



A WORD OF WARNING

Manushi Chhillar says youth should feel free to be themselves but they need to stay away from online toxicity

LEISURE P2



RESETTLING KASHMIRIS

India is considering resettling of young Kashmiri militants in more peaceful parts of the country

TWO STATES P7



RUSSIA REJECTS CONCERNS

Russia rejects safety concerns aired by some experts over Moscow's rapid approval of a Covid vaccine

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I googled. Nobody is even trying to come up with a vaccine for communalism!

SHORT TAKES

Shutdown norms relaxed for I-Day

Bhubaneswar: The state government Wednesday slightly modified its earlier order on weekend shutdowns in four districts and relaxed norms to allow people to unfurl the National Flag August 15. The fresh notification said that people can unfurl the National Flag in the four districts of Ganjam, Khurda, Gajapati and Cuttack and Rourkela city till 11 am on Independence Day. Earlier, the government had imposed weekend shutdowns.

Top Hizbul ultra killed by forces

Srinagar: Top Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) commander Azad Lahari was killed Wednesday in an encounter with the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district, police said. "In the initial firing, two soldiers were injured. One of the injured succumbed to his injuries at the Army's Base Hospital in Srinagar," police said. Lahari was killed in the joint operation by police, Army and the CRPF in Kamrazipora.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	38369.63 ↓ 37.38
NIFTY	11308.40 ↓ 14.10
DOLLAR	74.89 ↑ ₹0.11
EURO	88.18 ↓ ₹0.03
GOLD	₹52,320 ↑ ₹391
SILVER	₹66,584 ↓ ₹350

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	33.0°C	35.5°C
TEMP MIN	25.4°C	26.4°C
Humidity	97%	84%
Rainfall	4.8mm	Nil

Forecast: Generally cloudy sky

Funding boost for urban slums

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 12: Headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, the state cabinet Wednesday approved 20 proposals including 25 percent reservation of urban local bodies' (ULBs) annual budget for development of slums.

Addressing a presser here, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy said, "As 25 percent of the urban population resides in slum areas, the Cabinet has decided to reserve a fixed amount of capital expenditure to ensure basic services in the slums. Accordingly, 25 per cent of budget of a ULB will be fixed for development works in slum areas."

To implement the decision, the Cabinet has decided to amend the Odisha Municipal Act, 1950 and the Odisha Municipal Corporation Act, 2003 through Ordinance route following approval of Governor, he said. "Moreover, under 5T initiative, the trade license of commercial establishments in urban areas will be given in online mode. Provisional trade license will be given on the same day while the original license will be given after due verifications. The trade license will be given for five years instead of one," he said.

The government has also approved a tender worth ₹1138.63 crore for implementation of much-talked Gangadhar Meher lift irrigation project in Bargarh district. The project will provide irrigation facility to 25,600 hectares of agricultural land in 124 villages of Bargarh and Sonapur districts.



MAJOR CABINET DECISIONS

25% of ULBs' budget earmarked for development of slums

TENDER WORTH ₹1138CR APPROVED FOR GM LIFT IRRIGATION PROJECT

₹2,000cr to be used under Nirmal scheme for better ambience in healthcare facilities

FOUR MEGA WATER SUPPLY PROJECTS WORTH ₹800CR GET CABINET NOD

Construction (EPC) mode on turnkey basis with a project completion period of 30 months. There is a provision of installation of automated micro irrigation system in 100 percent command area of the project, he said.

The government has also decided to enhance the ambit of Nirmal scheme, which was launched in the year 2018-19 to provide better ambience to the patients and attendants in public healthcare facilities. The government has estimated to spend Rs1998 crore under the scheme in a period of five years. As many as 43 new public healthcare facilities and seven tertiary health facilities have been covered under the Nirmal scheme.

The Cabinet also approved four packages of mega drinking water projects worth ₹800.27 crore. About 6.07 lakh population in 911 villages under Kalimela and Malkangiri Blocks of Malkangiri district, Boipariguda block of Koraput, Saraskana and GB Nagar Blocks of Mayurbhanj, Bhogari Block of Balasore, Kasinagar & Gumma Blocks of Gajapati and Mahanga Block of Cuttack district will be benefited from the project. The Cabinet has also decided to exempt stamp duty and registration fees on the document of government land to be executed in favour of displaced families at the resettlement colony at Mangalaghat in Puri district. **MORE P3**

1800 266 266 1 (tollfree)

CHSE SCIENCE RESULTS

Pass rate 70.21 pc, boys outshine girls



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 12: Results of the Std 12 CHSE exams for the Science stream were announced Wednesday and 70.21 per cent of the total 97,373 candidates were declared successful.

Sudeep Sudarshan Rana of Jupiter Science College topped the state with 574 marks secured out of 600 (95.6 %).

The pass percentage this time was lower than last year's 72 per cent, and School and Mass Education Minister S R Dash attributed it to strict measures taken such as installing CCTV cameras in examination halls.

However, there is a rise in the number of students passing in the first and second divisions, he said.

While 25,339 students have cleared the exam in the first

division, 24,121 passed in the second division and 18,268 in the third division, the minister said.

Total 137 students have secured marks above 90 per cent in the exams conducted by the Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE), Odisha.

The minister said, students can check their results on orissaresults.nic.in. Total 68,374 students cleared the examinations. Of them, 38,301 were boys and 30,073 girls, he said.

Twenty schools recorded 100 per cent success rate. There were 15 schools from which no student could pass. I have asked the department's secretary to show cause these schools, Dash said.

Nayagarh district recorded the highest pass rate of 86.51 per cent, Jharsuguda recorded the lowest at 40.71 per cent.

Pandemic at its peak in Khurda: RMRC dir

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 12: Officials engaged in testing and management of COVID-19 in the state opined that while new cases in Ganjam seem to be stabilising, Khurda is witnessing the peak of the pandemic.

"COVID cases in Ganjam are stabilising. Now, we are getting more cases from contact tracing and less from new infections. The positivity rate of infections in the district has declined, which is a good sign," Sanghamitra Pati, Director, Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) said. The director said that her institution has also submitted the sero survey report of Berhampur in Ganjam to the state government and the results are likely to be shared with the media by next Monday.

The official said that the second round of sero survey would give a clearer picture. The Phase II survey would be done in Bhubaneswar in the third week of August. The second phase, is done four weeks after the first sample collections, she added.

The RMRC director also said that the testing in the state has increased, mainly due to rise in antigen testing. She also hinted that close to one lakh testing per day could be done through all the forms of testing.



Virus caseload breaches 50K-mark

Odisha's COVID-19 tally Wednesday crossed the 50,000-mark with the highest single-day spike of 1,876 fresh cases, while the death toll rose to 305 as nine more patients succumbed to the disease, a health department official said. The total number of coronavirus cases in the state now stands at 50,672, he said. Of the nine new fatalities, four were reported from Ganjam, two from Rayagada and one each from Angul, Balasore and Khurda districts. **P4**

"When it comes to increase testing, majority of the tests will be done through antigen mode. Only symptomatic patients who test negative in antigen tests will be sent for RT-PCR testing. This is what the ICMR norm says," she said.

Top bureaucrat under Vig lens

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 12: Vigilance sleuths Wednesday raided properties of special secretary of Revenue and Disaster Management Department Ajay Kumar Das while investigating allegations that he amassed assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

Acting on a tip-off, the officials carried out simultaneous raids at Das' residential houses at Ratnakara Bag near Tankapani Road in Bhubaneswar, his flat at Patia in Bhubaneswar and his double-storied building in Balasore. During the searches, 3 flats in his name-

two in Bhubaneswar and one in Puri were traced.

OFFICER CAUGHT TAKING BRIBE

Bijay Kumar Dash, Resource Assistant, Directorate of Agriculture Marketing, Cooperation Department, Bhubaneswar was caught red handed by Vigilance Cell officers while demanding and accepting bribe of ₹10,000 from complainant Dharendra Mallick for sanction of his RACP and refund of ₹25,000/- which was recovered from the complainant in connection with a departmental proceeding.

The bribe amount was recovered from the possession of Dash and seized.

B'lore violence 'well planned'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, August 12: Terming the violence in the city as a 'well planned act,' Karnataka Revenue Minister R Ashoka Wednesday said the 'traitors', who perpetrated the riots would be dealt with an iron hand and steps would be taken to ensure that such incidents do not recur.

Speaking to reporters after meeting Congress MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy at Vidhana Soudha here, Ashoka said, "The manner in which the riots were perpetrated shows that it was a well planned act and was intended to spread to other parts of the city. These are traitors and we



will subdue them."

As many as three people were killed in the police firing and scores other injured including 50 policemen in the violence that erupted Tuesday night at D J Halli in Pulakeshinagar locality over an alleged social media post on a 'com-

munity sensitive' issue posted by the MLA's relative.

The Minister said the lawmaker's house was completely damaged and belongings including sarees and jewels were looted while the rest was set on fire.

"It is clear from the intensity of vandalism that the intention was to attack and finish off Srinivasa Murthy. It has to be investigated whether any anti-social elements from within the state and outside were involved," Ashoka said.

Claiming that the violence was planned to terrorise the people of Bengaluru, Ashoka said government will send across a strong message so that no one would ever dare to take law into their hands again.

Forgive & forget, says Raj CM as rebels come back



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaisalmer, August 12: Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot Wednesday said resentment among Congress MLAs lodged in hotels for a month since the political crisis in Rajasthan broke out was natural but he has exhorted them to bear it to save democracy.

Forget, forgive and move on in the interest of the country and state, he said.

The political crisis in Rajasthan broke out after former Rajasthan deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot raised a banner of revolt against Gehlot nearly a month ago.

However, a meeting between Pilot and former Congress president Rahul Gandhi Monday signalled an amicable resolution of the crisis ahead of the crucial assembly session from August 14.

A day after the meeting, the Congress said the crisis in Rajasthan is a closed chapter and all legislators supporting its government will work towards strengthening the state, fighting COVID-19 and other economic problems.

Before leaving for Jodhpur, Gehlot told reporters, It is natural for them (MLAs) to be upset. The way this episode happened, they had to stay in hotels... so it was natural to be upset. I have exhorted them that in the interest of the country, state, people of the state and for saving democracy, sometimes we have to bear, he said.

Harris' VP nomination sparks glee in India, Jamaica

Joe Biden picks Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate, recognising the crucial role of Black voters and Indian-Americans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 12: Well before dawn Wednesday, the phone began to ring in Gopalan Balachandran's home in India's capital. It was his sister calling from the other end of the country and she had exceptionally good news to share: their niece could become the next vice president of the United States.

When Joe Biden announced that he had selected Sen. Kamala D. Harris as his running mate, he made history. Harris is the first Black woman and the first Asian American woman to join a major-party presidential ticket in the United States.

The news also rippled around the world. Harris is the daughter of immigrants from India and Jamaica, giving her selection an unusually

international dimension.

Harris' mother, Shyamala Gopalan, came to the United States from India at the age of 19 to pursue a doctoral degree in California. There she met Donald Harris, a student from Jamaica who went on to teach economics at Stanford University.

Black women across the US have lauded Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden's historic announcement of picking Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris as his vice-presidential running mate.

Harris' name has been discussed as a top contender for vice president since before she even declared her own candidacy to run for the democratic nomination in January last year. Multiple black women told CNN that Harris' selection was not just about herself, but providing a

base for something for all women of colour across the US to aspire to.

Black women and women of color have long been underrepresented in elected office and in November we have an opportunity to change that, Harris tweeted on Tuesday.

Harris was born in Oakland and grew up in Berkeley. After her parents divorced, she spent her high school years living in French-speaking Canada - her mother was teaching at McGill University in Montreal.

In 2010, she became the first Black woman to be elected as California's Attorney General, overseeing the country's second largest Justice Department, only behind the US Department of Justice.

Black women are sick and tired of being considered the backbone

of the Democratic Party. We want to be recognized as leaders. We want all the things. We're due, Karen Finney, a Democratic strategist, recently told The 19th, a new nonprofit newsroom that focuses on the junctures of gender and politics.

Harris had been one of Biden's

rivals for the Democratic presidential nomination until she dropped out of the race late last year. **MORE P10**

KAMALA HARRIS
Born in Oakland, California to Jamaican father and Indian mother
Age : 55
Party DEMOCRATIC

POLITICAL JOURNEY

- 2003: Elected as the 27th District Attorney of San Francisco
- 2010: Elected California's Attorney General - First woman and Black person to get the job
- 2014: Re-elected against Republican Ronald Gold
- 2016: Won US Senate election from California



SAIFEENA EXPECTS ADDITION TO FAMILY

Actress Kareena Kapoor and her husband, actor Saif Ali Khan, announced Wednesday that they were expecting an addition to their family. The couple have a son Taimur, who was born December 20, 2016.

IAF'S OBJECTION OVER GENDER BIAS

The Indian Air Force has written a letter to Dharma Productions, Netflix and the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), raising objections over inaccurate presentation of gender bias in the movie *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl* which it said portrays the IAF in a bad light.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

You are uptight about what is yours and today, you are even less keen on sharing. This possessiveness may have to do with a certain 'someone'. Ganesh says matters regarding love are going forward intensely and your marital life will blossom.

TAURUS

Your think tank will be running on overdrive today. Your possessiveness might kick in to cause a conflict. Keep your anger under the carpet to avoid any unnecessary complications. Introspection will also play upon your thoughts, leading you to explore your problems and pry for solutions, predicts Ganesh.

GEMINI

Today may not be very meaningful and productive for you, though you will get to spend plenty of quality time with yourself in the afternoon, which may not necessarily be to your liking. By evening, you may feel a little extra sensitive. A lonely day, or as an optimist would put it, you've got the whole day to yourself; it could have been worse.

CANCER

You are likely to be at your inventive best today, feels Ganesh. You are likely to taste success, much to the delight of your colleagues at work and loved ones back home. However, experience counts, and if you are a beginner at something, you may face problems in your new venture.

LEO

Agreed that home is where the heart is. But today, your home is where your troubles will be. The faster you try to run away from them, the quicker they seem to catch up with you, says Ganesh. So, scooting off may not be the best solution. Some people around you may try to blow things out of proportion; the best way to keep them in check is with a smile.

VIRGO

Open the mind gates and let your imagination flow, says Ganesh. At your creative best, you will pursue innovation and creativity today. Luck will be on your side and even those things that you took a risk on may lean your way. You energy levels will be unusually high and you will feel passionate about all that you undertake. A good day to organise social events for family and friends.

LIBRA

Some days are full of new ideas. Today is one such day as you radiate diligence and intelligence. Consider it an auspicious moment to begin new business schemes, especially if you happen to be self-employed. Today, you will be able to think at a level higher and clearer than the rest. But, as happens when you focus more on work, it comes at the cost of family time. Maintain a balance, advises Ganesh.

SCORPIO

Dig in deep and keep yourself in the hunt, says Ganesh. Karma matters, but don't give much thought to the outcome. In matters of joint ventures, adopt a wait-and-watch approach today.

SAGITTARIUS

Problems will push you in a corner today. But try resolving them as soon as possible. Expect delays in making final decisions. But as the day ends, expect fruitful results to come by, predicts Ganesh.

CAPRICORN

You will start the day with verve and vigour, and will appear a completely different person at work. There will be a discernible change in your way of working, especially in terms of the level of energy and concentration you will put in. The switch to the new strategy will better your performance considerably and will make you feel that it was a good change after all. By the end of the day, all that you would want is a nice break to unwind, says Ganesh.

AQUARIUS

Ganesh advises you to make a simple change in your routine and things will work out superbly. You also get recognition and rewards for past achievements. But that does not mean you become complacent, says Ganesh. Get going, as hard work is still the surest way to salvation!

PISCES

Ferdinand the Bull would be the cartoon character that would most aptly describe you today. Calmness will be second nature to you, and wisdom will ooze from your pores. Communal harmony is something dear to your heart, and your amenability will see you achieve it, says Ganesh.

'LOOK HOW FAR WE HAVE COME'

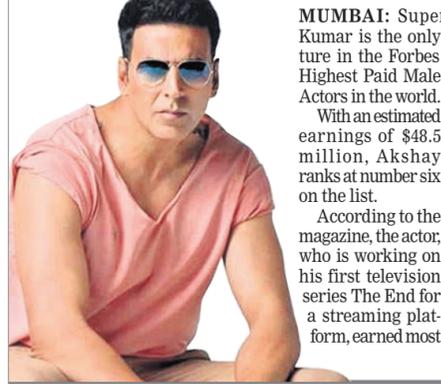


Mumbai: Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas has congratulated US Democratic vice-presidential candidate Kamala Harris on becoming the first Black woman and FIRST PERSON of Indian descent to compete on a major US party's presidential ticket. #representationmatters ?PS: To my younger self - look how far we have come!" Priyanka wrote alongside the image. Harris is born in the US to immigrants, cancer researcher Shyamala Gopalan from India and economics professor Donald Harris from Jamaica.



Priyanka took to Instagram and posted a picture of Harris in a purple suit, waving her hand. "This is a historical, transformational, and proud moment for all women. All women of colour, all Black women, and all South Asian women. Congratulations @kamalaharris on becoming the first Black woman and FIRST PERSON of Indian descent to compete on a major US party's presidential ticket. #representationmatters ?PS: To my younger self - look how far we have come!" Priyanka wrote alongside the image. Harris is born in the US to immigrants, cancer researcher Shyamala Gopalan from India and economics professor Donald Harris from Jamaica.

Akshay among top 10 in Forbes 2020 list



MUMBAI: Superstar Akshay Kumar is the only Indian to feature in the Forbes 2020 list of 10 Highest Paid Male Actors in the world. With an estimated earnings of \$48.5 million, Akshay ranks at number six on the list.

SUPER TEN	
Dwayne Johnson	- \$87.5 mn
Ryan Reynolds	- \$71.5 mn
Mark Wahlberg	- \$58 mn
Ben Affleck	- \$55 mn
Vin Diesel	- \$54 mn
Akshay Kumar	- \$48.5 mn
Lin-Manuel Miranda	- \$45.5 mn
Will Smith	- \$44.5 mn
Adam Sandler	- \$41 mn
Jackie Chan	- \$40 mn

According to the magazine, the actor, who is working on his first television series *The End for a streaming platform*, earned most of his money from his endorsement deals. The magazine stated that Akshay is getting \$10 million for his role in the upcoming television series. Akshay's upcoming films include *Bachchan Pandey*, *BellBottom*, *Laxmmi Bomb*, and *Raksha Bandhan*. This year, Hollywood star Dwayne Johnson has topped the list for the second year in a row with \$87.5 million. *Deadpool* star Ryan Reynolds came in second with an estimated earnings of \$71.5 million. Actor-producer Mark Wahlberg, star of action comedy *Spenser Confidential*, was third with \$58 million. Next on the list were actors Ben Affleck with \$55 million and Vin Diesel with \$54 million.

Online celebration of Int'l Youth Day



BHUBANESWAR: With restrictions in place for public gatherings, Viswa Odia Mahasangha (VOM), a non-profit organisation dealing with various social issues, Wednesday took to virtual platform to celebrate International Youth Day. Attending the event as Chief Guest, Higher Education Minister Arun Sahoo said the future of the nation lies in the hands of youth. He appreciated VOM president Surendranath Mohapatra's effort in organising such a programme during Corona times.

