
Aug 4	143	166

The Millennium city, which saw just 22 cases July 30, reported 143 new cases of Covid-19 August 4

firmed cases of the viral disease.

The district till now has reported a total of 11 Covid deaths and four deaths of nCoV positive patients for reasons other than Covid-19.

According to the recent statement of Saurav Garg, COVID Observer in Cuttack, the district is well equipped with more than 6,000 beds at dedicated hospitals, COVID Care Centres, COVID Care Homes at different regions to cater to the needs of the patients.

The Cuttack city in the last few weeks has seen increase in Covid Hospital beds and is likely to add two more Covid Care Centres to cater to the needs of COVID patients.

OPF alleges ₹300Cr admission scam by private schools

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: The Odisha Parents' Federation (OPF) Thursday alleged that there was an admission scam to the tune of Rs 300 crore by 57 schools in the state and demanded a Vigilance probe into it.

The outfit alleged that these schools sold the seats reserved for economically weaker section (EWS) and disadvantage group (DG) categories of students and earned a whopping Rs 300 crore. The OPF stated that in 2010-11 the then School and Mass Education (SME) commissioner-cum-secretary had issued the procedure wherein 25 per cent seats were reserved under the RTE Act. The direction said 10 per cent seats should be filled by the EWS category and 15 for DG category students. "In case there is non-availability of wards belonging to any of the above two categories, there shall be inter change of seats," the direction said.

The federation alleged violation of Right to Education (RTE) Act in the above mentioned 57 schools by the incumbent SME commissioner-cum-secretary for personal interest.

"We request Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for his kind intervention by ordering a Vigilance inquiry," Bhatt said.

The OPF warned of launching a hunger strike if the SME department doesn't instruct the private English medium schools to allow 25 per cent reservation for students belonging to EWS and DG sections.

OPF chairman Basudev Bhatt said, "We demand that the SME department should issue a specific order as per the RTE Act and bring an SOP for admission of students belonging to EWS and DG sections in private English medium schools. These schools should allow reservation of 25 per cent seats for these students under the Act."

The federation urged the government to direct private schools to implement RTE Act during the current academic session and before August 9, 2020, failing which, the OPF said, it would go on a hunger strike from August 10.

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A man buys the Tricolour from a Khadi store at Choudhury Bazar in Cuttack ahead of the Independence Day ceremony, Thursday

State pushes farmers into distress: Cong

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: The Odisha Congress, Thursday, said that the farmers in the state are staring at crop loss and damage due to the lackadaisical approach of the state government.

Congress leader Debasish Patnaik Thursday held a press conference and attacked the state government over its alleged apathy towards the farmers of the state.

He said, "People engaged in farming are struggling for survival. The

lack of drip irrigation and proper drainage system has created new problems. The farmers may lose their farm produce due to this. Many may not even get their insurance."

He also said that the state has been misleading the people with regard to connecting the farmers with social media like Twitter and WhatsApp. "The state government is more interested in doing misleading publicity on social media. A BJD MP has now opened help centre to help the people of Odisha

to get jobs outside Odisha. The state government has failed in skill mapping of migrant workers and they would return back to other states for jobs," he said.

The Congress leader said that the state government is running out of urea fertilizer for the farmers.

"They have failed to arrange such agricultural inputs to ensure the livelihood of farmers. This can lead to loss of their livelihood. The government is busy preaching the farmers through social media."

Outfit opposes privatisation of Covid care

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: Members of civil society, Thursday, opposed the attempt of the state government to allow more private corporate hospitals to handle the Covid care in the state citing lack of accountability of the players.

In a submission to the State Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy, members of the Lok Sakti Abhiyan have asked the state government to take the onus of treatment of the viral disease to ensure accountability of the public health crisis.

"It is matter of regret that the state government preferred to open Covid treatment centres in private corporate hospitals where the authority or their doctors are not accountable to public interest. The government hospitals are more responsive and more responsible for public health," Prafulla Samantara, Chairman of Lok Sakti Abhiyan said.

He also cited lack of facility and care given to the COVID patients from the state.

"There are flaws, negligence and mismanagement in dealing with Covid patients and in COVID centres. There are covid centres which are lacking basic sanitary needs. There are insufficient doctors to look in to so for the treatment is concerned," a communication from the outfit to the chief secretary said.



A shopkeeper displays idols of Lord Krishna and Sriradha for sale in Bajrakabati area of Cuttack ahead of the Janmashtami festival, Thursday

CV Raman students top Smart India Hackathon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: In the just concluded 'Smart India Hackathon 2020', Software Edition, two groups of students of CV Raman Global University, Odisha stood first in the country by solving two live problems of Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments.

The group, 'Nexas', consisting of Sourav Mishra (team leader), Satyabrata Pal, Shrishya Agarwal, Abhilasha Panda, Abhishek Das, Binat Kumar from CSE department, and another group, 'Braniacs_1.0', consisting of Shikha Kumari Pathak (team leader), Taniya Ghosh, Gayatri Jena, Akash Mishra, Pratyush Pani, Shantanu Bhargavanshi from ETC & EE Department achieved the unique feat. Team 'Nexas' developed a software-based app for filing online FIR with high degree of



security and all the required information to facilitate hassle-free FIR linking with Aadhaar card of the complainant/victim.

Similarly, team Braniacs_1.0 developed an app based career counselling software for school level students, graduates & dropouts to provide assistance in career guidance, Personality Test, Language Translation and many

more useful things. Both the teams were awarded with Rs1 lakh each and highly praised by the members of the organising team of the competition. Altogether, 1,081 teams participated in the final round of the Smart India Hackathon, Software Edition this year. The founder president of CGU, Odisha, Sanjib Kumar Rout, acting VC Prof Bhabes Bhattacharya

BATTLE OF BRAINS

Team 'Nexas' developed a software-based app for filing online FIR with high degree of security and all the required information to facilitate hassle-free FIR linking with Aadhaar card of the complainant/victim

Similarly, team Braniacs_1.0 developed an app based career counselling software for school level students, graduates & dropouts to provide assistance in career guidance, Personality Test, Language Translation and many more useful things

and all the students & staff of CGU, Odisha greeted the winning teams as well as their mentors, Surendra Kumar Nanda and Tushar Kanti Dash for this achievement.

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Our life should be governed by the love for the Truth and the thirst for Light.

The Mother



Shine & slump

Gold prices are making new records with every passing day. The precious metal (24 carat) Thursday inched up by Rs 225 to Rs 56,590 per 10 grams. It had closed Wednesday with an astounding gain of Rs 1,365. Weak dollar and concerns over economic growth worsened by galloping virus cases in the world are holding up international gold prices, as investors in western countries continue to put their faith in the yellow metal. Silver and gold have been the best performing assets so far this year with 40 per cent and 50 per cent returns, respectively and there is still a lot of upside. Ever since the outbreak of the pandemic, the price of gold has been relentlessly rising. There is a marked contradiction in the demand and price matrix, though. Demand for physical gold has slumped while its price has been escalating. Gold imports in the June quarter (April-June) saw a sharp plunge at 70 per cent to 64 tonnes—an 11-year low—as against 213 tonnes during the same period last year. What drives the current surge in gold prices? The demand drop is largely due to massive economic disruptions caused by the Covid-19. The pandemic broke out when the entire world was already in the grip of a global slowdown. Public demand has evaporated and so has consumption. People's incomes have drastically fallen. Job opportunities have gone through the window. Workers across industries and regions are struggling to live with truncated pay and job losses. In such desperate times, it is only natural that people hold on to whatever savings they are left with. Certainly not a time to spend on gold. Discretionary spend on gold, a major factor behind movement of gold, has come to naught. There is a drastic fall in demand for gold in China and India—world's two largest gold consumers. However, the fall in demand for gold in Asia has been more than made up by a surge in demand in western countries. Investors in Europe and America are piling into gold as a safe haven in the pandemic-ravaged economy, helping push its prices. Influx into exchange-traded funds this year in Europe and the US are at record level.

Although India is a major consumer of gold, its market is highly price sensitive. Buyers tend to shy away from gold whenever there is a markup in its price. The current slump in gold demand is largely due to its prohibitive prices. Moreover, repeated lockdowns/shutdowns in the country have ensured that businesses are shuttered and people stay inside. Shops have shut and malls have emptied. As regards lockdowns/shutdowns, there is no clear direction from the government. The pattern of lockdowns and shutdowns has so far been rather erratic. Shops and commercial establishments are a confused lot. The fluidity of the situation has forced them to shun planning. The sharp rise in Covid-19 caseloads in July and August has dashed hopes of an early reopening of the economy. The situations are likely to remain so in near to medium term. If the demand in India and China for physical gold bounces back, the price will further run up. These are rather uncertain times for all stakeholders of gold such as traders, dealers, investors, artisans and consumers. With the discretionary spend on gold completely switched off, the yellow metal will have a troubled time ahead. The RBI Thursday raised the loan-to-value (LTV) on gold loans for non-farming purposes to 90 per cent from earlier 75 per cent. This would mean the same amount of gold can fetch larger loans when mortgaged with banks. This may not necessarily boost demand for gold in India as its current prices are already sky-high. At the most, this may raise short term liquidity for people holding onto gold. Gold will continue to shine amid slump.

WISDOM CORNER

Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace.

CONFUCIUS

The moment a child is born, the mother is also born. She never existed before. The woman existed, but the mother, never. A mother is something absolutely new.

OSHO

Noisy outside, empty inside.

CHINESE PROVERB

WORDSWORTH

Talk turkey

There are three well-known stories about this, none of them wholly convincing. We do know that it's a US term. It's first recorded in 1824, but is probably much older; one suggestion is that it goes back as far as colonial times. What the explanations have in common is of real turkeys. But the meaning of the phrase seems to have shifted down the years. To start with, it meant to speak agreeably, or to say pleasant things; nowadays it usually refers to speaking frankly, discussing hard facts, or getting down to serious business. The change seems to have happened because to "talk turkey" was augmented at some point in the 19th Century to "talk cold turkey", with the modern meaning. In the course of time it was abbreviated again, with the shorter form keeping the newer meaning. (The other meaning of "cold turkey" is unrelated.) The most prosaic answer is that the "to talk pleasantly" sense came about through the nature of family conversation around the Thanksgiving dinner table. It is also suggested that it arose because the first contacts between Native Americans and settlers often centered on the supply of wild turkeys, to the extent that Indians were said to have enquired whenever they met a colonist, "you come to talk turkey?" The most complicated explanation is a story about a colonist and a native who went hunting, agreeing to share their spoils equally. At the end of the day, the bag was four crows and four turkeys.

Tall tale

Tall is one of those curious words, like nice, that has had more meanings down the centuries than you can shake a stick at. Back in Anglo-Saxon times it meant swift or prompt, and later on it variously had senses of fine, handsome, bold, strong, brave, skilful and a good fighter. It was only in the sixteenth century that it started to mean somebody or something physically higher than normal. (Even now, we can speak of somebody being five feet tall, in which tall means having a specified height, not being of more than average height.) A little later, certainly by the 1840s, Americans had started to use it for something exaggerated or highly coloured, as in phrases like tall stories or tall writing. It's closely connected with tall order, something that is thought to be hard to achieve, and there were other phrases as well, such as tall time, meaning a long time, which Charles Dickens used. "Tall tale" obviously belongs in among these. I haven't been able to track down its earliest recorded use (for some reason, the Oxford English Dictionary has nothing earlier than 1933) but I did find this, from a lesser-known work by Jerome K Jerome of 1893 called Novel Notes: "I've come across monkeys as could give points to one or two lubbers I've sailed under; and elephants is pretty spry, if you can believe all that's told of 'em. I've heard some tall tales about elephants".

LOL

Ride with penguins

A police officer sees a man driving around with a pickup truck full of penguins. He pulls the guy over and says: "You can't drive around with penguins in this town! Take them to the zoo immediately." The guy says OK, and drives away. The next day,



the officer sees the guy still driving around with the truck full of penguins, and they're all wearing sun glasses. He pulls the guy over and demands: "I thought I told you to take these penguins to the zoo yesterday?" The guy replies: "I did... today I'm taking them to the beach!"

