


DESIRABLE TRAITS

Actor Ankita Lokhande shares a thoughtful post on all the qualities that are desirable in life


LEISURE | P2



MAJOR SCAM

Superhuman fertility rate shown among women in their 60s leads to unearthing of major scam in Bihar

TWO STATES | P7



'TOO ILL TO MOVE'

Russian doctors say Alexei Navalny remains too ill to be transferred to Germany for treatment

INTERNATIONAL | P10

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Lucky you! Court feels your time is important and shouldn't be wasted. See, I've been coming here for past 22 years!

SHORT TAKES

Bhadrak MLA tests COVID-19 positive

**BHUBANESWAR:** Another ruling Biju Janata Dal MLA Friday tested positive for COVID-19, taking the total number of lawmakers infected by the virus in the state to nine. Bhadrak MLA Sanjib Mallick announced that he has tested positive for COVID-19. "Today my covid test done and test results got positive. I am requesting all those who are in my contact please do covid test and obey the covid positive guideline," Mallick, the first-time MLA tweeted. Odisha till Friday has reported 72,718 COVID-19 cases and 390 deaths.


Many low-lying areas inundated

**BHUBANESWAR:** Incessant downpour triggered by a series of low pressure areas formed over Bay of Bengal has claimed five lives in the state so far and increased the water levels in several rivers, officials said. The state government, however, ruled out any fear of flood. It said though the water level in some rivers had crossed the danger mark, it is likely to recede as the intensity of rainfall in upper catchment areas has now reduced. Several areas, particularly in Malkangiri district, continued to grapple with disruption in road communication caused by severe deluge, they said.

BSY govt may ban SDPI, PFI

**BANGALORE:** The cabinet Thursday agreed in principle to ban Popular Front of India (PFI) and its political wing, Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), over their alleged involvement in the Bengaluru riots and some other violent incidents. But the decision will be formalised only after a comprehensive review of evidence against the two organisations and legal procedures. The cabinet asked police to submit a report detailing evidence on the organisations' suspected role in communal riots and anti-social activities.

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VARIATION	
SENSEX	38434.72	▲	214.33
NIFTY	11371.60	▲	59.40
DOLLAR	74.94	▼	₹0.22
EURO	88.24	▼	₹0.71
GOLD	₹51,808	▼	₹343
SILVER	₹66,513	▼	₹1082

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
MAX	30.9°C	31.8°C	
MIN	25.5°C	24.0°C	
Humidity	93%	83%	Forecast
Rainfall	Trace	Nil	
Generally cloudy sky			

VOTERS TO GET GLOVES, POLLING BOOTHS TO HAVE THERMAL SCANNERS

EC spells out poll norms

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 21:** Voters will be provided with gloves to press the EVM button and COVID-19 patients in quarantine will be allowed to vote at the last hour of the polling day, according to broad guidelines issued by the EC on Friday for holding elections during the coronavirus pandemic.

The gloves will most likely be disposable.

A separate set of guidelines would be issued for voters who are residing in areas notified as containment zone, the Election Commission said.

The commission has recommended mandatory sanitisation of polling stations, preferably a day before the polls.

Thermal scanners would be placed at the entry point of every polling station. Polling or paramedical staff will conduct thermal screening of voters at the entry point of a polling station, it said.

There shall be maximum 1,000 electors instead of 1,500 electors in a polling station, the guidelines said.

A group of five people, including candidates but excluding security personnel, is allowed to take part in door-to-door campaigning.

For road shows, the commission said, convoys of vehicles should be broken after every five vehicles instead of 10 (excluding security vehicles).

Public gatherings and rallies can

● THERE SHALL BE MAXIMUM 1,000 ELECTORS INSTEAD OF 1,500 ELECTORS IN A POLLING STATION, THE GUIDELINES SAID

● A GROUP OF FIVE PEOPLE, INCLUDING CANDIDATES, IS ALLOWED TO TAKE PART IN DOOR-TO-DOOR CAMPAIGNING

● FOR ROAD SHOWS, CONVOYS OF VEHICLES SHOULD BE BROKEN AFTER EVERY FIVE VEHICLES INSTEAD OF 10

be held subject to adherence to COVID-19 guidelines.

The district election officer should identify in advance dedicated grounds for public gatherings with clearly marked entry and exit points.

In all such identified grounds, the district election officer should put markers in advance to ensure social distancing norms are followed by the attendees.

The district election officer and district superintendent of police should ensure that the number of attendees does not exceed the limit prescribed by the State Disaster Management Authority for public gatherings, the commission said.

Bihar will be the first state where

BY-ELECTIONS FOR TWO ASSEMBLY SEATS DUE

**BHUBANESWAR:** By elections for two assembly seats—Balasore Sadar and Tirtol are due in state. The by-elections to the two assembly segments are necessitated following death of two sitting MLAs—BJP's Madan Mohan Dutta (Balasore Sadar) and BJD's Bishnu Charan Das (Tirtol). The Tirtol seat is reserved for the scheduled caste community. Dutta died June 17, 2020 while Das passed July 6, 2020. Both the legislators have passed away due to serious health problems. Both ruling BJD and the principal opposition BJP are eyeing to retain their respective seats in the by-elections, which will occur following a notification from the ECI.

assembly elections will be held amid the pandemic. The polls are likely to be held sometime in October-November.

Asked why the norms have no mention of "virtual" or "digital" campaigning, another official said the "broad guidelines have been framed based on COVID-19 guidelines issued by the Health Ministry and the Home Ministry to prevent the spread of the virus."

"Based on our guidelines, states will prepare their own set of three-layered comprehensive guidelines at the state, district and assembly constituency level." The state specific guidelines may talk of virtual campaign, he said.

It's official, Dutee Arjuna awardee

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 21:** Ace athlete of the state Dutee Chand and 26 other sportspersons of the country won the Arjuna Awards, the recipients of which were declared by the Sports Ministry Friday.

This apart, the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award was conferred on Rohit Sharma for Cricket, Mariyappan T. for Para Athletics, Manika Batra for Table Tennis, Vinesh for Wrestling and Rani for Hockey. Interestingly, Sakshi Malik and Mirabai Chanu's names were removed from the final list. Their names were earlier recommended for Arjuna Award.

Similarly, the Dronacharya Award (Life Time Category) will be given to Dharmendra Tiwary for Archery, Purushottam Rai for Athletics, Shiv Singh for Boxing, Romesh Pathania for Hockey, Krishan Kumar Hooda for Kabaddi, Vijay Bhalchandra Munishwar for Para Powerlifting, Naresh Kumar for Tennis and Om Parkash Dahiya for Wrestling.

In a first, the awards will be held virtually August 29, the National Sports Day, instead of the Rashtrapati Bhavan this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The criteria for the awards take into consideration the athletes' performances over a four-year period. A weightage of 80 per cent is given to athletes winning medals at various international competitions with the remaining 20 per cent left to the discretion of the panel members.

E-court: 150 state cases heard

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, August 21:** The Supreme Court has taken up around 150 cases of the state for hearing through virtual mode in 100 days and passed orders/judgments in around 35 cases.

During this period, the apex court adjudicated several prominent cases of the state, including the Jagannath Rath Yatra case. The Supreme Court had in June allowed the annual chariot festival of Lord Jagannath after several petitions were filed seeking permission to conduct the festival.

The Supreme Court had initially refused to grant permission due to the pandemic. However, the bench changed its decision a day before the commencement of Rath Yatra.

Other major cases include allowing migrant workers from Surat to enter the state in May. The apex court had stayed the decision of Orissa HC that banned their entry. It also granted bail to a tribal girl, who was charged for murder.

The court allowed Orissa Minerals Development Corporation Ltd to resume mining operations in Odisha. Dissatisfied over the lackadaisical attitude of state gov-

9 dead in T'gana power plant fire

AGENCIES

**Hyderabad, August 21:** All nine persons trapped in a huge fire at an underground hydroelectric power station in Telangana were killed, officials said Friday.

All the efforts by rescue workers to save the trapped employees at Telangana State Generation Corporation (TS Genco) plant at Srisailem canal's left bank in Nagarkurnool district were futile.

The rescue workers recovered the bodies of five victims. They were identified as Assistant Engineers Mohan Kumar, Uzma Fatima, and Sunder, Divisional Engineer Srinivas Goud and Mahesh, an employee of a battery company.

Efforts were on to trace the bodies of the remaining persons. The rescue per-

sonnel including those from the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) were battling thick smoke to retrieve the bodies. Some rescue workers have also reportedly become ill during the rescue operation.

Earlier, personnel from the NDRF and experts from the Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL) joined the rescue operations.

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao ordered a probe by the CID into the fire.

HOPE OVER FEAR

Joe Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris join hands after the former formally accepts the Democratic Party's nomination for President. In his acceptance speech, he said that America will choose hope over fear, facts over fiction and fairness over privilege as he cast President Donald Trump as a failed leader who has shirked responsibility while stoking hate and division

PTI PHOTO

Man duped of ₹45L by mysterious foreign lady

THE ACCUSED, WHO PRETENDED TO BE AN INVESTOR IN INDIAN PROJECTS, WAS A MEMBER OF A GANG OF CYBER CRIMINALS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 21:** Cyber crooks often use emails to collect personal details of netizens or dupe them with fake financial offers. Many people have fallen into the trap of this emerging trend in crime despite continuous public awareness programmes by various government agencies.

In one such incident, a person from Cuttack has lost around ₹45 lakhs to a gang of cyber criminals involving a foreign lady. The cyber crime police station at the Crime Branch office in Cuttack has initiated a probe on the issue after registering a case on the basis of the complaint lodged by the victim August 17.

As per sources, the victim, Manas Ram Misra, 62, of Cuttack alleged

he received an email from one Ms Elizabeth from UK who offered to partner with Misra to invest in some projects in India. However, Misra turned down her offer January 17, 2017.

Subsequently, she mailed an offer to make Misra the manager in the business she was supposed to finance in Odisha. Accordingly, Misra sent one signed agreement paper to Ms Elizabeth through email along with some shortlisted projects.

Few days later, Misra received a phone call from some alleged custom officials from New Delhi Airport informing him about the detention of Ms Elizabeth for holding huge amount of foreign currency, British Pound. Elizabeth had reportedly come to India for business purposes.

They asked Misra to pay the

fine in Indian currency on behalf of the accused lady which he refused and asked the custom officials to initiate action as per the law. Meanwhile, Elizabeth informed Misra that she had moved to Mumbai and deposited £ 1.5

million British pound sterling (Rs14.73 crore) in the Citibank's branch in Mumbai. The accused lady informed Misra that she had mentioned him as the nominee while filing the accounting opening form.

Later, the accused, in order to win the faith of Misra, reached Odisha. She reportedly stayed at a reputed hotel near Nalco Square in Capital city where Misra also arranged a meeting of owners of various projects.

After around eight months, some unknown persons identifying themselves as staffers of Citi Bank informed Misra that Ms Elizabeth died.

They asked him to take necessary steps for transfer of Elizabeth's money to his account. Misra allegedly deposited around ₹45 lakhs in various accounts as per the instructions of the cyber crooks who were posing as Citibank's officials. However, upon receipt of the amount, they did not contact Misra and their phone numbers were switched off.

Selfie craze claims 2 lives in Bargarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, August 21:** Selfie craze proved fatal as two students met their watery grave after falling into Kapil Dhara waterfall while clicking selfies in Bargarh district Thursday evening, police said Friday.

The deceased have been identified as Papu Mahakud (18) and Khirod Soni (20) of Jhipiki village under Paikamal police limits in Bargarh district.

According to sources, Khirod, Papu and a friend had visited Nrusinghanath, Thursday afternoon. They proceeded towards Kapil Dhara. They were enjoying at the waterfall, clicking selfies. At this moment, Khirod and Papu lost their balance and fell into the water.

Police along with fire personnel from Paikamal Fire Station reached the spot and conducted rescue ops.



**FORTUNE FORECAST**

**GaneshaSpeaks.com™**  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
**FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\***

**ARIES**

Some cheerful news could put you in really high spirits today. The news could either be of a personal or professional nature – perhaps about your career, or a social gathering, or some monetary profit.

**TAURUS**

You are likely to be in a mood to get away from the daily grind and take a much need break. You would naturally try to stay free from future concerns and commitments and keep all your woes and worries aside for the day.

**GEMINI**

A fun and frolic filled day awaits you. You will have a lot of fun with your family members, especially children. You will help your children with their work. Marital life will be blissful. Relations with your spouse will be romantic today. A pleasure filled day awaits, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**

Ganesha says that you will feel tiredness and weakness but in the office or business you will be relaxed , with less tension. Ganesha suggests that you should be careful to fulfil new responsibilities entrusted to you.

**LEO**

You will attempt to reschedule your daily routine to be able to make the most of your day. While it is easy to make plans, implementing them and sticking to them depends on your own discipline and determination.

**VIRGO**

Issues regarding religious beliefs and spirituality will surface today. Pursue your goals single-mindedly to attain success in the field of your choice, and exploit your abilities and talents to the hilt, advises Ganesha. You will be more logical and calculative, rather than emotional, in matters of your relationships.