Chandbali MLA Byomkesh Ray joined the event as the Guest of Honour and asked youngsters to take interest in politics for state's all round development while Choudhary-Cuttack MLA Souvic Biswal encouraged the participants to contribute in the process of nation building. Taking part in the event, VOM president Mohapatra said youth are the real torch bearers who can help the country scale new peaks in future. Among others who spoke on the occasion were - Sanjay Mahakud, Rudra Narayan Dash, RK Padhi and Prakash Mallik - all general secretaries of the organisation and Dejalini Mohapatra, a member of Mo Paribar. The vote of thanks was given by social worker and VOM's secretary Manas Pattnaik.

Manushi warns against online toxicity

MUMBAI: Actress and former beauty queen Manushi Chhillar, on the occasion of International Youth Day Wednesday, said that youth should feel free to be themselves, but also warned against online toxicity.

"We, the youth of our country, are riding on the technology wave and while there are massive advantages, there are disadvantages too. We are dealing with severe online toxicity and hate that one shouldn't face growing up. Rather the youth should feel free to be themselves, discover their identities, make mistakes and learn from them," Manushi said. She added: "I pray we are super strong to take on this much negativity that's thrown at all of us on a daily basis and are able to distinguish between what matters and what doesn't." The former beauty queen wants the youth to always know that these things don't really matter. "Likes and shares and comments in the virtual world are definitely adding up to the pressure and I would want the youth to always know that these things don't really matter," she said. Manushi is 23, and she feels living through the Covid pandemic has definitely set new priorities for the youth, including her.

PEANUTS



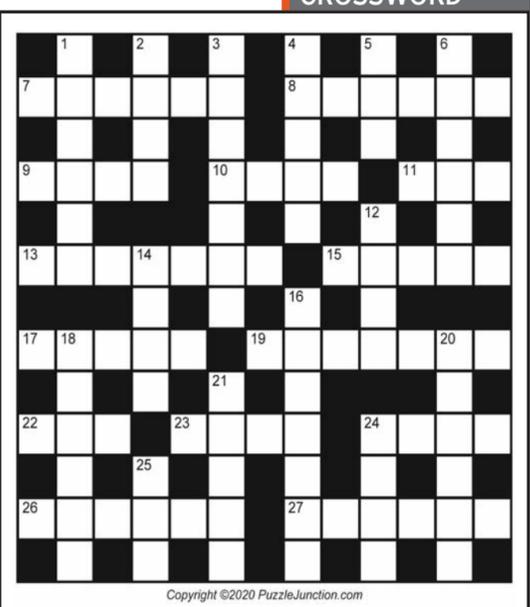
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD

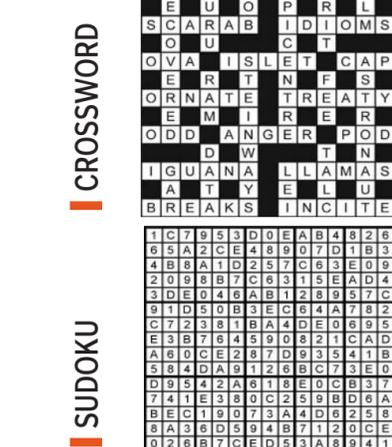


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|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Across | 22 Craze | 4 Frequently |
| 7 Arum | 23 Sole supporter? | 5 Pool tool |
| 8 Penny-pinching | 24 Dermatologist's concern | 6 Taproom |
| 9 Menu option | 26 Marketplace | 12 Ambience |
| 10 Gush forth | 27 Short-sighted | 16 Catch-22 |
| 11 Exchange blows | | 18 Noah's landfall |
| 13 Groups of fish | | 20 Talk of the town |
| 15 Comical | Down | 21 Portion |
| 17 Bead material | 1 Kind of cuisine | 24 Boast |
| 19 Spanish nobleman | 2 Vivacity | 25 Beldam |
| | 3 Horrible | |

SUDOKU



SOLUTIONS

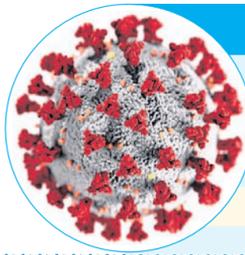


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



DURGA PUJA PREP

Priests offer puja on Kathajodi riverbank in Cuttack before collecting holy soil for the shaping of clay idol for Durga puja by Chandnichowk Puja Committee, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	2,06,20,330	1,35,19,612	7,48,002
India	23,72,200	16,73,860	46,717
Odisha	50,672	36,479	305

Don't scribble, prescribe in caps: HC to doctors

The HC expresses highest regard for the professionalism of doctors for their exemplary and untiring service during Covid-19 pandemic

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, August 12: The Orissa High Court has asked the doctors to write prescriptions in capital letters and observed that illegible scrawls composed by doctors create unnecessary nuisance for the patients, pharmacists, police, prosecutors and judges who are bound to deal with such medical reports.

A bench of Justice SK Panigrahi observed that prescriptions of physi-

MAJOR OBSERVATIONS



THE DIGITAL ERA COULD THROW OPEN SEVERAL OPTIONS TO MAKE PRESCRIPTIONS AND THE DIAGNOSIS MORE PATIENT-FRIENDLY

- Illegible handwriting can delay treatment and lead to unnecessary tests and inappropriate doses which in turn can, at times, result in fatal consequences
- Sometimes, even some physicians fail to read their own handwriting

cians, OPD slips, post-mortem reports, injury reports among others are required to be legible and fully comprehensible. The High Court also asked the state Chief Secretary to take necessary action in this regard.

"This court feels, it is imperative that the entire physician community need to go an extra mile and make conscious efforts to write prescriptions in good handwriting preferably in CAPITAL LETTERS. The digital era could also throw

open several options to make prescriptions and the diagnosis more patient friendly," the court said.

The High Court expressed highest regard for the professionalism of doctors for their exemplary and untiring service during COVID-19 pandemic at different levels.

The bench, however, said that illegible handwriting can delay treatment and lead to unnecessary tests and inappropriate doses which in turn can, at times, result in fatal consequences. "On many occasions, the pharmacists find it difficult to decipher what is written in the prescription. Sometimes, even some physicians fail to read their own handwriting," the court said.

Significantly, the Medical Council of India had also issued a notification in 2016 suggesting that every physician should prescribe drugs with generic names and preferably in capital letters and he/she shall

ensure that there is a rational prescription and use of drugs.

It is to be mentioned here that the High Court was hearing an interim bail plea by a petitioner on the ground that his wife is suffering from severe gynaecological complexities along with cardio-vascular and haematological problems and that she is living alone. The appellant submitted that his presence is necessary for attending her.

The counsel for the petitioner also submitted the medical reports for the perusal of the court.

However, while verifying the medical documents, the court observed that "prescription by the doctor is pathetically poor legibility and is far beyond the comprehension of any common man or even for this Court which is dealing with the matter."

The High Court granted interim bail to the petitioner.

None from premier colleges in Top 100

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 12: No one from the prominent educational institutions here has found a place in the Top 100 list of the successful students in this year's Plus-II science examinations conducted by the Council of Higher Secondary Education, Odisha.

However, a few students from some private educational institutions have found places in the Top 100 list.

The Silver City is home to many prominent institutions including Ravenshaw Junior College, Shailabala Women's College, Stewart Science College, Christ College and Jatiya Kabi Bira Kishore College. Students who secure good marks in matriculation examinations usually enrol themselves in these colleges to study

Plus-II science.

Last year, the cut-off mark for admission to Plus-II science in Ravenshaw College was 90 per cent while it was 83.83 per cent for JKBC College, 80 per cent for Shailabala College, 77.83 per cent and 70 per cent for Christ College.

However, not a single student from these prominent colleges has secured a place in the

Top 100 list for this year's Plus-II science examination. As per the results published by the CHSE Wednesday, only one student from Ravenshaw College has secured more than 90 per cent marks in the Plus-II exam.

However, a student from a Tangi-based private college has secured a place in the toppers' list. Similarly, students from some other private colleges also found place in the Top 100 list.

BEIRUT BLAST AFTERMATH

Govt tells factories to take safety measures

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 12: The state government, Wednesday, asked all factories in the state to provide details of inflammable and explosive materials used, handled and stored in their premises in a bid to prevent any major mishap in the wake of the massive explosion that rocked Lebanese capital Beirut.

The factories were also issued instructions to take all safety measures to prevent any untoward incident and furnish a report on the preparedness on their part to deal with any such emergency, an official said.

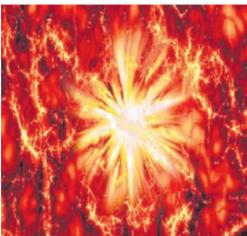
In a letter to the factories, the Directorate of Factories and Boilers asked them to provide the list and quantity of inflammable and explosive materials used, handled and stocked in their premises.

The move is aimed at preventing any major tragedy like the one in a warehouse in Beirut August 4 that claimed several lives and left a large number of people injured, the official said.

While the factories are required to furnish details of flammable and explosive materials with them and the manner in which they are stored, the field-level officials have been asked to undertake site verification to ensure that proper safety protocols are being adhered to, he said.

The state government's move comes close on the heels of the Centre's direction to the ports to verify whether any hazardous substance is lying in warehouses.

More than 2,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate stored in a ware-



Factories were asked to provide the list of inflammable and explosive materials used and stocked on their premises

house in the port at Beirut has been stated as the possible source of the blast that devastated the city.

While steps have been taken to conduct safety audit in different fertiliser plants in the state as they use chemical substances, a close watch is also being maintained on the ports located at Paradip, Dhamra and Gopalpur as part of the precautionary measures being undertaken, the official said.

As part of the precautionary steps, field-level officials are carrying out safety audits in the two major fertilizer units - IFFCO and Paradip Phosphates Ltd (PPL) - located in Jagatsinghpur district, he said, adding that similar survey is also being conducted regularly in other major plants such as the IOCLs Paradip refinery.

Covid norm violation may attract penalty up to ₹1L

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 12: The State Cabinet Wednesday enhanced the penalty for violation of Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 up to ₹1 lakh.

To ensure strict observance of guidelines for containing the spread of the disease and break human-to-human transmission, it is necessary to enhance the penalty amount as provided in the Epidemic Diseases Act, said Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy.

In order to regulate the non-compliance of mask use, spitting at public places, violation of social distancing norms and other rules provided in the Odisha Covid-19 Regulations 2020, the fine has been enhanced upto ₹1 lakh, he said.

Now, under Section 3 of the Epidemic Diseases Act, a violator can get imprisonment for a term which may extend up to two years or with fine which may extend upto ₹1 lakh or both.

Since the Assembly is not in session, the Cabinet decided to bring necessary amendment to the Act through Ordinance route.



The Cabinet has decided to scrap interview or viva voce test for recruitment to Group C posts

Proposal for establishment of State Health Assurance Society (SHAS) has also been approved by the Cabinet. The society will look after management of claims of empanelled private hospitals under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY), Biju Krushak Kalyan Yojana, Odisha State Treatment Fund (OSTF).

Further, the Cabinet has approved a proposal for providing government guarantee of ₹1,500 crore for the loans already availed by GRIDCO during FY 2019-20. Such guarantee will enable the GRIDCO to get about 2 per cent interest concession from the banks.

The Industrial Policy Resolutions

2007 and 2015 were amended to provide various fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to industrial units. The VAT, Entry Tax and Entertainment Tax were replaced with GST.

Definition of downstream industries under IPR 2015 has also been amended suitably so as to remove ambiguity in determining eligibility of various incentives under the policy.

Similarly, the government has decided to scrap interview or viva voce test for recruitment to Group C posts in the state cadre and district cadre. Odisha Revenue Service (Recruitment) Rules 2011 was also amended.

4 HURT AS LOOTERS HURL BOMBS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, August 12: Four members of a family were injured after some miscreants allegedly hurled bombs at a house during a loot bid at Daleiputi village under Khurda Sadar police limits in this district. The incident took place in the wee hours of Wednesday.

Police have detained one person for his alleged involvement in this case. According to the owner of the house, Tukuni Swain, more than five mis-

creants hurled bombs at their residence to execute the loot. "Four of our family members sustained critical injuries during the explosion. The miscreants fled away after neighbours reached the spot," he added.

On hearing the sound of the explosion, the neighbours and Tukuni rushed to the spot and rescued the victims.

On being informed Khurda Sadar police reached the spot with a scientific team and started an investigation into the incident.

Dwindling forests cause man-elephant conflict

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 12: World Elephant Day was observed at Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) here, Wednesday, with a message of elephant conservation. During the event, it was revealed that factors like rising human population and dwindling forest cover are responsible for elephants straying into human settlements.

According to a release issued by the deputy director of NZP, the day was celebrated in the presence of NZP Director Shashi Paul, Centurian University's Zoology HOD Siba Prasad Parida, and the zoo's deputy director Bimal Prasanna Acharya.

The celebration with a message for elephant conservation was held without crowd due Covid-19 pandemic. The elephants were given a special treat of coconut, banana, sugarcane, maize, watermelon and apple. The mahouts were also felicitated on the occasion for their hard work.

World Elephant Day is observed August 12 every year to conserve and protect elephants from numerous threats they face. The first World Elephant Day was celebrated in 2012 to bring attention to the urgent plight of Asian and African elephants, to share knowledge and solutions for better care and management of captive as well as wild elephants, said the statement issued by the NZP deputy director. African elephants are listed as 'Vulnerable' whereas Asian elephants are listed as 'Endangered' on

ENDANGERED SPECIES



The World Elephant Day being observed at the Nandankanan Zoological Park

The first World Elephant Day was celebrated in 2012 to bring attention to the urgent plight of Asian and African elephants

African elephants are listed as 'Vulnerable' whereas Asian elephants are listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of threatened species

INCIDENTS LIKE CROP DAMAGE, RESULTING IN ECONOMIC LOSS, AND CASUALTIES OF ELEPHANTS AND HUMANS ARE THE CONSEQUENCES

the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of threatened species.

Human-elephant conflict has become a bigger concern due to increasing human population and dwindling forest cover, forcing elephants to stray into human settlements or nearby areas. Incidents like crop damage, resulting in economic loss, and casualties of elephants and humans are the consequences. Poaching of elephants for tusks is a serious concern in some parts of Asia. Poaching of tusks impacts sex ratio that become highly female biased; genetic variation is reduced, and fecundity and recruitment may decline.

Project Elephant was launched in 1992 by the Union Ministry of

Concern over vanishing giants

Bhubaneswar: Unsustainable development mechanisms and exploding human population have been creating such an aghast scenario where the wildlife, especially terrestrial giants like elephants, are brought to the brink of their survival, said experts in a webinar on the occasion of the World Elephant Day organised jointly by the Save Elephant Foundation and the Orissa Environmental Society (OES) here, Wednesday. Secretary of OES Jayakrushna Panigrahi said, "Once in lakhs, the Asian elephants have reduced to mere 40,000-50,000 presently - about 27,000 in India; and the African elephants, once in millions, have now declined to nearly 4.15 lakh. Habitat degradation as a consequence of various developmental activities such as construction of highways and railways, mining, industrialization and settlement of human habitations are carrying out degradation of the forests.

Environment and Forests to provide financial and technical support of wildlife management efforts by states for their free ranging population of wild Asian elephants.

"The project aims to ensure long-term survival of viable conservation-

reliant population of elephants in their natural habitats... So, we celebrate World Elephant Day which is an international annual event August 12, dedicated to the preservation and protection of the world elephants," Acharya said.

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MENSWEAR, SAREES, LEHENGAS AND GOWNS

Fight off COVID stigma: CM

Odisha registers highest single-day spike of cases

NAVEEN DIRECTS OFFICIALS TO GIVE MORE EMPHASIS ON HOTSPOT DISTRICTS—KHURDA, CUTTACK, JAJPUR AND SUNDARGARH

Bhubaneswar, August 12: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday directed senior government officials to undertake massive awareness campaigns to remove stigma on COVID-19 from the minds of the people.

Reviewing the COVID-19 situation in the state through video conference, Naveen said, "Home isolation must be promoted as a good practice and the fear for the disease and stigma around it must be removed from the minds of the people and communities so that more and more people would opt for home isolation."

Home isolation must be promoted as a good practice and the fear for the disease and stigma around it must be removed from the minds of the people and communities so that more and more people would opt for home isolation

NAVEEN PATNAIK | CM, ODISHA



launch an appealing and convincing IEC campaigns to prevent stigmatisation of the Covid positive persons in the community.

Naveen urged the public representatives and members of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) to carry the message to the people against such stigmatisation.

In a span of three weeks, the state government has been able to establish five plasma therapy units from scratch.

Several ministers have been assigned responsibilities to motivate people on plasma donation. The concept of plasma donation must be popularised at all levels, he directed.

To take up the fight against COVID-19 to the next level, the government has decided to substantially enhance the testing during the coming weeks.

"We have ramped up testing. We have one of the highest recovery rates and one of the lowest fatality

rates in the country. We are one of the few states in the country which is providing universal care for Covid patients at completely free of cost," he pointed out.

The Collectors were advised to lead the programme to conduct tests at sub-divisional hospitals and community health centres. BDOs and PRIs will play an active role in motivating people to voluntarily come forward for testing and further launch a campaign at local levels to de-stigmatise the Covid-19 positive persons.

The CM directed the officials to give more emphasis to hotspot districts—Khurda, Cuttack, Jajpur and Sundargarh.

From testing to treatment to food, transport, accommodation, everything is provided free of cost, and the objective is because of financial problem, nobody should suffer without being able to get treatment in Odisha, he concluded.

- Highest single-day spike of 1,876 fresh cases
- Odisha's COVID-19 caseload stands at 50,672
- State's death toll rises to 305 as nine more patients succumb to the viral infection
- The highest 297 new cases reported in Khurda, followed by Ganjam (260), Sundargarh (119) and Cuttack (109)

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 12: State's COVID-19 tally Wednesday crossed the 50,000-mark with the highest single-day spike of 1,876 fresh cases, while the death toll rose to 305 as nine more patients succumbed to the disease, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

The total number of coronavirus cases in Odisha now stands at 50,672, said the official.

Of the nine new fatalities, four were reported from Ganjam, two

from Rayagada and one each from Angul, Balasore and Khurda districts. The new cases were found in all 30 districts of the state. Of them, 1,182 were detected from quarantine centres, while 694 people tested positive for the disease during contact-tracing exercise, the official pointed out.

The highest 297 new cases were reported in Khurda, followed by Ganjam (260), Sundargarh (119) and Cuttack (109).

The state tested 32,053 samples for COVID-19 Tuesday, its highest till date.

I-DAY PREP



Policemen rehearse ahead of the Independence Day parade at Idco Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

Commissionerate Police launches redesigned website with add-ons

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 12: The twin city Commissionerate Police Wednesday launched its redesigned website with inclusion of a host of features for smooth delivery of online services to the citizens.

Launching the website—<http://bhubaneswarcuttackpolice.gov.in>—at Police Seva Bhawan here, director general of police (DGP) Abhay highlighted the three key features of the revamped website.