COVID, COMMON SENSE

FOCUS WORLD



Kaushik Basu

WHAT WE NEED ARE GUIDELINES WITH AN ARTICULATED RATIONALE, SO THAT PEOPLE CAN ADJUST THEIR BEHAVIOR TO THE CONTEXT

As the Covid-19 pandemic rages on, our understanding of it is improving. Through a combination of epidemiology and physics—including knowledge of the virus's character and how aerosols float in the air—we are learning more about how the microbe infects new hosts. This understanding is fueling hopes that we will soon be able to counter the pandemic more effectively. But it has also led to some contentious exchanges regarding the social sciences and the interaction between social norms and the law.

Ever since the pandemic began to spread beyond Wuhan and around the world, there has been an increasingly acrimonious debate as to what all preventive measures should be decreed by governments and enforced by public officials and the police, and which should be promoted as social norms. Unfortunately, this debate has become so polarised that people are immediately classified as right-wing or left-wing depending on their view. Because people often do not like to be categorised in this way, and certainly not wrongly, many are reluctant to express themselves on this important question.

In fact, on many coronavirus-related matters, we need enforceable laws. Especially in the early days of the pandemic, when people understood little about the virus, treating public-health measures as matters of personal choice was folly. Because some people decided to gather in large groups and not wear face masks, the disease became widespread in some countries, with Brazil under President Jair Bolsonaro and the United States under President Donald Trump being prime examples.

But it would be equally dangerous to swing to the other extreme and make governments solely responsible for changing our behavior. Autocratic regimes, in particular, are liable to use the pandemic as a pretext to arrest opponents and silence dissent. Furthermore, excessive government control is often the first step toward crony capitalism, whereby a few big firms use the levers of



As we understand more about Covid-19 and how the virus spreads, we can decide when we should socially distance ourselves, and by how much. The six-foot (1.8-meter) rule may need to be interpreted flexibly

state power to stifle competition and repress wages.

Social norms are often more effective than government mandates, because they allow a degree of flexibility that statutes cannot provide. In Ithaca, for example, there is a bridge on Forest Home Drive that has featured in studies of games and social norms, including in William Ferguson's book *Collective Action and Exchange*. The bridge is so narrow that cars can pass only in one direction. Regulating the traffic flow by law might entail making it a one-way bridge, or requiring cars to travel from left to right in the morning and right to left in the evening. Or the law might require drivers to alternate, with one crossing from left to right and the next in the opposite direction, resulting in wasted space behind each car.

What happens in the absence of legal regulation is far better: There is a norm whereby three or four cars cross in one direction, and then the drivers behind them stop, allowing three or four cars to come from the other side. Because the norm, unlike a law, is flexible, you might, if you are in a hurry, decide to cross the bridge as the fifth or sixth car, delaying those waiting on the other side by a few seconds.

As we understand more about

Covid-19 and how the virus spreads, we can decide when we should socially distance ourselves, and by how much. The six-foot (1.8-meter) rule may need to be interpreted flexibly. For example, if you are talking to a much taller person, or someone who holds their chin very high, you may need to move back an extra foot in order to allow any infected aerosol to complete its arcing journey from face to floor.

What we need are guidelines with an articulated rationale, so that people can adjust their behavior to the context. In a widely cited recent paper, for example, the University of California, San Francisco's Monica Gandhi and her co-authors show that face masks not only protect others from your Covid-19 germs, should you be carrying them, but also protect you from other people who may be infected.

There is thus both a social and a selfish reason for you to wear a mask. But if you are walking alone on a beach, you have every reason not to wear one. It is also reasonable not to wear a face mask in the company of people with whom you cohabit, given the likelihood that either all or none of you have the virus.

As we learn more about Covid-

19, we will develop better rules for ourselves. But two caveats are in order. First, many epidemiological studies warn that, for certain findings, causality has not yet been established. In fact, we can never establish causality definitively. We must regard all such claims with a dose of skepticism and the awareness that we may revise them later.

This is another reason to prefer the greater flexibility of social norms to the heavy hand of the law. For example, we now know that up to 40 per cent of people infected with the coronavirus are asymptomatic. In societies where only some people wear masks, the share of asymptomatic carriers could be as high as 90 per cent, as happened during one outbreak in Oregon. If they are not wearing a mask, their lack of symptoms puts us off guard, implying that wearing a mask may indirectly cause Covid-19 to spread more. This is of course not an argument for disregarding masks. Rather, it is a reminder that all ideas, whether rooted in folklore or science, must be combined with common sense to optimize our behavior.

The writer is a former chief economist of the World Bank.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

Health sector in doldrums

With the number of Covid-19 victims rising exponentially, it is vital to assess where India stands in terms of medical capacity to provide the necessary healthcare. India's poor health infrastructure belies any hope; and the health sector is in doldrums. The nation ranked low at 145th among 195 countries in terms of healthcare access and quality, as per recent global assessments.



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

INDIA OCCUPIES, ABYSMALLY, THE 170TH POSITION OUT OF 188 COUNTRIES IN TERMS OF PUBLIC HEALTH EXPENDITURE

To start with, the doctor-population ratio. Here, it is 1:1456 against the WHO recommendation of 1:1000. This means, for a 1,000 population, India has only 0.9 doctors as against the world average of 1.6. India is behind China with 2 doctors and Pakistan and Sri Lanka one doctor each for a 1,000 population. If the number of government beds in India is considered, it was 0.7 per 1,000 population in 2011, which has declined to 0.58 in 2015 and further to 0.53 in 2017— as against a world average of 2.7.

Dismal health expenditure figures have triggered massive pressure on the existing health infrastructure, which is further enfeebled in the aftermath of Covid-19. As per a World Bank report in

2017, India's total healthcare spending was 3.53 per cent of the GDP, much lower than world average of 9.896 per cent. However, public expenditure/government spending on healthcare as a percentage of GDP is a better index of the health-welfare of a people than the total health expenditure as a percentage of the GDP. On this count, India's performance is even more abysmal. Of the total public health expenditure, the Centre's share is 25 per cent.

The National Health Policy 2017 had recommended that the government's spending in health sector should be 2.5 per cent of the GDP by 2025. But, it is still ranging from 1 per cent to 1.29 per cent. India's public expenditure on health as a percentage of the GDP is far lower than those of the poorest countries. India occupies the 170th position out of 188 countries in terms of public health expenditure.

As per World Bank data in 2017, India's public health expenditure as a proportion of GDP is 0.96 per cent against a world average of 5.89 per cent. India spends even lower than that of Bhutan with 2.37 per cent, Sri Lanka 1.64 per-

cent, and Nepal 1.24 per cent.

In terms of per capita health expenditure per year, as of 2017, India's \$69.29 per cent is too low when compared to world average of \$1061.14. According to the National Health Profile of 2018, the public per capita expenditure on health increased from Rs 621 in 2009-10 to Rs 1,112 in 2015-16. That comes to Rs 93 per month or Rs three per day. Sri Lanka spends about four times as much. Question is: how people can cope with Covid-19, with a mere Rs 3 per day?

According to a WHO report, the total health spending is growing faster than the GDP in low and middle income countries (close to 6 per cent on average) than in high income countries (4 per cent). Health system resources are coming less from households paying out of pocket and more through pooled funds, in particular from domestic government sources. But, in India, this is declining.

India's health sector is the most privatized in the world. As out-of-pocket expenditure proportionate to total health expenditure in 2017, Indians spent 62.10 per cent on health, compared to a world aver-

age of 18.207. According to National Health Profile data, the cost of treatment has been on the rise in India, which has led to inequity in access to healthcare. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) says that, troubled by illness, 3.85 lakh people committed suicide between 2001 and 2015.

The countries that have emerged as developed in course of time have seen increased expenditure in health as a percentage of GDP. Cuba spends 11.71 per cent of the GDP in health; with 10.47 per cent of the GDP being public health expenditure—the highest in the world. Cuba has 8.4 doctors per 1000 population, with 5.2 government beds for a 1,000 population.

Without increasing health care expenditure, relying on the health insurance route alone will serve no purpose. If the government invests more on health or provide health facilities to people at cheaper rates, they will have more income at disposal to spend. With the rise in discretionary spending, demand will rise, leading to an increase in economic activities and thereby faster growth and development.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist.

Sushant, cops

Sir, Sushant Singh Rajput's 'suicide' is embroiled in controversies. Even after nearly two months, the Mumbai police do not have any substantial lead to the case. When the family of the actor, the Bihar government and the Centre favoured a CBI inquiry, it was surprising that the Mumbai police was busy only in issuing statements to the media, and not taking the investigation forward. The Maharashtra government too has not acquitted itself well. It rather added to the controversy by putting the inquiry police officer from Patna in quarantine, affecting the investigations. It is astonishing that the Mumbai Police is not attaching due importance to such a sensitive and high profile case. Is it to be understood that the police administration in the financial and entertainment capital of the country is bent on losing its good image built over the past many years? Sushant deserves a better deal from the Mumbai cops.

Sanjib Das, CUTTACK

Sushant, CBI

Sir, Promising actor Sushant Singh Rajput has passed away in mysterious circumstances, and his death is under probe. While the investigations are on, a controversy has erupted between the cops of Mumbai and Patna.

For the parents and family members of Sushant, they are not in a mind to certify this as a case of suicide, though circumstantial evidence points to such a possibility. After losing his only son, Sushant's father K.K. Singh reached up to Prime Minister Modi, seeking the Centre's help to unravel the mysteries behind the death. The Supreme Court deserves thanks for its intervention in the matter and recommending a CBI investigation. This is the way forward now. A prime suspect vis-à-vis the situations leading to this death, actress Rhea Chakravorty, has urged the Supreme Court to shift a related case from Patna to Mumbai. This was done after the Bihar Police lodged an FIR against her for allegedly abetting the actor's suicide.

What the large number of fans of Sushant wants is immediate identification of the culprits behind the actor's death. It would not be a bad idea if the Supreme Court steps in to monitor this probe, considering the huge public interest involved.

Ramdas Ray, BHUBANESWAR

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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THE DELUGE

Is Goa's lone COVID hosp well equipped

State IMA president urges the govt to relocate the COVID facility to the precincts of the state's top medical facility - the Goa Medical College

AGENCIES

Panaji, August 6: The Goa chapter of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) Wednesday expressed concern over the increasing number of deaths at the state's only designated Covid hospital. It cited non-availability of specialists at the centre as one of the possible reasons for the spate of recent deaths.

The IMA also expresses sadness at the abrupt transfer of the head of the designated COVID facility, Ira Almeida, earlier this week



Employees State Insurance hospital in South Goa's Margao town, which has been designated as a Covid facility, the state's only such facility.

According to the state Health Ministry protocol, while symptomatic patients are treated at the ESI hospital, asymptomatic patients are admitted to the several Covid Care Centres in Goa or are allowed to home quarantine themselves. The IMA has also urged the Goa government to change its protocol and discontinue the practice of admitting symptomatic patients to the ESI hospital.

"We feel the government must seriously think of starting a 250-bed Covid hospital block at the Goa Medical College itself. It will help in good management logistically, and there will not split in workforce also, which is extremely important in these times when there is scarcity of experts," Samuel said.

State IMA President S Samuel also urged the Goa government to relocate the Covid facility to the precincts of the state's top medical facility - the Goa Medical College - for better care of symptomatic patients.

"IMA Goa is extremely concerned about the rising number of deaths. We feel that non-availability of senior experts and non-availability of investigations like CT scan and MRI scan are major factors," a statement issued by the association said Wednesday.

More than 60 persons have died after testing positive for Covid-19 in Goa ever since the pandemic broke out in March this year. Most of the fatalities have occurred at the

Stop cruel methods to kill male chicks, Goa hatcheries warned

Use of nitrogen and other inert gases for killing newborn chicks should henceforth be adopted, the govt tells hatcheries and poultry farms

AGENCIES

Panaji, August 6: Following petitioning by PETA, the Goa government's Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services (AHVS) department has told hatcheries and poultry farms from using "cruel methods" to kill newborn male chicks.

"It is brought to the notice of all hatcheries and poultry farms operating in the state of Goa to stop the cruel methods used for killing newborn male chicks and other unwanted chicks in the hatcheries," the circular issued by Desai said.

"Methods recommended by the Animal Welfare Board of India and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals rules 2019, which prescribes the use of nitrogen and other inert gases for killing newborn

chicks should henceforth be adopted," it also added.