**LIBRA**

Ganesha says you will be able to spend ample time with your loved ones and may even taken them out for lunch or dinner which will bring you more closer to them. You will even try to please them by showering them with gifts and presents today.

**SCORPIO**

A creative thought or an innovative idea may spice up your routine work. Apparently, you may seem all worked up and disorganised, but actually you may be quite systematic when it comes to your work. Keep the enthusiasm in you alive to make life happier, tips Ganesha.

**SAGITTARIUS**

You may have to make important decisions of life today, says Ganesha. Remember, haste makes waste, so take every decision only after thinking about its long-term consequences or end results. Be patient.

**CAPRICORN**

Mark this date on the calendar as today is going to be one of the most important days of life, the reason being you are going to meet somebody who is will stay with you through out your life. Though it may some time bore you, but your relationships will keep you busy today.

**AQUARIUS**

You will try everything to please your colleagues and bosses, but they will still have something negative to say about your performance. In order to be in the good books of everyone you end up hurting your own interests, feels Ganesha.

**PISCES**

You will have difficulty in interpreting the behaviour of your life partner today. It is better to bring transparency in your relationship rather than to doubt it. Speak freely about your problems and communicate with your spouse. Business relationships will also face rough weather.



**BEN AFFLECK WILL RETURN AS BATMAN IN THE FLASH MOVIE**

Ben Affleck will return as Batman in the upcoming standalone *The Flash* movie, director Andy Muschietti has revealed. Affleck has previously played the Dark Knight in two Zack Snyder films, *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* and *Justice League*, in addition to a cameo in *Suicide Squad*.

**NETFLIX'S UNSOLVED MYSTERIES WILL RETURN OCTOBER 19**

Netflix has announced that its *Unsolved Mysteries* reboot will return with rest of the six episodes October 19. The first six episodes of the first season were released on the streaming platform July 1. The new episodes will focus on more unexplained disappearances and tragic events in hopes that the viewers may have the answer.



**Babushaan leads clarion call for honouring Dhyhan Chand**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 21:** A first-ever digital campaign to demand ‘Bharat Ratna’ for the legendary hockey icon Major Dhyhan Chand has been initiated by Joyeeta Roy and Prateek Kumar Mishra of ‘Signature 24 Productions’. It should be stated here that Major Dhyhan Chand’s birthday, which is August 29 is celebrated as the ‘National Sports Day’ of India.

The campaign was started by BCCI president and former India captain Sourav Ganguly and actors Babushaan Mohanty and Rachel White. They had earlier said that the hockey icon should have been conferred the ‘Bharat Ratna’ on August 29, last year. Incidentally it is also the birthday of Dhyhan Chand and is known as

the National Sports Day.

The campaign created a buzz with eminent personalities from all walks of life and common people across India joining in to voice their support and to celebrate Dhyhan Chand’s contribution to Indian hockey.

The campaign even attracted the attention of the Parliament with some members stating that the iconic hockey player be conferred the ‘Bharat Ratna’. Even the Sports Minister of India, Kiren Rijiju has constantly supported the initiative of ‘Signature 24 Productions’ with messages on his Instagram account.

On the occasion of the first anniversary of the campaign, ‘Signature 24 Productions’ is all set to bring together a plethora of hockey players to host a digital event with the sole agenda of cele-

brating the glory of Indian hockey and remembering Major Dhyhan Chand and his contribution. Those who will be attending the event are Gurbux Singh and Harbinder Singh (both Olympic gold medallists). The event will also see the presence of Arjuna awardee Ashok Kumar (son of Major Dhyhan Chand, Olympic bronze medallist) and current player Yuvraj Walmiki. The event will be hosted by eminent Odia actor and superstar Babushaan.

Babushaan will be seen yet again in a new avatar which is going to be quite exciting for the actor himself. “He has been excited and engaged in doing a lot of research work for the past few days to prepare the questions himself that he would be asking the players”, said Joyeeta, founder of ‘Signature 24 Productions’.

Prateek, another co-founder of Signature 24 Productions said: “A lot of unknown stories on Major Dhyhan Chand will be discussed. There will also be discussions on Indian hockey in the Olympics and the eight gold medals won by India.”

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju was invited to join in as the chief guest. However, due to prior commitments he will not be able to attend the meet. However he has conveyed his best wishes for the event. The event will be live on Facebook and one may use any one of the links to view the programme.

[www.facebook.com/bharatratnafordhyanchan](https://www.facebook.com/bharatratnafordhyanchan)  
[www.facebook.com/signature24productions](https://www.facebook.com/signature24productions)  
[www.facebook.com/Mohantybabushaan](https://www.facebook.com/Mohantybabushaan)



**Taapsee-starrer Rashmi Rocket goes on floors this November**



**Mumbai:** Sports drama *Rashmi Rocket* starring the fierce Taapsee Pannu commences shooting this November.

Beginning in the salt pans of Kutch, *Rashmi Rocket* is about a young girl from a village, blessed with a gift — SPEED. She’s an incredibly fast runner. The village fondly knows her as ‘Rocket’. When she gets a chance to showcase her talent professionally, she excels but also realizes that the race to the finish line is peppered with many hurdles, and what seems like an athletic contest turns into her personal battle for respect, honour, and even her very identity.

*Rashmi Rocket* is written by Nanda Periyasamy, Aniruddha Guha and Kanika Dhillon. The film will be helmed by Akarsh

Khurana who directed *Karwaan*. “We were all set to shoot when the pandemic struck. I’m glad that we’re resuming soon. The team and I have been waiting eagerly to set off on this journey. It’s a terrific story that I’m excited to tell.” says director Akarsh Khurana

“I have been involved in this project from the very beginning stage to make this one really special. Just before the pandemic I was already three months into my training period to transform into a physique closest to that of a sprinter. This has been a long break but with the kind of subject it is I am excited to restart the journey from scratch again starting with my training.” says Taapsee Pannu.

**Ankita shares what’s desirable in life**



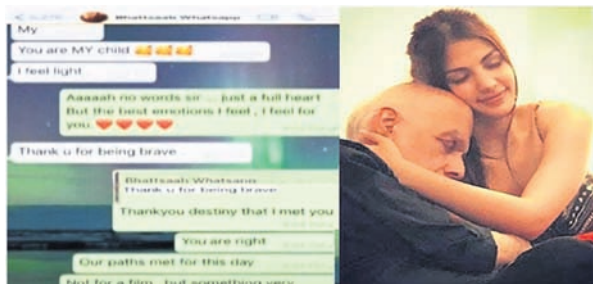
**Mumbai:** Actress Ankita Lokhande has shared a thoughtful post on desirable qualities in life. Her post is all about being true to yourself. She shared her thoughts with a black and white picture of her that she posted on Instagram.

“Do you want to know what’s desirable? Efforts, honesty, presence, keeping promises, deep connection, deep conversations and being truthful to yourself.” Ankita mentioned along with a heart emoticon.

Sushant Singh Rajput’s ex-girlfriend Ankita has been quite vocal in supporting a CBI probe into the late actor’s death right from the start. Recently after the Supreme Court transferred the case to CBI, she had posted: “Justice is the truth in action... Truth wins.”

Before venturing into Bollywood, Sushant had shot to fame as a television actor with Ekta Kapoor’s daily soap *Pavitra Rishta*, which also starred Ankita. The two actors dated for almost six years before parting ways.

**Mahesh Bhatt trolled after WhatsApp chat with Rhea goes viral**



**Mumbai:** Filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt started trending on Twitter after screenshots of a WhatsApp conversation from June 8, allegedly between him and actress Rhea Chakraborty, made it to the new headlines Friday. Twitter has been flooded with memes and trolls targeting the veteran filmmaker, with netizens claiming that people like him do not deserve to be respected. The screenshots of the chat, doing the rounds on social media suggests that Rhea informed Mahesh Bhatt that she was leaving her boyfriend, late actor Sushant Singh Rajput, June 8.

Netizens allege it was Mahesh Bhatt who started talking about Sushant’s depression after the actor’s death, just as he spoke about actress Parveen Babi’s mental health in the past.

“Parveen Babi was depressed! Divya Bharti was de-

pressed! Jiah Khan was depressed! Sushant Singh Rajput was depressed!

All were depressed & that’s why they committed suicide. #MaheshBhatt don’t imposed the tag that they all were depressed & mentally unstable to hide d conspiracy,” tweeted a user.

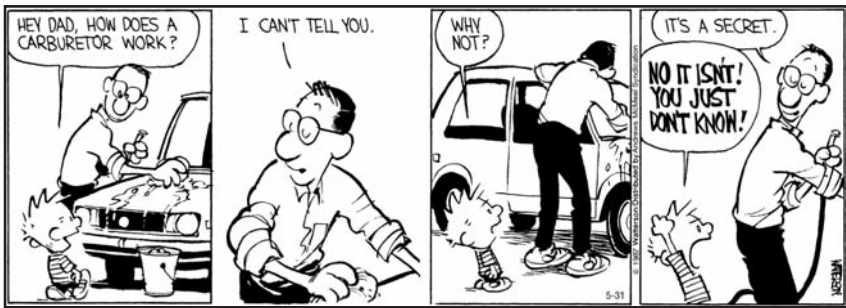
“#MaheshBhatt, Respect and care for senior citizens.. But what about citizens like Mahesh Bhatt?? The younger generation is ashamed becoz of him!,” tweeted another user.

Reports also emerged claiming that Rhea was inside Cooper Hospital at the time of Sushant’s post-mortem. Netizens are blaming Bhatt along with Rhea for the same. “Who allowed rhea to go inside the hospital?? She stayed there for 45min. What is she doing during these 45min??? of course they are tampering the evidences...” tweeted a user.

**PEANUTS**



**CALVIN AND HOBBS**



**BREVITY**



**FUN post CROSSWORD**

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

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**Across**

1	Type of games or rings	17	Japanese paper folding craft	3	Dangerous fish
5	Where to find a king	19	Approaches	4	Witches
8	Recreational vehicle (5,4)	22	Squid’s squirt	5	Doctrine
9	Duffer’s goal	23	Beach find	6	Drained
10	Chinese green tea	24	Tennis starter	7	Peculiar
11	Anger, for one	25	Equestrian gear	12	Bakery treats
12	Asps			13	Turn indicator
14	Stringed instrument	<b>Down</b>		15	Fired up
		1	Get-up-and-go	16	Toes, e.g.
		2	Abominable snowmen	18	Confuse
				20	Reef ring
				21	Factions

**SUDOKU**

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

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

**SOLUTIONS**

**CROSSWORD**

**SUDOKU**

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

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



# downtown

## Beneficiaries in state received ₹60,865 cr through DBT

*Till August this year, around 40 crore people in the country have availed government assistance through Jan Dhan Yojana, the biggest financial inclusion programme of the world, said Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, August 21:** Union Petroleum Minister Dhamendra Pradhan Friday claimed that the inclusive economic policy of the Narendra Modi government at the centre has strengthened the financial status of people in the country including in Odisha.

The Union minister claimed that the beneficiaries of 65 central schemes including the Pradhan Mantri Ujjala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi

Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana in Odisha have received a total of Rs 60,865 crore in their bank accounts through the DBT mode.

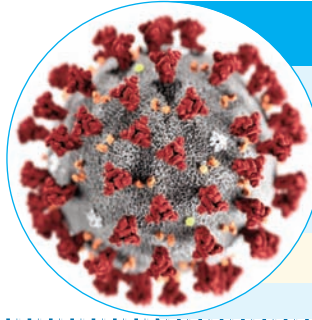
“The DBT mode has helped the government as well as the beneficiaries in Odisha. The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to bringing all households in the country into the banking fold,” Pradhan said in a tweet while highlighting the inclusive economic policy of the Centre.

Till August this year, around 40 crore people in the country have



### INVITING DANGER

People flout social distancing norms while buying fish from roadside vendors at Nayapalli in Bhubaneswar, Friday



### COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	2,29,27,619	1,55,71,522	7,98,247
India	29,06,584	21,59,808	54,987
Odisha	72,718	50,504	390

## BJP opposes sale of Dharmashala land



BJP activists stage a dharna in front of Bagala Dharmashala, Friday

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, August 21:** The district unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has opposed sale of Bagala Dharmashala land to lodging house owners who had been evicted for beautification of the Srimandir surroundings.

Activists of the saffron party led by Puri MLA Jayanta Kumar Sarangi, Brahmagiri MLA Lalitendu Bidyadhar Mahapatra, BJP district unit president Ashrit Patnaik Friday staged a dharna in front of Bagala Dharmashala (shelter house) here and asked the district administration to refrain from selling the shelter house land to anyone.

**THE SHELTER HOUSE HAS 2 ACRE AND 574 DECIMAL LAND AT BALAGANDI REVENUE VILLAGE IN PURI CITY**

**THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION HAD EARLIER SOLD 340 DECIMALS OF BAGALA DHARMASHALA TO SIX EVICTED LODGING HOUSE OWNERS**

The district administration had earlier sold 340 decimals of Bagala Dharmashala to six evicted lodging house owners.