"The redesigned website is mobile-friendly. The last one was designed around a decade ago when the access to website through mobile phone was not common amongst the citizens. Secondly, new features have been introduced to make the website accessible to the differently-abled persons. The third major aspect of the rejuvenated website is that it would serve more as a platform of service delivery to the citizens as it has been integrated with the Odisha Police Citizen Portal," the police top brass said.

Twin city commissioner of po-



- NEW FEATURES**
- The redesigned website is mobile-friendly
 - New features introduced to make the website accessible to the differently-abled persons
 - Envisaged to serve more as a platform of service delivery as it has been integrated with the Odisha Police Citizen Portal
 - A chatbot has been introduced

lice Sudhanshu Sarangi said that adequate security and social media features have been added to the

website. "We'll lay stress on social media interaction with users and use the feedback to further strengthen the system," Sarangi added.

In a bid to facilitate swift interaction between police and the citizens, a chatbot has been introduced to the website. A chatbot is an artificial intelligence-based programme that enables the computer to generate answers to questions asked by people using some keywords.

Sources said the security features of the website including the certificate have been upgraded in accordance with the norms of the Union government.

Promote Centre's agri infra boost scheme, says BJP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 12: The state leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Wednesday said that the state government must popularise the Central government's agri-boost measures.

Odisha BJP president Samir Mohanty said, "Under the scheme, the government has disbursed Rs 1,000 crore for boosting the agriculture infrastructure within 30 days. The plan is to double the income of the farmers."

He added, "With this scheme, the state can see agro entrepreneurship. Arrangements have been made for loans for the people wanting to invest in the agriculture sector. I would like to request the state government to make the scheme, meant for the farming sector, a success. Most of the population in the state is dependent on agriculture."

The BJP leader appreciated the efforts of the state government to have Agriculture Budget and Agriculture Commission. "I want the government to popularise the scheme in the state which can help the farmers of the state."

COVID-19 TAKES THE ZING OUT OF DUSSEHRA PREPARATIONS

A puja committee in the Silver City won't accept any donation from traders and shopkeepers of the locality

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 12: The Covid-19 pandemic has derailed the College Square Durga Puja Committee's plan to have a silver tableau for this year's Dussehra celebrations.

The puja panel had planned for a silver tableau for the worship of clay idol of Goddess Durga immediately after the completion of last year's Dussehra. Its panel had hired several filigree artisans from Sheikh Bazar area to design the silver tableau and procured 3.5 quintals of silver for the purpose.

According to sources, around 75 per cent work for the silver tableau was completed by March this year. "The tableau work was stopped during the countrywide lockdown over the Covid-19 pandemic. There is much uncertainty with regard to the organisation of this year's Dussehra in a grand way. We will wait for the next year to enter into



College Square puja mandap in Cuttack

the coveted list of puja committees having their silver tableaux," said an office-bearer of College Square Puja Committee.

Committee sources said they have planned to begin process for shaping a clay idol of Goddess Durga August 30. "No final decision has been taken on the issue. We may shape a comparatively small idol for this year's Dussehra," he said.

The puja committee, meanwhile, has decided not to accept any donation from traders and shopkeepers of the locality. "The Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns have broken the financial backbone of people. We will not accept donation from the shopkeepers," said the puja panel.

Notably, College Square Puja Committee has been organising Dussehra since 1962. Initially, it was worshipping the clay idols of Hara-Parvati during Dussehra. But, the worship of Devi Durga's clay idol at College Square puja mandap started around 35 years ago.

PARTY POOPER

College Square Durga Puja Committee had hired several filigree artisans from Sheikh Bazar to design the silver tableau

The panel had procured 3.5 quintals of silver for the purpose

AROUND 75 PER CENT WORK ON THE SILVER TABLEAU WAS COMPLETED BY MARCH THIS YEAR

"The Mahanagar Shanti Committee is yet to announce its final decision on organisation of this year's Dussehra. The committee will soon convene a meeting to deliberate on the issue and take a final call," said College Square Puja panel president Uttam Behera.

Committee secretary Jagannath Sahu said they have decided to organise the Durga puja in a simple manner due to the pandemic. "When the whole world is fighting the deadly virus, how can we opt for a lavish puja?" he said.

It is worth mentioning here that as many as 28 puja panels in the city have already designed their silver tableaux over the years.

How come Puri Mahaprasad was found dumped in open?

As per the customs, if Mahaprasad gets spoiled, it should be buried at the Koilibaikuntha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, August 12: The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has landed in a fix as palm leaf boxes containing unsold Mahaprasad were found to have been dumped near the south gate of the Srimandir here Wednesday.

Suar-Mahasuar servitors usually sell the most sought after temple delicacy at Ananda Bazar, on the premises of the 12th century shrine. However, the shrine has remained out of the bounds for devotees since March 20 owing to the coronavirus-induced lockdowns in place to break spread of the viral infection. Subsequently, owing to a sudden slump in the demand, the delicacy which was already in store got spoiled and a few of the servitors reportedly threw it in open, said a source.

Sources added that dogs and bovine could be seen feeding on the Mahaprasad. This has riled many who blamed the temple authorities of having no control over the servitors.

"Why the shrine had prepared a huge quantity of the delicacy at a time when the temple has been shut for devotees? It could have been distributed amongst the needy



Palm leaf boxes containing unsold Mahaprasad dumped near the south gate of the Srimandir here, Wednesday

Disrespect to Mahaprasad is no less than disrespect to the Lord. The temple administration should investigate into the issue. Let the culprit(s) get punishment," Shree Jagannath Bhakta Parishad chairperson Suryanarayan Rath said.

Echoing similar concern, Jagannath Culture researcher Surendra Kumar Mishra said, "As per the customs, if Mahaprasad gets spoiled, it should be buried at

the Koilibaikuntha. This time, too, it could have been buried at the Koilibaikuntha with permission from the temple administration."

Asked, Srimandir administrator (rituals) Jitendra Kumar Sahu they would definitely look into the issue. "In case of spoilage, it could have been buried at Koilibaikuntha. Dumping it in the open is really sad. Action will be taken in this regard."

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MILLET MISSION STRIKING ROOTS IN MALKANGIRI

REVIVING THE CROPS FOR NUTRITIONAL VALUE



Under the special programme for its promotion in tribal areas, the crops have been revived. Now it is getting the much-needed attention across the state because of its high nutritional value

In fact, the nutrient-rich millets were fast fading away from agricultural landscape in tribal pockets, but they are now making a comeback to the scene, thanks to the Millet Mission

Millet meals are also being served as 'khichhdi' and 'upma' under the ICDS and MDM programmes in anganwadi centres and schools in some areas

Various food items like halwa, vada, dosa, pakoda, biscuits and cakes made from millets are being promoted among urbanites through different events

vantage of picking their choice. Some farmers said that separating husks from suan is a difficult thing. For that reason, the farmers have to sell their produce to traders at cheap price.

"The rice of suan has a good demand in the market. There is need for a processing unit to produce rice from suan," some farmers pointed out.

Farmers are also trained on how to prepare bio-compost, organic fertilizers, vermin-compost and natural pesticides. A step was also taken to preserve some varieties of seeds in the current season.

Millet meals are also being served as 'khichhdi' and 'upma' under the ICDS and MDM programmes in anganwadi centres and schools in some areas.

Various food items like halwa, vada, dosa, pakoda, biscuits and cakes made from millets are being promoted among urbanites through different events.

"Steps were taken to provide machines to grind millets, produce rice from suan, and prepare biscuits, loaves, cakes and other food stuff from millet flour. This will strengthen the economic backbone of the farmers," said Kailash Chandra Panda, the executive officer of the Women and Child Welfare Committee.

Tapán Kumar Rath, Suresh Majhi, Labakusha Khemudu and Trinath Khemudu are part of the Millet mission.

Passenger trains on Haridaspur-Paradip rail line in the offing



POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, August 12: Passenger train services will soon start on the much awaited Haridaspur-Paradip railway line project. A decision to this effect was taken at a meeting at the Collectorate here, Tuesday.

The district administration will take steps with immediate effect to run passenger trains as a 'rail roko' protest was held recently during an experimental trial run of a goods train on the route demanding introduction of passenger train services.

In the first phase, the railway authorities will allow goods trains and after the security check and all other necessary arrangements, the authorities will introduce passenger train services.

"People speculate there will be no passenger train services on the railway line. But we will start the passenger train service after a successful trial of goods train service," Paradip Port Trust (PPT) Chairman Rinkesh Roy said.

"There were rumours about running of passenger trains with goods trains on Haridaspur-Paradip rail line. However, all speculations about this were put to rest by the PPT Chairman Rinkesh Roy in the presence of Kendrapara MP Anubhav Mohanty, Mahakalpada MLA Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak and District Collector Samarth Verma," stated Kendrapara MLA Sashibhusan Behera.

Behera stated that railways would come up with an official announcement on the running of passenger trains after arrangements like toilets and a proper railway station are constructed.

"People of Kendrapara district are emotionally attached to the project and the confusion regard-

"We will start the passenger train services on this rail route after a successful trial of goods train service," Chairman of Paradip Port Trust, Rinkesh Roy revealed at the meeting

ing the running of passenger trains on the route was cleared by the company in the meeting," said Mahakalpada MLA.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan July 29 had urged Railway Minister Piyush Goyal for introduction of passenger train services on Haridaspur-Paradip rail line at the earliest.

Notably, Paradip-Haridaspur railway line project was sanctioned in 1996 and its foundation stone was laid by Union railway minister Nitish Kumar in 1999. However, the completion of the project was delayed by almost two decades.

The railway project is being executed through a special purpose vehicle in which the state government, ministry of shipping and Indian Railways have equal share. The project took an extremely long time for commissioning but with continuous monitoring, it has finally come to the final stage. The 82-km line connected Kendrapara district to the railway map of the country for the first time.

The project will cover Haridaspur to Paradip including Jajpur, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur districts. In November last year, the state government had directed officials concerned to complete the project within the extended deadline of March, 2020. However, train services are yet to be flagged off.

Sec-144 in 10 areas of Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, August 12: Sambalpur district administration Wednesday imposed Section-144 of CrPc in and around 10 places in the district in the wake of Covid-19 cases.

The imposition of restrictions will remain in force from August 12 to August 16, ordered Sub-Divisional Magistrate.



The areas which have come under Sec-144 are Hatli Chowk, Badbazar; Hirakud Colony (Adarsh Nagar); Jhaduapada (Sradhakara Supkar Gali); Haragouripada, Panchgochhia; Jagannath Mandir Colony; Housing Board Colony; Sibanagar; Dhanupali; Explosive Colony, Motijharan; Nuapada, Bareipali and Kansaripada.

Imposition of restrictions will remain in force from August 12 to August 16, ordered Sub-Divisional Magistrate.

CURBS EASED FOR NUAKHAI FESTIVAL

SAMBALPUR: The Sambalpur district administration Tuesday relaxed shutdown restrictions for three days ahead of Nuakhai and Independence Day. Accordingly, there would be no weekend shutdown restrictions August 15, 22 and 23. Keeping in mind the mass festivals, this was decided by Sambalpur Collector Shubham Saxena. The relaxations will be applicable for the time being temporarily on dates as specified. Shutdown restrictions will be imposed August 16 and 17 instead, clarified Saxena by issuing an order in this regard Tuesday. Notably, weekend shutdown restrictions have been imposed in order to prevent a probable spread of coronavirus infection in the days ahead as Covid-19 positive cases are on the rise here. The district denizens had earlier demanded relaxation in weekend shutdown restrictions for Nuakhai festival falling August 23. Sambalpur MLA Jayanarayan Mishra had written a letter to the Chief Minister Neveen Patnaik, in this regard.

People are not allowed to go out and enter the restricted zone.

116 Ganjam cops infected

BERHAMPUR: With Covid-19 cases on the rise in Ganjam district, 116 police personnel including officials have been infected with the virus in Berhampur police district, a report said.

Notably, erstwhile sub-inspector of Berhampur Sadar police station Bibhuti Bhushan Sethy was the first Covid-19 warrior who was diagnosed with the virus 26 June this year.

Out of the 116 infected cops, three have succumbed the infection. The deceased cops were Digapahandi police station home

guard Narasingh Das, traffic police station assistant sub-inspector Krushna Chandra Mandal and Badabazar police station constable Jitendra Kumar Pradhan.

Constable Jitendra was paid tribute Tuesday night near MKCG Hospital's morgue, the department nodal officer and traffic Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Sarthak Rai informed.

Berhampur SP Pinak Mishra, ASPs Prabhakar Routray, Prashant Kumar Mishra and SDPO Bishnurasad Pati were among others who paid tributes to him.

COMMUNICATION DISRUPTED



Even as heavy rain continues to lash parts of Malkangiri, connectivity with Kalimela gets disrupted after stretches of NH-326 are inundated

Villages fight over rivulet water

POST NEWS NETWORK

Buguda, August 12: Villagers of Chilikhama and Golabandha under Buguda block in Ganjam district had a confrontation over sharing of water from Jaupania Ghai (a rivulet) Tuesday, a report said. However, tension temporarily subsided after Buguda minor irrigation department officials reached the spot and pacified the villagers.

Notably, villagers of both Chilikhama and Golabandha depend on this rivulet under Buguda minor irrigation department limits. Chilikhama villagers have water supply from the rivulet through a canal whereas Golabandha villagers have been using Jaupania Ghai water through a pipeline which they had laid using their own funds.

On the other hand, Golabandha villagers have been demanding a canal



facility for over three years. They have been running from pillar to post, but in vain. As Chilikhama villagers blocked the pipeline, this triggered altercations between the villagers of Chilikhama and Golabandha.

"There is provision for supply of water to both Chilikhama and

Golabandha villages confirming to a-cut map. Necessary steps will be made to supply water to Golabandha village in a week," executive engineer of the department Kishore Chandra Pal, assistant engineer Saroj Saha and junior engineer Achyutananda Patra said.

Elephant calf found dead in Sambalpur forest division

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, August 12: World Elephant Day brought untoward news for animal lovers, ecologists and local intelligentsia, as a carcass of an elephant calf was found at Keshapali village under Dhama range in Sambalpur forest division Wednesday morning, a report said.

The tusker was around five to seven years of age. On being informed, Sambalpur forest and

animal resources department of officials immediately reached the spot and seized the carcass.

The cause of the calf's death can be ascertained only after postmortem while forest officials have started investigation into the incident, officials said.

"A herd of elephants had been rampaging paddy crops at farmlands near the village for past couple of days. The dead pachyderm was there along with herd", Keshapali villagers expressed.

NOTICE FOR LOSS OF DOCUMENTS
Notice is hereby given on behalf of my Client LICHL, At-Area Office, Bhubaneswar for advancing Housing Loan to Sri Prakash Chandra Nayak on property at Plot No. 1957/2699, Area-Ac. 0.003 decimals of Khata No. 1288/609, Mouza- Sankarpur, Dist.- Puri. But it found that, he has lost the Original Link Deed bearing No. 3771 Dt.27.09.1999 executed between Sibanarayan Mahasuar with Laxmipriya Khuntia while Prakash Chandra Nayak coming from Puri to Brahmajeri in a Auto on Dt.22.06.2020 and not traceable. Therefore, notice is hereby given to General Public that if anybody has got any right, title interest over the property on the missing document, or on the above property they have to claim before the LICHL, at area office Bhubaneswar within 15 days from the date of publication. And after that the documents will lose its legal force and LICHL will not be responsible for any claim. What-so-ever on the property after 15 days.
Address for Communication: N.C. Pattnaik, Advocate, Plot No. - 920/3595, Jail Road, Jharapada, Bhubaneswar - 6, Mob.: 9853311889.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. B-187
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER SUNDARGARH (R&B) DIVISION, SUNDARGARH
E-mail ID: pwd_sng@yahoo.co.in, Tel./Fax: (06622) 272230
"e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. EE-R&B-SNG-23 of 2020-21
Letter No. 4048/IWE Date: 12.08.20

1	The Executive Engineer, Sundargarh (R&B) Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in Double Cover System in ONLINE mode from eligible contractors with valid licences for "Eternal 3D Wall Painting" as detailed in DTGN.
2	Nature of Work : Eternal 3D Wall Painting
3	No. of Work : 01 (One) No.
4	Tender Cost : Rs. 10,000/-
5	Class of Contractor : "B" & "A" Class Contractor
6	Availability of Bid document in the website : From 10.00 A.M. of Date 21.08.2020 to 05.00 P.M. of Date 01.09.2020
7	Date of Opening of Bid : 11.00 A.M. on Dt.02.09.2020
8	The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website (https://tendersodisha.gov.in). Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the website said only.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Sundargarh (R&B) Division
OIPR-34043/11/00/2021

Angul heritage museum yet to see the light of day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, August 12: Fifteen years ago, the state government had proposed museums in all districts. Ten years have passed since the construction work of a museum in Angul district headquarters started. But the proposed museum is yet to see the light of day.

Angul was separated from undivided Dhenkanal district in 1993. At that time, the museum of Talcher royal palace housed a huge collection of rare articles. In the year 1995-96, the then Collector PK Nayak evinced interest to set up a museum where these rare articles treasured in the royal museum can be on display for common people.

After holding a few rounds of discussions, he on behalf of the district administration gave a proposal to the state government for setting up a museum in the district.

The state government at that point did not accept the proposal, citing the shortage of funds as a reason.



But the district administration was directed to get the building constructed from its own resources and start the museum.

Since a museum helps students develop their knowledge base and aid researchers, the government in 2005 decided to set up a museum in all districts. Angul district then received a grant of Rs 20 lakh for set-

ting up a museum. Spending the grant, the district administration got a building constructed near the district information and public relations bhawan in 2009-10.

As of now, Odia language, literature and culture department's office and the district library are functioning from the same building. But the purpose for which the building was

constructed has been forgotten with the administration showing little interest in setting up the museum.

Local people alleged that the district administration seems to be little concerned about excavation of ancient articles and scrolls from various places in the area.

"A few years ago, weapons dating back to pre Stone Age were found at Sanakerajang village under Banarpal block. Similarly, palm plates found from Jukubu and Talamula villages and the stone statue recovered during the construction of Navodaya Vidyalaya's building at Champatimunda were regarded as ancient ones. As of now, most of these articles have gone missing," they observed.

A linguist was engaged to decipher the language engraved on the palm plate recovered from Jukubu village. But the culture department, Angul does not have any information regarding the whereabouts of the same palm plate.

"There is enough possibility that

the missing rare articles might have already been smuggled out of the state and they might have found places in galleries of museums there," locals alleged.

They also added that the museum at Talcher Palace has some rare articles that are not found even in the state museum. Those articles cannot be put on display as we have no museum here.

According to sources in the district culture department, lack of manpower and paucity of funds are two main reasons why no step is being taken to collect information about the ancient articles.

The department is clueless as to where the missing articles are at present.

When contacted, Angul District Collector Manoj Kumar Mohnaty said steps would soon be taken for setting up of the museum after holding discussions with district culture department. The hindrances coming on the way of setting up of the museum will be thoroughly inspected.



Nothing, not even the darkest falsehood can stop the ultimate triumph of Truth.