PETA in its petition to the Goa government department had said that the egg industry "commonly kills male chicks because they can't lay eggs, while both the meat and egg industries routinely destroy other unwanted chicks, including those who are weak or deformed."

"Common killing methods include grinding, crushing, burning, or drowning them and even feeding them alive to fish," the animal rights' organisation said in a statement issued here Thursday.

"Through the order, the state government also made a pioneering policy decision that once in ovo sex-determination technology - which identifies male embryos at an early stage of development so that an egg, rather than a live bird, can be destroyed - is commercially available in India, the state will adopt the technology," the statement also said.



NIH Roorkee to study salinity in Goa's Mhadei river: Centre

Mhadei is an inter-state river which spans across Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra

AGENCIES

Panaji, August 6: The Union Ministry of Jal Shakti has appointed the National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee to study the salinity in Goa's Mhadei river, according to Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

"Moreover, you may also recall the discussions held on March 6, in respect of the Mahadayi river water dispute and as discussed in the meeting, taking into account the concerns raised by you regarding issue of salinity in Mahadayi river; this ministry has assigned National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee to take up the study of salinity of Mahadayi river and submit a report to this Ministry," Shekhawat said in a letter to Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, which was released by the CMO to the media Thursday.

Sawant in March this year, had written to Shekhawat, requesting the Union Jal Shakti Ministry to give the Goa government an opportunity to plead its case against a series of dam projects proposed by the Karnataka government across the Mhadei, an inter-state river which



A parking area is flooded due to overflowing Tunga river following incessant rainfall at Sringeri near Chikmagalur, Thursday

RAJ BHAVAN CAN BE BUILT AFTER CRISIS IS OVER: MoS

AGENCIES

Panaji, August 6: War of words between Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Governor Satya Pal Malik over construction of a new Raj Bhavan complex continues. Meanwhile, Union Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik Thursday also weighed in, saying the new official Governor's residence could be built after the Covid-19 crisis tides over and the state's finances are in order.

Speaking to reporters in Panaji, Naik also said that there was no question of starting a casino operation in Raj Bhavan, slamming the Opposition for spreading falsehood.

"Raj Bhavan is Raj Bhavan. Who says there will be a casino in it? It is a wrong thing to say. Raj Bhavan is the residence of the most important person in the state. How can you have a casino there?" Naik said, when asked for a comment on the ongoing controversy. Naik is a Lok Sabha MP from the North Goa parliamentary constituency.

"The new Raj Bhavan can be constructed after the financial condition of the state improves. It is not right to think about it right now.."



Goa's existing Raj Bhavan

The new Raj Bhavan can be constructed after the financial condition of the state improves. It shouldn't be given priority over the Covid-19 crisis. Governor has also said that it shouldn't be given priority

SHRIPAD NAIK | UNION MoS, DEFENCE

More beds than patients in CCCs

AGENCIES

Bangalore, August 6: There are more beds than asymptomatic and mildly symptomatic Covid patients in Bangalore Covid Care Centres (CCCs), said a Minister Thursday.

28 pc of beds across 11 Covid Care Centres in Bangalore are vacant, says Medical Education Minister K Sudhakar

"There are 4,276 beds across 11 CCCs in Bangalore. As of today morning (Thursday), 936 of them or 28 per cent are vacant," said Medical Education Minister K Sudhakar. Meanwhile, 306 more beds are due to be vacated Thursday as that many patients have been scheduled to get discharged. According to Sudhakar, Covid recoveries spiked in the past one week, leading to the freeing up of beds. In the past seven days, more than 17,089 patients have been discharged.

COVID OR NOT

Karna pvt hosps can't turn away anyone: Official

AGENCIES

Bangalore, August 6: No private hospital in Karnataka can turn away a patient without attending to him or her, irrespective of the Coronavirus status, an official has said.

"Private medical establishments shall not deny treatment and admission to any patient approaching the establishment irrespective of the fact that such patient may or may not be suffering from Covid-19," an official from the state Health and Family Welfare department said Wednesday.

Likewise, no private hospital can insist on a patient for a Covid-19 test report, said the official invoking the Disaster Management Act.

"The establishments also can-

It is the duty of every private hospital to provide first aid and take lifesaving steps when any patient approaches it

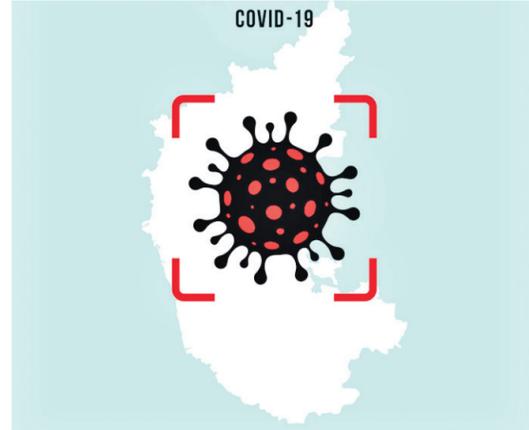
OFFICIAL | HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE DEPT, KARNATAKA

and take lifesaving measures to stabilise the patient," he said.

The department also invoked statutes from Karnataka Medical Establishments Act 2017, under sections 11 and 11(A) to drive home the message.

The directives assume significance at a time when several cases of private hospitals denying admissions and fleeing patients across the state have emerged.

"It has been noticed that some of



Mixed response to reopened gyms, yoga centres

AGENCIES

Bangalore, August 6: As hundreds of gyms and yoga centres here reopened Wednesday after remaining shut for over four months due to the extended Covid-induced lockdown, the response on the first day was mixed due to various reasons.

"The response has been tepid on the first day of reopening of our gym due to coronavirus scare and strict guidelines, which allows only limited number of members to work out at a time," trainer Vishwanthar Ramaiah at the Iron Cult gym at Basveshwarnagar in the city's northwest said.

In contrast, response at yoga centres was good despite the new guidelines also limiting the number of practitioners at a time to ensure



physical distancing. "Though we have been holding online classes since April, many of our members came on the first day of reopening the centre as it is conducive to do yoga under personal supervision," SGS International Yoga Kendra guru Niranjana Murthy said from Padmanabhnagar in the city's southern suburbs.

In compliance with the 'Unlock 3.0' guidelines of the Union Home Ministry issued July 29, the Karnataka government July 30 allowed gyms and yoga centres in the state to reopen from August 5 with strict measures like wearing

The response has been tepid on the first day due to coronavirus scare and strict guidelines, which allows only limited number of members to work out at a time

VISHWANTHAR RAMAIAH | TRAINER, IRON CULT GYM AT BASVESHWARNAGAR

Though we have been holding online classes since April, many of our members came on the first day of reopening the centre as it is conducive to do yoga under personal supervision

NIRANJANA MURTHY | YOGA GURU, SGS INTERNATIONAL YOGA KENDRA

of masks, hand washing and maintaining physical distance by members and fumigation of the centres through the day.

"About 50 members were training at a time in line with our gym's capacity before Covid-hit lockdown. We had only 8-10 members Wednesday during the morning, afternoon and evening sessions. We hope it will increase in days to

come, as 15 members are allowed at a time," said Ramaiah.

Of the 2,000 gyms across the city, many of them are yet to fully reopen, as trainers and staffers have not returned from their native places. Though lockdown in the city was lifted June 1, gyms and yoga centres were not allowed to reopen to prevent people gathering at one place.



India's proactive and graded multi-level institutional response to COVID-19 made it possible for the country to maintain very low cases and deaths per million population

HARSH VARDHAN | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

56K NEW CORONA CASES

With 56,282 new coronavirus cases and 904 deaths in the last 24 hours, the total tally in India rose to 19,64,537 and 40,699 deaths, the data from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare revealed Thursday



of the day quote

The draft environment impact assessment (EIA) notification does not relax the process of public hearing, but aims to make it more meaningful



PRAKASH JAVADEKAR | UNION ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

Last week, the Lok Sabha Speaker called me regarding the possibility of beginning the session in August. The party has told the Speaker that it will not be able to attend the session if it starts this month



The Maharashtra government should take a decision on lifting the coronavirus-induced lockdown in the state by August 10



PRAKASH AMBEDKAR | VANCHIT BAHUJAN AGHADI LEADER

India rebuffs China, refuses to disengage

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 6: The present stand-off with China is likely to be prolonged, said Defence Ministry in a status report on border tension in Eastern Ladakh. The ministry has put out an update on Chinese aggression on Line of Actual Control on its website.

The report stated that the situation in Eastern Ladakh arising from "unilateral aggression by China continues to be sensitive and requiring close monitoring and prompt action based on evolving situation."

The ministry stated that Chinese aggression has been increasing along the Line of Actual Control and more particularly in Galwan Valley since May 5, 2020. The Chinese side transgressed in the areas of Kugrang Nala, Gogra and north bank of Pangong Tso lake on May 17 and May 18.

"Consequent to this, ground level interactions were held between armed forces of both sides to defuse the situation. Corps Commander Level Flag Meeting was held on June 6, 2020. However, a violent



face-off incident took place between the two sides on June 15, 2020 resulting in casualties of both sides," the ministry stated.

It further pointed out that subsequently second Corps Commander Level Meeting took place on June 22, 2020 to discuss modalities of de-escalation process.

"While engagement and dialogue at military and diplomatic level is continuing to arrive at mutually acceptable consensus the present stand-off is likely to be prolonged," the report stated. The report ended with saying that "prompt action

based on evolving situation" should be taken.

The third meeting took place on June 30 and it went on for around 12 hours. During the meeting, all contentious areas of stand-off were discussed to stabilise the situation.

China had agreed to move back in Pangong Tso but did not. India claims Line of Actual Control at Finger 8 and Chinese are sitting between Finger 4 and Finger 5. Similar differences exist in Depsang and Demchok.

The fourth meeting took place on July 14 where India and China mil-

India warns China

Washington/New Delhi: The government Thursday warned China against attempts to interfere in India's internal affairs after Beijing unsuccessfully initiated a discussion in the UN Security Council on Jammu and Kashmir. In a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs, the government said that this was not the first time that China has sought to raise a subject that is solely an internal matter of India. "As on previous such occasions, this attempt too met with little support from the international community. We firmly reject China's interference in our internal affairs," the government said. The government Wednesday received a letter of support from the US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs which held China responsible for the aggression along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh.

itary delegates held deliberations about disengagement of troops and materials at the borders for 15 long hours. Indian delegates asked Chinese People's Liberation Army troops to completely withdraw from Pangong Lake and Depsang.

Covid fight: Centre releases ₹890 crore

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 6: The Central Government Thursday released Rs 890.32 crore as the second instalment of the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package to 22 states and union territories.

The financial assistance is based on the COVID-19 caseload in these regions. The second instalment will be used for strengthening the public health facilities infrastructure for testing including procurement and installation of RT-PCR machines, RNA extraction kits, TRUNAT and CBNAAT machines and BSL-II cabinets.

The states which were given financial assistance include Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram,

Nagaland, and Sikkim.

The aid will also be used to strengthen the public health facilities infrastructure for treatment and development of ICU beds, installation of oxygen generators, cryogenic oxygen tanks and medical gas pipelines in public health facilities and procurement of oxygen concentrators, and engagement, training and capacity building of necessary Human Resources and incentives to healthcare workforce and volunteers, including ASHAs, on COVID duties.

The first instalment of Rs 3,000 crore was released in April to all states and union territories to aid and enable them to ramp up testing facilities, augment hospital infrastructure, conduct surveillance activities along with procurement of essential equipment, drugs, and other supplies. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that Rs 15 thousand crore have been provisioned for treating coronavirus patients and strengthening the medical infrastructure of the country.

Rain fury: Uddhav reviews preparedness



A motorist rides through a waterlogged road near the swollen Masunda Lake following incessant rains, in Thane, Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 6: Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray Thursday took stock of the state administration's preparedness in the wake of the incessant heavy rains in Mumbai and other parts of the state, including Kolhapur where the Panchganga river was flowing close to the danger mark.

A statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said Thackeray asked the authorities to remain alert and ensure citizens do not face hardships. He spoke to the authorities concerned and officials of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), it said.

Mumbai city received 331.08 mm rainfall while the suburbs received 162.3 mm downpour from Wednesday till 8.30 am on Thursday. The city witnessed strong winds at a speed of 106 km per hour while elsewhere it was 70 to 80 kmph, it said.