“A benevolent person had established Bagala Dharmashala in Puri to provide night shelter facility to devotees. Poor devotees used to stay in this dharmashala by paying just Rs 20 each for a day. Besides, locals were organising weddings and other social functions by pay-

ing only Rs 100. The state government had illegally transferred the dharmashala land to the ownership of the revenue department. Now, the administration is selling the land to private parties,” Sarangi alleged.

Sarangi asked the district administration to stop selling the dharmashala land immediately and cancel the sale deeds with six evicted lodging house owners. “The administration is free to sell any other government land to evicted people,” he said. The Puri MLA further claimed that around Rs 3 crore has been spent from a central scheme to improve infrastructure at the dharmashala recently.

It is worth mentioning here that Kanheialal Bagala had set up a shelter house for devotees in the Holy City here by purchasing land from the Bengal government in 1899. Bagala had donated the land and the dharmashala to Puri Collector in 1905. At present, the shelter house has 2 acre and 574 decimal land at Balagandi revenue village here, sources said.

### Demolition around Srimandir resumes

After a gap of five months, the district administration Friday resumed demolition near Srimandir to lay a heritage corridor around the 12th century shrine. At least three residential buildings close to the west gate of the shrine were demolished amid tight security. The owners of these buildings had earlier sold their land to the administration, sources said.

## NHRC ASKS CS TO ADDRESS WOES OF DALIT FAMILIES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 21:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Chief Secretary to address the woes of six Dalit families whose houses had been razed to ground by culprits at Shalevata gram panchayat under Loisingha police limits of Bolangir August 11.

The commission, while hearing an application filed by rights activist Himanshu Sekhar Nayak, asked the Chief Secretary to direct district authorities to take appropriate steps within eight weeks and intimate the commission. The panel has also sought stringent action against the culprits involved in the demolition of the houses of the Dalit families.

The sarpanch, Hemakanti Munda, misused the powers vested with her by the state government due to Covid-19 pandemic as per the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005. The accused demolished the houses of the Dalits constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana-Gramin scheme.

The landless families constructed the houses on vacant government plots after getting permission from Tehsildar and revenue inspector. However, the Sarpanch's husband along with eight others bulldozed the houses of the six tribal families with a JCB machine August 11. Later, police arrested the lady Sarpanch and her husband after registering a case in this regard. Eight other associates of the Sarpanch are still at large.

Nayak urged the commission to direct the authorities to pay compensation of Rs 8 lakh to each family, 10 decimals land to the landless families free of cost and exemplary action against the culprits.

### COVID REVIEW

## Rework tack to check Covid spike, DMs told

**The rate and cause of spread differ from area to area. The nature of spread in rural area is different from that of urban and city areas. The border areas with neighboring states also have their own uniqueness. As such, Collectors must rework their own district specific strategies**

ASIT TRIPATHY | CHIEF SECRETARY



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 21:** With an aim to blunt the continuous spike in Covid positive cases in many districts, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy has asked Collectors to identify the exact causes of the rise in positive cases and revise their strategies to contain it.

Tripathy gave this direction while taking a district wise review of the pandemic on a digital mode with Covid observers and Collectors Thursday.

“The rate and cause of spread differ from area to area. The nature of spread in rural area is different from that of urban and city areas. The border areas with neighboring states also have their own uniqueness. The growth centers with adjoining villages may need a different approach. As such, Collectors must rework their own district specific strategies and should keep updating the approaches with changing situations,” he said. The Collectors were directed to contain the spike of the disease in rural areas within a week. Stating that Covid hospitals should be kept free for treating the patients requiring critical care, he said, “A robust home isolation mechanism and frequent follow up with the patients by health personnel would be more helpful for physical and mental health of non-serious and asymptomatic cases.”

Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mohapatra, who was also present at the meet, said, “Since Covid positive patients with co-morbidity are vulnerable

to grow serious, each district must have a robust strategy to pick them up to the hospitals at an early stage for proper treatment.”

Additional Chief Secretary Health and Family Welfare Pradeep Kumar Mohapatra said, “An expert body with experienced medical professors is now functioning in the state for providing critical care advice to doctors. The treating physicians in different districts should be in active contact with the expert team for containing the death rate.”

Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena sought to encourage home isolation of a-symptomatic or mild symptomatic positive cases instead of burdening the Covid care centers and hospitals. A review showed that the strategy adopted by Ganjam district administration was effective in reducing the rate of infection in the district.

Ganjam Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange said the strategies like intensive house to house survey, digitization of the survey data, identification of vulnerable persons with co-morbidity, dedicated call centers for incoming and outgoing calls, strict enforcement of containment zones while ensuring necessary services helped the district administration in containing the rate of infection.

The Collectors of Rayagada, Sundargarh, Cuttack, Khurda along with Bhubaneswar municipal commissioner presented updated situation with strategies being followed in their respective areas.

### BEAUTIFICATION PLAN



A building near Srimandir in Puri is being demolished Friday for setting up of a heritage corridor around the shrine

## NGT seeks info on Mahanadi encroachment

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 21:** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has asked the state government to look into possible encroachments on the flood plains of the Mahanadi river in Cuttack district.

A two-judge bench tribunal was hearing a case on encroachment on Mahanadi riverbed at Rantilo in the district when it took suo motu cognizance of the matter and expanded the hearing to more such areas in the district and asked the government to inquire into the matter and inform them accordingly.

The NGT has asked the government to examine if the areas close to the new campus of SCB Medical College and Bali Yatra Ground are reporting encroachments and illegal structures in contravention of



the law. “During the hearing, it also transpired that such encroachments may be taking place at other locations of the flood plains, including near the Cuttack Medical College or near Bali Yatra Ground,” the order of NGT said.

“Let these aspects be looked into by a committee and a further factual and action taken report fur-

nished within three months,” it said.

The court meanwhile asked the government to take action against erring parties as per law. It also went through a Joint Inspection Report of the Joint Committee.

“...It is clear that the committee has found violations of law in raising construction in the active flood

plain area or no development zone of the river. However, there is no action taken report. If the state authorities have found violations, it is for them to take remedial measures to enforce the law,” it said.

All new projects of the government and private bodies on the flood plains of the river Mahanadi and adjoining areas have come under the lens of the watchdog.

Earlier, while hearing a case of encroachment on the Mahanadi riverbed, the NGT sought formation of a joint panel and asked them to visit the site and give their report to the NGT.

The joint inspection report by the district administration, State Pollution Control Board, Central Pollution Control admitted existence of illegal structures on the areas.

## 2 members join Odisha Public Service Commission

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 21:** The state government Friday appointed retired IAS officer Bibhuti Bhusan Patnaik and ex-VC of Gangadhar Meher University Sudhansu Sekhar Rath as members of the State Public Service Commission (OPSC).

Patnaik retired as registrar of co-operative societies July 31. He served as tourism director, Jharsuguda Collector and director, welfare of PWDs. Prior to that he had field experience in many districts in various capacities.



Rath had served as first Vice Chancellor of Gangadhar Meher University. He has profound knowledge and experience in teaching and applied research in economics, finance, management and allied subjects.

Rath has published many articles in national and international journals of repute. He has also extended consultancy services to World Bank, UNDP, NIPFP, IIPA, among others. At present, retired brigadier Laxmi Charan Patnaik is the chairman of OPSC while Namita Mohanty is a member.

## ‘Pandemic hits reproductive health of women’

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 21:** A recent study by the Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSO) claimed that the reproductive health of women suffered a setback during the COVID 19 pandemic. The survey was done on close to 700 women and 2,278 school-going kids in six districts, mostly tribal ones.

The study claimed that most women and adolescent girls struggled to get access to public health centres due to non-availability of public transports. The report highlighted the lack of access to healthcare services and more reliance of people on quacks and home treatment.

“While 66 percent preferred traditional treatments, 13 per cent went to village quacks for their treatment,” the report said.

The survey said the menstrual health as well as consumption of iron and folic acid was majorly disrupted due to the pandemic. “The reproductive health services have been adversely affected. Out of the



### WORRYING TREND

The study claimed that most women and adolescent girls struggled to get access to public health centres due to non-availability of public transports

It highlighted lack of access to healthcare services and more reliance of people on quacks and home treatment	While 66 percent preferred traditional treatments, 13 per cent went to village quacks for their treatment, said the report
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total respondents, only 40 per cent could be able to avail iron and folic acid tablets,” the report said.

“While inquiring about the sanitation aspect of adolescent girls, it was found that only 35 per cent of respondents had accessed sanitary napkins. School-going girls used to get certain number of sanitary napkins every month from school free of cost,” the report said.

The CYSO study said ASHAs reported that they had no stock of

sanitary napkins with them for distribution during the lockdown period.

It also said that 13.17 per cent of women were hungry and 19 per cent women skipped meals due to unavailability of food. The report also said that many lactating women were deprived of nutrition supplements from Anganwadi centres. “Among lactating mothers, 48% did not receive chhatua and eggs from Anganwadi centres,”



# Rain toll 5; govt allays flood fear

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, August 21:** Incessant downpour triggered by a series of low pressure areas formed over Bay of Bengal has claimed five lives in the state so far and increased the water levels in several rivers, officials said.

The state government, however, ruled out any fear of flood. It said though the water level in some rivers had crossed the danger mark, it is likely to recede as the intensity of rainfall in upper catchment areas has now reduced.

**POURING WOES**  
Many parts of the state have been battered by heavy rain under the impact of four back-to-back low pressure areas formed over Bay of Bengal

The fresh spell of rain has claimed two more lives due to wall collapse incidents Friday. While a woman died due to wall collapse in Kuliana area of Mayurbhanj, another person was killed in a similar incident caused by heavy rainfall in Rimalal area of Deogarh district, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) P K Jena said.

The death toll in rain-related incidents in the state has risen to five as two persons had been swept away by the strong current of a river in Moroda area of Mayurbhanj district August 19 and another person was killed in a wall collapse incident August 16 in Patnagarh area of Bolangir district, Jena said.

Ruling out the likelihood of flood in any part of the state at this juncture, he said the intensity of rain-fall has decreased and the state recorded an average rainfall of 16mm since Thursday with Kosagumuda block in Nabarangpur



Several areas in Malkangiri grapple with disruption in road communication due to the severe deluge

uge, they said.

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Ruling out the likelihood of flood in any part of the state at this juncture, he said the intensity of rain-fall has decreased and the state recorded an average rainfall of 16mm since Thursday with Kosagumuda block in Nabarangpur

district reporting 126.2mm and Padia block in Malkangiri 112.3mm rainfall during the last 24 hours till 8.30am of Friday.

While 22 blocks recorded more than 50mm rainfall during the period, 59 blocks received rainfall between 20 and 50mm, Jena pointed out.

The water level of Baitarani river stood at 17.94metre at Akhuapada in Bhadrak district as against the danger mark of 17.83, but the embankments of the river are quite strong. The water level is likely to fall as the intensity of rainfall in catchment areas has subsided, an official said.

Similarly, the water level of Jalaka river had risen to 6.6metre, much above the danger mark of 5.5metre, but there is no threat of flood and the situation is under control, said Water Resources Chief engineer Jyotirmaya Rath, adding 'there is no need to panic.'

Malkangiri district is grappling

with submergence of some areas with water and road link disruption following incessant rainfall, he said, adding that many bridges in the district are under water as they are at low level.

Road communication between Kalimela and Padia in Malkangiri continues to be snapped with water flowing over a bridge near



A damaged culvert at Niliguda in Malkangiri district

OP PHOTOS

## nCoV recoveries cross 50K; caseload at 72,718



Specially-designed vehicles of BMC sensitise denizens on COVID-19

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, August 21:** State's COVID-19 tally surged to 72,718 Friday with 2,698 fresh cases while 10 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 390, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said. The recoveries Friday crossed the 50,000-mark.

Four deaths were reported from Ganjam, two from Khurda and one each from Angul, Koraput, Nayagarh and Subarnapur districts, said the official.

The 10 fresh deaths included six males and four females. Four of them were in the age group of above 60 years, five in the age group of 40 to 60 years and the rest one was 35-year-old, the H&FW department said, adding that of the 390 deaths, Ganjam district alone accounted for 170 fatalities followed by Khurda (54).

On the other hand, a total of 1,675 cases were recorded in quarantine centres and the remaining were

detected during contact tracing. The fresh coronavirus cases were reported from all the 30 districts of Odisha, including the highest number of 475 infections from Khurda followed by Cuttack (207), Ganjam (162), Rayagada (154), Sundargarh (103) and Balasore (102).

The twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, meanwhile, reported 324 and 149 cases respectively.

Ganjam, which used to register the highest number of cases and COVID casualties, has been witnessing a decline in the detection of COVID cases in the past few days. The district is now in third position in the detection of COVID cases daily as Khurda and Cuttack districts have jumped to the first and second position respectively.

The state, meanwhile, crossed 50,000 recoveries as 1,926 more persons cured from the viral infection Friday, the H&FW department tweeted.