THE MOTHER



The cruelty of animal hoarding

I have known Merritt Clifton for many years now. He, his wife Beth, and son Wolf are completely devoted to animals, and run an e-magazine called ANIMALS 24-7 which you should all read. One of their board members, Vicky Crosetti who died recently, was a nationally recognised expert in the phenomenon of hoarding. She had written an article on how to deal with this and I will quote liberally from her experience, because we have to deal with this on a regular basis and each case breaks my heart.

People who claim to love animals often mistreat them terribly. Not just the people who keep a single pet and lock him/her up the whole day at the gate, but the people who 'rescue' animals from the street and take them back to their 'shelters'/homes.

I start getting irate messages from neighbours, of people like this, who complain about filth and noise. When I send an investigation team, we find dozens of animals crowded into a small filthy space, all tied up, some in cages, many dead, and the others close to death. This is typical of 'good intentions gone bad' and it signifies 'obsessive-compulsive' behaviour. This is not just true of single people but of entire so-called 'shelters'.

It breaks my heart when I see a shelter, which I have created or contributed to, whose caretakers I have believed in, show a completely different picture when I finally have it inspected. It turns out to be a crowded holding centre for hundreds of ill, diseased and wounded dogs. No medicine, no staff, no cleanliness and probably very little food. In the last 10 years, I have found at least five like this, the last one being a hell-hole run by two sisters in Ghaziabad. I am not including 'gaushalas' which are more or less all terrible - just hundreds of sick and dying cows kept for religious reasons and left to die unattended and unfed.

Last year, the two sisters were evicted from their flat in the middle of the night. The flat was full of garbage, old newspapers, cigarette butts, used sanitary napkins, and cats on the verge of death. The stench was unbearable. I helped them by organising lawyers, but they drove them crazy. It was clear that they both needed hospitalisation. Now I have a situation in Navi Mumbai where an elderly woman runs a 'shelter' which has huge mortality, because it is literally a hellhole. Any attempt to stop her results in threats to commit suicide, slit wrists, begging on Facebook and promises to do better. But she has killed hundreds of animals. Each drama on the Net brings her in more money and public acclaim. I am the bad guy here.

Last month, I was sent a mail by someone who has a house near Kolkata. She wrote that she was an animal 'rescuer' and had run out of money. I called immediately. She had 60 cats and 50 dogs taken from the street - one house. Not one had been sterilised and most of them were pregnant. I asked People for Animals, Kolkata to sterilise the animals immediately, and a very kind person in Kolkata offered money for the operations. One month later when I called, I learned that most of the cats had died from a feline virus because she wouldn't spend money on a vaccine. She became abusive when I told her to get the remaining vaccinated. There is no doubt that she is a typical hoarder.

We need to deal with these cases as one would deal with a normal cruelty case: have the person or perpetrator arrested for deliberate cruelty, and the animals taken away, treated and re-homed if possible. We need to make sure that this person is never going to control the fate of animals again. This is what Crosetti says: "Animal hoarding cases are cruelty cases. Whether one animal or 100 suffer, there is no valid excuse for it; original intentions are irrelevant; and legally extenuating circumstances, such as mental illness or personal crisis, are matters to address in the courtroom, often as obstacles to effecting the best outcome for the animals."

Hoarders profess to love their animals. Their love, however, tends to be thinly veiled obsessive possessiveness. They use the word 'mine' a lot and see the animals as property, probably the only property they have. They do not want to part with their animals under any circumstance, even death.

I have seen this in three of my PFA units which, unfortunately, continue to keep the name but have nothing to do with us: one of the women managers is a widow, the other unmarried, the third is run by an unmarried, failed homoeopath. They do a dreadful job; and the shelters, which I built for them, are in shambles and the animals suffer hugely. But they will not give them up to a better team, will allow no volunteer in, are rude to everyone, cry easily, tell a lot of lies and fight like cornered rats if even one of the animals is sought to be adopted.

They will not sterilise the animals. In one of these shelters, two rescued rabbits had been put into a cage, and when I inspected it, there were over a hundred, of which many had literally been squashed to death. When I put my foot down, they took out ads accusing me of undue interference, and literally absconded with the shelters which are now simply hoarding centres for animals who are not fed or treated. I wish I could have them arrested for causing such mass misery under the guise of animal welfare. These three need to go to jail - but the police don't seem to take cruelty seriously.

In every case, I have attempted soft interventions offering money for volunteers and staff, offering to take the animals or get a doctor to treat them. No deal. "Hoarders are addicts. Like any addicts, they will do and say anything to satisfy the demands of their habit."

"Hoarders who are reclusive eccentrics elicit sympathy. Those who manage an articulate, well-dressed facade seem to make a credible case that they are misunderstood and mistreated."

Hoarders believe that life, endured in any amount of misery, is preferable to death. But they never get rid of the dead either. In so many of these cases, I have seen long dead animals lying all over their premises.

Hoarders are also very secretive. They never make friends. Hoarding sites tend to be both unimaginably filthy and in dangerous disrepair. They slide in and out of their residences and only the smell gives them away. From experience I know what Crosetti says: "Hoarders often are almost frightening in their ability to one moment appear tearful, pleading, and pathetic, yet the next moment rage out of control, screaming obscenities. They can also become real physical threats," which is why we need a team when we deal with one.

A specific protocol is needed: capture nets, drugs, safety gear, and carriers in the ambulance and a police backup. Get in touch with good shelters beforehand so that animals can immediately be put there if you have a housing problem. Videotape the operation. Each rescued animal needs a complete veterinary examination and, if necessary, have a media person present. Public outrage over animals being treated cruelly can move the police to act faster. How judges sentence offenders is often influenced by their perception of public concern.

Everyone should know what a good shelter is: it is a safe haven where animal are treated kindly. "Animals do not starve in a shelter; do not kill each other in fights, do not live in filth, do not suffer from untreated disease and injury, and they do not breed."

Whether the shelter is big or small, whether it is run by an organisation or one person, whether it is on institutional land or in a person's home, these are the rules.

To join the animal welfare movement contact gandhim@nic.in, www.peopleforanimalsindia.org

LEBANESE DESERVE BETTER

FOCUS MIDDLE EAST



John Andrews

LEBANON'S DEMONSTRATORS HAVE LONG DEMANDED AN END TO CONFESSONAL POWER-SHARING AND AN END TO MEDDLING BY A HOST OF FOREIGN POWERS, FROM AMERICA AND ISRAEL TO SYRIA AND IRAN

Haram Lubnan, poor Lebanon. As if hosting more than a million refugees from the Syrian war next door, an economy in free-fall, and Covid-19 weren't enough, now the catastrophic destruction of the port of Beirut has left more than 150 dead, over 6,000 injured, and some 300,000 - 5 per cent of the population - homeless. What can end this tale of woe for a country whose capital once saw itself as the Paris of the Middle East?

Sadly, that image is long gone, destroyed by the 1975-90 civil war, corruption, and regional turmoil. The hapless government called a state of emergency in the wake of the port blast, only to be confronted by demonstrators chanting the slogan that almost a decade ago sparked the Arab Spring: al-sha'b yurid isqat al-nizam - "The people want the overthrow of the regime."

Although the government has now resigned, popular fury is set to grow: on August 18, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in the Hague will issue its verdict on the 2005 assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri. Four members of Hezbollah, the Shia militia and political party backed by Iran and Syria, have been tried in absentia for the bombing of Hariri's motorcade. The verdict had been set for August 7, but was postponed 'out of respect for the countless victims of the devastating explosion' in Beirut three days earlier.

Whatever the Special Tribunal's verdict, political tensions will rise. Hezbollah, classified as a terrorist organisation by the US and the European Union, enjoys widespread Shia support. Its militia is more powerful than the Lebanese army, and it has a powerful bloc in parliament. Just as the presence of Palestinian guerrillas and their 'state within a state' was a factor in the civil war, so Hezbollah's 'state above the state' will provoke still more calls - by Lebanese and outsiders alike - to end a system in which political and economic power is allocated not by merit but by religious sect.

But is that what 'the people,' with their banners calling for



Lebanon has always been a fragile construction. When I lived in Beirut in the 1970s, the city was indeed the cosmopolitan 'Paris of the Middle East,' until the civil war, abetted by outside powers, fragmented it into heavily armed neighbourhoods in which the religion listed on one's ID card could mean life or death

thawra (revolution) really want? Lebanon, carved out of the Middle East a century ago by the Sykes-Picot accord between Britain and France is a mosaic of Christians, Muslims, Druze, and others (some 18 sects are officially recognised). In 1943, when France ended its League of Nations mandate, independent Lebanon's political leaders declared an unwritten National Pact under which the president would be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of parliament a Shia Muslim.

As Riad al-Solh, the first prime minister put it, the aim was to 'Lebanonize Lebanese Muslims and to Arabize Lebanon's Christians.' The Christians were to distance themselves from the West, and the Muslims were to abandon the idea of Lebanon as part of a larger Arab nation.

The original premise was that Christians and Muslims were more or less equal in number. But the last census in Lebanon was conducted in 1932, and it is clear that Christians have become a minority in the decades since. With a lower birth rate and a higher

propensity to emigrate (thousands fled during the civil war), Christians now comprise just a third of Lebanon's citizens.

But why adjust the system to reflect demographic reality if the result would be another bout of sectarian warfare? The Taif agreement that led to the end of 15 years of civil war only tinkered at the edges, giving Muslims parity with Christians in parliament and enhancing the power of the prime minister.

Lebanon's demonstrators have long demanded an end to confessional power-sharing and an end to meddling by a host of foreign powers, from America and Israel to Syria and Iran. Their one success was that domestic and international revulsion at the murder of Hariri forced Syria to withdraw its troops in 2005, 29 years after they began 'safeguarding' Lebanon.

The paradox is that the system the protesters decry has given them a degree of personal liberty and freedom of speech that is all too rare in the Arab world. Moreover, when jobs depend on patronage, ending the system

might bring personal loss. In an experiment by a Lebanese think tank, 70 per cent of interviewees agreed to sign a petition calling for an end to the system, but the figure dropped to 50 per cent when participants were told that their names would be made public.

Lebanon has always been a fragile construction. When I lived in Beirut in the 1970s, the city was indeed the cosmopolitan 'Paris of the Middle East,' until the civil war, abetted by outside powers, fragmented it into heavily armed neighbourhoods in which the religion listed on one's ID card could mean life or death. Given the sophistication and entrepreneurial energy of the Lebanese, it is conceivable that ending the confessional system would turn fragility into strength. But I doubt it.

In other Arab countries, religious minorities have relied on dictators to protect them - and, as in Iraq and Syria, have suffered as soon as national unity is threatened. Would those Maronites who claim a Phoenician rather than Arab identity happily accept majority rule by Muslim Lebanese? Would the Shia accept Lebanon's Sunnis, now bolstered by Sunni refugees from Syria, as overlords?

The real challenge is to enforce accountability. It is shameful that the warlords of the 1970s and 1980s have become not statesmen but mafiosi in charge of protection rackets (power cuts, for example, provide easy money for suppliers of diesel generators). It is shameful that selfish bankers and official reluctance to guarantee urgent economic and financial reform have stalled negotiations with the International Monetary Fund.

The Lebanese deserve better. In the wake of the disaster in Beirut, the open question of how they will achieve it has become more difficult than ever to answer.

The writer is a former editor and foreign correspondent for The Economist and the author of The World in Conflict: Understanding the World's Troublespots.
@PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM WELFARE

Hurried schemes sans effectiveness

Dhurjati Mukherjee

DESPITE LAUNCH OF MANY SCHEMES, BACKWARDNESS IS MANIFEST IN MANY AREAS OF NORTHERN AND EASTERN STATES

The process of governance over the years, via discussions and debates, has undergone a change in India. As is evident, there is a new trend of launching policies and programmes in a hurry without ensuring their effectiveness. The need for infrastructure development has been high. The struggle of Indian villages has fundamentally not changed. The most affected are the densely populated northern as well as eastern states. Backwardness is manifest in many of these districts.

For example take the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY), launched six years ago aimed at developing model villages. Reports indicate the programme has been found to be ineffective in ushering in development in chosen gram panchayats with a central performance audit urging the Union Rural Development Ministry to review the scheme. The Common Review Mission (CRM) 2019 of the Ministry pointed out: "The CRM teams that visited the states neither did, nor found any significant impact of this scheme, in many of the SAGY villages."

It was found that MPs did not give any significant amount of money from the MPLADS. In isolated cases, where MPs have been proac-

tive, some infrastructure development has taken place. Though SAGY scheme has no budgetary allotment, each MP is expected to select a village in his constituency for development. The goal being to develop three model villages by each MP by March 2019 and five more by 2024, so far very few MPs were seen to be adopting villages under SAGY.

The CRM has also expressed concern over the quality of roads constructed under schemes of state governments and maintenance of rural roads under Centre's Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana after the end of five-year warranty period. It is significant that the audit urged the Centre to frame a 'National Rural Roads Policy' to ensure uniform norms of construction and maintenance, irrespective of whether the road belongs to a state scheme or the PMGSY. The administrative machinery is generally indifferent.

Another example which the Central audit found even more intriguing is the work generated under MGNREGS. It remains half of the entitled 100 days per household annually despite a higher demand in states, urging the Centre to order a study in the mismatch. As per the CRM 2019, work given

under MGNREGS is much less than the demand. In 2019, the average work per household was 48 days. It was a bit higher at 50 in 2018 but lower at 45 in 2017. Though from recent reports it is quite discernible that in the current fiscal this will not happen, there is need for giving additional resources of around 15 to 20 per cent as most migrants don't want to venture out of their states and are facing acute financial crisis.

The examples are proof enough that the government's crucial programmes aren't being properly monitored and are not reaching the intended beneficiaries. The other is the lack of direction and judicious planning. The ineffectiveness of the private sector, which plays a less pivotal role, is equally manifest.

Recently, the Adani Green Energy, the renewable energy arm of Adani Group, bagged the world's largest solar energy contract to build an 8000 MW capacity photovoltaic power plant and also set up 2000 MW capacity domestic solar panel manufacturing facility. But questions do arise as the group is reported to be facing massive debt burden.

Thus, it's time to thoroughly examine awarding of vital projects to 'favoured' private sector partners,

who may not be so successful. Earlier, two debt-ridden Indian private enterprises were awarded the task of large-scale manufacturing of semiconductors. This is despite the fact that the semiconductor industry was estimated to grow from \$10.02 billion in 2013 to \$52.58 billion in 2020 at a compound annual growth rate of 26.72 per cent. This inability led to imports rising and the country continuing to lose billions of dollars in this sector.

Further, at this time when the government is reeling under severe economic stress, it has taken loans from the Asian Development Bank worth \$1.5 billion to fight Covid-19 and \$1 billion from the World Bank to help protect livelihoods.

The country is struggling to provide hospital facilities, oxygen equipment and ventilators, among others and a sum of Rs 20,000 crore set apart for controversial the Central Vista project could, used differently, help buy 14 lakh ventilators, needed to save lives. There is a massive shortfall even in the number of basic hospital beds and other essential equipment as the pandemic gathers speed in some states. Besides in the backdrop of migrants' struggling for sheer survival, job creation is vital for the economy.

- INFA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Gurkhas in India Army

Sir, Gurkhas form an integral part of the Indian military. They are a courageous lot. Their ancestry might be traced to Nepal, but many Gurkhas are Indians by birth and upbringing. Youths joining the Indian Army is a voluntary service, and not compulsory as in some countries. Gurkhas enter the Indian Army on their own will. Some of the Chinese actions of late would be seen as attempts to woo Gurkhas, and this with ulterior motives. Gurkhas are also in British army as the Royal Gurkha Regiment. Gurkhas have laid down their lives for protecting the Tricolour. Their battalions have done wonderful work in the United Nations Peace Keeping Force. They are a pride of India.

Sunil Pradhan, Khariar, NUAPADA

Perils of online education

Sir, In these days of the pandemic, education has been affected the most. Educational institutions have remained shut for five months. However, online education has come to the rescue of the education sector and become the new normal. Students are having online classes but this has not helped most, especially students from poor background. Smartphone is a must for this, and this is out of reach of the poor. A farmer from Cuttack had to sell his cow to buy a smartphone for his daughter. In Odisha, there are only over six lakh internet users. Thus, it should not make sense to take this academic year through online. Not only students, but also teachers are not trained enough to take classes via online.

Susant Pal, Utkal University, BHUBANESWAR

Rights of daughters

Sir, The apex court has held that daughters and sons will have equal rights to a father's property under the Hindu Succession Act. The court has modified an earlier legislation done in 2005, wherein it was stated that, to be eligible for a claimant to father's property, the father should have been alive prior to this year. The court has clearly stated that this vulnerable section of the society should have equal rights in their father's property. This is a well-appreciated ruling.

Sanjib Das, CUTTACK



Centre considers resettling Kashmiris who give up arms

REUTERS

New Delhi/ Srinagar, August 12: India is considering offering young Kashmiri militants an escape from a life of violence by temporarily resettling them in more peaceful parts of the country, according to the top military commander in the Kashmir Valley.

Lieutenant General BS Raju revealed the plan for a new scheme to offer a way out of militancy during a telephone interview from his headquarters in Srinagar.

He told Reuters recommendations had been submitted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government and that the plan, while not finalised, was in an advanced stage.

"These are young boys who need to be taken care of for a period of time," Raju said, adding that could involve temporarily settling them outside of the Muslim-majority Kashmir.

Past efforts to persuade militants to put down their guns have had mixed success. But Raju said the military had recommended the scheme take a longer-term approach to rehabilitating ex-militants.

"The bottom-line is that it will have a structure that will help and give confidence to the people who are opting to surrender," Raju said.

More than 50,000 people have died during more than three decades of an insurgency that New Delhi accuses neighbouring Pakistan of fuelling, by using militant groups to wage a proxy-war across the disputed border dividing the Himalayan region.

India has flooded the Valley with security forces - about 200,000 military and paramilitary troops are deployed there. And Raju said militant attacks have dropped by nearly 40 per cent compared to last year.



REHABILITATION POLICY

- The New Delhi-based South Asia Terrorism Portal estimated that more than 400 insurgents have surrendered since 2004, but after 2007 the numbers came down to a trickle, with only two dozen men giving up arms in the last three years
- Past efforts to persuade militants to put down their guns have had mixed success
- Currently most surrenders are conducted in line with a 2004 policy that provides a lump sum payout of Rs 150,000, a small monthly stipend, free vocational training and cash payments for weapons handed over

scape by taking away Jammu & Kashmir's special status, splitting it into two federally-controlled territories. Promising a concerted effort to develop the region economically, Modi said the move was needed to integrate Kashmir more fully with the rest of the country, but critics said it would further alienate Kashmiris.

Pakistan, which maintains a long-standing territorial claim on Kashmir though it denies accusations that it materially helps the militants, has denounced Modi's action. Since the start of the year, Indian security forces have killed around 135 militants, most of them recruited locally.

The military estimates that there are currently around 180 militants operating with various groups active in the Valley, Raju said. Some 70 local Kashmiris are reckoned to have been recruited by these groups since the start of the year; about a dozen less than during the same

period a year ago. "We wish that this should drop further, and finally cease altogether," Raju said. Currently most surrenders are conducted in line with a 2004 policy that provides a lump sum payout of Rs 150,000, a small monthly stipend, free vocational training and cash payments for weapons handed over.