The chief minister asked the officials concerned to take up clearing of the uprooted trees on a war-footing.

He also praised the railway police and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel for their efforts in rescuing 290

passengers from two local trains stranded on flooded tracks near Masjib Bunder in south Mumbai on Wednesday.

The statement said a railway employee was killed due to electrocution from a motor pump in Masjib Bunder while one person was injured when a tree fell on him in Kurla.

Water-logging in different parts of the city was cleared fast by the civic staff, it said.

There were 361 incidents of uprooting of trees and branches and 15 incidents of wall collapse in Mumbai, it said.

Thackeray asked Konkan and Pune divisional commissioners to focus on shifting to safer places those living near the rivers, whose water levels were rising due to heavy rains, in Kolhapur, Raigad and Ratnagiri districts.

There are 16 NDRF teams deployed in rain-hit areas of the state out of which four have been sent to Kolhapur.

Thackeray asked the authorities concerned to remain alert in view of the water level in the Panchganga (Kolhapur), Kodavali (Ratnagiri) and Kundalika (Raigad) rivers flowing close to the danger mark.

Sushant case: CBI takes over probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: The CBI has taken over investigation into the actor Sushant Singh Rajput death case from the Bihar Police after re-registering an FIR of alleged criminal conspiracy and abetment to suicide against his rumoured girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty, officials said Thursday.

The case will be probed by a special investigation team under Superintendent of Police Nupur Prasad and will be supervised by DIG Gagandeep Gambhir and Joint Director Manoj Shashidhar, both senior IPS officers from the Gujarat cadre, they said.

The agency acted swiftly on a reference from the government in Bihar, the home state of 34-year-old Rajput, where his family had lodged an FIR against Chakraborty, they said. The Patna police had reg-



istered the FIR under IPC sections related to alleged criminal conspiracy, cheating and abetment to suicide, among others.

The case has gone to the CBI on a reference from the Bihar government which has been forwarded to the agency by the central government. A state government cannot give a case to the CBI. It is routed through the Department of Personnel and Training, the nodal ministry for the CBI.

Seeing anguish over the death of Rajput in Bihar, which goes to assembly polls later this year, the state referred the matter to the CBI even as the Mumbai Police is probing the main case related to alleged suicide of the actor.

ONGOING TENSION



Residents walk towards a house, damaged due to mortar shelling by Pakistan troops, at Mankot sector in Poonch district, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

SHORT TAKES

Manoj Sinha new J&K LG

New Delhi: Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Manoj Sinha was Thursday appointed the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, a day after G.C. Murmu in a surprise development resigned from the post exactly a year after the nullification of Article 370 in the erstwhile state, and barely nine months after he took over the reins of the newly created Union Territory. President Ram Nath Kovind has accepted the resignation of Murmu as Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, and appointed Sinha for the post.

Sarpanch killed

Srinagar: A BJP sarpanch was shot dead by terrorists at Vessu in south Kashmir's Qazigund Thursday. The sarpanch identified as Sajad Ahmed Khandey was shot from a close range by terrorists injuring him critically. He was rushed to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. There has been a series of terror attacks on political workers and panchayat members in Kashmir. Last month Waaem Bari, BJP leader and an ex-district president of the party for north Kashmir's Bandipore district was killed by terrorists.

Girl molested

Raipur: A nine-year-old girl, who has tested COVID-19 positive, was allegedly molested by a sweeper at a private hospital in Raipur Thursday, a police official said. The incident took place in the morning at the hospital that was designated as a COVID-19 treatment centre, under Khamtarai police station area, he said. The accused, identified as Kanhaiyalal Nishad (45), was later arrested, Raipur Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ajay Yadav said.

Woman raped

Aurangabad: A 22-year-old woman was allegedly raped by two unidentified men near a temple on the outskirts of Maharashtra's Aurangabad city, police said Thursday. The incident took place when the victim had gone to the Bhangsi Mata Gad area, located 18 km from the city, with a male friend on Tuesday evening, an official from Daulatabad police station said. The duo was accosted by two unidentified men, who allegedly beat them up and forcibly took the victim to an isolated spot and raped her, he said.

Labourer turns millionaire

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panna (MP), August 6: A labourer became a millionaire overnight when he unearthed three diamonds worth Rs 30 lakh to 35 lakh at a diamond mine in Panna district of Madhya Pradesh, a senior official said Thursday.

While digging a shallow mine, the labourer, identified only as Subal, found three diamonds with net weight of 7.5 carat, Panna district's diamond officer R K Pandey said. Experts have valued the precious stones at anywhere between Rs 30 lakh and 35 lakh.

The labourer has deposited the stones at the district diamond office and they will be auctioned



as per government rules, Pandey said. After deducting 12 per cent tax, Subal will get the remaining 88 per cent of the sale proceeds, the official said.

A few days ago, another labourer had managed to find a 10.69 carat diamond from one of the mines in Panna in the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh. Panna, otherwise located in a backward region, is world famous for its diamond mines.

Ashok Gehlot govt gets a breather

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, August 6: Amid the ongoing political crisis in the state, the Rajasthan High Court Thursday gave some relief to the Ashok Gehlot government in the case challenging the merger of six BSP legislators with the ruling Congress and seeking a stay on it.

Disposing of a petition filed by Bahujan Samaj Party national Secretary Satish Mishra and Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Madan Dilawar, a division bench of Chief Justice Inderjit Mahanti and Justice Prakash Gupta said that notice, issued earlier by a single judge bench, should be delivered to all six former BSP MLAs, by August 8.

As the ruling party MLAs are camping in a Jaisalmer hotel, it said that the Jaisalmer District Judge should ensure timely delivery of the notice, taking the help of the local Superintendent of Police.

The notice should also be published in Jaisalmer newspapers, said the court.

The BSP and the BJP leaders had approached the division bench on Tuesday, challenging the order of a single judge bench that refused to stay the functioning of the six as Congress legislators.

Contending that the single judge bench has not given them interim relief, and that the notice it had issued to the MLAs concerned had not reached them as they are in Jaisalmer, they demanded that the court should, therefore, stay the merger order.

The single judge bench earlier issued notice to the Speaker, the Assembly Secretary and six MLAs on July 30 and slated the next hearing on August 11.

'Pak trying to sneak weapons into J&K using UAVs'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, August 6: Pakistan has adopted a new technique of sending arms and ammunition to Jammu and Kashmir using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and several such incidents have been detected in the recent past, Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh said Thursday.

He also said less than 200 militants are currently active in Jammu and Kashmir, and just 26 terrorists could enter the Union Territory from across the border so far this year. "Pakistan has been trying to send arms and ammunition to militants through drones (UAVs). We have detected several such incidents in the past," Singh said here.

The police chief said such incidents of Pakistani UAVs carrying weapons were detected in Kupwara, Heera Nagar, Kathua and Rajouri. Another modus operandi of Pakistan to dispatch weapons



through trucks to Jammu and Kashmir was unearthed in Punjab in the past, he said.

"There has been a huge shortage of weapons for the militants operating here," the police chief said. The DGP said Pakistan has intensified cross-border firing this year so that terrorists could be pushed into Jammu and Kashmir.

"There has been 75 per cent more

firing from across the border in the first seven months of 2020. There were 487 incidents of firing from Pakistan till July this year in comparison to 267 such incidents in the same period in 2019. The firings are cover to infiltrate militants. So far, just 26 militants could infiltrate into Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Singh said due to sustained anti-militancy operations, the security

forces have been able to curtail the number of active militants in Jammu and Kashmir to less than 200 now from 300 to 350 terrorists a few years ago.

Referring to local youths joining militancy, the DGP said 80 such youths have joined different terror groups this year of which 20 are now active and the self-life of such militant is now a maximum of 90 days.

"Eighty local youths have joined militancy this year so far of which 38 were killed and 22 arrested. Just 20 of those who have joined militancy are active now," he said. The police chief said as many as 150 militants were killed in 2020 so far, of which 30 are foreigners and another 39 are top commanders. "The terrorist groups are leaderless and facing a huge shortage of weapons," he said.

Claiming success of the anti-militancy operations in last two years, the DGP said it has happened as the security forces have

gone against the terrorist support structure -- the Jamaat-e-Islami (JK), Hurriyat and their members and the Over Ground Workers (OGWs). Most of the leaders of the Jamaat and Hurriyat and OGWs are under custody and their funding has been halted, he said.

Singh said a Terror Monitoring Group (TMG) has been set up with representatives from the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Enforcement Directorate, Income Tax Department and a few other organisations, and the body is continuously working to curb funding of terrorists and their supporters. "Almost all links of sending money through hawala, western union money transfer and in tiffin boxes of couriers were shut," he said.

The police chief said security grade has been improved along the International Border and the Line of Control and as a result, six encounters have taken place along the borders so far this year.



The situation due to Covid-19 is pathetic and unemployment is rising in the country
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

PM REMEMBERS SUSHMA SWARAJ ON HER DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi remembered senior BJP leader and former Union minister Sushma Swaraj on her first death anniversary Thursday, saying she served India selflessly and was an articulate voice for the country at the world stage



of the day quote

Nations must refrain from commenting on India's internal matters. The abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir was taken in the larger interest to protect the unity, integrity and sovereignty of the country

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

The Bhoomi Pujan at Ram Mandir is a matter of pride and honour for all Indians. Long wait over

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | WEST BENGAL GOVERNOR

The matter should not be turned into a Punjab vs Madhya Pradesh tussle. GI tagging will provide stability to basmati prices in international markets and bolster our exports

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | MP CM

Fire claims 8 Covid patients

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, August 6: Eight coronavirus patients died in a fire inside the ICU ward of a private hospital in Ahmedabad city in the early hours of Thursday, officials said.

A para-medical staff member of the hospital was injured in the tragedy. A cumulative compensation of Rs 6 lakh each for the families of the deceased - five men and three women - was announced by the Centre and Gujarat government.

The blaze broke out around 3.30 am on the top floor of the four-storey Shrey Hospital in Navrangpura area, officials said. It is one of the 60-odd 'designated private hospitals which have been authorized by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) to treat coronavirus patients.

"Eight coronavirus patients admitted in the ICU ward on the fourth floor of Shrey Hospital have died due to fire. 41 other COVID patients who were in the general ward on bottom floors were rescued and shifted to SVP Hospital," said Rajiv Kumar Gupta, an IAS officer.

Shrey Hospital was sealed for investigation, said Gupta, who has been deputed in Ahmedabad as an officer on special duty. Preliminary investigation showed that the fire was caused by a short circuit, he said.



Police stand outside Shrey Hospital after a major fire broke out in Ahmedabad

The blaze broke out around 3.30 am on the top floor of the four-storey Shrey Hospital in Navrangpura area, officials said

A cumulative compensation of ₹6 lakh each for the families of the deceased - five men and three women was announced by the Centre and Gujarat government

Gupta, Municipal Commissioner Mukesh Kumar and Principal Secretary (Health) Jayanti Ravi visited the spot. "We have learned that an electric short circuit led to a blast. The blaze spread in the ward within minutes," said Kumar.

According to Chirag Patel, a hospital attendant who saved the lives of three elderly patients, there were eleven patients on the fourth floor when the fire broke out. The deceased were identified as Lilavati Shah (72), Jyoti Sindhi (55), Ayesha Tirmizi (51), Navneet Shah (80), Arif Mansoori (42), Narendra Shah (62), Arvind Bhavsar (78) and Manu Rami (82).

Additional Commissioner of

Police R V Asari said that Bharat Mahant, a trustee of the hospital, was being questioned. Chief Minister Vijay Rupani ordered an inquiry by Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Sangeeta Singh and her counterpart in the Urban Development Department Mukesh Puri.

The two IAS officers have been asked to submit the inquiry report in three days, the Chief Minister's Office said in a statement. Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel said that another attendant received 25 to 30 percent burn injuries while trying to save the patients. The attendant and 41 patients were shifted to SVP Hospital, he added.

Twist in Mallya case

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 6: In a new twist in the Vijay Mallya case, a certain document connected with the case in the Supreme Court has gone missing from the apex court files.