## Utilise time fruitfully, minister tells pupils

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 21:** Higher Education Minister Arun Sahoo Friday asked students to utilise free time efficiently by improving their skills and learning something new in which, he said, the parents and teachers should play a key role.

He said this at a virtual felicitation ceremony of Nayagarh students who performed well in Class X and Class XII exams 2020. The district retains top positions in Class XII science and commerce results. In Class X examination, the Nayagarh students occupied fourth position. On the occasion, Sahoo said that a student's bright future depends on hard work.

School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash praised the students and teachers for their work during Covid-19 pandemic.



A road near Unit-1 market in Bhubaneswar, Friday, sees a heavy rush as people go on shopping spree ahead of Ganesh puja and weekend shutdown

OP PHOTO

## Shelter home head held for sexual abuse

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, August 21:** A 68-year-old man of British origin has been arrested on charge of sexually abusing a minor tribal boy, who studies in a shelter home run by him in Jharsuguda district, a senior police official said Friday.

The accused has been running the residential missionary institute at Jharsuguda with more than 500 children for about 25 years, Jharsuguda Superintendent of Police (SP) Rahul PR said.

The man, who has adopted Indian citizenship, was arrested Thursday on the basis of a complaint lodged by the minor boy, a hostel inmate. Further investigation is in progress,

the SP said. The man has been booked under relevant sections of IPC, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and SC/ST (POA) Act, the SP said. As per the complaint lodged by the boy, the man had sexually assaulted him when they were returning from Rayagada last year, sources in the police said. The incident came to light during a probe into misuse of funds being provided by a foreign NGO, they said.

The man had launched 'Faith Outreach' along with his wife around 25 years ago to provide education to tribal students. It has a centre which provides home and care for abandoned babies and a children's home that provides cloth-

ing, education, medical care and daily food to over 500 poor children, the sources said.

The organisation also has a training centre that prepares volunteers to work as social workers in the local communities.

However, the hostel at the shelter home has been closed since March this year in view of Covid-19 pandemic, a police official said.

No senior official of the organisation was immediately available for comment on the incident.

In a similar incident, a man who ran a child shelter home in Dhenkanal had been arrested in 2018 following allegations made by the inmates that he physically and sexually abused them.

# Ganesh Puja ban dashes Jatni idol makers' hopes

**COVID PLAYS SPOILSPORT**

**THE GRAND CELEBRATION OF GANESH PUJA IN JATNI HAS BEEN A GOOD SOURCE OF EARNING FOR THE IDOL MAKERS**

**THE IDOL MAKERS HAD EXPECTED THE SAME EARNING THIS YEAR AS WELL**

**BUT THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION'S ORDER REGARDING NO COMMUNITY PUJA CELEBRATIONS THIS YEAR HAS WATERED DOWN THEIR PLANS**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khurda, August 21:** The district administration's decision banning grand Ganesh Puja celebrations this year in Khurda's Jatni town has cast a shadow on the hope of clay idol makers.

Every year as the festive season sets in, a kind of festive mood fills the air in Jatni town. Starting from educational institutions to clubs and puja committees, all get charged with this festive fervour. Lord Ganesh is worshipped at over 200 pandals and the festival lasts for 12 days in this town.

The grand celebration of Ganesh Puja has been a good income source for the idol makers here. The idol makers had expected the same earning this year as well. But the district administration's order regarding no community puja celebrations this year has watered down their plans.

"Hoping for the situation to improve by Ganesh Puja, I had made many small idols, some bigger and some large idols. We the idol makers here always long for this festival as we earn handsomely during this time of the year. The cancellation of Ganesh

## VIOLATORS TO FACE ARREST

**BHUBANESWAR:** The Commissionerate Police will intensify patrolling in City Saturday to check any violation of the order prohibiting community celebration of Ganesh Puja. DCP Umashankar Dash said that all the puja committees have been informed about the administration's decision. The committees also assured the cops that the celebrations will remain confined to the individual houses. Dash also warned that the cops will seize music system and arrest anyone found violating the orders Saturday.

Puja has left us nowhere. I am not sure what to do with the idols that we have already made," idol maker Sukant Behera said.

Khurda Collector Sanat Mohanty said, "The cancellation

of puja celebration at pandals and educational institutions is for people's safety. If we get applications from poor idol makers for assistance, we'll take a call after evaluating the realities."

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# Govt aid eludes many in Mayurbhanj

VARIOUS QUARTERS HAVE SNIFFED SCAM IN COVID SOPS AND SOUGHT INVESTIGATION

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, August 21:** The Centre has made a provision of Covid assistance for people with ration cards to alleviate their suffering during lockdowns and shutdowns. However, over 21,000 beneficiaries have not taken their assistance in Mayurbhanj district.

Each family with a ration card is entitled to get Rs 1000 each month. Official records say, ration card holders have been provided free rations like rice and wheat. During distribution of rations, the beneficiaries are supposed to be given such monetary benefits.

Various quarters have sniffed a scam in it and demanded a probe into non-payment of assistance to the beneficiaries.

Reports said, in view of the livelihood and normal activities being affected by the pandemic, the central government had provided funds four months ago to the families living below poverty line. Each beneficiary is supposed to get cash benefits directly.

According to official information, the district has 6,06,943 ration card holders in 26 blocks, two municipalities and two NACs.

It was learnt that all beneficiaries have been delivered their



The the district has 6,06,943 ration card holders in 26 blocks, two municipalities and two NACs

In the last four months, all the beneficiaries were delivered their quota of rations along with monetary aid while 21,033 beneficiaries have not received their monetary aid despite having received their rations

It was learnt that the district administration has returned their assistance money worth Rs 20.93 lakh to the Central government

rations in the last four months while 21,033 beneficiaries have not received their monetary aid despite having received their rations.

The district civil supplies department has returned their assistance money worth Rs 20.93 lakh to the Central government.

On the other hand, utilization certificates of delivered rations and assistance worth Rs 1.89 crore have not come from 13 blocks and two NACs.

Many youth leaders and social activists pointed out that if all beneficiaries were given rations, why 21033 beneficiaries were deprived of monetary assistance.

Rajesh Singh, a youth leader of Baripada, asked when all beneficiaries were given rations why were several thousands deprived of their entitled money.

There are lapses in the public distribution system, he added.

“These beneficiaries are suspected to be ghost ones while their rations worth lakhs of rupees have been looted. If the district administration carries out an investigation, all things will be clear,” Singh observed.

A case in point is 70-year old Banita Mukhi, a resident of ward-27 under Baripada municipality. She has been living a miserable life in a shanty. Sadly, she has not

been able to get 5 kg free rice despite repeated complaints.

Laxmidhar Habda, a former councillor alleged that wealthy people are delivered rice, wheat, dal and financial assistance while the poor are deprived of their entitlements.

Suspecting it to be a scam, he said civil supplies officials are involved in it. He demanded an investigation into it.

District civil supplies officer Surendra Kumar Padhi said next steps will be taken in delivery of monetary assistance as per the direction of the Collector.

There will be discussions with BDOs and executive officers about delivery of assistance he added.

## SHORT TAKES

### Baby elephant found dead

**Sundargarh:** The forest department Friday recovered the carcass of an elephant calf from a pond near Khajurbahal village in Doghara section under Hemagiri forest range in Sundargarh district. The real reason for the death of the two-month-old male calf is yet to be ascertained. However, officials in the department suspected that the baby elephant might have got trapped in the slushy mud in the pond in its bid to drink water. Some locals spotted the carcass and informed forest officials. They said, the baby elephant was part of a 15-member herd seen near Khajurbahal village for the last several days. There were three calves in the herd.

### Bodies of woman, 2 kids found in well

**Koraput:** Police recovered the bodies of a woman and her two children from a well under mysterious circumstances in ward no-13 under Kotpad NAC in Koraput district Friday morning. According to sources, the woman and her husband often fought over family issues. Thursday evening, they again entered into a verbal duel following which the woman left the house taking her 12-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter with her. The trio did not return home that night. Some villagers spotted the bodies in the well Friday morning. They immediately informed Kotpad police who reached the spot. With the help of fire services personnel and villagers, they brought out the bodies from the well and sent them for postmortem. While local people were of the opinion that the woman along with her two children had jumped into the well, police have launched an investigation. They have detained the husband of the deceased for interrogation, it was learnt.

# Types of patients who can't donate plasma in Ganjam

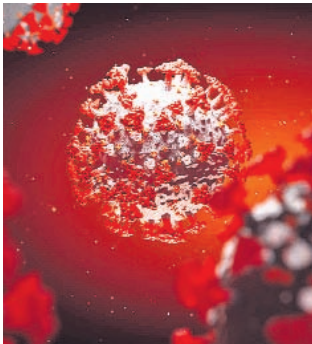
POST NEWS NETWORK

**Ganjam, August 21:** Ganjam COVID-19 hospital Friday requested COVID recovered patients in the district to volunteer for plasma donations so that serious patients can benefit from it. That said, the hospital also put out a list of factors highlighting the patients that are not eligible for plasma donation.

According to a tweet by the hospital, if the recovered patient is a diabetic and under insulin s/he cannot donate plasma.

Similarly, if the recovered patient's blood pressure is more than 100-140mm Hg (Systolic) and 60-90mm Hg (diastolic) with or without medicine; if the patient has uncontrolled diabetes or hypertension with change in medication in last 28 days, if the patient is a cancer survivor or if the patient has chronic kidney, heart, lungs or liver diseases, then s/he cannot donate plasma.

Likewise, if the recovered patient is a woman and has ever been pregnant she also cannot be a



plasma donor. The tweet says COVID recovered patients between 18 and 60 years, above 55 kilograms who were earlier diagnosed with COVID-19 and have tested negative since can donate plasma.

Notably, health screening of COVID-19 recovered patients in Ganjam district started from Thursday and it would go on till August 26. During the screening, the recovered patients have been asked to volunteer for plasma donation.

## Health screening of recovered patients starts

**BERHAMPUR:** Health screening of recovered COVID-19 patients started here from Thursday, informed sub-divisional magistrate in a tweet.

His tweet also said that the recovered patients were motivated to donate their plasma so that lives of others can be saved. The screening will continue till August 26.

About the screening drive, Ganjam District Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange Wednesday informed in a

tweet that the health screening of recovered patients will help find out if they have any health issues like breathlessness and body pain.

During this survey, AYUSH doctors, ANMs, Anganwadi and Asha workers will visit the houses of recovered persons. They will collect data if they have any symptom of COVID-19. If anyone of them is found to be symptomatic, they will be immediately admitted to COVID hospital, it was learnt.

## Covid stigma forces wife to light hubby's pyre

**MALKANGIRI:** The wife of a deceased COVID-19 patient had to light the funeral pyre of her husband as she did not receive any cooperation from relatives and locals. This incident took place at Mandapali village under Mathili block in Malkangiri district. The deceased, Krushna Chandra Nayak, breathed his last Thursday evening. The incident once more illustrates the ignorance of people in dealing with the COVID-19 infected people.

The deceased had been working as a block education officer (BEO) under Lamataput block in Koraput district. Before contracting the virus, Krushna had other comorbidities like high blood pressure



and diabetes. He was admitted to a COVID-19 facility in Jeypore after he developed complications due to the comorbidities.

During routine testing Krushna was found to be COVID-19 positive. After his condition deteriorated, a decision was taken to shift him to Visakhapatnam. However he died en route to Visakhapatnam.

His body was then brought back to his native place – Mandapali village in Malkangiri district.

As he was a COVID-19 infected person, co-villagers and relatives did not cooperate in cremation of the deceased. They refused to help the bereaved wife and stayed away from the family. Finding no other way wife Pushpa cremated her husband's body as per tribal rituals, by wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) kit. The incident just goes to show the stigma which still remains in the minds of people regarding coronavirus. In spite of constant awareness programmes on social media platforms and on the phone, people still want to stay away from families affected by coronavirus.

# Locals seek tourist hub tag for ‘Hati Minar’

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, August 21:** Notwithstanding a plethora of measures by the forest department to protect elephants in Keonjhar; there has been no respite in the deaths of animals in the mineral rich district. The casualties of the animals due to poaching, electrocution, road accidents shook the conscience of Krushna Chandra Nayak, a retired lecturer. He felt the need for creating public awareness about the need for protection and safety of animals whose population is gradually declining.

In January 2019, he built a 35-ft tall memorial pillar in memory of an elephant which got electrocuted on a paddy field at Jali village under Champua block. The pillar is called ‘Hati Minar’.

He donated five acres of land to



A tusker strayed into a paddy field of Krushna Chandra Nayak Sept 7, 2009, but no sooner did it reach the paddy field to feed on the ripe paddy, then it raised its trunk to touch the sagging high tension power lines and fell to the ground

Nayak's mother was deeply shocked by its death and asked him to do something memorable for the elephant

In January 2019, he built a 35-ft tall memorial pillar in memory of the dead elephant at Jali village

develop the site into a children's park and planted 30,000 saplings for a herbal garden.