The New Delhi-based South Asia Terrorism Portal estimated that more than 400 insurgents have surrendered since 2004, but after 2007 the numbers came down to a trickle, with only two dozen men giving up arms in the last three years.

Kuldeep Khoda, a former Kashmir police chief, said the scheme had partly failed because the vocational training provided by the government was inadequate.

"If you ask me very frankly, there was hardly any training being given. They were just kept there for a few months," he said. "It was just a formality which was being completed."

Sinha allays fears of elected leaders

SEPARATISTS HAVE STEPPED UP ATTACKS ON LOWER RUNG POLITICIANS, MANY OF WHOM DO NOT HAVE PERSONAL SECURITY GUARDS, IN RECENT WEEKS

AGENCIES

Srinagar, August 12: Newly-appointed Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Wednesday promised better security arrangement for grassroots level elected leaders but asked them to take precautionary measures as well.

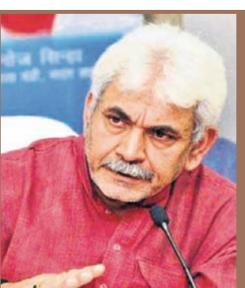
"Many people have spoken about security issues. We have lost several colleagues recently... My sympathies and the administration stand with their families. Whatever possible security arrangements have been made, these have also been reviewed. I want to assure you that we will make our efforts to provide best security arrangements to you," Sinha said while addressing a function to felicitate COVID warriors here at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC).

The lieutenant governor urged sarpanchs, panchs and other elected members to adopt precautionary measures for their own safety.

"I will not enlist those measures

publicly but these will be conveyed to you by authorities in one way or the other," he added. Sinha was responding to concerns raised by grassroots elected leaders about their security, following the killing of several panchayat members and some BJP workers by militants in Kashmir over the past one month.

Four Bharatiya Janata Party workers or office-bearers have been targeted by militants in the last



MANOJ SINHA | LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

one month. BJP's district president for Bandipora Waseem Bari, his father and brother were shot dead by militants last month.

A BJP panch was shot at and injured August 4 while another sarpanch from the party was shot dead two days later in south Kashmir's Kulgam district.

A BJP worker was shot at by militants in Budgam district August 9 and died a day later.

The target killings has led to nearly a dozen BJP leaders resigning from the party in just past three days. Earlier, according to a Reuters report, India shifted scores of village and municipality leaders, mostly from BJP, to secure locations in Kashmir after a spate of militant attacks. Separatists fighting Indian rule in the disputed region have stepped up attacks on lower rung politicians, many of whom do not have personal security guards, in recent weeks. "It is a temporary arrangement," Kashmir valley's police chief Vijay Kumar told Reuters. "We will devise a strategy to provide security to those who are vulnerable."

Sofi Yousuf, a BJP vice-president in Kashmir, said that his colleagues were being targeted to prevent the party from expanding in the Himalayan region, where insurgents have waged war against New Delhi since the late 1980s.

"They want to create a fear psychosis on the ground," Yousuf said.

AROUND 180 ACTIVE

Last August, Prime Minister Modi changed the political land-



ON ALERT

Border Security Force (BSF) jawans display preparedness in the Pargwal area along the India-Pakistan border, ahead of the Independence Day, at Akhnoor in Jammu & Kashmir, Wednesday. Border grid security has been tightened further and all border roads are being kept under a strict watch. PTI PHOTO

Is Karnawati-Humayun legend reviving in Raj?

Political pundits say the month-long crisis witnessed a 'happy ending' due to the role played by Vasundhara Raje who made 'all efforts' to keep the Gehlot government safe and ensured rebel Sachin Pilot's return to Congress

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, August 12: The story of Chittorgarh queen Karnawati and Mughal emperor Humayun appears to be on revival in Rajasthan, where former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje is being compared to Karnawati while her successor Ashok Gehlot is the Mughal emperor; who despite being in opposite camps supported each other both covertly and overtly to allow the other to emerge victorious in vicious circumstances.

Political pundits in the state say that the month-long political crisis witnessed a 'happy ending' due to the role played by Vasundhara Raje who made 'all efforts' to keep the Gehlot government safe and ensured rebel Sachin Pilot's return to the Congress.

Karnawati, the Mewar queen, during the 15th century, sent a rakhi to Humayun, seeking help from his side, when enemies attacked her

kingdom. The Mughal emperor gave his utmost respect to the queen's rakhi and came rushing to help his so-called sister when she was in need. Political sources say that Vasundhara Raje and Gehlot, despite being in opposite camps representing BJP and the Congress, were also extending significant help to each other.

In fact, Sachin Pilot had a few days back claimed that Gehlot was busy ensuring that Vasundhara Raje did not have to vacate her government bungalow.

Hanuman Beniwal, Nagaur MP and convener of BJP ally RLP, has also said that Vasundhara Raje was trying her best to 'save' the Gehlot government. He also claimed that there was an 'internal understanding' between her and the Chief Minister. Vasundhara Raje, apparently, called many BJP MLAs and reportedly sought their support for Gehlot during the trust motion, he



Gehlot and Raje despite being in opposite camps supported each other both covertly and overtly to allow the other to emerge victorious

said. Meanwhile, Vasundhara Raje's stoic silence amid the ongoing political crisis in Rajasthan surprised everyone as she did not show any kind of support in any tweet or attack made by the state BJP unit on the opposition camp and maintained a safe distance from all controversy. The Dholpur royal preferred to stay in her palace for over a month and made no attempt to attend party meetings in Jaipur.

In fact, she went to Delhi and expressed her annoyance against the

state unit's activities during her meeting with BJP national president JP Nadda as well as Union minister Rajnath Singh. Her supporters wrote a letter to Nadda alleging that the state party leadership was ignoring her, saying she was a mass leader in the state.

Surprisingly, during the crisis, many state Congress ministers, including Shanti Dhariwal and Pratap Khachriyawas from among CM Gehlot's camp continued praising Vasundhara Raje while the BJP leadership maintained silence on her.

Congress minister Harish Chaudhary commented that the BJP was planning to take its MLAs to a Gujarat hotel fearing Vasundhara Raje.

Around 35 out of 72 BJP MLAs are believed to be Vasundhara Raje loyalists and showed solidarity with their leader and maintained silence during the recent political crisis in the state.

An unusually hot summer in Kashmir



Young boys bathe in a canal during a hot day, on the outskirts of Srinagar, Wednesday. PTI PHOTO

AGENCIES

Srinagar, August 12: It has been an unusually hot summer in Kashmir this year with temperatures crossing 35-degree Celsius on some days.

While people in Kashmir are trying to cope with the dry spell, a rainfall deficit coupled with rising temperature is bad news for the farmers.

There seems no respite for now as the forecast shows similar weather conditions prevailing over the next few days.

"I have never seen Srinagar so hot. This has really caused a lot of discomfort to the people particularly farmers whose paddy crops have been affected," said a resident.

The MET department said that lack of rainfall has created hot and humid conditions in Kashmir.

"There has been a major deficit in rainfall in the last two months," Sonam Lotus, Director, J&K MET department, told IANS.

"Due to less rainfall, agriculture has suffered, the water resources are not getting replenished. The temperature in Srinagar is more compared to last ten years," he

added. The official said that not much rainfall is expected over the next few days in Kashmir.

According to a recent study, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh may witness a temperature increase of up to 6.9 degrees Celsius by the end of the century due to climate change. The study warns that the glaciers in this Himalayan region could shrink by 85 per cent if the projections come true.

The study, published in the journal Climatic Change July 29, predicted the impact of future climate change in the Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh Himalaya, by the end of the twenty-first century using an ensemble of 11 models under three greenhouse gas emission scenarios.

It also highlights the changes in the distribution of the prevalent climate zones in the region. "The study has been carried over the entire region of Jammu and Kashmir, including Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Aksai Chin and other regions across the Line of Control (LoC)," noted Professor Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Dean of Research at the University of Kashmir.

Raj mounts campaign to stop child trafficking

Authorities are concerned about a rise in child labour as coronavirus restrictions are eased and work restarts

REUTERS

New Delhi, August 12: Rajasthan is mounting a major campaign to stop children being trafficked across its borders after three child victims who were rescued from factories died from malnutrition.

Extra checkpoints are being set up to stop traffickers and authorities have told police to conduct monthly drives against child labour, according to an order from the Rajasthan government.

The state is known for its handicraft industry and authorities are concerned about a rise in child labour as coronavirus restrictions are eased and work restarts.

"We have been continuously rescuing children in the last few weeks and unfortunately three of them died because of malnourishment," said a police officer who asked not to



be named as he is not authorised to speak to the media.

"The factory owner would tell people the child workers were family, but was obviously not feeding them or treating them properly during the lockdown. Two owners have been arrested but there are more, who just see children as cheap labour."

It is illegal to employ anyone under 15 in India, but children are permitted to support family businesses outside of school hours.

This provision is widely exploited by employers and human traffickers, child rights campaigners say, with thousands of children born into poverty being trafficked to work as slaves in factories and farms.

Police and transport officials have been told to verify the movement of every child to prevent the trafficking of child workers from poor states such as Bihar in eastern India.

The drive will last through August, said Ravi Prakash Meharda, the police officer in charge of civil rights and anti-trafficking in the state.

The southern state of Tamil Nadu has taken similar measures after more than 100 adolescents were rescued from a spinning mill following a tip-off to staff at Childline, a toll-

free helpline for children.

Child welfare committee officials said conditions at the mill "were not proper and they were not properly paid".

Tamil Nadu's highest court said last week that child labour was "rampant" in the state, calling the spinning mill case "only the tip of the iceberg". It directed police, labour and child welfare officials to be vigilant and conduct frequent raids.

India has launched multiple campaigns to check child labour in recent years, cracking down on factories where children are hired to make bangles and shoes or sew on sequins.

About 175,000 children in India have been removed or rescued from work and given support since 2016, government data shows.

"The campaigns have not been totally successful and the problem continues because there is demand and there is impunity for violators," said Suresh Kumar, executive director of the Bihar-based child protection charity Centre DIRECT.

"In one of the recent Rajasthan deaths, the child's family in Bihar could not even afford to bring the body back and requested that he be cremated there only. The state didn't step up either to send the body home. It tells you a lot."

of the day quote

We must follow teachings and philosophy of Lord Krishna to live a successful life
MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR
HARYANA CM

The reality is now dawning on Vijayan that he is fast losing ground and that is why he is attacking both the Opposition and the media
RAMESH CHENNITHALA | CONGRESS LEADER

I request Yediyurappa to confiscate and attach the properties of the rioters and compensate the losses to public property in the same way as the Uttar Pradesh government did in Uttar Pradesh
TEJASVI SURYA | BJP MP

SHORT TAKES

Soldier injured

Srinagar: A soldier was injured when militants fired at a Rashtriya Rifles patrol in J&K's Baramulla district Wednesday, police said. The incident was reported from Hygam (Sopore) area of Baramulla. "The area has been cordoned off for searches. The injured soldier has been shifted for treatment," a police officer said.

Terrorist held

Srinagar: A Lashkar-e-Toiba terrorist was arrested in a joint operation by security forces in north Kashmir's Bandipore district Wednesday, officials said. Police said that based on reliable information about a plan regarding a terror attack and ground investigation, a joint team of police, Army and the CRPF arrested an active terrorist of the LeT at Hajin. Accused Aquib Ahmad Rather is a resident of north Kashmir's Handwara. Police said incriminating material, apart from arms and ammunitions, were seized from his possession.

Five killed

Bangalore: At least five people, including three children, were charred and many others sustained burns when a Bangalore bound bus was travelling in caught fire on a national highway in Chitradurga district Wednesday morning. According to police sources, there were 32 people in the vehicle. "Five people have died after a bus caught fire on National Highway 4 at about 3.30 am. The bus was on the way from Vijayapura to Bangalore," a police officer said. The deceased have not been identified, he said.

Tutor arrested

Kanpur: The Kanpur police have arrested a private tutor on Tuesday for allegedly showing porn video clips on his mobile to a 10-year-old student. The parents of the boy lodged a complaint at Barra police station against his tuition teacher Sunil that the latter was showing the child obscene videos on his mobile during tuition classes.

Rajiv Tyagi dies

New Delhi: Congress leader and spokesperson Rajiv Tyagi passed away Wednesday after suffering a heart attack, the party said. A young leader, Tyagi suffered an attack soon after a TV debate and fell unconscious at his residence in Vaishali, sources said. He was immediately rushed to the Yashoda Hospital in Ghaziabad, where doctors tried to revive him, but could not, the sources said.



Coronavirus is spreading and cases are rising in the state. In Lucknow, the situation is alarming. But the state government could not formulate any policy to deal with the pandemic
AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

SHRIPAD NAIK CONTRACTS CORONA

Union Minister of State for Defence and AYUSH Shripad Naik has tested positive for Covid-19, the minister tweeted Wednesday



ED seizes phones of Rhea, kin

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, August 12: The Enforcement Directorate (ED), probing the money laundering case in connection with late Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput, has seized the mobile phones of his girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty, her brother Showik, and her father Indrajit, sources said Wednesday.

According to top ED sources, the agency has also collected other electronic gadgets from them as part of its probe. The sources said that the agency had taken the mobile phones to see if SMSes shared between Rhea and Sushant, or Rhea and her family members, or with associates of Sushant had been deleted from the devices.

The ED will also probe if she talked about financial transactions with the late actor or her family members. The sources also disclosed that during her questioning by the ED, she had shared her experience about a trip to Italy in October 2019 when she allegedly saw Sushant de-

SUSHANT DEATH CASE



THE ED WILL PROBE IF SHE TALKED ABOUT FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS WITH THE LATE ACTOR OR HER FAMILY MEMBERS

ACCORDING TO TOP ED SOURCES, THE AGENCY HAS ALSO COLLECTED OTHER ELECTRONIC GADGETS FROM THEM AS PART OF ITS PROBE

THE ED SOURCES REVEALED THAT RHEA, SHOWIK, AND INDRAJIT HAVE NOT SHARED THE DETAILS OF THEIR PROPERTIES WITH THE AGENCY

pressed in a hotel room. The ED sources revealed that Rhea, Showik, and Indrajit have not shared the details of their properties with the agency. The sources said that the ED had asked bank officials to share such details of property documents of Rhea and her family.

The sources said that Sushant's former Business Manager and Rhea's current Manager Shruti Modi had told the ED that she used to take all personal and professional decisions on behalf of the late actor. The ED took over the

probe on July 31 on the basis of an FIR lodged by Patna police in Bihar on a complaint by Sushant's father KK Singh.

On August 6, the CBI took over the probe into the June 14 death of Sushant and named six persons, including Rhea and her family members. The ED has till date recorded the statement of Rhea, Showik, Indrajit, Sushant's Chartered Accountant Sandeep Sridhar, House Manager Samuel Mirands, flatmate Siddharth Pithani, Rhea's CA Ritesh Shah, and Sushant's sister Mitu Singh.

HOSPITAL FIRE: ONE ARRESTED



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, August 12: The administrator of the private hospital here where eight COVID-19 patients died in a fire last week was arrested Wednesday on the charge of 'causing death by negligence', a police official said.

Bharat Mahant (57), main administrator of Shrey Hospital, was arrested by officials of Navrangpura police station after he underwent medical test and tested negative for coronavirus, he said.

Mahant, who was at the helm of affairs at the hospital since 1998, will be produced in the court on Thursday, said Assistant Commissioner of Police M A Patel. A fire broke out on the fourth floor ICU ward of the hospital, which had been authorized to treat coronavirus patients, in the wee hours of August 6. Eight patients died.

On August 10, a First Information Report under IPC section 304 (A) (causing death by negligent or rash act) was registered against Mahant. The FIR said that while the cause of fire was a short circuit, the patients died due to "lack of ventilation" in the ICU as its four windows had been fixed shut with screws and did not open.

There had been no fire safety audit of the hospital prior to the incident, nor was there any fire alarm system, it said. Though there were fire extinguishers in the ward, they were not used because the staff had not been given training in fire-fighting, the FIR alleged.

OVER 70% CORONA PATIENTS RECOVER

Even though the infections are racing ahead, with the country adding at least 1 lakh new cases every two days, the gap between recoveries and active cases is growing every day



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 12: The Union Health Ministry Wednesday said that the country's recovery rate has soared past 70 per cent due to successful implementation of an effective containment strategy, and aggressive and comprehensive testing coupled with standardised clinical management.

India has logged more than 23 lakh coronavirus cases and over 46,000 deaths. Even though the infections are racing ahead, with the country adding at least 1 lakh new cases every two days, the gap between recoveries and active cases is growing every day.

According to the ministry, "The record highest single-day recoveries at 56,110 was registered in the last 24 hours. The coordinated efforts of the Centre, state and UT governments have resulted in continuously increasing average daily recoveries. The recovery rate has reached another high of 70.38 per cent."

Out of the total 2,329,638 cases, recoveries have surged to 1,639,599. The actual caseload of the country is the active cases, which currently stand at 6,43,948 and are only 27.64

per cent of the total cases. In the first week of July, the daily average recovered cases were at 15,000 which jumped to more than 50,000 in the first week of August.

Besides this, as a result of the focus on effective clinical treatment, use of non-invasive, improved and coordinated services of ambulances and timely treatment have resulted in a drop in the case fatality rate.

The case fatality rate is the proportion of people who die from a specified disease among all individuals diagnosed with the disease over a certain period of time and is used as a measure of disease severity, and it stands at 1.98 per cent.

The Health Ministry said that the country's test, track and treat strategy has achieved another peak with 7,33,449 tests done in the last 24 hours. This has taken the cumulative tests to more than 2.6 crore. The tests per million has also jumped to 18,852.

"To keep up with this strategy, the testing lab network in the country is continuously strengthened which as of today consists of 1,421 labs in the country; 944 labs in the government sector and 477 private labs," the ministry added.

BRAVING ODDS



Balloon sellers walk in the rain, in New Delhi, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

Two HAL light combat choppers deployed at Leh

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 12: Amid border tension with China in Eastern Ladakh, two Light Combat Helicopters developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) have been deployed for operations at high altitude in Leh to support Indian Air Force missions.

R. Madhavan, CMD, HAL, Wednesday said: "It is the lightest attack helicopter in the world, designed and developed by HAL to meet the specific and unique requirements of the Indian Armed Forces, reflecting the crucial role of HAL in Atma Nirbhar Bharat."

The Vice Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Harjit Singh Arora took part in one such operation along with HAL test pilot, Wg Cdr (Retd), Subash P. John recently by taking-off from high altitude location to a forward area for a simulated attack on a high altitude target.

This was followed by a landing at one of the most treacherous helipads in the region. The Light Combat Helicopters successfully

demonstrated its quick deployment prowess to forward locations in extreme temperatures.

Light Combat Helicopters is a potent weapon platform because of its state-of-the-art systems and highly accurate weapons that are capable of hitting any type of target by day or night.

The other features of Light Combat Helicopters include its ability to operate in the complete 'Area of Responsibility' (AOR) and altitudes.