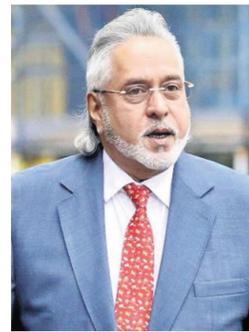
A bench comprising Justices U.U. Lalit and Ashok Bhushan adjourned the hearing to August 20. It was hearing the review plea filed by Mallya against a July 14, 2017 judgment wherein he was found guilty of contempt for not paying Rs 9,000 crore dues to banks despite repeated directions, although he had transferred \$40 million to his children.

The bench was looking for a reply on an intervention application, which it seemed, has gone missing from the case papers. Parties involved in the case sought more time to file fresh copies.

On June 19, the Supreme Court sought explanation from its registry regarding Mallya's appeal against the May 2017 conviction in the contempt case for not repaying Rs 9,000 crore dues to banks not listed for the last 3 years.

A bench comprising Justices Lalit and Bhushan had asked the Registry to furnish all the details including names of the officials who had dealt with the file concerning the Review Petition for last three years.

The bench said according to



the record, placed before it, the review petition was not listed before the court for last three years. "Before we deal with the submissions raised in the Review Petition, we direct the Registry to explain why the Review Petition was not listed before the concerned Court for last three years," said the bench.

In May 2017, the apex court held him guilty of contempt of court for transferring \$40 million to his children, and ordered him to appear on July 10 to argue on the quantum of punishment.

The bench said let the explanation be furnished within two weeks. "The Review Petition shall, thereafter, be considered on merits," it added. In 2017, the apex court passed the order on a contempt petition against Mallya by a consortium of banks led by the SBI.

Dalit family first to receive Ayodhya prasad

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ayodhya, August 6: The first prasad from the grand 'Bhumi Pujan' ceremony of the Ram Jannabhoomi temple in Ayodhya, has been given to a Dalit family.

The family is Mahabir's, and they were given 'prasad' along with a copy of Ram Charit Manas and a 'Tulsī mala'. It was only after that the distribution of the prasad for others began in Ayodhya.

Mahabir is the same person whose accommodation under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana was visited by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath where he even shared a meal during the Lok Sabha election campaign.

The bhumi puja was performed on Wednesday by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Apart from the Prime Minister, Adityanath, Governor Anandiben Patel and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat were also present.

The entire Ram Jannabhoomi complex was cleaned on Thursday. The construction of the temple will begin from Saturday.

INDIA REJECTS PAKISTAN'S CRITICISM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: India Thursday strongly rejected Pakistan's criticism of the launch of construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya and asked the neighbouring country to refrain from "communal incitement".

External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava also asked Pakistan to desist from interfering in India's internal affairs. "We have seen the press statement by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on a matter internal to India. It should desist from interfering in India's affairs and refrain from communal incitement," Srivastava said.

"While this is not a surprising stance from a nation that practices cross border terrorism and denies its own minorities their religious rights, such comments are nevertheless deeply regrettable," he added. He was responding to a question on Pakistan's criticism of the laying of foundation stone of the Ram temple in Ayodhya on the site of the Babri Masjid.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday laid the foundation of the Ram temple in Ayodhya at a grand ceremony. Last November, the Supreme Court paved the way for the construction of the Ram temple at the site where the 16th century Babri mosque was demolished in December 1992.

SHORT TAKES

Five killed in boat mishap

Mau: Five people were killed when a boat capsized in the Ghaghra (Saryu) river in Uttar Pradesh's Mau district. The accident took place Wednesday evening. The boat was carrying 15 people. The victims comprised three women and two children, while the search for a 15-year-old missing girl was underway. Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Madhuban (Mau), L.B. Dubey said most of the people on the boat were on their way to Deoria. The boatman possibly lost control because of the strong river current, Dubey said.

Couple found dead in UP

Lucknow: A young couple was found inside a hotel in Krishna Nagar in the Uttar Pradesh capital. No suicide note has been recovered. According to ACP Deepak Kumar, the staff of the hotel informed the police about the couple after they discovered their bodies in one of their rooms. The girl has been identified as Nancy while the boy is Rahul. Nancy's body was found on the bed while Rahul's was found hanging from a hook in the ceiling. Nancy's family had filed a complaint at the Sarojini Nagar police station, alleging that the girl had been lured away by Rahul.

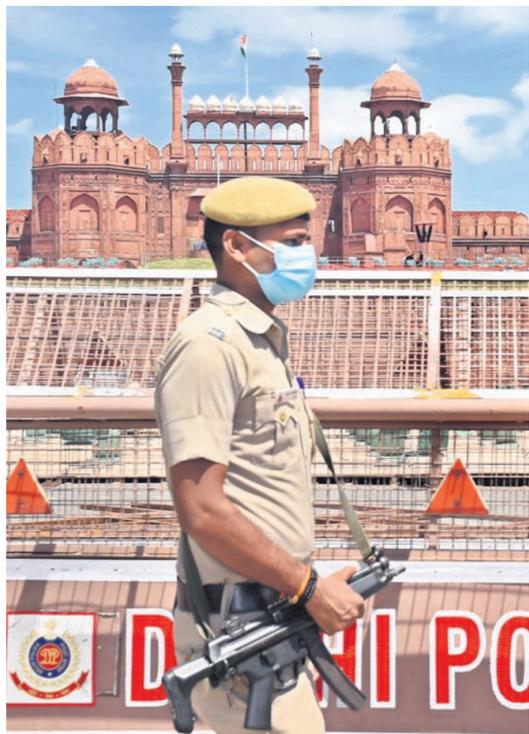
Man ends life

Kanpur (UP): A 22-year-old man allegedly committed suicide by jumping in front of a moving train in Kanpur. The man reportedly had failed to fulfill his promise of gifting a bicycle to his sister on Raksha Bandhan. The incident took place Wednesday when Putti Lal of Khodanpur village, jumped in front of a moving train near Barrajpur railway station in Shivrajpur area. Putti's elder brother Suraj said, "Putti had promised our sister to gift a bicycle as Raksha Bandhan gift. But he was running short of money, and at last, he could not afford a bicycle. He was upset and probably took this extreme step because of this reason."

Doctors remove 24 kg tumour

Shillong: A team of doctors in Meghalaya has successfully removed a 24 kg tumour from the abdomen of a 37-year-old woman patient, Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma said. Sangma, in a tweet on Wednesday, said the doctors during a three-hour long surgery at Tura District Maternity and Child Hospital (DMCH) successfully removed the tumour.

TIGHT VIGIL



A security guard patrols outside Red Fort ahead of the upcoming Independence Day celebrations in New Delhi, Thursday

ED raids ex-J&K minister's son

The central probe agency has filed a money laundering case against Hilal Rather and others, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, taking cognisance of a CBI FIR and Income Tax Department probe against him that pertains to a Rs 177-crore alleged bank fraud

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Thursday conducted multiple raids in four cities in connection with a money laundering case linked to a bank fraud probe against Hilal Rather, the son of former Jammu and Kashmir minister Abdul Rahim Rather, officials said.

They said the raids were carried out at 16 locations in Kashmir, Jammu, Delhi and Ludhiana. The exercise has been undertaken to collect evidence, they said.

The central probe agency has filed a money laundering case against Hilal Rather and others, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), taking cognisance of a CBI FIR and Income Tax Department probe against him that pertains to a Rs 177-crore alleged bank fraud.

The CBI has alleged that Hilal Rather entered into a criminal conspiracy with the then officials of the Jammu and Kashmir Bank to get loans of about Rs 177.68 crore in al-



BANK FRAUD CASE

leged violation of rules and guidelines.

His father, a former finance minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, is a National Conference (NC) leader. "The loans that were sanctioned for construction of flats were allegedly diverted and misappropriated by the accused using the bank accounts of his employees," the CBI had alleged.

It was further alleged by the CBI that the accused submitted forged certificates and bills to the bank. In a charge sheet filed before special court in Jammu this March, the CBI had named the then branch

heads of J&K Bank, New University Campus branch, Iqbal Singh and Arun Kapoor apart from Hilal Rather.

Detailing alleged omissions on part of bank officials, the CBI had said they "did not" verify certificates and helped Rather in siphoning off the loan amount and laundering of money. The I-T Department too had raided him in June last year on charges of alleged tax evasion.

"During the search, it was detected that the tax evader (referring to Hilal and his group) has been given illegal benefit of Rs 60 crore by J&K Bank," the CBI had then said in a statement.

No benefit of plasma therapy to reduce Covid-19 mortality risk: AIIMS trial

AIIMS DIRECTOR DR RANDEEP GULERIA SAID THURSDAY NO CLEAR MORTALITY BENEFIT OF CONVALESCENT PLASMA THERAPY WAS SEEN DURING A TRIAL CONDUCTED AMONG 30 COVID-19 PATIENTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: Convalescent plasma therapy did not show benefit in reducing mortality risk among COVID-19 patients, according to an interim analysis of a randomised controlled trial done at AIIMS here to assess the efficacy of this mode of treatment.

The therapy involves taking antibodies from the blood of a person who has recovered from COVID-19 and transfusing those into an active coronavirus infected patient to help kickstart the immune system to fight back the infection.



AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria said Thursday no clear mortality benefit of convalescent plasma therapy was seen during a trial conducted among 30 COVID-19 patients.

During the trial, one group of patients was given convalescent plasma therapy along with the standard supportive treatment while the other group only received standard treatment. The number of fatalities recorded in both the groups was equal and there was not much clinical improvement in the condition of patients, he said. "However, this is just an interim

analysis and we need to do a more detailed evaluation to see if any sub-group may benefit from plasma therapy," Dr Guleria said. He also underlined that plasma has to be tested for its safety and should have sufficient antibody to be useful to COVID-19 patients.

The efficacy of convalescent plasma therapy in moderate to severe coronavirus-infected patients was discussed in the third National Clinical Grand Rounds (CGR) on COVID-19 held on Wednesday.

"Plasma is safe. As far as its efficacy is concerned, we do not have a green signal yet. So the clinical

use has to be very judicious and within the ambit of national guidelines," Dr Monish Soneja, additional professor in the Medicine department at AIIMS, said at the webinar.

Convalescent plasma therapy has been listed as an investigational therapy for off-label use in coronavirus infected patients because as of now there is no conclusive evidence for its efficacy, Dr Soneja said.

About the initial findings of the randomised controlled trial, Soneja said, "Convalescent plasma is not a magic bullet." It may be used particularly in early moderate stage of the disease.

There may be a subset of patients with certain characteristics who may benefit from plasma, he said, adding, "This is a work in progress as we do not know those characteristics."

The findings highlight that relatives of the patients should not insist on plasma therapy until and unless the treating doctor considers the patient fit for it and where he may think that the mode of treatment would be beneficial, Dr Neeraj Nischal, associate Professor in the department of medicine at AIIMS, said.

Uninvited guest: Cobra comes home for dinner

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, August 6: A slithering serpent triggered a state of panic amongst members of a family as soon as they spotted the uninvited guest comfortably perched in a drawer of the almirah in their bedroom, perhaps waiting for dinner time to move out.

The local police man contacted the NGO Wildlife SOS which sent its team to nab the reptile. A two-member team from the NGO geared up with necessary rescue equipment and rushed to the location. After ensuring that the occupants were at a safe distance, the team carefully extricated the distressed cobra from the almirah and transferred it in a safe transport carrier. It took 30 minutes minutes for the rescue operation. The reptile was safely rescued by the team and was later released back in its natural habitat.

Baijraj M. V, Director Conservation Projects for Wildlife SOS, said, "We are glad that more and more peo-

ple are reaching out to us for help, rather than taking matters in their own hands. Snake sightings increase in the monsoons and our teams work round the clock to ensure no call for aid goes unanswered."

Kartick Satyanarayan, CEO and Co-founder of Wildlife SOS, said "Being one of the four most venomous snake species to be found in India, our team had to exercise a lot of caution while conducting the rescue in order to avoid any unnecessary casualties. Sometimes these rescues can be dangerous and risky, but our team is trained to handle and carry out such sensitive operations, in the interest of public safety and protection of urban wildlife."

The cobra was kept under observation for a few hours and later released back in the wild. India is home to a variety of snake species ranging from extremely venomous snakes like the Cobra and Common krait to relatively harmless and non-venomous ones like the Common sand boa, Red sand boa, Wolf snake & Rat snake.