It may be noted that a tusker came wandering into a paddy field of Nayak September 7, 2009, but no sooner did it reach the paddy field of Naik to feed on the ripe paddy after quenching its thirst at the nearby river; then it raised its trunk to touch the sagging high tension power lines. Within seconds it fell to the ground. The forest department had cut off its tusks and buried its carcass there.

Nayak's mother was deeply shocked by its death and asked him to do something memorable for the elephant. “My mother was too shocked about the elephant dying on our field. She asked me to build a memorial for the dead elephant on our paddy field where it died. She was so heartbroken over the death

# Baitarani flows above danger level; floods loom in Bhadrak

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhadrak/Aradi, August 21:** Owing to incessant rains triggered by a cyclonic circulation over the Bay of Bengal, the Baitarani is flowing above the danger level near Akhuapada in Bhadrak district Friday. The spate in the river has brought fear and apprehension in the minds of the villagers living close to the banks of the Baitarani.

As against the danger mark of 17.83 metres near Akhuapada, the river was reportedly seen flowing at 17.84 metres at 7.00am Friday morning. The water level Thursday was at 17.56 metres.

The Baitarani flows through Keonjhar district before entering



## Gondia-Jajpur link snaps in Dhenkanal

**DHENKANAL:** A road from Tolakalundi under Gandia block stretching up to Turanga village under Dharmasala block connecting Gandia with Jajpur was completely inaccessible Friday due to heavy rains in the district over last two days. Traffic movement on this particular stretch came to a complete halt.

According to reports, the road was handed over to Dhenkanal works department a year back for carrying out repair work. However, the road was not repaired despite repeated demands

of local villagers.

Similarly, in another incident, rainwater washed away the concrete-barricades of Baidyakateni bridge under Dhenkanal works department at Laulai village of Nihalaprasad panchayat in the district.

Incessant rains have created a flood-like situation here leaving it entirely waterlogged. Town planning area, Gayatri Nagar, Karigara Sahi, Kanchan Bazaar and Kumbhar Sahi have been badly affected, official sources informed.



Bhadrak district. So rainfall in the neighbouring district also affects the Bhadrak district residents. There has been very heavy downpour in both the districts in the last two days. This has resulted in the river being in spate and hundreds of acres of agricultural lands in Bhandaripokhari, Dhannagar and Tihidi areas are already sub-

merged under floodwater.

As Keonjhar district has been issued 'red warning' for heavy to heavy rainfall by the weathermen, the farmers in Bhadrak district are already worried over the prospect of severe crop loss.

Meanwhile, a report from Aradi said that an approach road of Kaiangola bridge and its stone pack-

## e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE

### Tender Online No. 04 of 2020-21

No.O-266:-

1	Name of the Work	Road works for 2020-21 mentioned in column 2 of table of N.I.T.
2	No. of works	3 Nos. (From 53.00 lakh to 62.00 lakh)
3	Estimated cost	Specified against each work in column 3 of table of N.I.T. excluding Goods and Services Tax.
4	Earnest Money Deposit	Specified against each work in column 4 of table of N.I.T.
5	Period of completion	Specified against each work in column 6 of table of N.I.T.
6	Class of contractors	Specified against each work in column 5 of table of N.I.T.
7	Cost of Tender Paper	Specified against each work in column 7 of table of N.I.T.

Other details for the N.I.T.:

1	Procurement Officer	Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Jagatsinghpur
2	Date & time of availability of bid documents in Portal.	10.09.2020 at 11.00 hrs.
3	Last date & time for receipt of bids in Portal.	19.09.2020 at 17.00 hrs.
4	Last date & time of seeking of Bid clarification	18.09.2020 at 15.00 hrs.
5	Opening of tender (Technical Bid)	21.09.2020 at 11.00 hrs at the Office of Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Jagatsinghpur.

Further details can be seen from the Government website: [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in)

Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Jagatsinghpur  
OIPR-25056/11/0003/2021



**ODISHA LIFT IRRIGATION CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(A GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA UNDERTAKING)  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,**  
**L.I. DIVISION, PARALAKHEMUNDI (GAJAPATI)**  
E-mail-eoelcpcpd@gmail.com, Phone No.- 06815-222282

## e-Procurement Notice

**Bid Identification No. 02/2020-21 OLIC (PKD) Dt.20.08.2020**

No. CAD-389: The Executive Engineer, L.I. Division, Paralakhemundi, At-Goura chandrapur Opposite- Centurian School, Dist- Gajapati invites items Rate bids in online mode for “Installation of new Lift Irrigation Projects / Revival of Lift Irrigation Projects” along with energisation on Turnkey basis from reputed contractors/firms having valid PWD license of required class and valid HT license issued by E.L.B.O. Contractors/firm should have experience in similar nature of works for the work. Proof of registrations, experience from appropriate authorities are to be uploaded along with the bid/ bids. The authority reserves the right to cancel any of the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. Number of Package                                       | 16 Numbers                   |
| 2. Estimated Cost Approx                                   | Rs.2.45 to 14.26 lakhs       |
| 3. Tender Cost   | As per DTCN                  |
| 4. Class of Contractor                                     | As per DTCN                  |
| 5. Date & Time of Publication                              | Dt.26.08.2020 from 11.00 hrs |
| 6. Date & Time of Closing                                  | Dt.07.09.2020 at 17.00 hrs   |
| 7. Date & Time of opening of bid                           | Dt.08.09.2020 at 12.00 A.M   |
| 8. The bidders have to participate in online bidding only. |                              |

Further details can be seen from the website [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in). Addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender, if any, can be seen in the said website.

**Sd./- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
OIPR-32348/11/0002/2021





If you can always smile at life, life will always smile at you.

THE MOTHER

## Asthana in new avataar

Two years after his highly publicized ouster from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), its former Special Director Rakesh Asthana has been named Director General of the Border Security Force (BSF). Interestingly, he continues to hold additional charge of Director General, Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). Checking narcotics smuggling remains a big concern; and in the BSF, which patrols the borders, Asthana as DG is back in a position where he can play a more active role.

Asthana has served in the state government and at the Centre where he served twice in the CBI. The 1984-batch IPS officer from the Gujarat cadre also did a low-profile stint at the Bureau of Civil Aviation and Security.

At the CBI, he was involved in investigating many high-profile cases. During his first stint in the agency, he investigated the fodder scam, which resulted in the conviction of former Bihar chief minister Lalu Prasad Yadav. He also achieved signal success in building a water-tight case for the extradition of escaped liquor baron Vijay Mallya from the UK. He led CBI's case in the UK courts. In Gujarat, he served in crucial posts such as Vadodara's police commissioner under then chief minister Narendra Modi.

### Murmu rattles IA&AS

The appointment of former Lt Governor of Jammu & Kashmir; GC Murmu as India's Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has not been welcomed by the Indian Audit & Accounts Service (IA&AS) officers. It is being seen as yet another instance of the dominance of the IAS cadre over other all-India services. Not that it's been known to make any difference to this Sarkar once it has made up its mind!

Sources say that in becoming CAG, Murmu who is from the 1985-batch Gujarat cadre of the IAS, has superseded at least six IA&AS officers. But he is not the first IAS officer to become the nation's top auditor: Murmu's immediate predecessor, Rajiv Mehrishi, was from the 1978 IAS cadre, and he too had followed Shashikant Sharma, who belonged to the 1976 batch. Many would also remember CAG Vinod Rai, a 1972-batch IAS officer. Apparently, the last IA&AS officer to become CAG was A Bakshi whose tenure ended in 1978.

Since then, CAGs have been from the tribe of the "heaven-born"; but, clearly, the IA&AS officers who have lost the race to become CAG are unwilling to accept the IAS "outsiders". Will the current resentment subside "naturally" or will Murmu face rough weather? We'll have to wait and see.

### Tell-all tales

The arrival of "tell-all" books by Viral Acharya and Urjit Patel has whetted the curiosity of many who are looking to find some skeletons tumble out.

Both economists did stints at RBI and left in more or less similar circumstances – before the end of their terms. While Patel was RBI governor, Acharya is a former deputy governor of RBI, who quit six months before his tenure ended in 2019.

According to Acharya, Patel quit because of several attempts to undermine the autonomy of the bank by the government. It was something that was widely discussed in the media at that time. However, Patel had claimed that he had resigned for "personal reasons", although it was widely speculated that one reason he disagreed with the government was on the issue of parting with the central bank's reserves. However, he seems to have mended fences now as he has been appointed as chairman of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy.

Acharya, too, quit after a series of spats with government officials. His book was published close on the heels of Patel's book which provides a glance into how India's bankruptcy code was weakened by several stakeholders within the broader banking system. Acharya has argued that numerous policies "regressed" the economic climate in the country while he was deputy governor between early January 2017 and mid-July 2019.

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## WISDOM CORNER

- The most distinguished persons become more revolutionary as they grow older. **GEORGE BERNARD SHAW**
- Get out of your head and get into your heart. Think less, feel more. **OSHO**
- When the winds of change blows, some people build walls and others build windmills. **PROVERB**

## WORDSWORTH

### ■ Terrific

Words often shift in meaning and decay in power through being adopted as mere superlatives. Another example is horrid, which originally meant something so frightful as to make one's hair stand on end but which – as the first edition of the Oxford English Dictionary noted in its gently chiding way a century ago – was then "especially frequent as a feminine term of strong aversion". Terrific started out, around the time of Milton, as the adjective related to terror, "causing terror, terrifying; fitted to terrify; dreadful, terrible, frightful", as the OED comprehensively puts it. However, even before Dickens's time, it had begun to be used for anything merely severe or excessive. A writer in 1809 complained that business was terrific when he meant that he was busy. Another in 1855 described applause as terrific when she wanted to say that it was intense and prolonged. Examples from later in the century mention a terrific explosion, which was powerful but didn't evoke terror, while a terrific velocity was merely substantial. T

### ■ Tetrapyloctomy

Tetrapyloctomy is the art or skill of splitting a hair four ways. Don't be a mere two-way hair-splitter; grasp your pedantry firmly in both hands and split your hair crosswise into four. This word has found a secure if niche existence in the lexicons of academics with a sense of humour since it was invented by Umberto Eco in his novel Foucault's Pendulum, published in English in 1989. In a mocking attempt to reform higher education, one character proposes a School of Comparative Irrelevance, whose aim would be to turn out scholars capable of endlessly increasing the number of unnecessary topics. In it would be a Department of Tetrapyloctomy, whose function would be to inculcate a sense of irrelevance in its students. Another department would study useless techniques, such as Assyrio-Babylonian philately and Aztec Equestration. The word combines tetra, four, with pilus, hair (as in depilatory), and the ending -tomy, a cutting.

## LORD RIDING WITH ME


Story goes that, late one night, a preacher was driving on a country road and had a wreck. A farmer stopped and said, "Sir, are you okay?"

The preacher said, "Yes, I had the Lord riding with me." The farmer said, "Well, you better let him ride with me, because you're gonna kill him."



FOCUS GDP/ENVIRONMENT

BALANCE COSTS, BENEFITS



There is need for reform of the EC process. It needs to be fast-tracked. Projects are hit by the long time taken in the grant of the environment, forest, wildlife, coastal and pollution clearances. The government could make a unified clearance process which looks at all these laws in one go while, at the same time, strengthening these laws



**WE MUST STRENGTHEN THE ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AND YET ENSURE SPEEDY IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS TO SECURE AN INCREASE IN GDP**

The Union government has sought to dilute many provisions of the Environment Impact Assessment Notification (EIA Notification) in order to speed up the establishment of factories and mega cities and making of highways. As per the plan, the requirement of public hearing is to be removed for certain projects, the ministry would be empowered to grant post-facto Environment Clearance (EC) to projects that are presently operating without EC, and large numbers of projects such as irrigation and dredging of rivers are to be exempted from obtaining an environment clearance, etc.

The intention of the government appears to be to help quickly establish mega cities and industries; and enable the speedier completion of highway projects. Plans apart, a prompt EC is however necessary for securing an increase in our GDP. The damage to the environment pushes back our GDP. A large numbers of our High Net-worth Individuals (HNIs) have migrated from India and taken their money with them. One of their grouses has been that the air and water in India are polluted. Thus, establishment of polluting industries may increase GDP directly but can lead to an even greater reduction in GDP due to fleeing of our money. We are also not able to attract tourists despite having the Taj Mahal, the Himalayas, the Ganga and the beaches of Goa because of poor environment.

One of the reasons for the poor state of our environment is that a number of projects meant ostensibly for the increase in GDP are actually bringing about the opposite result. Take for example, the National Waterway No 1 (NW1) being made on the Ganga. The cost of transporting one tone of material over a distance of one km on NW1 is said to be ₹1.06, against ₹1.36 by rail. It is said that the NW1 would lead to a saving of 30 paise per ton per kilometer. But we forget that the distance from Haldia to Varanasi by rail is about 800

km, against about 1,300 km by NW1, because the river meanders like a snake while the rail runs in a straight line. Thus, the cost of transporting one tonne of material from Haldia to Varanasi is about ₹1,370 by waterway and ₹1,080 by rail, despite the NW1 having a lower per ton per km cost. This project clearly harms the GDP.