It has capability to carry adequate weapon load at high altitudes under varied conditions. All these characteristics make it most suitable for hot and high altitude operations.

The IAF and the Indian Army together need around 160 Light Combat Helicopters. The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) had approved the proposal for an initial batch of 15 Light Combat Helicopters.

The IAF had issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for 15 Limited Series Production (LSP) helicopters (10 for IAF and 5 for Army) and HAL had submitted its response.

CISF rejects Kanimozhi's charges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 12: The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) will undertake "enhanced efforts" to deploy more personnel at airports who know the local language following an incident where DMK MP Kanimozhi recently alleged that a force personnel questioned her if she was an Indian as the law maker didn't speak Hindi.

A senior officer in the airports guarding central paramilitary force rejected the charges made by the MP quoting the women official's preliminary questioning on the incident.

He said the lady official who interacted with the Member of Parliament on August 9 at the Chennai international airport told senior officials during inquiry that she "did not utter the words as alleged by the concerned passenger but just said that Hindi is also an Indian or official language."

Kanimozhi, the daughter of DMK party patriarch and former Tamil Nadu chief minister K Karunanidhi, had tweeted about the incident.

"Today at the airport a CISF officer asked me if I am an Indian' when I asked her to speak to me in Tamil or English as I did not know



A senior officer in the airports guarding central paramilitary force rejected the charges made by the MP quoting the women official's preliminary questioning on the incident

Hindi. I would like to know from when being Indian is equal to knowing Hindi," the MP from the Thoothukkudi Lok Sabha seat in Tamil Nadu had tweeted with the hashtag #hindiimposition'.

CISF officials said the lady official posted at the Chennai airport has been "counselled about her conduct and the soft skills and basic language courtesies the force personnel need to extend to the passengers, as taught to them during training." The lady official, they said, hails from a south Indian state and had interacted with Kanimozhi for a routine security process to be followed, in Hindi.

"She told the inquiry team that she never questioned the passenger about her being an Indian for not knowing Hindi but just said

that Hindi is an Indian or official language," a senior CISF officer said.

After Kanimozhi flagged the issue through her Tweet, the CISF had responded through its official handle on the same social media platform and said an inquiry has been ordered into the matter and that "it is not the policy of CISF to insist upon any particular language."

The senior officer said the force will undertake "enhanced efforts to ensure that personnel and officers who know the local language are increasingly deployed at airports keeping in mind administrative and operational issues." That has always been the policy and it is being reiterated again, he said.

COVID FIGHT ₹6,000 crore grant released

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 12: In an attempt to assist states effectively address the situation arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Centre Wednesday released the fifth instalment of their share of revenue deficit grant, amounting to over Rs 6,000 crore.

The grant had been released for 14 states - Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and all northeastern states

Of the 14 states, the maximum grant-in-aid in August has gone to Kerala, which has got Rs 1,277 crore followed by Himachal Pradesh with a revenue deficit grant of Rs 953 crore

excluding Arunachal Pradesh. "The government on August 11, 2020 released Rs 6,195.08 crore to 14 states as the fifth equated monthly instalment of the Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant as recommended by the 15th Finance Commission. This would provide them additional resources during the Corona crisis," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's office said in a tweet.

The money has been released ahead of schedule and as a special dispensation to meet immediate funding needs of the state governments looking to restore economic activity and minimise losses to its citizens due to disruptions caused by lockdowns.

Of the 14 states, the maximum grant-in-aid in August has gone to Kerala, which has got Rs 1,277 crore followed by Himachal Pradesh with a revenue deficit grant of Rs 953 crore.

Much of this money is expected to be used by states towards paying the salaries to their staff as sharp fall in tax collections in April and May has already put pressure on their accounts.

Delhi cops pull the strings on Chinese manjha

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 12: As part of tradition, Delhi skies are studied with kites of various shapes and sizes just as Independence Day approaches.

Flying kites has become a symbol of freedom, with both the young and the old taking part in kite-flying competitions either on their rooftops or empty grounds. Young kids rushing to kite shops to buy kites and charkhis is a common sight.

However it is not entirely a happy picture. Some of the strings used for these kite-flying competitions are coated with glass and metal. These are popularly known as the 'Chinese manjha' in the market. The string

can prove fatal if it strikes around the neck. In recent years many people including children have lost their lives because of its use, prompting the government to ban it in 2017 in Delhi. The National Green Tribunal ordered a total ban on manjha made of nylon or any other synthetic material in 2017 as well.

As Independence Day nears, the use of drones and paragliders has already been banned by the Delhi police. Now, the police is keeping a constant vigil on the sale of glass-coated manjha in the market.

"Using kite thread made out of plastic, nylon or similar synthetic materials popularly known as 'Chinese manjha' or any other thread coated with glass or metallic powder causes injury to hu-



mans and birds which at times proves fatal. Such deaths and incidents have been seen in the past few years," said a senior police of-

ficer. Several police stations in Delhi have been asked to escalate vigil in their areas around kite shops and see if rules are being

flouted and the banned manjha is either being secretly sold or purchased.

"Any person found selling the metallic powder or nylon or plastic manjhas would be booked under section 188 of the Indian penal code," said the officer. Surprise raids are also being conducted at various shops in different parts of the city. Most of the manjha supplies in Delhi come from Bareilly, Meerut and even Noida.

While many people including children have fallen victim to the deadly manjha, the police find it difficult to identify the accused as the kite-flyer cannot be traced through CCTV. Also tracing the string to its source is difficult considering several kites fly in the sky.

of the day quote

Social media cannot turn into an instrument for anti-social behaviour

KT RAMA RAO | WORKING PRESIDENT OF TRS

The greatest strength and asset of any nation is its youth. India is truly blessed to have a youth power filled with tremendous ambitions and skills

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

For the first time since the COVID-19 outbreak in Goa, four private hospitals in the coastal state have agreed to treat patients

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

SHORT TAKES

Woman, son commit suicide

Ranchi: A woman committed suicide along with her seven-year-old son by jumping before an oncoming train in Jharkhand's Palamau district Wednesday, police said. Priyanka Devi, 30, of Sagauna village went to the nearby railway track on Wednesday morning along with her three children after an overnight quarrel with her husband Nagendra Ram. She jumped on to the tracks along with her children when a goods train was passing by. The woman and her son Akash died on the spot whereas her five-year-old daughter and three-month-old son were critically injured.

Reward announced

Hapur (Uttar Pradesh): The Hapur police have announced a reward of Rs 50,000 on Dalpat, the accused in the rape of a six-year-old girl. The victim was kidnapped and brutally raped last Thursday and is presently admitted in the Meerut Medical College where her condition remains critical. Three days after three sketches were released based on the statements of the girl's parents and neighbours, the police have now announced the bounty to quicken the pace of the investigation expecting leads to increase.

Two arrested

Baghpat (Uttar Pradesh): Two persons have been arrested for the murder of former BJP district president Sanjay Khokhar who was shot dead Tuesday morning. Sanjay Khokhar had gone for a morning walk in the Chhaprauli area in Baghpat when he was shot dead by unidentified men on Tuesday. State Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had given the district police 24 hours to arrest the accused. Director General of Police (DGP) H. C. Awasthi told reporters, "An FIR has been registered in the case. Those who have been named in this FIR were also involved in a case in 2020 and had attacked the deceased due to personal enmity. Two people have been taken into custody. We are looking for the rest of the accused."

4 killed, 8 hurt

Mathura (Uttar Pradesh): Four persons were killed and eight others injured in an accident involving a private bus and an unidentified vehicle on the Yamuna Expressway in Mathura district on Wednesday morning, police said. Five of the injured were said to be critical. The injured have been admitted to different hospitals in Mathura.



The need of the hour is to give a major push to the Atmanirbhar campaign by all the stakeholders, including the private sector and academia through research

M. VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

MULAYAM STABLE

The health condition of Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav, who was admitted to a hospital last week, is under control, the medical facility said Wednesday



'MISMANAGEMENT' OF PANDEMIC

SC to hear plea seeking panel for inquiry

The petition has alleged that the Centre failed to undertake timely and effective measures for containing transmission of the virus and an independent inquiry by a commission, appointed under the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1952, was essential to inquire into the "lapses"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 12: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Friday a plea which has sought a direction to the Centre to appoint a commission, headed by a retired apex court judge, for inquiry into the alleged mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. The petition has alleged that the Centre failed to undertake timely and effective measures for containing transmission of the virus and an independent inquiry by a commission, appointed under the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1952, was essential to inquire into the "lapses".

As per the cause list uploaded on the apex court website, the plea, filed by six petitioners including retired bureaucrats, is scheduled to come up for hearing on August 14 before a bench headed by Justice L. Nageswara Rao.

The petition, filed through advocate Prashant Bhushan, has claimed that the Centre's response to the pandemic and its "deleterious



impact" on the lives and livelihoods of the citizens is a "definite matter of public importance and warrants appointment of a commission" under section 3 of the Act.

The plea has claimed that the nationwide lockdown, which had commenced from March 25, and the manner in which it was implemented has had a "devastating impact" on jobs, livelihood and the overall economy.

It alleged that the nationwide

lockdown, which was announced on March 24, was "arbitrary, irrational and without due consultation with experts or state governments." In spite of being the harshest and most restrictive lockdown in the world, it has failed to arrest the spread of the disease," the plea claimed and also referred to the "exodus" of migrant workers and daily wagers during the lockdown from cities to their respective home towns.

It alleged that the authority has also failed in drawing up national plan and issuing guidelines for providing minimum standards of relief to vulnerable sections of the society under the Disaster Management Act 2005. The plea alleged that there was delay in ensuring adequate supplies of personal protective equipment for safety of healthcare workers during the pandemic.

It claimed that the Centre has failed to undertake effective measures for containing the transmission of virus even after being notified about it by the World Health Organization (WHO) in early January this year.

The plea has alleged that these lapses "while dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic have led to a severe infringement of the fundamental rights of people". It claimed that prior to March 4 and during the months of January and February, the authorities have failed to conduct screening and surveillance of adequate number of international passengers.

Delhi HC allows rape victim to abort

The High Court clarified however that this will be subject to reports of further blood tests, required to assess if there is any additional risk to the girl



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 12: The Delhi High Court has allowed termination of a 22-week pregnancy of a minor rape victim following the report of a medical board, set up by Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital, that its continuation would result in psychological complications.

The high court clarified however that this will be subject to reports of further blood tests, required to assess if there is any additional risk to the girl. The pregnancy termination procedure will be carried out only if the parameters of the girl do not indicate any added risk, it said.

"This court considers it apposite to allow the present petition and direct that the petitioner (girl) be admitted to Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and the necessary procedures be carried out for termination of the pregnancy," Justice Vibhu Bakhru said. Section 3 of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act does not permit the procedure if the gestation period is more than 20 weeks.

The court passed the order on a plea by the 16-year-old girl, who was a victim of rape and in advanced stage of pregnancy which could not be terminated by the concerned doctors.

The girl approached the high court seeking direction to the Delhi government and a hospital here to terminate her pregnancy. Justice Bakhru interacted with

the girl and her father through video conferencing and noted that the minor was under considerable distress and her father too was insistent that the pregnancy be terminated. The court said the risks of terminating the pregnancy have been explained to the girl and her father.

While hearing the matter, the court had directed the Medical Superintendent of RML Hospital to constitute a medical board to examine the girl and report whether termination of pregnancy involves risk to her and to also evaluate the risk of continuing with the foetus.

The doctors, who joined the virtual hearing, told the court that the girl was in considerable distress and the clinical psychologist had also reported that continuation of pregnancy would result in psychological complications.

The report of the medical board indicated that the pregnancy was of 22 gestational weeks. "In view of the report and psychological assessment of the petitioner (girl), it does appear that she is at considerable risk of psychological complications if the pregnancy is continued. The concerned doctors have explained that there may be some risks in terminating the pregnancy but the same are not higher than what is acceptable and expected at this stage," the court said.

It also recorded its appreciation for the concerned doctors of RML Hospital for promptly constituting the medical board and examining the minor.

Mumbai fishermen net a whale shark

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, August 12: Late on Tuesday night, a fishing trawler in the Arabian Sea accidentally netted a big catch around 40-50 kms off Colaba.

A giant dotted whale shark got entangled in the fishing nets and desperately struggled to set itself free, but failed, said one of the fishermen on board the vessel. Owing to darkness and inclement weather conditions, the fishing trawler decided to sail back to Mumbai, dragging the creature in the nets behind it, and reached here early on Wednesday.

They left it along with the net near the shores of the 145-year-old Sassoon Docks in Colaba and sailed back into the sea, informed Damodar Tandel, President of Akhil Bharatiya Machhimar Kriti Samiti and prominent fisherfolk leader. Later, a crane was deployed to lift the massive dotted whale shark that was around 8-metres (over 26 feet) long, and weighed more than two tonnes (two thousand kilograms). The crane laid it on the docks as curious fisherfolk gathered around to click selfies.

"We were on a routine patrol in the area and saw this enormous fish, which the fishermen rever as 'Dev-Masa' lying here," Colaba Police Station's constable Swapnil Kumbhar said. Though Kumbhar was not clear of the next course of action, prominent fisherfolk leader Damodar Tandel said the whale shark was taken away by a trader who will extract oil from it.

This is the first instance in recent times that such a massive fish got entangled in a fishing net, though Mumbai and Maharashtra coastline have witnessed incidents of similar sea-giants getting washed ashore in the past, he said.



A man carries a bundle of kites ahead of the Independence Day, at Lal Kuan in old Delhi, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

Birbhum shopkeepers spread Covid awareness

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, August 12: In a unique gesture to sensitise the public to Covid-19 crisis, many shopkeepers in West Bengal's Birbhum district have put up mannequins sporting face masks and PPE kits in the show windows.

With Durga Puja round the corner, shopkeepers selling readymade garments have geared up to woo buyers to shop during the festival amid coronavirus-induced uncertainties. The businessmen at various shopping malls in the West Bengal districts are leaving no stones unturned to attract customers.

"We have dressed the mannequins in PPE kits and even put masks, instead of new clothes, just to sensitise all customers that they should not take this pandemic casually. Yes, we all must celebrate Durga Puja, but definitely with proper protection," said Dipankar Das, a manager at a garments mall in Birbhum.

Many buyers were surprised to see mannequins dressed in PPE kit and masks. "It is a unique sight. We have never seen mannequins wearing such odd-looking surgical attire. But yes, the message that the shopowners wanted to convey to their clients is loud and clear. The awareness drive is unusual and effective," said Moumita Mukherjee, a customer.



Corona patient dies outside hosp

The hospital authorities have refuted the charge saying that the woman's family was given an estimate for treatment but not pressurised for making payments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, August 12: A 60-year-old woman suffering from COVID-19 died in an ambulance outside a city private hospital as she was allegedly made to wait by its authorities, who reportedly demanded that Rs 3 lakh be first paid for admission, her family members said Wednesday.

The hospital authorities have refuted the charge and said that the woman's family was given an estimate for treatment but not pressurised for making payments. The woman hails from Tamluk in East Midnapore district and the alleged incident took place on Monday night after she was brought to the hospital from a nursing home in the city after she tested positive and reported severe health problems,

a Kolkata Police official said.

Her son Nazeem Khan has lodged a police complaint against the hospital at Anandapur police station, the official said. The alleged incident took place a day after the West Bengal Clinical Establishment Commission allowed hospitals to charge patient parties for admission an advance of no more than Rs 50,000 or 20 per cent of the estimated treatment cost, whichever was lower but not refuse admission or treatment if the payment was not made immediately.

"The hospital authorities asked us to deposit Rs 3 lakh. We managed to pay Rs 80,000 and requested them to start my mother's treatment assuring them to get the remaining amount in the meantime. But the hospital told us that treatment will not be started un-

less the full payment was made," Khan said.

Later, Rs 2 lakh more was transferred to a bank account of the hospital by the woman's elder son Latif Khan from Abu Dhabi, he said. "But by then my mother had passed away in the ambulance... We repeatedly requested the hospital to send a doctor to her, but its authorities insisted that unless they see a proof that the money was transferred to them, nobody from it would attend to my mother," he said.

"If they (hospital authorities) had attended to my mother on time, she could have been saved," a sobbing Khan said. Refuting the charge, a senior official of the hospital said, the patient was brought in a very serious condition.

LOW-KEY AFFAIR

Covid casts shadow on 'Dahi Handi' celebrations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 12: The grim shadow of COVID-19 crisis was visible on Dahi Handi festivities in Mumbai and other parts of Maharashtra Wednesday as mandals opted for low-key celebration unlike past years which provided for public spectacles by ebullient Govinda squads.

Adhering to the social distancing guidelines, Dahi Handi mandals were not forming human pyramids this year to mark the birth of Lord Krishna. Instead, they were carrying out health and social welfare drives, like blood donation camps and removal of plastic.

In previous years, Dahi Handi used to be celebrated with great fervour in parts of Maharashtra, par-

ticularly in Mumbai and neighbouring Thane, where religious institutions, political leaders, and Govinda mandals, comprising youngsters dressed in colourful attire, took part in the festivities.

Various social groups also used to organise programmes and cash rewards were given to the groups which succeeded in making the multi-tier human pyramids and breaking the dahi handis, earthen pitchers containing curd or buttermilk, tied at a height with rope.

But this year, dahi handis were being broken in a symbolic manner with those involved maintaining social distance and wearing masks. Ram Kadam, BJP MLA from Ghatkopar in Mumbai, said in normal times, his mandals Dahi Handi celebration saw five to six

lakh footfalls.

"Ours was the biggest Dahi Handi celebration in India in normal times. But this year, we celebrated in a very simple manner, observing social distancing given the COVID-19 crisis. No human pyramid was formed. A child climbed atop a table and broke Dahi Handi to mark the festival in a symbolic manner," Kadam said.

"This year, we gave a message of boycotting Chinese products and working for an atmanirbhar (self-reliant) India," he said. Bala Padalkar, chief of Dahi Handi Utsav Samarany Samiti, an umbrella body of over 950 mandals (groups) in the state, said that the enthusiasm was not the same this year and members of various mandals agreed not to travel in the city to break dahi handis.



A boy wearing a face mask breaks an earthen pot (Dahi Handi) on the occasion of Janmashtami festival, in Mumbai

PTI PHOTO

Instead, they performed puja in their own areas without forming human pyramids, he said.

Considering the crisis situation and the brave fight put up by COVID-19 warriors, various man-

dals undertook health and social welfare initiatives, including blood donation camps, to mark the festival, he added.

Sandeep Dhawale, coach of the city-based Jai Jawan Govinda Pathak (squad), known for forming high human pyramids, said maintaining social distance was the need of the hour and celebrating the festival in a simple manner was in the interest of everyone's health.