The pandemic has put immense strain on health systems across the South-East Asia Region. We must fast track efforts and do all we can to avoid that happening, while continuing efforts to break COVID-19 transmission chains
DR POONAM KHETRAPAL SINGH | WHO REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR SOUTH-EAST ASIA

SAFETY CONCERNS
The British government says it won't be using 50 million face masks it bought during a scramble to secure protective equipment for medics during the coronavirus outbreak because of concerns they might not be safe



of the day quote

North Korea has worked aggressively to develop nuclear-capable long-range ballistic missiles able to threaten the homeland, allies and partners
VICTORINO G. MERCADO | US ASSISTANT SECY OF DEFENSE FOR STRATEGY

It has never been clearer that, for peace to flourish, all people need to lay down the weapons of war, and especially the most powerful and destructive of weapons: nuclear arms that can cripple and destroy whole cities, whole countries
POPE FRANCIS

There is an excellent vaccine, there are regulatory processes that the vaccine needs to go through based on the timetable that you (Alternate PM and Defence Minister Benny Gantz) mentioned. We will start safety and efficacy trials after the autumn holidays, but the product is in hand
PROF SHAPIRA | DIRECTOR OF ISRAEL INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

SHORT TAKES

Nirav's custody extended

London: Fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi, fighting extradition to India, was Thursday further remanded in custody until August 27 after he appeared via video link at a regular remand hearing before a UK court on charges over the nearly USD 2 billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud and money laundering case. The 49-year-old jeweller, who has been lodged at Wandsworth Prison in south-west London since his arrest in March last year, appeared via video link before District Judge Vanessa Baraitser at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London for a regular 28-day "call-over" hearing.

Germany tightens travel restrictions

Berlin: Germany will require people arriving from countries deemed high risk, such as the United States, to take coronavirus tests starting this weekend, the health minister said Thursday, as the country recorded its highest daily tally of new infections in three months. German officials have voiced alarm over a steady upward creep in the number of new infections over recent weeks.

Nepal reimposes curbs as cases rise

Kathmandu: The Nepal government Thursday reimposed curbs in capital Kathmandu and other coronavirus-affected districts following a spike in the number of fresh virus cases. The country's COVID-19 tally Wednesday reached 21,390 after 380 new cases were reported. The virus death toll stands at 60.

Flood havoc in Sudan

Cairo (Egypt): Seasonal torrential rains have wreaked havoc on houses and infrastructure across Sudan, affecting more than 50,000 people, the United Nations said. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Sudan said late Wednesday that 14 of Sudan's 18 provinces have experienced flooding in recent days. In North Darfur, at least 600 internally displaced people are "in dire need" of shelter and food after a flash flood hit the camp where they lived in the Al Lait area.

An unscheduled port visit led to disaster

AGENCIES

Moscow, August 6: The chemicals that went up in flames in Beirut's deadliest peace-time explosion arrived in the Lebanese capital seven years ago on a leaky Russian-leased cargo ship that, according to its captain, should never have stopped there.

"They were being greedy," said Boris Prokoshev, who was captain of the Rhosus in 2013 when he says the owner told him to make an unscheduled stop in Lebanon to pick up extra cargo.

Prokoshev said the ship was carrying 2,750 tonnes of a highly combustible chemical from Georgia to Mozambique when the order came to divert to Beirut on its way through the Mediterranean. The crew were asked to load some heavy road equipment and take it to Jordan's Port of Aqaba before resuming their journey onto Africa, where the ammonium nitrate was to be delivered to an explosives manufacturer. But the ship was never to leave Beirut, having tried and failed to safely load the additional cargo before becoming embroiled in a lengthy legal dispute over port fees. On Tuesday, that stockpile caught



Satellite images show scale of destruction after explosions

fire and exploded not far from a built-up residential area of the city. The huge blast killed 145 people, injured 5,000, flattened buildings and made more than a quarter of a million people homeless.

The ship might have succeeded in leaving Beirut, had it managed to load the additional cargo. The crew had stacked the equipment, including excavators and road-rollers, on top of the doors to the cargo hold which held the ammonium

LEBANESE VENT FURY AT LEADERS

Residents of Beirut vented their fury at Lebanon's leaders Thursday during a visit by French President Emmanuel Macron, blaming them for the deadly explosion that ravaged the capital. Shouting, "Revolution!" they crowded around the visiting leader who promised to press the politicians for reform. For many Lebanese, Tuesday's giant blast was the last straw after years of corruption and mismanagement by a political elite that has ruled for decades. The blast, which killed more than 130 people, wounded thousands and left tens of thousands homeless, is believed to have been caused when a fire touched off a stockpile of 2,750 tons of highly explosive ammonium nitrate that authorities left sitting in a warehouse for years — despite a customs official's repeated warnings.

China sentences Canadian to death

Relations between China and Canada soured over the arrest of Meng Wanzhou, an executive and the daughter of the founder of Chinese tech giant Huawei, at Vancouver's airport in late 2018

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, August 6: China has sentenced a third Canadian citizen to death on drug charges amid a steep decline in relations between the two countries.

The Guangzhou Municipal Intermediate Court announced Xu Weihong's penalty Thursday and said an alleged accomplice, Wen Guanxiong, had been given a life sentence. Death sentences are automatically referred to China's highest court for review.

The brief court statement gave no details but local media in the southern Chinese city at the heart of the country's manufacturing industry said Xu and Wen had gathered ingredients and tools and began making the drug ketamine in October 2016, then stored the final product in Xu's home in Guangzhou's Haizhu district. Police

later confiscated more than 120 kilograms (266 pounds) of the drug from Xu's home and another address, the reports said. Ketamine is a powerful pain killer that has become popular among club goers in China and elsewhere. The US wants her extradited to face fraud charges over the company's dealings with Iran. Her arrest infuriated Beijing, which sees her case as a political move designed to prevent China's rise as a global technology power. In apparent retaliation, China detained former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig and Canadian entrepreneur Michael Spavor, accusing them of vague national security crimes. Soon after, China handed a death sentence to convicted Canadian drug smuggler Robert Schellenberg in a sudden retrial, and in April 2019, gave the death penalty to a Canadian citizen identified as Fan Wei in a multinational drug smuggling case.

FB deletes Trump's Covid post

Houston: Social media giant Facebook, for the first time, has removed a post from US President Donald Trump in which he claimed that children were "almost immune" to COVID-19, saying it violated its policy against spreading "misinformation" about the novel coronavirus. The post in question was a video clip of a Trump interview on Fox News Channel uploaded by the Trump campaign Wednesday. The US President claims in the clip that children are "almost immune" to COVID-19. While much remains unknown about the novel coronavirus, children can contract COVID-19 and are believed to be able to spread it to others, even without symptoms. "This video includes false claims that a group of people is immune from COVID-19 which is a violation of our policies around harmful COVID misinformation," Andy Stone, a Facebook policy spokesperson said in a statement. It is the first time that Facebook has removed a post from Trump entirely, rather than labelling it, as it has done in the past, making it a rare instance in which it has been willing to censor the president.

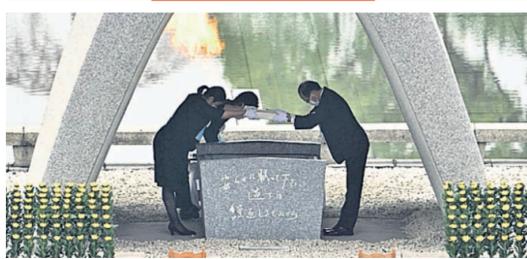
Hiroshima marks 75th atomic bomb anniversary

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Tokyo, August 6: Hiroshima Thursday marked the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing on the Japanese city of by the US during the Second World War, with its Mayor urging the international community to unite against serious threats to humanity.

Speaking at the Peace Memorial Park near Ground Zero, Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui said countries should put aside their differences and come together to overcome both man-made and natural challenges, reports The Japan Times newspaper.

A moment of silence was observed at 8.15 a.m., the exact time of the bombing on August 6, 1945. But this year's ceremony was drastically scaled down due to a recent spike in the number of coronavirus in Japan. There were only about 880 seats, less than one-tenth of the usual number, and scrapped sections allocated for general admission. Matsui fur-



A uranium-core atomic bomb named "Little Boy" was dropped by a US bomber exploded above Hiroshima 75 years ago, killing an estimated 140,000 people by the end of 1945

A second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki August 9 Japan surrendered six days later, marking the end of World War II

ther said that "the people of the world must unite to achieve nuclear weapons abolition and lasting world peace".

Also at the ceremony, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said "each country must step up efforts to re-

move a sense of mistrust through mutual involvement and dialogue", amid the severe security environment and widening differences between nations' positions on nuclear disarmament. He did refer to the Treaty on the

HUMAN, CANINE BOND



A woman wearing a mask rides a cycle while walking her dog at a park in Buenos Aires, Argentina

UNI PHOTO

OIC snub on Kashmir issue upsets Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, August 6: Despite repeated requests from Pakistan to hold a foreign ministers' meeting on Kashmir, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation has shown reluctance to convene such a conference, prompting an upset Islamabad to threaten that it may call a separate gathering on the issue. Pakistan has been pushing the

57-member organisation, which is the second largest intergovernmental body after the UN, for the foreign ministers' meeting since India revoked the special status of the Jammu and Kashmir in last August.

However, there has not been any positive response from the OIC, the biggest bloc of Islamic countries in the world, to Pakistan's request so far. "I am once again respectfully telling OIC

that a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers is our expectation," Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said during a talk show on ARY News Wednesday.

"If you cannot convene it, then I'll be compelled to ask Prime Minister Imran Khan to call a meeting of the Islamic countries that are ready to stand with us on the issue of Kashmir," he threatened.

A major reason behind the OIC's inaction has been Saudi Arabia's re-

luctance to accept Pakistan's request for one specifically on Kashmir. Riyadh's support is crucial for any move at the OIC, which is dominated by Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries.

During a virtual meeting of the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir held "on the request of Pakistan" June 22 also, Qureshi had urged the grouping to "step up its efforts" to resolve the Kashmir issue.

Michelle Obama reveals she has 'low-grade depression'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, August 6: Former US first lady Michelle Obama says she has been suffering from "low-grade depression" due to the coronavirus pandemic, the rising racial injustice and the "hypocrisy" of the Trump administration.

Amid all the challenges facing the country, Obama said she is managing the "emotional highs and lows" by trying to maintain a routine, trying to not be hard on herself, getting outdoors and spending time with her family, NBC News reported. "I know that I am dealing with some form of low-

grade depression," she said in the latest episode of her podcast released Wednesday.

"Not just because of the quarantine, but because of the racial strife, and just seeing this administration, watching the hypocrisy of it, day in and day out, is dispiriting," the channel quoted her as saying. In the episode, Obama, 56, spoke with the Washington Post opinion columnist and friend Michele Norris about the rise in protests over racial injustice since the death of George Floyd. Floyd, 46, died after being arrested by police outside a shop in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



Michelle Obama

business

of the day quote

Of course, uncertainties remain about the coronavirus, but much of the negative impact was caused by the difficulties in production and sales that came from a lockdown

In our trade with Japan, we export \$180 mn worth of mainly APIs and some generics, and import some of the high-end medicines from them. In medical devices, we import around \$268 million, which is a very small percentage of \$5.6 bn of the medical devices imported by India from all over the world

SEJI KURAISHI | EVP, HONDA MOTOR CO.

We are coming up with a special scheme, which is called the Focused Product Investment Scheme, especially designed for greenfield and brownfield investment in the manmade sector. So, top-40 lines, which are traded in the world in man-made fibre, we are going to incentivise in a very big way

RAVI CAPOOR | TEXTILE SECRETARY

SHORT TAKES

Wipro, Intel to collaborate

Bangalore: Wipro Limited announced Thursday it will join forces with Intel to enable Wipro's LIVE Workspace, the company's digital workspace solution with the Intel vPro platform. This joint collaboration will help customers drive business continuity by enabling remote IT support and solutions, as they seek to keep employees productive amid social distancing boundaries and other remote-work limitations that have become the new normal, a Wipro statement said.