More so if we add the loss of dolphins, Hilsa and other fishes, deterioration in water quality, etc. Yet, the officials of the Inland Waterways Authority of India are pushing the project for obvious reasons that are best left unsaid. At their behest, moreover, the government has sought to allow dredging of the rivers, saying environmental regulation was a hurdle in the GDP growth. The truth is, GDP will increase if such ill-planned projects are stalled. The environmental regulations will do a yeoman's service to the GDP by stalling such projects. They should be strengthened to help guard the GDP.

One specific area that requires attention is that the costs and ben-

efits of the projects must be assessed passionately. At present, the environmental regulations do not require any assessment whether a project is beneficial for the GDP or not. Also, the EIA, which is a precondition for grant of an EC, should be made by an independent agency appointed by the government. At present, the project proponent appoints the EIA Agency. Needless to say, he who pays the piper calls the tune.

Thus, EIAs suppress more environmental impacts than they disclose. For example, the environmental assessment of NW1 got done by no less an entity than the World Bank has ignored the fact that the distance is more through the waterways. The third area requiring attention is that an EC should be valid only for a specified number of years. Every project has a "commercial life" built into its financial assessment. The project is supposed to pay back the investment in this period. The hydro-power projects in the United States, for example, are given clearance for 30 years and the Project

Proponents are required to obtain fresh EC after this period. The underlying idea is that the Project Proponent has already recovered its investment and it suffers no loss if the project is scrapped.

There is need for reform of the EC process. It needs to be fast-tracked. Projects are hit by the long time taken in the grant of the environment, forest, wildlife, coastal and pollution clearances. The government could make a unified clearance process which looks at all these laws in one go while, at the same time, strengthening these laws.

The other area calling for reform is the interference from the courts. The copper plant of Vedanta has, for example, been closed down by the courts due to the violation of environmental regulations. This has forced the country to import copper, leading to a huge loss. There is a need to take a balanced view on this matter.

That said, there is need for speedy disposal of cases in the courts. The Prime Minister will be well-advised to take steps in this direction. He may meet with the Chief Justice of India to fast-track disposal of case involving economic activities. Secondly, the government should increase the strength of judges in National Green Tribunal, high courts and the Supreme Court by five times so that projects that are truly beneficial for the GDP are decided on speedily.

Thirdly, the number of working days of our courts should be increased. According to one study, the Supreme Court works for 190 days a year; the high courts an average of 232 days and lower courts 244 days. They all should be made to work for 280 days.

Environment protection and GDP go hand-in-hand. The problem lies in the slow working of the government officials and the Judges. We must strengthen the environmental laws and yet ensure speedy implementation of projects to secure an increase in GDP.

*The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore.*

## SPECTRUM COVID-19

# Russia's vaccine and cautious welcome

Nikunja Bihari Sahu

**APPREHENSIONS OF DANGER ARE PRIMARILY DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE VACCINE HAS BEEN CLEARED BY REGULATORY APPROVALS OF THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT WITHOUT PASSING THE CRUCIAL PHASE-3 HUMAN TRIALS**

Russia's announcement of a vaccine for Covid-19 is reminiscent of the Space Race during the Cold War period, when the US and the erstwhile USSR were competing hard to place the first satellite in Space and then Russia surprised the US and the world by launching Sputnik-1 Space mission on October 4, 1957. Now, Russia, the central entity of the USSR, is claiming another first.

The vaccine named as Sputnik V was developed by the Moscow-based Gamaleya National Research Center for Epidemiology and Microbiology of the Russian Healthcare Ministry. This is set for mass immunization in Russia in October, after inoculating medical personnel and frontline health workers. The vaccine will be given in two doses to stimulate and reinforce an immune system response against the novel coronavirus. The first dose of the vaccine was administered to Russian President Vladimir Putin's daughter herself to reinforce the claims of safety and efficacy.

Notably, the preventive mechanism developed by Russia is an adenovirus or a common cold virus-based viral vaccine. The vaccine



makes use of weakened particles of the novel coronavirus (the spike protein) to kick-start the body's immune system response against the invading pathogen. These coronavirus particles in the vaccine cannot harm the body as they cannot multiply. However, the announcement has not been greeted with excitement, as skepticism regarding the efficacy and safety of the vaccine is still looming large.

Significantly, the WHO has expressed concern over the potency and performance of the vaccine and urged Russia to release all its records of the vaccine trial for examination by experts. It must be noted, alongside, that top respiratory doctor Professor Alexander Chuchalin has quit the Russian health ministry, citing 'gross violations' of medical ethics concerning the development of the vaccine. Russia's leading virolo-

gist and former head of infectious diseases at Vector Institute, Alexander Chepurinov, has also expressed his concern over the safety of the vaccine and underlined the dangers of an increase in the spread of novel coronavirus instead of a subsidence of the pandemic.

Apprehensions of danger are primarily due to the fact that the vaccine has been cleared by regulatory approvals of the Russian government without passing through the crucial phase-3 human trials, wherein thousands of volunteers are dosed with the vaccine candidate to check for its side-effects and the immune system response induced by it. Even the phase-1 and phase-2 trials of the vaccine have been completed in a very short period of time of two months.

Considering the above shortcomings, it is unlikely that there would be too many takers around

the world for this vaccine. A question is whether the vaccine could make an entry to India. The regulatory authority here would not give its nod for mass inoculation of the vaccine as the risk of its performance over a large population including the children and the old could not be lost sight of.

Again, this process is time-consuming and many people would have died of the pandemic, they being deprived of the vaccine at the time of need. India could wait and carefully watch the effect of the vaccine over Russian population till October. In the event of encouraging results, we can go ahead with trials on our own population in a phased manner, keeping in view the highly extraordinary situation created due to the pandemic.

Caution is advised. We should keep in mind the fact that life of even a single individual is precious, and no one should be deprived of the blessings of science, particularly when a solution is lurking around the corner, from one or other unexpected quarters.

*The writer is education officer, Regional Science Centre, Bhopal.*

## Jobs for locals

Sir, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan's announcement on August 18, reserving government jobs for citizens of Madhya Pradesh may have its merit, but it also will aggravate the insider versus outsider issue. Also, what of an outside woman married to a man from MP, or the like, or of children of term-bound private sector and Central government employees who study in the state, and of outside students studying in MP? Their contributions to the state's economy cannot be ignored. The undercurrent of political employment and caste considerations will be more pervasive, leading to a standard work culture. Unemployment is a burning problem demanding urgent attention. But when a new law is enacted, it should not aggravate existing problems.

Prof Maguni Charan Behera  
RGU, ITANAGAR

## Dongria Kondhs' plight

Sir, One among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) in Odisha is Dongria Kondhs. They are fewer in number and are restricted to the Niyamgiri hills of Rayagada and Kalahandi districts. Horticulture, shifting agriculture and Nature's other offerstake care of their material requirements. The Dongria Kondhs are simple and down-to-earth in their approach to life. Their earnings are completely from Nature. They strive hard in their own farms to raise vegetable crops and rare products like als, ginger, turmeric etc, as also fruits including pineapples, mangoes and oranges. Their income is also by selling their own farm products and forest products in the local markets. The fear of the virus spread has halted all public activities. These families need governmental and other support.

Santosh Kumar Satapathy,  
PARALAKHE MUNDI

## Narrow village roads

Sir, There was a time when bullock carts, tractors, cars, and trucks have passed through the village roads with great ease. In a space of the past 10 years, it is very difficult for a bicycle rider to move along the village road. Village after village, influential people are occupying the road, storing sand in heaps, chips, crushed stone and other materials there for future use. Some are extending their home and walls illegally on to the roads. The local administration or road authority is not taking action because those who such illegal acts have political clout or bribe the officials. Where is governance in this country, after all?

Santosh Kumar Mohanty,  
CUTTACK

# Letters

## TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST  
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Bhubaneswar-751010



# In Bihar govt records, 65-year-old gave birth to 8 girls in 14 months

Superhuman fertility rate shown among women in their 60s leads to unearthing of major scam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Muzaffarpur, August 21: Superhuman rates of fertility shown among women in their 60s, all residents of an administrative block in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district, has led to the unearthing of a major scam, officials said Friday.

The bizarre phenomenon, which could have left the world of gynecology and obstetrics astir if taken at face value, has been reported from Musahari block where records have been apparently fudged by officials concerned to siphon off money meant for a scheme that seeks to incentivise the birth of girl child and prevent female infanticide.

The matter came to light after Musahari Primary Health Centre in-charge Upendra Chaudhary smelt a rat and lodged an FIR at the local police station recently.

"It is unbelievable. Leela Devi, aged 65, has been shown to have given birth to eight girls in 14 months



and for every so-called childbirth ₹1,400 were transferred into her purported account and shown as withdrawn by the beneficiary," he said.

Similar disbursements have been shown in favor of sexagenarian Shanti Devi, who, if the records of National Rural Health Mission here were to be believed, gave birth to five children in nine months.

Sonia Devi has, likewise, been shown to have delivered four children in five months.

When told about the benefits purportedly received by them and

the reason for the same, these women expressed bewilderment, pointed towards their children, all middle-aged, and stated that it must have been decades since they last went into labour. District Magistrate Chandrashekhar Singh has taken a strong note of the flagrant irregularities and ordered a high-level inquiry.

The inquiry committee headed by Additional District Collector Rajesh Kumar has found that prima facie the charges of irregularities are true. "Departmental action will be taken against those found guilty after a detailed probe which would be in addition to legal punishment that may be awarded by court of law in due course," he said.

The unearthing of the irregularity has led to outrage among the people whom the episode reminds of the infamous fodder scam of the '90s, in which records had shown truckloads of fodder meant for livestock transported on scooters, and payments for the same being made to people running businesses like tailoring,

It is unbelievable. Leela Devi, aged 65, has been shown to have given birth to eight girls in 14 months and for every so-called childbirth ₹1,400 were transferred into her purported account and shown as withdrawn by the beneficiary

UPENDRA CHAUDHARY | HEALTH OFFICER

# This NE district is country's cancer capital

In Mizoram, 1 out of every 5 has the risk of developing cancer in the age group of 0-74 years

AGENCIES

Aizawl, August 21: Mizoram's Aizawl district has reported the highest age-adjusted cancer incidence rate among males in the country for five years from 2012, a study has found.

According to the National Cancer Registry Programme (NCRP) 2012-2016 report, Aizawl district has recorded the highest age-adjusted incidence rates among males with 269.4 cancer cases per one lakh population.

Aizawl is followed by East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya and Kamrup (Metro) in Assam which reported 227.9 and 213 cancer cases per one lakh population, respectively.

With 219.8 cancer cases per one lakh population, Papumpare district in Arunachal Pradesh has recorded the highest incidence rate among women, followed by Aizawl district with 214.1 cancer cases per one lakh population among females, the report which was released Tuesday said.

Mizoram as a whole recorded 207 and 172.3 cancer cases of all sites per one lakh population among men and women, respectively.

In Asia, Aizawl district has the highest incidence rate of lung cancer in females and also the highest incident rate of stomach cancer in males when compared with Non-Asian countries, the study also showed.

Aizawl district also topped in colon cancer in the country among males and females.

The report said the total number of people diagnosed with cancer in Mizoram during 2012-2016 was 8,059, including 3,736 females while 4,080 cancer cases were registered



In Asia, Aizawl district has the highest incidence rate of lung cancer in females and also the highest incident rate of stomach cancer in males when compared with Non-Asian countries

in females and also the highest incident rate of stomach cancer in males when compared with Non-Asian countries, the study also showed.

Aizawl district also topped in colon cancer in the country among males and females.

The report said the total number of people diagnosed with cancer in Mizoram during 2012-2016 was 8,059, including 3,736 females while 4,080 cancer cases were registered

in Aizawl district alone during the same period.

In Mizoram, 1 out of every 5 persons (both males and females) has the risk of developing cancer in the age group of 0-74 years.

In Aizawl district, 1 of every 4 males and 1 of every 5 females are likely to develop any cancer site in the age group of 0-74 years.

The NCRP also said that the NE region has the highest incidence rate in cancers of oropharynx, oe-

sophagus, nasopharynx, hypopharynx, stomach, colorectal, liver, gallbladder, larynx, lung, cervix uteri and ovary.

The highest incidence of tobacco-related cancers in the country was also reported from the northeast. East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya had the highest proportion of tobacco cancer with 70.4 per cent in men and 46.5 per cent in women.

As for Mizoram, the proportion of tobacco related cancer for men was 43.3 per cent and 22.1 for women.

Meanwhile, mission director of National Health Mission (NHM), Dr Eric Zomawia attributed the high incidence rate of cancer in Mizoram to use of tobacco, consumption of smoked meats and fermented foods, and unhealthy lifestyle. He said that the government is making massive efforts to check the high incidence rate of cancer in the state.

Mizoram has one cancer hospital in Aizawl's Zemabawk locality and a day care cancer clinic at Lunglei civil hospital in the southern part of the state.

According to Zomawia, the government is making an effort to upgrade Zemabawk cancer hospital to tertiary care cancer centre.