His mandal has undertaken the plastic-free Mumbai and clean environment initiative on Wednesday to mark the festival while following the social distancing rules. We are collecting plastic and recycling it. The fund raised through the activity will be used for the education of the needy, Dhawale said.

international

of the day quote

Supporting our neighbours is essential during this time of crisis to keep the entire region stable



VALDIS DOMBROVSKIS | EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

The White House and top Democrats in Congress may not be able to reach a deal on coronavirus aid, in the fifth day without talks on the stalemate blocking relief to tens of millions of Americans



STEVEN MNUCHIN | US TREASURY SECRETARY

The epidemic in the United States was out of control and the blame lay with Health Secretary Alex Azar



ZHAO LIJIAN | CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN

SHORT TAKES

3 killed after train derailed in Scotland

London: British Transport Police say three people died and six were taken to hospital after a passenger train derailed in northeast Scotland amid stormy weather. The train's driver was among the dead in Wednesday's incident, which occurred after heavy rain. Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon described the derailment as a "major" incident and said she would be convening an emergency response meeting. Police, several ambulances, an air ambulance and fire engines were at the scene.

Spat over migrants

London: Relations between the British government and ice cream maker Ben & Jerry's chilled Wednesday in a spat over the treatment of migrants. The feud began Tuesday when the Vermont-based dessert brand directed a tweet at Britain's interior minister, Home Secretary Priti Patel, who has vowed to stop asylum seekers crossing the English Channel from France to England in small boats. Hundreds of people have made the dangerous crossing in the past weeks of calm summer weather.

Unrest in Mali

Bamako: Police in Mali fired tear gas and water cannon at daybreak Wednesday to disperse hundreds of protesters who had occupied and spent the night in a square in the capital Bamako, demanding the resignation of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. Thousands of people had gathered at Independence Square in Bamako Tuesday after the opposition resumed protests as talks mediated by West African regional leaders to resolve the crisis stalled.

Kamala Harris may prove an elusive target for Trump

AGENCIES

Washington, August 12: Joe Biden's selection of Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate provides a brand-new target for President Donald Trump's re-election campaign that has struggled to find an effective line of attack against his Democratic rival. But going after Harris comes with its own risks and challenges.

Within minutes of Biden's announcement Tuesday, Trump had called Harris "nasty," "horrible" and "disrespectful," while his campaign painted her as an extremist who would yank the moderate Biden to the left.

Trump again said that some men may feel "insulted" by Biden's commitment to choose a woman as his vice presidential candidate. But there is little evidence at the moment that suggests that the public views Harris, a former California prosecutor and attorney general with strong ties to the Democratic establishment, as a radical.

In fact, she's more liked by Republicans than Biden, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted August 10-11, just before she was announced as Biden's pick. The poll showed 21% of registered Republican voters have a favorable impression of Harris, compared with 13% who had a similarly favorable view of Biden.

Already, leading Democratic women warned against a replay of Trump's match-up in 2016 with then Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton, who was subject to gender-based critiques as



In this Sept. 12, 2019, file photo, Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden, left, and then-candidate Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif. shake hands after a Democratic presidential primary debate hosted by ABC at Texas Southern University in Houston

the first female presidential candidate. Trump has also called Clinton "nasty" and accused her of playing the "woman's card." "If he wants to use misogynistic tropes against Kamala Harris, I think that is deeply challenging for him," said Neera Tanden, a top aide to Clinton during her presidential bid. "He has no room for error with suburban women." Privately, however, Trump's aides acknowledged Harris would be a formidable adversary. One senior White House official said that the Harris pick means Vice President Mike Pence would have a tough debate in October.

LOOKING FOR AN EDGE

Trump's standing with the pub-



The pandemic has revealed how vulnerable and interconnected we all are

POPE FRANCIS

SHOCKING DISCLOSURE

New research adds to the growing body of evidence that pasteurising human milk inactivates the virus that causes Covid-19



AMAZON AGAIN UNDER 'THREAT'



A fire brigade member holds a dead anteater while attempting to control hot points in a tract of the Amazon jungle near Apui, Amazona's State, Brazil

SL's new Cabinet sworn in

The ministers took oath in front of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in a grand ceremony held in the central hills of Kandy

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Colombo, August 12: Twenty-six new ministers were sworn into Sri Lanka's new Cabinet Wednesday after the country recently held a Parliamentary election which saw the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) led by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa winning a landslide victory, securing a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

Along with the Cabinet ministers, 39 state ministers were also sworn in. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa retained the Defence Ministry. Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa was appointed as the Minister of Finance, Urban Development, Housing, Buddhist Affairs, Religious and Cultural Affairs.

Dinesh Gunawardena was sworn in as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Prasanna Ranatunga was sworn in as Minister of Tourism and Keheliya Rambukwella was sworn

in as Minister of Mass Media.

Some of the notable state ministers sworn in were Chamal Rajapaksa who took oaths as State Minister of Internal Security, Home Affairs and Disaster Management, and Shehan Semsinghe who was sworn in as State Minister of Samurdhi (prosperity), Micro Finance, Self-Employment and Business Development.

Sri Lanka held its Parliamentary election on August 5 under strict health guidelines amid Covid-19 pandemic which has infected over 2,800 people in the island country so far. The election was held to elect a new 225-member Parliament.

SLPP won a landslide victory by securing 145 seats, while the United People's Power, led by former presidential candidate Sajith Premadasa polled in as runner-up by securing 54 seats. Sri Lanka's new Parliament will convene on August 20.

Medics to get vaccine in two weeks: Russia



A new vaccine is on display at the Nikolai Gamaleya National Center of Epidemiology and Microbiology in Moscow, Russia

REUTERS

Moscow, August 12: Russia said Wednesday the first batch of its Covid-19 vaccine would be ready for some medics within two weeks and rejected as "groundless" safety concerns aired by some experts over Moscow's rapid approval of the drug.

President Vladimir Putin said Tuesday that Russia had become the first country to grant regulatory approval to a COVID-19 vaccine, after less than two months of human testing. The vaccine has not yet completed its final trials. Only about 10% of clinical trials are successful and some scientists fear Moscow may be putting national prestige before safety.

"It seems our foreign colleagues are sensing the specific competitive advantages of the Russian drug and are trying to express opinions that in our opinion are completely ground-

less," Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said Wednesday.

He said the vaccine developed by Moscow's Gamaleya Institute would be administered to people, including doctors, on a voluntary basis, and would be ready soon.

"The first packages of the medical vaccine against the coronavirus infection will be received within the next two weeks, primarily for doctors," he said.

Alexander Gintsburg, director of the Gamaleya Institute, said clinical trials would be published once they have been assessed by Russia's own experts.

He said Russia plans to be able to produce 5 million doses a month by December-January.

Kazakhstan plans to send government officials to Moscow later this month to discuss possible deliveries of the vaccine, its presidential office said.

OUTCRY IN SOMALIA OVER 'CHILD MARRIAGE' BILL

AGENCIES

Johannesburg, August 12: An outcry is rising in Somalia as parliament considers a bill that would allow child marriage once a girl's sexual organs mature and would allow forced marriage as long as the family gives their consent.

The new Sexual Intercourse Related Crimes Bill "would represent a major setback in the fight against sexual violence in Somalia and across the globe" and should be withdrawn immediately, the United Nations special representative on sexual violence in conflict, Pramila Patten, said in a statement Tuesday. The bill also



weakens protections for victims of sexual violence, she said. Already more than 45 per cent of young women in Somalia were married or "in union" before age 18, according to a United Nations analysis in 2014-15.

Somalia in 2013 agreed with the UN to improve its sexual violence laws, and after five years of

work a sexual offenses bill was approved by the Council of Ministers and sent to parliament. But last year the speaker of the House of the People sent the bill back "in a process that may have deviated from established law" asking for "substantive amendments," the UN special representative said.

The new bill "risks legitimising child marriage, among other alarming practices, and must be prevented from passing into law," UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said this week, warning that its passage would "send a worrying signal to other states in the region."

Over 1K detained in latest Belarus protests

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Minsk, August 12: Police detained over 1,000 people in Belarus during the latest protests against the results of the country's presidential election, officials said Wednesday.

Rallies took place in 25 Belarusian cities Tuesday and overnight. Interior Ministry spokeswoman Olga Chemodanova told *The Associated Press*. Thousands have demonstrated in the capital of Minsk and several other cities for three nights to contest the election results.



The Central Election Commission reported that President Alexander Lukashenko won a sixth term in Sunday's election with 80% of the vote. Top opposition candidate Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who had attracted

massive crowds at campaign events where voters expressed frustration with the authoritarian Lukashenko's 26-year rule, got just 10%.

Police deployed to break up the post-election protests used batons, stun grenades, tear gas and rubber bullets. One protester died Monday amid the crackdown in Minsk, and scores were injured.

Belarusian human rights group Viasna said many people were afraid to seek medical help, fearing prosecution for participating in the protests.

Kids in Beirut suffer from trauma after deadly blast

AGENCIES

Beirut, August 12: The massive explosion of nearly 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate in Beirut's port killed more than 170 people, injured about 6,000 others and caused widespread damage.

As many as 100,000 children were displaced from their homes according to Save the Children, with many of them traumatised.

The UN children's agency UNICEF said three children were among the dead and at least 31 were hurt seriously enough to need hospital treatment. Joy Abi Habibi, a mental health expert with *Save the Children*, says young people who are traumatised can react differ-



DESPERATE TO REBUILD

Sitting amid the debris, Lebanese Wednesday expressed their frustration at the state for abandoning them in their desperate efforts to rebuild after last week's catastrophic Beirut port explosion compounded a dire financial crisis. Officials have said the blast could have caused losses of \$15 billion, a bill Lebanon cannot pay, given the depths of the financial crisis that has seen people frozen out of their savings accounts since October amid dollar scarcity. Volunteers and construction workers with bulldozers were still clearing wreckage from neighbourhoods more than a week after the blast. Rows of destroyed cars were still parked in front of damaged stores and demolished buildings.

ently "Headaches, nausea, bed-wetting, digestive problems are physical symptoms parents tend to overlook," she said. Psychologist Maha Ghazale, who is no relation, has been treating many children after the explosion. She said many are experiencing uncertainty "and they keep asking if this will happen again."

"Many children are refusing to go back home, to get close to a glass door or window," Ghazale added. Ricardo Molaschi was visiting his grandparents' apartment in Beirut with his Italian father and Lebanese mother. When the blast hit, the 6-year-old was cut by flying glass, requiring stitches. His grandfather, Kazem Shamseddine, was killed.

The youngster has been having recurrent bursts of anger toward whoever caused the explosion.

The trauma can repeat itself if children are exposed to the news and adult conversations about it, says Ghazali, who advises isolating them from that and seeking help. "Children are resilient, but unprocessed trauma can lead to increased anxiety, behavioral problems, it becomes part of their life and can lead later to negative coping mechanisms," she says.

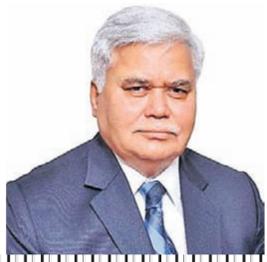
Restoring a sense of safety, normalcy and routine will help, Ghazali says. Hiba Achi says she has decided to leave Lebanon with her son and join her husband who works in Dubai.

Media mogul Sumner Redstone dies at 97

AGENCIES

New York, August 12: Sumner Redstone, who built a media empire from his family's drive-in movie chain, has died. He was 97.

ViacomCBS Inc., which he led for decades, remembered Redstone for his "unparalleled passion to win, his endless intellectual curiosity and his complete dedication to the company." Redstone built the company through aggressive acquisitions, but many headlines with his name focused on severed ties with wives, actors and executives. In multiple interviews, he said he'd never die. His tight-fisted grip on the National Amusements theater chain, which controlled CBS Corp. and Viacom Inc.



Pure-play telcos evolving into large digital networks offering full stack of services is a positive development that augurs well for the new normal of WFH, distant education, telemedicine and other virtual applications

RS SHARMA | CHAIRMAN, TRAI

M&M FINANCE RAISES ₹3,089 CR

Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services, a non-banking financial arm of Mahindra Group, Wednesday said it has raised ₹3,088.82 crore through a rights issue which was oversubscribed. The issue, which opened for subscription July 28, was subscribed approximately 1.3 times



of the day quote

Overall, Q1 FY2021 will be a washout for India Inc, with significant pressure on revenues and earnings considering that the major part of the quarter was under lockdown or gradual ramp-up phase

SHAMSHER DEWAN | VICE-PRESIDENT, ICRA

Now, this is the time...we should identify which are the fields where we can make import substitution, how we can develop the MSMEs and the industry by which we can take advantage of the economic situation in the world

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

With digital literacy through physical centres taking a huge hit due to the current crisis, (self-learning portal) Digisakshar hopes to provide a safe online learning environment for digital novices to learn new skills

ASHOK PAMIDI | CEO, NASSCOM FOUNDATION

SHORT TAKES

UltraTech plans ₹1,500 cr capex

Mumbai: Largest cement manufacturer Ultratech Cement has lined up investment of ₹1,500 crore in FY21 in multiple initiatives, its chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla said Wednesday. The company is also targeting to increase its annual capacity to 118 million tonnes from 114.8 million tonnes currently, he informed the company's shareholders during its virtual AGM. Birla, who heads the diversified conglomerate Aditya Birla Group, said that UltraTech has the capacity, leadership across markets and a strong balance sheet to emerge as one.

JMC Projects shares jump 8%

New Delhi: Shares of engineering firm JMC Projects (India) Wednesday closed with over 8% gains after the company secured new orders worth ₹1,363 cr. The stock closed 6.30% higher at ₹51.50 on the BSE. During the day, it jumped 13.51% to ₹55. On the NSE, it zoomed 8.26% to close at ₹52.40. In a filing to the BSE Tuesday, the company said it has won ₹1,169 cr building projects order in southern India.

Don't cut import duty on tea: CCPA

Kolkata: The Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations (CCPA), the apex body of tea associations in India, has urged Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal not to reduce import duty on tea as any move in that direction will disturb the equilibrium of the industry. CCPA chairman Vivek Goenka in a letter to Goyal said that any such move will lead to erosion of domestic prices and subsequently affect the economic viability of the tea gardens and livelihood of lakhs of people.

Gehlaut calls it quits

Mumbai: Sameer Gehlaut has stepped down as the Executive Chairman of Indiabulls Housing Finance and taken up the role of Non-Executive, Non-Independent Director of the company. In a regulatory filing Wednesday, the company said that Gehlaut informed the board that he has taken up the position of CEO of another listed company promoted by him, Indiabulls Ventures. Going forward, he said, he would like to focus full time on the CEO role for growing its consumer business in finance and healthcare on App Dhani.

COVID IMPACT

'World oil demand to fall steeply in 2020'

REUTERS

London, August 12: OPEC said Wednesday that world oil demand will fall more steeply in 2020 than previously forecast due to the pandemic and there were uncertainties about next year's recovery.

World oil demand will fall by 9.06 million barrels per day (bpd) this year, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries said in a monthly report, more than the 8.95 million bpd decline expected a month ago.

Oil prices have collapsed as the



Oil prices have collapsed as the coronavirus has curtailed travel and economic activities

coronavirus has curtailed travel and economic activities. While some countries have eased lockdowns allowing demand to recover,

concern over new outbreaks has kept a lid on prices and OPEC expects this to persist. "Crude and product price developments in the second half of 2020 will continue to be impacted by concerns over a second wave of infections and higher global stocks,"

OPEC said in the report.

OPEC stuck to its forecast that in 2021 oil demand would rebound by 7 million bpd but said the view was subject to large uncertainties that may result in "a negative impact on petroleum consumption," such as demand for air travel, more fuel-efficient cars and more competition from other fuels.

"Almost all forecasters expect jet fuel in 2021 to struggle making up for lost demand," OPEC said. "Gasoline demand will face pressure to return to 2019 levels."

To tackle the drop in demand,

OPEC and its allies, known as OPEC+, agreed to a record supply cut of 9.7 million bpd that started May 1, while the United States and other nations said they would pump less.

In the report, OPEC said its output rose by 980,000 bpd to 23.17 million bpd in July, largely because Saudi Arabia and other Gulf members ended extra voluntary cuts they had made in June.

That amounted to 97% compliance with the pledges, according to a Reuters calculation - lower than June's figure of well above 100%.

Tax authorities raid Chinese entities for money laundering



REUTERS

New Delhi, August 12: Indian tax authorities raided the premises of a few Chinese entities and their associates for money laundering, according to an official statement late Tuesday, adding to New Delhi's growing discomfort with Beijing after a border clash in June.

Since the clash, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has taken steps such as banning some Chinese mobile-phone apps, and tightening the requirements for Chinese investment and participation in government tenders.

The statement provided no details on the timing of the raids or on the kind of 'entities' mentioned. Chinese individuals, their allies and a couple of bank employees were involved in money laundering through a series of shell companies, the statement said.

"Search action revealed that at the behest of Chinese individuals, more than 40 bank accounts were created in various dummy entities, entering into credits of more than ₹10 billion (\$134.03 million) over the period," the statement said. During the raid, the authorities found evidence of transactions involving Hong Kong and US dollars.

Vedanta distributes fruit saplings to Jharsuguda farmers



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Jharsuguda, August 12: Vedanta recently distributed more than thousand saplings of fruit bearing trees to the farmers in Jharsuguda so that they can create backyard orchards in their homesteads. Conducted under the company's farm-based sustainable livelihood programme, JeevikaSamridhi, the sapling distribution drive had a two-fold objective. Besides, it also aimed at encouraging them to supplement their diet with organically developed nutritious fruits and vegetables from their own backyards.

Over 200 farmers received saplings of high-yielding varieties of papaya, drumstick, lemon, guava and Indian jujube for planting in their backyards. Alongside distribution, they were oriented on the basics of plantation technique, plant care, harvesting and marketing, and will continue to be supported by horticulture experts throughout the process.

SK Dash, Secretary, Social Education for Women's Awareness, Kolabira, said, "As Vedanta is the implementing partner for the programme, we are closely working with farmers of Sriapali, Gudigaon and Keldamal villages, helping them adopt more efficient methods of farming, learn better ways of land and water management, and gain technical knowhow by connecting them to agriculture and horticulture experts from Krishi Vigyan Kendra and Government of Odisha.

PM to launch 'transparent taxation' to ease compliance

The focus of the tax reforms has been on reduction in tax rates and on simplification of direct tax laws. The CBDT has taken several initiatives to bring efficiency and transparency in the functioning of the I-T department



journey of direct tax reforms undertaken during last six years.

The reforms include reduction in corporate tax last year to 22% from 30% for existing companies and 15% for new manufacturing units, scrapping of dividend distribution tax and faceless assessment.

"The focus of the tax reforms has been on reduction in tax rates and on simplification of direct tax laws. Several initiatives have been taken by the CBDT for bringing in efficiency and transparency in the functioning of the I-T Department," it said.

The Budget for 2020-21 fiscal unveiled on February 1, had announced a 'taxpayer charter', which is expected to have statutory status and will empower citizens by ensuring time-bound services by the Income Tax department.

The charter will ensure trust between a taxpayer and the administration and reduce harassment,

as well as increase efficiency of the department; Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharam had said her Budget speech.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), which is the apex decision making body in direct tax matters, administers personal income tax and corporate tax.

"Wealth creators will be respected in this country," she had said in her 2020-21 Budget speech. "We wish to enshrine in the statutes a 'taxpayer charter' through this budget. Our government would like to reassure taxpayers that we remain committed to taking measures so that our citizens are free from harassment of any kind."