2-wheeler sales to decline in FY21

New Delhi: Ratings agency ICRA has revised downwards sales forecast for two-wheelers in India, expecting it to decline by 16-18% to around 1.7 crore units in FY2021. ICRA had earlier said that two-wheeler (2W) sales could decline by 11-13% in the current fiscal. In a statement, the rating agency attributed the revision in sales forecast to "overall macroeconomic scenario, the COVID-19 demand-supply disruptions, looming income uncertainties and increased cost of ownership of BS-VI vehicles".

US trade deficit drops in June

Washington: The US trade deficit fell in June for the first time since February as exports posted a record increase, rising twice as fast as imports. The Commerce Department said that the gap between the value of what the US buys and what it sells abroad fell 7.5% to \$50.7 billion in June from \$54.8 billion in May. Exports shot up an unprecedented 9.4% to \$158.3 billion. Imports rose 4.7% to \$208.9 billion.

Audi SUV ₹Q8 bookings open

New Delhi: German luxury car maker Audi has announced opening of bookings in India for its all-new sport utility vehicle (SUV) Audi ₹Q8, which can be booked with an initial amount of ₹15 lakh, Audi India said. "The Audi ₹Q8 is an epitome of performance and aggressive styling. With its twin-turbo V8 petrol engine, the Audi ₹Q8 combines the power of an ₹model with the elegance of a premium coupe and the flexibility of an SUV," Audi India Head BS Dhillon said.



We expect a 50-100% lease waiver (for malls) during lockdown, followed by a 30-50% concession in rentals in Q2 and Q3, which will reduce to 0-20% in the quarter to March. A gradual build-up in revenue can be expected from the current quarter

SACHIN GUPTA | SENIOR DIRECTOR, CRISIL RATINGS

HUAWEI LAUNCHES NEW CLOUD SOLUTION

Chinese tech giant Huawei has launched a Cloud solution designed to help digital payment service operators quickly build super app-centered payment ecosystems. With an open ecosystem, the solution provides API and other technologies that enable partners to launch the service on super app within one week



RBI to set up 'Innovation Hub' for financial inclusion

AGENCIES

Mumbai, August 6: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Thursday said it will set up an 'Innovation Hub' in the country for ideation and incubation of new capabilities which can be leveraged to deepen financial inclusion and promote efficient banking services.

'Easy liquidity policies have helped NBFCs'

Mumbai: RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has defended the easy liquidity stance of the central bank, asserting that the private sector entities have benefited out of the policy. Das said the measures, which got adopted with deep rate cuts, have also ensured faster transmission of the policy rates into the actual lending by banks, in turn helping the economy. At present, the overall excess liquidity is at over ₹5 lakh crore.



"The Innovation Hub will support, promote and hand-hold cross-thinking spanning regulatory remits and national boundaries," RBI said in its 'Statement on Developmental and Regulatory Policies'. The Hub, it added, will act as a centre for ideation and incubation of new capabilities which can be lever-

aged to create innovative and viable financial products and/or services to help achieve the wider objectives of deepening financial inclusion, efficient banking services, business continuity in times of emergency, and strengthening consumer protection, among others. Observing that the Reserve Bank has constantly endeavoured to encourage responsible innovation by

Startups to be brought under PSL category

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to broaden the scope of Priority Sector Lending (PSL) by including start-ups and enhancing borrowing limits for renewable energy sectors. The central bank would also increase the targets for lending to 'small and marginal farmers' and 'weaker sections' under the PSL. The eligible entities get access to credit on easier terms from banks under the PSL. Banks are required to assign 40% of Adjusted Net Bank Credit or Credit Equivalent Amount of Off-Balance Sheet Exposure, whichever is higher to priority sector, including agriculture and micro-enterprises, it said.

ASLF of ₹10K cr for Nabard, NHB announced

Mumbai: The RBI has announced an additional special liquidity facility (ASLF) of ₹10,000 crore equally split between Nabard and the NHB to help small financiers and home loan companies amid COVID-19 difficulties. The liquidity facility to both the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) and the National Housing Bank (NHB) will be offered at the policy repo rate, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said. It can be noted that higher share of moratoriums are being availed by the retail borrowers which has created the need for such liquidity support to lenders in order to meet their repayment commitments. The RBI has announced similar moves in the past as well.

'Focus on protecting economy'

REUTERS

Mumbai, August 6: India's policymakers should focus on protecting the economy as businesses struggle amid the coronavirus pandemic instead of being overly focused on what ratings agencies think, former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Raghuram Rajan said Thursday.

"It is also important to convince both domestic and international investors that after the crisis associated with the pandemic is over, we will return to fiscal responsibility over the medium term, and the government should do more to convince them of that," Rajan told the Global Markets Forum. India was placed under one of the strictest lockdowns in the world

The RBI and government have certainly been cooperating, but it seems like it is elsewhere, the ball is in the government's court to do more

RAGHURAM RAJAN | FORMER GOVERNOR, RBI



in late March for more than two months to stem the spread of the coronavirus, but cases have continued to rise steadily since the government eased restrictions in June, stymieing hopes of an economic recovery.

The government has announced several initiatives to help the poor and small- and medium-size businesses, but actual cash outflow from the government's measures has been estimated at just about

1% of GDP. Several attribute the fiscal prudence to fear of a downgrade after Moody's cut India's rating and outlook in early June followed closely by a change in outlook from Fitch.

The central bank on its part too has reduced the key lending rate by 115 basis points on top of the 135 bps last year but decided to hold rates steady earlier in the day against market expectations as inflation pressures have risen.

Voda Idea Q1 losses mount to ₹25,460 cr



AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 6: India's third largest telecom operator Vodafone Idea Thursday reported a sharp rise in its losses to ₹25,460 crore for the April-June quarter of 2020-21 due to high provisioning for statutory dues.

The losses of Vodafone Idea stood at about ₹4,874 crore in the year-ago period. The revenue from operations came in at ₹10,659.3 crore for the first quarter of FY2021, against ₹11,269.9 crore in the same period of the previous year, according to a regulatory filing.

The company said it has recognised additional charge of ₹19,440.5 crore in June quarter towards adjusted gross revenue (AGR) liabilities.

"...during this quarter, on prudence, we have recognised a charge of ₹194.4 billion as an exceptional item towards the total estimated AGR liability, in addition to estimated recognised liability of ₹460.0 billion as on March 31, 2020," a company statement said.

The company said that the first quarter numbers were impacted by the nationwide lockdown due to coronavirus. Ravinder Takkar, the MD and CEO of Vodafone Idea, said, "Q1FY21 was a challenging quarter as availability of recharges due to store closure and ability of customers to recharge on account of economic slowdown were impacted."

STATE MSME MIN HOLDS DIGITAL REVIEW MEET

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: State Minister of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises Dibya Shakar Mishra Thursday asked general managers of RIC/DIC to be more proactive in discharging their responsibility towards MSME sector.

Mishra asked during a review meeting in digital mode from his office chamber in Lok Seva Bhawan, Satyabrata Sahu, Principal Secretary, MSME Department and Shri Reghu G., Director of Industries along with officers from MSME Department and Directorate of Industries were also present in the meeting.

Keeping in view of the importance of livelihood in the present COVID-19 scenario, the Minister expressed his satisfaction on initia-

tives taken by the General Managers. Since the MSME sector provides ample scope for employment generation, he advised the General Managers to be more proactive in discharging their responsibility.

Convenor of State Level Bankers Committee (SLBC) informed that ₹2,500 crore has been sanctioned against 1.60 lakh accounts under Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) out of which ₹1,700 crore has been disbursed to 1 lakh account in the state so far.

Mishra directed that a training programme in Naktikani village in Kalahandi district, which is inhabited mostly by tribals, should be started by August 15, 2020. Similarly migrant labourers should be given priority for assistance under PMFME scheme of Ministry of Food Processing Industries.

EU RETAIL TRADE BACK TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Brussels, August 6: Eurostat, the European Union's (EU) statistics agency, said that the bloc's retail sale in June regained 99.7% of the volume that it had reached in February before the COVID-19 pandemic.

The seasonally-adjusted volume of retail trade increased by 5.7% in the euro area in June and by 5.2% in the EU compared with the previous month, Xinhua news agency quoted Eurostat as saying Wednesday.

The statistics agency also revised its earlier estimate of the retail trade volume to 20.3% increase in the euro area and 18.3% increase in the EU in May.

In March and April, when most

of the COVID-19 prevention measures were taken in the EU member states, all non-food product groups showed exceptionally big decreases, in particular the decline for textiles, clothes and footwear was extremely steep.

The two-month loss for automotive fuel was 43.4%, for computers, books and similar products it was 40.7%, and for electrical goods and furniture, 34.5%, said Eurostat.

When the containment measures began to ease in May, sales for all non-food product groups picked up.

With the next increases of sales in June, the pre-crisis level of sales was regained or even exceeded for some product groups.

Total, Adani to apply for petrol pump licence



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: A newly formed joint venture of French super-major Total and an Adani group firm will soon apply to the government for permission to open petrol pumps in India, Adani Gas chief executive said.

Total-Adani Fuels Marketing Ltd will apply for licences to offer the full bouquet of auto fuels at retail outlets, Adani Gas CEO Suresh Manglani said in first-quarter earnings call.

Last year, Total had bought 37.4 per cent stake in billionaire Gautam Adani-promoted Adani Gas to enter the world's fastest-growing fuel market. "Definitely we will take full benefit of the expertise and strength of Total," he said.

Total-Adani Fuels Marketing Ltd, which is a subsidiary of Adani Gas, will offer natural gas, petrol, diesel, and electric vehicle charging facilities.

He said the joint venture will seek licence under the liberalised fuel retailing regime announced by the government.

Last year, the government allowed any entity with a net worth of ₹250 crore to set up petrol pumps in the country.

FICCI, OYO develop online course

New Delhi: Industry body FICCI and hospitality firm OYO Thursday said that they have joined hands to develop and design an online training and certification course specifically for the hospitality industry. "The course will focus on redesigning the sanitisation protocols and minimising person-to-person contact for a hotel in line with the standard operating procedures announced by the tourism ministry," according to a joint statement. The course will help budget, mid-segment and boutique hotels and homestays in India as well as hospitality professionals to maintain and improve their safety and hygiene standards in line with government and industry benchmarks, it added.

BIZ BUZZ

'Odisha moving ahead with investments'

Bhubaneswar: As India remains concerned about the economy impact of COVID-19 pandemic, Industrial Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha (IPICOL) said that Odisha is already moving ahead with investment plans to get the economy back on track. Amid the global COVID-19 pandemic slowing down economies all over the world, IPICOL was able to garner an investment worth ₹20,979.34 crore for Odisha, which will generate employment potential for almost 16,504 people. When companies decide to invest, Odisha will be looked at more favourably than before, stated IPICOL. With regards to this, Nitin B Jawale, MD, IPICOL and Shri Hemant Sharma, Principal Secy., Department of Industries shared further insights on the mineral-rich state and also the recent developments made by the state government to get the economy back on track.

Bezos sells \$3.1bn in Amazon shares

San Francisco: Amazon Founder and CEO Jeff Bezos has sold over \$3.1 billion worth of the company's shares this week, according to documents filed with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Following tax deductions, the world's richest man will take home an estimated \$2.4 billion, Forbes reported Wednesday. While the reason behind the current share sales is not known, Bezos had earlier said he would be selling \$1 billion worth of Amazon shares every year to fund Blue Origin, his space exploration company. According to the filings, the latest share sales, were part of a pre-arranged 10b5-1 trading plan, CNBC reported.



'Sustainable mining can propel economic growth'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: The ongoing outbreak of COVID-19 has slowed economic activities with declining livelihood and opportunities. Amid such situation, the Federation of Indian Mineral Industries (FIMI) and Indian Bureau of Mines, Ministry of Mines, Government of India (IBM) stated that mining sector could be the key to tide over the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

FIMI and IBM stated that a state like Odisha has the lion's share of the country's natural resources accounting for 25% of coal reserves and over 50% of bauxite reserves. Also, an extensive coastline provides the coastal state a direct gateway to the global trade market.



Over the years, the Indian Aluminium industry has invested over Rs. 1.4 lakh crore in Odisha.