# Bihar BJP leaders advocate virtual campaign for polls



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, August 21: BJP leaders in Bihar have been unanimously pressing for a virtual campaign for the Assembly elections to be held later this year amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Rajiv Ranjan, vice president of Bihar's BJP unit, pointed out that connecting with voters through a normal campaign will be extremely difficult and dangerous amid the pandemic as the voters may hesitate to assemble at one place.

"Hence, it would be wise to come up with innovative ideas to connect with the voters through a virtual campaign," he said.

"Keeping in view the Assembly elections later this year, we have a national executive committee meeting coming up in two days

and we have already put this point before the top BJP leaders. Our state leaders will elaborate on this idea at this meeting. The three-day meeting will also be held virtually," Ranjan said.

"We have limitations in this election campaign with arrangements for hand sanitizers and masks but adhering to social distancing norms is not easy, hence going towards the digital path is the only way to fight against the pandemic and at the same time connect with voters," he said.

Ranjan added that BJP has 75 lakh dedicated workers in Bihar. The chief guest at the national executive committee meeting on Day 1 will be former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, while BJP chief Jagat Prakash Nadda will be the chief guest on the last day.

# Assam bets on free scooters for top girl school students

REUTERS

Guwahati, August 21: Assam is trying a new tack to keep girls learning-rewarding 22,000 of its top performers with a free scooter for passing final school exams.

The northeastern state hopes its giveaway will encourage more girls to go to college, with the hazards of public transport often cited as a hindrance to further education.

"This will help many girl students to have hassle-free transportation to their respective colleges," Assam education minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, said.

The minister said the free scooters would go to any girl who scored over 60 per cent in their end-of-school exams, with delivery of the prizes due by mid-October.

"We also see it as an attempt to empower girls and make them independent," he said.

Long distances and a lack of safe transport are among the top reasons that prompt girls to miss class and drop out, ac-



cording to a report by charity Child Rights and You (CRY).

The number of out-of-school girls across India aged 11-14 fell below 5 per cent in 2018 compared with about 10 per cent a decade ago, according to a survey by education non-profit Pratham. CRY said its 2019 survey showed that roughly one in every three girls who drop out of school quit at aged 10, a full six to eight years short of the usual school-leaving age.

This will help many girl students to have hassle-free transportation to their respective colleges... We also see it as an attempt to empower girls and make them independent

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM EDUCATION MINISTER

# Tripura starts neighbourhood classes



Students, adhering to Covid-19 safety norms, attend a class in an open space in Agartala, Friday.

PTI PHOTO

EDUCATION IN COVID TIMES

The state government has started these classes for students, who do not have television sets or mobile phones

Students from Class III to XII in groups of five attend the classes in school grounds or nearby open spaces

On its first day, over one lakh students attended neighbourhood classes in open spaces maintaining social distancing

Such classes have already started in Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka

representatives from all political parties and organisations and on the recommendations of these com-

mittees steps are being taken to provide teaching to the students." He said the education depart-

# A village claimed by 2 states

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agartala, August 21: An official inquiry has been ordered after 130 villagers of Phuldungsei situated along the Tripura-Mizoram border were found enrolled in the electoral lists of both the states and drawing various services and benefits, officials said Friday.

An official of North Tripura district said that the names of these 130 Phuldungsei residents were recently registered in the electoral rolls ahead of Mizoram's August 27 village council polls. These people were however enrolled as voters in Tripura for many years, he claimed.

Tripura's Revenue and Fisheries Minister Narendra Chandra Debbarma told IANS that he had asked Revenue and Finance Secretary Tanushree Debbarma to inquire into the matter and submit a report at the earliest.

Different tribal parties are already agitated over the matter and urged the central and state governments to resolve it at the earliest.

Tripura's erstwhile royal family's scion Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarman, a former President of Tripura Pradesh Congress



Tripura's territories are being taken away by a neighbouring state (Mizoram). It cannot be accepted

PRADYOT KISHORE MANIKYA DEBBARMAN | ROYAL FAMILY SCION

Committee, told the media Friday that he had conveyed to Chief Minister Biplob Kumar

Deb to deal firmly with the matter.

"Tripura's territories are being taken away by a neighbouring state (Mizoram). It cannot be accepted," said Debbarman, who quit the Congress last year and formed a regional party.

Tripura shares a 109-km border with Mizoram and many villages, mostly dominated by tribals, exist along its inter-state borders.

North Tripura District Magistrate

Raval H Kumar told IANS that he would not be able to comment on the matter as he is in home quarantine after one of his family members tested coronavirus positive.

Kanchanpur Sub-Divisional Magistrate Chandni Chandran said the state government ought to take a decision before she can act on the matter.

She wrote a letter to the DM that "Phuldungsei village as a whole, despite its eastern side falling in Mizoram, had been accepted as part of Tripura territory," emphasising the urgent need to demarcate the exact boundary between Mizoram and Tripura and incorporating the whole of Phuldungsei village in Tripura.

# 83 lakh affected in 16 flood-hit Bihar districts

AGENCIES

Patna, August 21: The flood situation in Bihar remained grim Friday with an additional 1.13 lakh people bearing the brunt in 16 districts in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of affected people to 82.92 lakh, Disaster Management Department bulletin said.

Flood-related deaths remained unchanged at 27, the bulletin said.

As many as 82,92,464 people have been affected by the deluge in 1,322 panchayats of 130 blocks since Thursday. Additional five panchayat areas faced flood fury in the past 24 hours while the number of blocks and districts remained the same at 130 and 16 respectively.

Till Thursday, 81,79,257 people were impacted by the calamity.

Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur remained the two most affected districts where the number of people hit by the deluge has increased.

The number of sufferers has also risen in Gopalganj district.

Of the 27 deaths, Darbhanga district reported 11, followed by six in Muzaffarpur, four in West Champaran and two each in Saran, Siwan and Khagaria.

Over 5,000 people are staying in six relief centres, the bulletin said.

The Ganga is flowing 10 cm above the danger mark at Gandhi Ghat, over 27 cm above the mark at Hathidah (both in Patna) and more than 34 cm above the mark at Kahalgao in Bhagalpur, a bulletin issued by the Water Resources Department said.

The water level of the Ganga is witnessing a rising trend in Buxar, Munger, Bhagalpur, Kahalgao while it has remained steady at Digha and Hathidah.

Prominent rivers which are flowing above the danger mark at several places included the Bagmati, Burhi Gandak, Ghaghra and Khirai.





## of the day quote

It is my strong appeal to MLAs, both of the ruling party and opposition in Uttar Pradesh, to rise above party politics and effectively raise the issues of public interest in the House and make the government and administration accountable. This demand is in the wider public interest

MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

Corruption breeds with lack of transparency. Lift iron curtain @MamataOfficial for facts to spill out

JAGDEEP DHANKAR | WEST BENGAL GOVERNOR

After years of struggle by Muslim women, a law was framed to ban the triple talaq in the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but few vile people are still playing with it

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | MP CM

## SHORT TAKES

### Six rescued

**Mumbai:** Six persons were rescued after a fire broke out at a seven-storey commercial building in south Mumbai Friday afternoon, officials said. Smoke filled up 'Raj Gour' building outside Masjid Bunder Station (east) as the fire started around 2 pm, said a Fire Brigade official. At least five fire engines reached the spot and the flames were doused within forty-five minutes, he said.

### Four arrested

**Bangalore:** Four people have been arrested in ChamaraJanagar district for allegedly possessing a huge cache of prohibited wildlife items including pelts, bones and claws. Acting on tip-off that some people were trying to sell wildlife products, forest officials carried out an operation Thursday night and arrested four of them, the department said in a statement Friday. All of them in their twenties are from villages in Hanuru taluk in ChamaraJanagar, the officials said.

### Cop dies of Covid

**Kolkata:** An Assistant Commissioner of Police died of Covid-19 infection at a city hospital Friday, sources said. Uday Shankar Bandopadhyay, an ACP in Kolkata police's central division, was admitted to a private hospital in the city a few weeks ago with respiratory problems. As his condition deteriorated, Bandopadhyay had to undergo a Covid test and was detected positive for the virus. He was immediately shifted to a private Covid hospital here.

### Man found dead

**Bulandshahr:** A 65-year-old watchman was found dead at his employer's house in a suspected case of murder in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district Friday, police said. The exact cause of death is not yet known as police has sent the body for a post-mortem.

### MP minister tests positive

**Bhopal:** Madhya Pradesh Public Works Department Minister Gopal Bhargava Friday said he has tested COVID-19 positive. He shared the information on his Twitter handle. "I got antigen test (for COVID-19) done along with my family and close staff, in which I tested positive as per the initial report. I am getting admitted to a hospital on the advice of doctors," Bhargava said in a tweet Friday.

# Govt unlikely to postpone NEET, JEE



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Aug 21:** Government sources have claimed that there has been a rise of almost 50 per cent in NEET centres this year as compared to last year, and indicated that enough arrangements are in place to hold the competitive examinations, which many people want to be postponed, including BJP's Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy.

In what appears to be the Centre's decision to go ahead with NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) and JEE (Joint Entrance Examination), sources in the government cited the Supreme Court order which said, "We find that there is absolutely no justification in the prayer made for the postponement of the examinations in question relating to NEET UG-2020 as well as JEE (Main), 2020. In our opinion, though there is a pandemic situation, ultimately life has to go on and the career of the students cannot be put in peril for long and a full academic year cannot be wasted."

"Accordingly, the admit cards for the JEE (Main) were released by the National Testing Agency (NTA) and the exam is scheduled from September 1-6. Till date, out of 8,58,273 candidates, 6,49,223 have downloaded their admit cards.

"Out of the total candidates, 99.07 per cent have been given the first choice (centre) of their preference. So far, only 120 candidates

have requested for a change in the centre cities allotted to them, which is being looked into sympathetically," said government sources. The admit cards for the NEET (UG), scheduled to be held September 13, are scheduled to be released shortly. Out of the total of 15,97,433 candidates, 99.87 per cent are being given the first choice of their preferred city.

Further, in order to facilitate the candidates in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the NTA had provided the JEE (Main) candidates with an option to change their centre cities five times, and as many as 63,931 candidates have availed the same. Similar option was also given to the NEET (UG) candidates, and about 95,000 of them have availed it.

As per the government sources, elaborate arrangements have been made to sanitise the centres before and after the exams, provide the candidates with fresh masks and (on demand) hand gloves based on the comprehensive guidelines issued in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Earlier on Friday, BJP MP Subramanian Swamy had sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention to direct the Education Ministry to postpone NEET and JEE till Diwali, and even warned of suicides by youth if the tests were not deferred. In his "urgent letter" to Modi, Swamy said: "Holding the exams, in my opinion, may lead to a large number of suicides by youths around the country."

# Doc's death: Yedi orders probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, August 21:** Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa Friday ordered an inquiry into the suicide of a government doctor who was handling COVID-19 cases in a taluk, allegedly due to severe work pressure.

He also announced an ex-gratia of Rs 50 lakh for the family of Nanjangud Taluk (Mysuru district) Health Officer, S R Nagendra. "Dr S R Nagendra has said he was committing suicide as he was frustrated due to the harassment by his superiors. I will order a detailed inquiry into the matter to find out the truth behind the incident," the Chief Minister said.

Yediyurappa expressed his sorrow over Dr Nagendra taking his own life at his residence at Alanahalli in Mysore district Thursday morning. "Generally Rs 30 lakh is given to the doctors who die in line of duty but considering this as a special case, Rs 50 lakh will be given (to his family) and I have also decided to give a government job to anyone of the family."

Later, the Chief Minister said the inquiry will be completed in seven days. He also said that besides Rs 50 lakh, whatever is due to



**Yediyurappa expressed his sorrow over Dr Nagendra taking his own life at his residence at Alanahalli in Mysore district Thursday morning**

be given to the next of the kin will be given expeditiously. Meanwhile, an audio conversation purportedly between Nagendra and a senior district level officer who is heard taking him to task for not conducting enough tests, went viral.

"How many swabs have to be taken and how many are you extracting? Is it a joke? Have you come here to play? You are playing with the patients. For a week if you are

## MATTER OF LIVELIHOOD

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, August 21:** Florists and small-time flower sellers in Kerala are crying foul over Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's directive to all to see that flowers from neighbouring states are not used for Onam celebrations.

The harvest festival spread over 10 days will begin Saturday and end September 2. During the festivities, flowers are much sought after to make floral carpets for decoration, be it at

homes or offices.

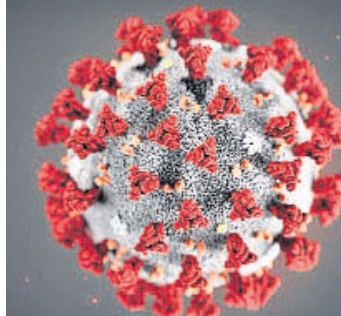
Vijayan directed that people should use flowers available in their neighbourhoods and not rely on those from neighbouring states. "There are about 6,000 florists in the state. It is a matter of our livelihood, especially during Onam. We are now told that there is a new directive. We wish to ask 'if flowers are a problem, is Kerala not relying on other states for fruits and vegetables?' This is not acceptable," a group of florists griped.