The statement issued Wednesday said tax reforms include bringing more transparency in official communication through the newly introduced Document Identification Number (DIN) wherein every communication of the Department would carry a computer generated unique document identification number.

Similarly, to increase the ease of compliance for taxpayers, the I-T Department has moved forward with the pre-filing of income tax returns to make compliance more convenient for individual taxpayers. Compliance norms for startups have also been simplified.

UK PLUNGES INTO DEEP RECESSION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 12: The UK economy plunged into a deep recession as it shrank 20.4% between April and June at the height of the coronavirus lockdown, according to new figures released Wednesday.

Reacting to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) data, UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak admitted that it indicated that the "hard times" had warned about are here and that many more jobs will be lost.

"I've said before that hard times were ahead, and today's figures confirm that hard times are here," Sunak said.

"Hundreds of thousands of people have already lost their jobs, and sadly in the coming months many more will. But while there are difficult choices to be made ahead, we will get through this, and I can assure people that nobody will be left without hope or opportunity," he said.

It marks the first time in 11 years that the UK has tipped into a recession, which is defined by two consecutive three-month periods of



Thousands have already lost their jobs, and sadly many more will. But while there are difficult choices to be made, we will get through this, and I assure that nobody will be left without hope or opportunity

RISHI SUNAK | UK CHANCELLOR

falling GDP. The latest GDP figures released by the ONS showed that it fell by 20.4% between April to June, following a drop of 2.2% between January to March.

"The recession brought on by the coronavirus pandemic has led to the biggest fall in quarterly GDP on record," said Jonathan Athow, Deputy National Statistician at the ONS.

"The economy began to bounce back in June, with shops reopening, factories beginning to ramp up production and house-building continuing to recover. Despite this, GDP in June still remains a sixth below its level in February, before the virus struck," said Athow.

"Overall, productivity saw its largest-ever fall in the second quarter. Hospitality was worst hit, with productivity in that industry falling by three-quarters in recent months," he said.

TEKLA STRUCTURES' TECH HELPS BDA PROJECTS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 12: Global construction technology leader Trimble Wednesday said that its flagship construction software, Tekla Structures, has delivered 10% extra carpet area with the same budget for a large-scale housing project by Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) at Ghatakia and Subudhipur.

BDA had awarded Inventaa Industries with the construction of this affordable housing project, which involved construction of 1,320 individual apartments spread over 33 blocks of 5-storied apartment complex.

Inventaa chose Tekla Structures as Building Information Modelling (BIM) software for developing high-quality and low cost precast concrete structures for this project, which were instrumental in keeping the construction costs low.

"Precast concrete is one of the latest construction technology that is increasingly becoming popular

for new building projects for a speed and superior quality of construction along with reduced project delivery time, less manpower and lifecycle costs. With the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, more builders, developers and contractors are turning towards precast concrete structures," says Paul Wallett, Regional Director, Middle East and India, Trimble Solutions.

The software enabled Inventaa to control the project in a centralized manner right from efficient design to planning, monitoring and improving upon the execution of the project on-site. Satyanarayana C, MD, Inventaa Industries said, "This project was completely handled in-house including the development of the architectural concept, structural engineering/design, production of the precast elements, installation of precast elements with all the requisite structural work at the site, and finally the installation of services and architectural finishing."

BIZ BUZZ

Deutsche Bank pumps in ₹2,700 cr in India ops

Mumbai: German lender Deutsche Bank Wednesday announced a capital infusion of ₹2,700 crore into its India operations for expansion across segments. This is the second time in less than two years that the bank has infused money into local operations consisting of 17 branches, after ₹3,800 crore investments in early 2019.

Banks have to set aside capital for every new loan that they make and also when the loan slips into non-performing territory. A bank statement said the fresh capital will be used to support further expansion of Deutsche Bank India across all of its businesses, including corporate banking, investment banking, and international private banking that have been consistently growing over the years.

Insolvency plea against Tata Chemicals dismissed

Mumbai: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has upheld the NCLT's order to set aside the plea for initiating Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) against Tata Chemicals. Operational creditor Allied Silica Ltd had moved the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal, claiming a debt of ₹68.44 crore. Tata Chemicals entered into a Business Transfer Agreement with Allied Silica Ltd in April 2018 to acquire the latter's business of precipitated silica for a consideration of ₹123 crore, on a slump sale. According to Allied Silica, Tata Chemicals, the corporate debtor, had only transferred a sum of ₹65 crore, out of ₹123 crore and the balance amount of ₹58 crore has not been paid.

'Bombardier, GMR, 21 others interested in private trains'

New Delhi: As many as 23 firms including Bombardier, Alstom, Siemens and GMR have shown interest in running private trains in the country and attended a pre-application meeting Wednesday as a first step, the Railways said. Other companies that attended the meeting on running private trains in 12 clusters included BEML, IRCTC, BHEL, CAF, Medha Group, Sterlite, Bharat Forge, JKB infrastructure and Titagarh Wagons Limited, it said. The Railways has invited 12 Request for Qualifications for private participation in operation of passenger trains over 109 origin-destination pair of routes through introduction of 151 modern trains (rakes). These new trains will be in addition to the existing ones operated on the network.



80% students think new jobs will soon arise: Survey

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 12: Almost 80% of Indian students said new jobs and skill needs will arise as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic while 77% revealed the pandemic has made them rethink their career path, a new survey said Wednesday.

The digital learning company Pearson surveyed more than 7,000 people, including 1,000 respondents from India, and found that 88% of learners globally say online learning will be a permanent part of primary, secondary and higher education moving forward.

According to the survey, globally, 82% respondents said the pandemic will give rise to new kinds of jobs, and nearly three out of every

STAYING OPTIMISTIC



four say it will result in a rethinking of their career paths. "Learners are resilient, so they

are learning and moving forward in new ways to seize that opportunity, no matter what the future

holds, John Fallon, Chief Executive of Pearson, said in a statement. As per the findings, 87% of Indian

students think online learning will be part of children's education experience moving forward.

However, 82% of Indians said the pandemic already has permanently changed the way people work.

In India, 71% of respondents think reopening colleges and universities is vital for a healthy economy and an open society while 75% of people in India say colleges and universities are risking the lives of students by reopening in the fall.

At least 66% of people in India said the education system in their country has done a good job adapting to the needs of students during the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey said.

The findings also showed that 84% of Indians want schools to do more about inequality.

According to the data, 74% of respondents in India believe the COVID-19 pandemic will deepen inequalities among primary and secondary students.

The survey also found that 83% of learners in India want educational institutions to maximise the learning experience through technology.

More than half of the respondents in India said they are in need of new digital skills because their job status has changed, with 87% in India saying they need digital skills such as virtual collaboration and data analysis to move forward with the economy.

SEVILLA, SHAKHTAR IN SEMIS

Leipzig test awaits Atletico

AGENCIES

Lisbon, August 12: Spanish football powerhouse Atletico Madrid will lock horns with German side RB Leipzig in the Champions League quarterfinal at the Estadio Jose Alvalade here, Thursday.

Atleti knocked out holders Liverpool in the last round and are in the quarterfinals for a fifth time in seven seasons, while Leipzig have made it to this stage for the first time.

It has been exactly five months since Atletico dumped a much-fancied Liverpool side out of the competition, helped by a calamitous display from stand-in goalkeeper Adrian.

Diego Simeone's men have made a habit of upsetting the odds on the continent and, after a couple of defeats in the final over the past six years, this may just be their season.

The draw has been kind to Los Rojiblancos, putting them up against

quarterfinal debutants Leipzig first and then one of Atalanta or Paris Saint-Germain in the semifinals.

Atletico will enter this one-legged tie in good shape, too, having gone 18 matches without defeat either side of the coronavirus-enforced shutdown.

Diego Simeone credited the victory over Liverpool for reigniting his side's campaign, claiming that it gave his players belief that they are good enough to beat any team.

After finishing third in La Liga behind the big two, Atleti's full focus is now on the biggest trophy in club football, and they have a good record against German opposition.

Los Rojiblancos have always progressed against Bundesliga sides in the knockout stages of the Champions League - versus Bayer Leverkusen in 2015 and Bayern Munich in 2016.

However, Leipzig will see this as a massive opportunity to create

some history of their own by going all the way in the reformatting competition.

Julian Nagelsmann's charges also finished third in their domestic league, ending the season with just one defeat in their final 15 matches - that coming against Borussia Dortmund.

On the continent, Leipzig topped their group before easing to a 4-0 aggregate win over Tottenham Hotspur in the first knockout round.

Atletico confirmed Monday that attacker Angel Correa and right-back Sime Vrsaljko were the individuals being tested positive for coronavirus at the weekend. All other tests came back negative, meaning that the game has been given the all clear by UEFA to go ahead as planned.

As for Leipzig, Nagelsmann would ideally go with Yussuf Poulsen and Patrik Schick up top in the absence of star striker Timo Werner.



KEEPING HEAD HIGH: Lucas Ocampos is ecstatic after scoring the winner for Sevilla against Wolverhampton, Tuesday

leg of their rescheduled round of 16 tie last week.

Afimico Pululu almost restored parity with a solo effort for Basel, but Taison grabbed Shakhtar's second with a deflected shot after a fine flowing team move in the 22nd minute.

Marcos Antonio almost added a third when he struck the crossbar with a curling shot in the 40th minute. Raoul Petretta produced a clearance to deny Moraes from the rebound.

Alan Patrick's penalty in the 75th effectively sealed the Ukrainian side's place in the semifinals, before right back Dodo added the fourth.

The tournament is being played in a shortened format in Germany because of the coronavirus pandemic, which forced all European competitions to be halted for months.

Shakhtar will play Inter in Dusseldorf August 17. The final will take place in nearby Cologne four days later.



Atletico players during their training session

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Duisburg (Germany), August 12: A late header from Lucas Ocampos gave Sevilla a 1-0 win over Wolverhampton and a place in the Europa League semifinals, Tuesday. In the other match on the night, Shakhtar Donetsk routed Basel 4-1 to set up a last four clash against Inter Milan.

After Raul Jimenez missed an early penalty for Wolves, Sevilla increasingly took control of the game. The five-time Europa League champion had seemingly endless set pieces around the Wolves penalty area and finally broke through when Ocampos headed in Ever Banega's cross following a corner in the 88th minute.

Wolves forward Adama Traore earlier showed extraordinary pace in his 53rd club game of the season to sprint in behind the Sevilla defense, only for Diego Carlos to cut him down with a tackle from behind for the penalty.

Jimenez had scored an early spot-kick against Olympiakos last week



Alan Patrick points skywards in celebration after scoring for Shakhtar

India-Qatar game postponed Hockey camps to resume August 19

Blue Tigers' FIFA World Cup Qualifiers tie moved to 2021 due to pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 12: The Indian football team will not see any action this year with the Asian qualifying matches for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Wednesday getting postponed to 2021 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Asian Football Confederation postponed all men's qualifiers scheduled in October and November for the 2022 World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup. India's last international match was the joint qualifying round match against Oman in Muscat in November last year, which they had lost 0-1.

Though out of contention for a place in the next round of World Cup qualifiers, India are still in the reckoning for a spot in the 2023 Asian Cup. They were scheduled to play Qatar at home October 8 followed by matches against Afghanistan (home) and Bangladesh (away) in November. A third-place finish in the group will help India get a direct berth in the third round of the qualifiers for the 2023 Asian Cup.

"In light of the current COVID-19 situation in many countries, FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation have jointly decided that the upcoming qualifying matches for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023, originally scheduled to take place during the interna-



Indian team head coach Igor Stimac talks to players during a training session

tional match windows in October and November 2020, will be rescheduled to 2021," read a joint statement of the FIFA and the AFC.

Both FIFA and AFC stated that the decision was taken keeping in mind the safety of all participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. The games will be rescheduled in 2021.

"With the aim of protecting the health and safety of all participants, FIFA and the AFC will continue to work together to closely monitor the situation in the region and to identify new dates for the respective qualifying matches.

"Further details on the new dates for the next round of qualifying

matches for the World Cup 2022 and the AFC Asian Cup 2023 will be announced in due course," the statement said.

The AFC had previously scheduled the qualifiers in October-November and considered staging them at a centralised venue for each group.

India are currently fourth in Group E with three points from five games. Qatar top the table with 13 points with Oman a point behind them in second.

Eight group winners and four best runners-up will progress to the continent's 12-team final qualifying stage for the World Cup.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 12: The training camps for India's national hockey teams will go ahead as scheduled from August 19 in Bangalore despite half a dozen men's team players, including skipper Manpreet Singh, being hospitalised after testing positive for COVID-19.

Both the men's and women's teams will resume training at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) South Centre in Bangalore.

"...the Indian men's and Indian women's hockey teams are scheduled to resume sports activities from, Wednesday 19th August 2020, following the completion of their 14-day quarantine period," the SAI said in a statement Wednesday.

The decision was taken after a discussion with the game's stakeholders, including Hockey India officials and chief coaches of both the teams.

"...after giving the utmost priority to the safety and well-being of all the athletes, it has been decided that the sporting activities will be resumed at SAI's National Centre of Excellence in Bangalore, as scheduled earlier."

The camp for male hockey players was uncertain after six of them tested positive for COVID-19. The women's camp, however, was never in doubt after all of them tested negative for the dreaded virus.

The six COVID positive men - mostly from Punjab - were part of a 10-member group that travelled to-

gether from New Delhi. Currently, 33 male and 24 female players are in Bengaluru for the camp.

The light intensity national camp is expected to continue till September 30. The SAI said the decision to go ahead was based on 'consensus' and it will amid strict compliance of the health safety protocol.

Indian men's hockey team chief coach Graham Reid said the health and wellbeing of the players and support staff will be the top priority during the camp.

"It is good to know that everyone is eager while making sure their health and wellbeing is our collective priority," Reid said

The six COVID positive players will be integrated into the group once they recover from the virus. "They are in good spirits, and are looking forward to a quick recovery. Once recovered and after following protocol of quarantine, we look forward to have them back with us," Reid said.

Reid's counterpart in the women's team, Sjoerd Marjine said he had received positive response from his team about the resumption of camp.

"I say it on behalf of the whole squad that we are very happy to be back at the national camp and resuming sports activities by following all the protocols," he said. "We look forward to work hard on the team's fitness in this protected environment."

Captain Manpreet Singh, Surender Kumar, Jaskaran Singh, Varun Kumar and Krishan Bahadur Pathak have been shifted to a hospital in Bangalore as a precautionary measure after striker Mandeep Singh was transferred Tuesday to the facility following a dip in his blood oxygen level, SAI said in a statement



Hafeez's protocol break in England upsets PCB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, August 12: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is furious at former captain Muhammad Hafeez for his apparent breach of the bio-security protocol imposed by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) for the ongoing away series.

The former skipper, who is not a part of the Test squad is there for the limited overs leg. Hafeez tweeted Wednesday a picture of himself with an elderly lady from the golf course adjacent to the team hotel despite strict instructions that they shouldn't interact with anyone outside the bubble.

A source close to the Pakistan team said Hafeez's breach of protocol had upset everyone as all players had been told specifically to avoid interaction with anyone outside the bio secure bubble, since the course is open to the public in Southampton.

Hafeez put himself in trouble when he posted a tweet of himself



and the lady terming her as inspirational. The ECB medical team is aware of the breach of protocol and Hafeez will most likely have to isolate himself for five days and then undergo two COVID-19 tests before he rejoins the team again.

Hafeez was among those players who had tested positive before travelling to England but then created an embarrassing situation for the PCB when he privately got himself tested and the result was negative which he posted on his Twitter account.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Unacademy' picks bid papers for IPL title sponsorship rights

New Delhi: Education technology company 'Unacademy', which is already one of IPL's sponsors, is eyeing the league's title sponsorship rights now and is set to submit its bid to replace Chinese mobile phone company Vivo this season. A BCCI official confirmed that Unacademy has picked up the bid papers but refrained from making any comments beyond that. "I can confirm that Unacademy has shown interest and picked the bid papers. I have heard they will be submitting a bid and are pretty serious. So Patanjali if they bid, will have competition," the senior official told PTI on conditions of anonymity. Vivo, which annually paid ₹440 crore, dropped out as title sponsor this year due to the Sino-India border stand-off. The BCCI is now looking at a lesser value - between ₹300 to 350 crore - for a period of four months and 13 days.

Barca player tests COVID-19 positive

Barcelona: A Barcelona player has tested positive for the coronavirus, the club said Wednesday, adding that he is not in their Champions League squad. Barcelona did not identify the player but said he had 'not been in contact with any of the senior team players who are scheduled to travel to Lisbon' Thursday. Barcelona will face Bayern Munich Friday in the quarterfinals. The club said the infected player has no symptoms of COVID-19 and is in good health. He was quarantined at home and everyone who had contact with him would be tested. He was among the nine players beginning pre-season training this week: Pedri, Trincao, Matheus Fernandes, Todibo, Wague, Alena, Rafinha, Miranda and Oriol Busquets.

Robinson replaces Stokes for 2nd Test

Southampton: Fast bowler Ollie Robinson replaced Ben Stokes as England Wednesday named a 14-member squad for the second Test against Pakistan, starting Thursday at The Ageas Bowl. Stokes was ruled out of the remainder of the series due to personal reasons. England won the first Test, making a dramatic comeback with Chris Woakes and Jos Buttler effecting a splendid turnaround. **THE SQUAD:** Joe Root (C), James Anderson, Jofra Archer, Dominic Bess, Stuart Broad, Rory Burns, Jos Buttler, Zak Crawley, Sam Curran, Ollie Pope, Ollie Robinson, Dom Sibley, Chris Woakes and Mark Wood.

Eves' int'l cricket finally returns

Dubai: Women's international cricket returned Wednesday for the first time since the final of the T20 World Cup as Austria host Germany in the first of five T20Is. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all women's T20I cricket had been postponed, but Wednesday, it returned after seven months when Australia defeated India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) March 8. Germany - known as the Golden Eagles and ranked 27th in the ICC T20I Rankings - will be looking to gain points as they face 50th placed Austria in the battle to move up the rankings.

Shakib could return for tour of Sri Lanka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, August 12: Serving a ban for not reporting corrupt approaches, Bangladesh's premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is likely to return to the national fold for a tour of Sri Lanka later this year, with his suspension ending October 29.

The southpaw was banned for two years, one year of it was suspended, for failing to report corrupt approaches by an alleged Indian bookie during the IPL.

Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka is more or less confirmed and given the schedule, Shakib could feature in the proposed three-match T20 series. "I think Shakib being out for a year is not that much different to the rest of our squad who have been out for six or seven months as well,"

Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo was quoted as saying by 'ESPNewsInfo'.

"We are hoping all the players are fit. Obviously, there are standards that they need to attain in terms of fitness level. We have to organise a bit of game time for Shakib, as well as for all the players."

The all-rounder's fitness will be taken into consideration before picking him. "It is very difficult to get into international cricket without any sort of cricket. I think we need to try to find some opportunities for him to play some games. He is a world-class player so I am sure he will get back into it pretty soon, but fitness is an important thing," the coach said.

Shakib is set to start training at the BKSP facility - Bangladesh's largest sporting institute - ahead of his return to competitive cricket.