FIMI believed that even with bauxite reserves of 2 billion tons, Odisha-based industries have to meet their bauxite requirements from imports, rendering them eco-

nomically unviable and globally uncompetitive. Further, the federation said, due to imports, the industries operate at reduced capacity causing loss of local jobs. Import of bauxite, one of India's most abundant ores, has caused an estimated forex loss of over 400 million dollars

Odisha has the potential for a multi-fold growth in bauxite production from current 12-13 MT to over 50 MT per annum, thereby fulfilling the domestic bauxite requirements of the country

in the last five years itself. Odisha has the potential for a multi-fold growth in bauxite production from current 12-13 million tonnes to over 50 million tonnes per annum, thereby fulfilling the domestic bauxite requirements of

the country. FIMI and IBM suggested that sustainable mining approach to tap these vast natural resources will attract huge investments in the coastal state, to tap the growing aluminium demand which is expected to double from 4 to 8 million tonnes in the next 5-7 years and will need fresh investment of over ₹1.8 lakh crores (\$ 25 Billion).

The mining sector can provide local livelihood opportunities to over 5 lakh migrant workers who have been forced to return due to the ongoing pandemic.

A recent study pegged the employment potential of the mining sector at over 48 lakh direct jobs by 2025 - with the potential to create over five crore jobs directly and indirectly.

BCCI, VIVO SUSPEND IPL PARTNERSHIP FOR ONE YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: The BCCI Thursday suspended the IPL title sponsorship deal with Chinese mobile phone company Vivo for the event's upcoming edition amid the Sino-India border face-off.

The BCCI sent out a one-line statement, without giving any details, to say that Vivo will not be associated with the IPL this year.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and vivo Mobile India Pvt Ltd have decided to suspend their part-

nership for Indian Premier League in 2020," the press release stated.

The company, on its part, stated that the association is being paused. "The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and vivo Mobile India Pvt Ltd have mutually decided to pause their partnership for the 2020 season of Indian Premier League," it stated.

Vivo won the IPL title sponsorship rights for five years from 2018 to 2022 for a reported sum of ₹2190 crore, approximately ₹440 crore per annum.

It is learnt that the two parties are now working out a plan in which Vivo



might come back for a fresh three-year period starting 2021 on revised terms. However, a top BCCI official offered a

divergent view.

"Here we are talking about diplomatic tensions and you expect that after November, when IPL ends and before the next IPL starts in April 2021, there would be no anti-China sentiment? Are we serious?" the veteran official told this agency on conditions of anonymity.

The anti-China sentiment in the country peaked after the violent face off between the Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh. India lost 20 soldiers in the clash, while China also acknowledged unspecified casualties.

The stand-off at the Line of Actual

Control (LAC) caused outrage across India with several calls for boycott of Chinese companies and products.

The BCCI is now likely to float a tender for new IPL title sponsors as mandated by its constitution. The glitzy T20 league starts September 19 in the UAE, forced out of India due to the rising COVID-19 cases.

The new development is in stark contrast to what came out of Sunday's IPL's Governing Council meeting, where it was decided that Vivo, along with all other sponsors, will remain on board. This was after BCCI had announced in

June that all sponsorship deals pertaining to IPL will be reviewed in the aftermath of the clash at the Galwan Valley.

However, after Sunday's meeting, there was a huge backlash on social media about BCCI holding on to Vivo. Both parties then began thrashing out an amicable separation plan, at least for this season.

However, the end of this deal could spell losses for the franchisees as they get a substantial share from the sponsorship pool. Half of the annual Vivo sponsorship money is distributed equally among eight franchises which comes to ₹27.5 crore.

UCL IS BACK

Real Madrid look to overturn Champions League first leg's 1-2 deficit when they visit Manchester City today

EUROPA LEAGUE RETURNS

Man Utd, Inter reach quarters

AGENCIES

Manchester, August 6: Real Madrid will be looking to overturn a 1-2 first leg deficit when they travel to Manchester City for the second leg of their last 16 UEFA Champions League (UCL) contest, Friday night.

City recorded an impressive victory when the pair met at the Santiago Bernabeu back in February, meaning that Real have plenty to do if they are to advance to the quarter-finals of the competition once again.

It would be fair to say that it has not quite been the season that the City supporters would have been hoping for. Indeed, in addition to giving up the Premier League trophy to Liverpool, the Citizens suffered a 0-2 defeat to Arsenal in the semi-finals of the FA Cup as they surprisingly bowed out.

Pep Guardiola's side did lift the EFL Cup courtesy of a 2-1 win over Aston Villa back in March, but it would go down as a disappointing campaign if that was the only silverware that they were to secure in 2019-20.

The English giants are in a strong position to reach the quarter-finals of the Champions League, though, holding a 2-1 advantage from the first leg of their clash with Madrid at the Bernabeu.

City would have been feeling good about themselves after the first leg, but there is a degree of uncertainty heading into the reverse match due to what has transpired across the world of football in recent months.

City ended their Premier League season with a thumping 5-0 win over Norwich City, which saw them finish on 81 points, 18 behind champions Liverpool in the Premier League table. They have been full of goals since returning to the field in June but have also lost to Chelsea, Southampton and Arsenal.

The Citizens were beaten by Tottenham Hotspur in the quarter-finals of last season's competition, while they have only won one of their five two-legged knockout ties against Spanish opposition, losing each of their last four, which will be a concern as they prepare to welcome the

reigning La Liga champions.

City's last home game against a Spanish club saw them lose 1-3 to Barcelona in the group stages of the 2016-17 competition, although they have won four and lost just two of their nine previous home matches against teams from Spain.

Guardiola's side will be the favourites to progress considering what happened in the first leg back in February, with the onus very much on Madrid to turn the tie around.

The special circumstances, surrounding the contest, mean that anything is possible, though, and it remains to be seen whether the Manchester giants can hold off the threat of Los Blancos to

advance to the final eight once again.

Last season was actually the first time since 2009-10 that Madrid failed to reach at least the semifinals of the competition as they bowed out to Ajax in the round of 16, and an exit at this stage would have to go down as another huge disap-

point-ment considering their pedigree in the competition.

Madrid have won their last seven away matches in the round of 16, though, while they have been victorious in 16 of their last 25 European away fixtures, suffering just five defeats, which is a brilliant record at this level.

The Spanish outfit have also won eight of their 12 two-legged knockout ties against English clubs in European competition, notably overcoming City in the semifinals back in 2016 courtesy of a 1-0 success.

That said, only on one previous occasion have Madrid lost the home first leg of a European tie and still managed to progress, which occurred back in 1971.



TONIGHT'S MATCHES

Man City vs Real Madrid
Juventus vs Lyon

Time: 12:30 am

Telecast: Sony Ten channels



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

HEAD-TO-HEAD

These two sides have met on five previous occasions, with Madrid leading the head-to-head record two victories to one, while there have also been two draws

The pair first locked horns during the group stage of the 2012-13 competition, with Madrid running out 3-2 winners at home before a 1-1 draw in the reverse game at the Etihad Stadium

The last meeting between the two sides came in the semis of the 2015-16 competition, and the Spanish giants advanced to the final courtesy of a 1-0 aggregate success

City's 2-1 victory in the first leg in February was therefore their first success against the capital giants

TEAM NEWS

City will again be without Sergio Agüero due to a knee injury, while Benjamin Mendy is suspended due to the yellow card that he picked up in the first leg in the Spanish capital

As for Madrid, inspirational captain Sergio Ramos will miss out through suspension due to the red card that the Spaniard picked up the first leg at the Bernabeu

Masood ton props Pakistan

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Manchester, August 6: Opener Shan Masood (151 batting, 314b, 17x4, 2x6) scored a gritty century as Pakistan reached 312/8 against England at tea on Day 2 of the first Test being played at the Old Trafford, Thursday.

Masood got to his third ton in a row by milking James Anderson for two runs as batting coach Younis Khan rose to his feet, flashing his signature smile as the 30-year-old reached triple figures in 251 balls, showing composure of the highest order.

The second session almost belonged to Pakistan after Masood and Shadab Khan (45, 76b, 3x4) shared a 105-run stand for the sixth wicket.

Shadab looked good for a fifty until off-spinner Dom Bess had him go for a wild wipe through the line, top edging the ball to England skipper Joe Root who took an easy catch at mid on.

Jofra Archer (3/45) then removed Yasir Shah and Mohammad Abbas in quick succession just before tea but there was no stopping Masood



who made the most of his two re-prieves on Day 1 - Jos Buttler dropped and missed a stumping when he was batting on 45 - to hold one end up and soak in all the pressure to bat majestically.

Earlier, resuming the day at 139/2, Babar Azam (69, 106b, 11x4) couldn't contribute anything to his overnight score as he was enticed into a false drive by James Anderson who had him caught at first slip by hosts' skipper Joe Root.

Asad Shafiq (7) followed suit soon after as Ben Stokes took a superb catch at second slip off Stuart Broad's bowling to get rid of the new batsman.

Wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan tried to play watchfully alongside Masood at the other end but half an hour before the end of the first session, Chris Woakes (2/43) did him with a wider from the crease delivery that caught Rizwan's edge of the bat and flew to 'keeper Buttler.

BRIEF SCORES (AT TEA): 312/8 (Shan Masood 151 batting, Babar Azam 69, Shadab Khan 45; Jofra Archer 3/45, Chris Woakes 2/43) vs England. Match to continue.

Ramos named goalkeeping coach of OFC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: Odisha FC announced Thursday the appointment of Rogerio Ramos as their goalkeeping coach ahead of the seventh edition of Indian Super League (ISL).

The former Indian national team goalkeeping coach joined the Bhubaneswar-based side on a two-year deal.

Apart from the Indian senior team and different national age group teams, the Brazilian was also the goalkeeping coach of the Sudan national team. The 46-year-old former professional goalkeeper was also active as a goalkeeping coach in various clubs across the world.

"I try to have full commitment with the staff, players and mainly with the goalkeepers to make this important sector of the team to work in perfect harmony with our coach's philosophy to get the best results possible from the team," said Ramos.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bottas retained for next season

Silverstone: Valtteri Bottas has been retained by the Mercedes Formula One (F1) team for next season. The Finnish driver heads into this weekend's 70th Anniversary Grand Prix at Silverstone 30 points adrift of teammate Lewis Hamilton in the World Championship. Hamilton's future beyond this year has yet to be confirmed but it is expected the six-time World Champion will also stay with Mercedes. "I'm in the fight for the title this year and staying with Mercedes puts me in the best possible position to compete for it next season as well," said Bottas.

Sanchez set for permanent Inter deal

Gelsenkirchen (Germany): Inter Milan will turn Alexis Sanchez's loan from Manchester United into a permanent deal, United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said. Asked about reports that Sanchez would become an Inter player on a permanent basis, Solskjaer told British broadcaster BT Sport Wednesday that: "I can confirm that. Alexis has had a good time over there, a good player, so we wish him all the best." The 31-year-old Chilean forward has been on loan with Inter since August after he struggled for playing time at United. Sanchez struggled to match expectations after joining United from Arsenal in 2018 and scored five goals in 45 games.

Dutch cyclist in induced coma after crash

Warsaw (Poland): Dutch cyclist Fabio Jakobsen was put into an induced coma after sustaining head injuries in a crash on the final stretch of the Tour de Pologne race in southern Poland, organisers said. Sprinting for the win at the end of the event's opening stage Wednesday, Jakobsen was sent flying into the side barriers after a collision with fellow Dutchman Dylan Groenewegen. Jakobsen was airlifted to a hospital in serious condition and was put into an induced coma, the Tour de Pologne press office said. Race director Czeslaw Lang blamed Groenewegen saying, "Groenewegen changed his trajectory, was pressing Jakobsen to the right side and on top of that stuck out his elbow. You don't do that."

Premier League reverts to maximum three-substitution rule

London: The Premier League (EPL) will revert to a maximum of three substitutions in matches next season with England's top division clubs deciding to no longer allow two additional changes. Clubs previously backed the use of five substitutions to deal with the congested schedule after the league's pandemic-enforced 100-day shutdown ended in June. Despite the International Football Association Board allowing the temporary use of five substitutions next season, the league won't be adopting it. The rule had been seen to favor bigger clubs with more depth in their squads. A maximum seven substitutes will be allowed on the bench but only three can be brought on when the new season begins around September 12.

CAMPAIGN ON TRACK: Anthony Martial is all smiles after netting the winner as LASK custodian haplessly looking at the ball rolling into the net; (inset) Christian Eriksen rejoices after his goal against Getafe, Wednesday