Incidentally, one of the biggest

**Parliaments need to ensure public participation in parliamentary oversight and improve governance in this age of information**  
OM BIRLA | LOK SABHA SPEAKER

## FORMER GOA CM CONTRACTS COVID

Former Goa Chief Minister and Congress MLA Ravi Naik Friday tested positive for Covid-19, an official said. Naik is the second former Chief Minister and the fifth state legislator to test positive for coronavirus



## STRINGENT MEASURES

# INDIA TIGHTENS VISA RULES

THE DECISION WAS TAKEN AFTER SOME SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES WERE NOTICED INVOLVING CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS LINKED WITH CHINESE THINK TANKS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, August 21:** Issuance of visa to people associated with Chinese think tanks will be scrutinised by the security establishments, the government has decided.

The decision was taken after some suspicious activities were noticed involving certain individuals linked with Chinese think tanks. The security and intelligence agencies have been asked to do background check of people who get sponsorships from various Chinese think tanks and advocacy groups before the issuances of their visas.

Indian intelligence agencies have alerted the government that China has set up various think tanks as part of its extensive outreach programme. These have been set up with an objective to influence people in coun-



tries of strategic interest.

These think tanks could be used to identify and recruit people for espionage, said a senior officer with an intelligence agency. Many organisations across the globe, backed by China, sponsor visas for policy makers, think tanks, political parties, upcoming leaders, corporates, academics and research entities, among others.

The agencies have prepared an elaborate list of groups and individuals who are under scanner.

## Hooch tragedy: BJP seeks CBI probe

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chandigarh, August 21:** Accusing the Congress government in Punjab of shielding the illicit liquor mafia, BJP leaders and activists Friday staged a protest demanding a CBI probe into the death of over 100 people in the recent hooch tragedy.

The police detained around 200 protesting BJP activists, led by state President Ashwani Sharma, who were demanding a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the deaths and the flourishing illicit liquor mafia under the patronage of Chief Minister Amarinder Singh. They were marching towards the Chief Minister's official residence here to stage a protest.

"We are protesting against the government and staging state-level blockades for nearly a fortnight so that the government wakes up from its slumber," Sharma said. A police official said that they had warned the protesters to vacate the protest site.



A man feeds pigeons during the biweekly lockdown in Kolkata, Friday

PTI PHOTO

# WOMAN SEEKS DIVORCE FROM 'PERFECT' HUSBAND

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Sambhal (UP), August 21:** In a bizarre incident, a Muslim woman has sought divorce from her husband on the grounds that he does not fight with her.

The woman has approached a Sharia court for divorce just 18 months after her marriage. The woman claimed that her husband's love was 'suffocating' her. "He does not shout at me and neither has he upset me on any issue. He even cooks for me and also helps me in performing household chores," she told the court.

She further said, "Whenever I

make a mistake, he always forgives me for that. I wanted to argue with him. I do not need a life where the husband agrees to anything." The Sharia court cleric, expectedly rejected her plea for divorce. When the Sharia court refused to grant her divorce, the woman took up the matter with the local panchayat which also expressed its inability to decide the issue. Meanwhile, the woman's husband said he loved his wife and always wanted to keep her happy. He also requested the Sharia court to return the case. The court has now asked the couple to resolve the matter mutually.

## Pakistan resorts to firing, shelling

**Jammu:** The Pakistan army Friday resorted to heavy firing and mortar shelling in forward areas along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district violating the ceasefire, officials said. "At about 18:30 hours today, Pak army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and resorting to intense shelling with mortars along the LoC in Mankote sector," a defence spokesperson said. The Indian Army retaliated befittingly to the ceasefire violation by Pakistan, he added. A 65-year-old man was killed as the Pakistan army resorted to mortar shelling in Poonch district. One jawan too was killed in the Pak firing in Rajouri sector along the LoC in another ceasefire violation this month. July 11, two women were killed in the shelling by the Pakistani army on forward posts and villages along the Line of Control (LoC) in different sectors in Poonch district.

## 107-year-old woman beats Covid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jalna, August 21:** A 107-year-old woman and her 78-year-old daughter have recovered from Covid-19 here in Maharashtra, overcoming the odds of high mortality rate among elderly people, an official said Friday.

The woman-daughter duo along with three other family members were discharged from a COVID-19 hospital in Jalna city Thursday. The centenarian, her daughter, 65-year-old son and two grandchildren, aged 27 and 17, were undergoing treatment for coronavirus for more than a week at the hospital, district civil surgeon Archana Bhosale said.

Residents of Mali Pura in old Jalna, the family was admitted to the hospital August 11 after they tested positive for the infection, she said.

The centenarian had recently undergone a spine surgery and when she tested positive for the virus, her old age posed a major challenge in her recovery, Bhosale said.

Post-recovery, the family members were given a warm farewell by the hospital staff.

# Ban on flowers from other states pricks Kerala florists



flower markets in Tamil Nadu is at Thovala, located about 20 km from the Kerala border. The economy of the Tamil Nadu town is heavily dependent on flower sales during the Onam season in Kerala. "What are we supposed to do? We know only this business of flowers, which we have been into for three decades. Covid-19 has hit us really bad. For more than three months, we remained indoors. Onam is one festival we were all waiting for. This is not fair, this ban order should not be implemented," said a woman sell-

ing flowers in the state capital. A leading florist said that there has been no supply of flowers from outside the state for four months, adding that they were looking forward to the Onam sales. "For the past four months, I was disposing my flowers and flower petals by burying them in a pit. If we do not tend to plants by plucking flowers and pruning the plants, these tend to be destroyed. We are now looking for markets within the state. We do not know what will happen," said another florist.



## of the day quote

D J Halli riots are a Law and Order issue. The incident should have been investigated and the guilty should have been punished

**H D KUMARASWAMY** | JD(S) LEADER

What sort of elections would be held under these circumstances? Every polling station will turn out to be a coronavirus infection centre after elections, and it is difficult to predict the extent to which the disease might spread

**YASHWANT SINHA** | FORMER UNION MINISTER

Eighty nine per cent of COVID-19 deaths in the state have been due to comorbidities like diabetes, cancer, hypertension and cardiac disease

**MAMATA BANERJEE** | WB CHIEF MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### 14 hospitalised after gas leak

**Chittoor:** Fourteen people were hospitalised in Andhra Pradesh following an ammonia gas leak from a dairy unit, Reuters partner ANI reported early Friday. The gas leak has been contained at the dairy, according to the ANI report. The latest incident comes three months after a deadly gas leak near the port city of Visakhapatnam, at a plant operated by a unit of South Korea's LG Chem Ltd, killed 12 and led to the hospitalisation of hundreds.

### 3 of family killed as house collapses

**Dehradun/Pithoragarh:** A man and his two children were buried alive when their house collapsed following rains in Pithoragarh district early Friday, while the body of a woman was found in a village four days after she went missing in the wake of a landslide. Intermittent rains also lashed various parts of the state blocking several roads, including those leading to the Himalayan temples. The roads leading to Badrinath, Kedarnath and Yamunotri got blocked at several points with rocks and boulders tumbling down the hills following rains.

### Heavy rain alert for Mumbai

**Mumbai:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an 'orange' alert for Mumbai, Thane and rest of the Konkan region of Maharashtra for Saturday, forecasting heavy rainfall. The orange alert implies that authorities should be ready to handle situations arising out of severe weather.



At present, we are facing the challenges posed by the pandemic. I hope and pray that Lord Ganesha bless us all to overcome this at the earliest possible and we all live a happy and healthy life

**RAM NATH KOVIND** | PRESIDENT

## RAY OF HOPE

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) has claimed that SORIG immune boosters are proving to be highly effective in the fight against Covid-19



## RISKY TRIP



Passengers without masks on a rickshaw pass through a waterlogged area due to high tide in Ganga river in Kolkata, Friday

PTI PHOTO

## Mukherjee remains hemodynamically stable, says hosp



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 21:** There was no change in the condition of former president Pranab Mukherjee and he remains hemodynamically stable and on ventilatory support, the hospital said Friday.

Doctors attending to him said his vital parameters are being maintained. According to the doctors, a patient is hemodynamically stable when the blood circulation parameters - blood pressure, heart and pulse rate, are stable and normal. Mukherjee was admitted to the Army's Research and Referral Hospital in Delhi Cantonment August 10 and was operated for removal of a clot in the brain. He had also tested positive for COVID-19. Thereafter, he developed a lung infection and is being treated for the same.

His health parameters are being closely monitored by a team of specialists at the hospital. "The medical condition of Shri Pranab Mukherjee remains the same. He is being treated for lung infection and continues to be on ventilatory support. His vital parameters are being maintained and he is haemodynamically stable," the hospital said in a statement.

## CBI to check CCTV of SSR's building for 'tampering'

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, August 21:** The CBI Friday formally launched their probe into the death of Sushant Singh Rajput. Within the first few hours the federal team collected the late actor's diary, laptop and mobile phone among other crucial documents, and sources said they have now set off to collect the close circuit television camera (CCTV) footage from the Bandra flat where Sushant was found dead.

The central agency will examine if the camera recording was "tampered" with on the day of the 34-year-old actor's death (June 14) or if there were any "technical glitches". Top CBI sources said that the agency will collect the CCTV footage and examine all the people who arrived there before his death.

The CBI team will also collect the CCTV's DVR and send it for forensic examination. The source said that the agency will examine



if the CCTV was working on the day of the actor's death or if it was switched off by someone intentionally. The source further disclosed that the agency will also communicate with the company which installed the CCTV cameras and the company which carried out the maintenance of the CCTV cameras. Earlier Friday, the CBI team met the Mumbai Police officials and collected all the documents pertaining to the death of Sushant and also his di-

aries seized from his Bandra flat and Lonavala farmhouse, mobile phone and laptop.

The CBI team also collected photographs of the crime scene, autopsy report and the statement of 56 people recorded in last two months from the laptop of the Mumbai Police, the source said. The CBI team also recorded the statement of Sushant's cook Neeraj and his former servant Dipesh Sawant earlier in the day. The source said that the agency is also questioning Sushant's flatmate Samuel Miranda. Meanwhile, The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Friday questioned and recorded the statement of Priyanka Singh, elder sister of Sushant Singh Rajput, in connection with a money laundering case probe linked to the actor's death, officials said. The statement of Priyanka Singh was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in Delhi, they said.

## Is India nearing its peak of nCoV cases?

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 21:** India's COVID-19 recovery rate soared past 74 per cent Friday with a record 62,282 patients having recuperated and discharged in a day taking the total recoveries to 21.5 lakh, the Union Health Ministry said.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate has dropped further to 1.89 per cent as on date. With more patients recovering and being discharged from hospitals and home isolation, the total recoveries have surged to 21,58,946 and exceeds active cases of coronavirus infection by 14,66,918 as on date. India's COVID-19 recovery rate has risen to 74.30 per cent which is further bolstered by 33 states and UTs reporting recovery

rate more than 50 per cent, it said. From 52.8 per cent June 17, the recovery rate improved to 63.24 pc on July 16 and further to 74.30 pc as on date. So what about India hitting the peak of the Covid-19 infection? Has it already happened? Or are we close to it? The SBI report, released August 17, said that India has reported 10 lakh cases (or 58,000 daily cases on an average) from July 30 to August 15.

"Still it's a major question as to when will India reach its peak? Based on the select countries peak data and recovery rate we believe that India can technically reach its peak when its recovery rate will cross 75% mark, the average benchmark across countries," the SBI Ecowrap said.

## No offices, shops in Haryana on weekends

During the past couple of weeks, Haryana has registered a big spike in cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh, August 21:** Haryana Home and Health minister Anil Vij Friday said all offices and shops, except those providing essential services, will remain closed on every Saturday and Sunday in the wake of increase in COVID-19 cases in the state.

### PANDEMIC CHAOS

"All offices and shops except essential will remain closed in Haryana on every Saturday and Sunday due to #COVID-19," Vij said in a tweet. He later told PTI that the decision was taken as cases during past few days have registered a sudden increase. "We have taken this decision as



there has been a sudden increase in cases," Vij said. The shops and offices in the state, except those dealing with essential services, will remain closed on Saturday and Sunday till further orders in this regard, the minister said. During the past couple of weeks,

Haryana has registered a big spike in cases. The infection tally has crossed 51,000-mark with around 600 fatalities. The state had Thursday registered its highest single-day spike of 996 coronavirus cases, just a day after it recorded 994 infections.

## SHIFTING ALLIANCE

## Pak Army to use Chinese navigation system BeiDou

THE CHINESE NAVIGATION SYSTEM IS AIMED AT REPLACING AND ENDING THE DEPENDENCE ON US-BASED GPS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, August 21:** Pakistan is all set to use Chinese homegrown navigation system BeiDou for both military and civil purpose, ending their dependence on the US-based Global Positioning System (GPS), sources in Indian security establishments stated.

It is part of Pakistan and China's defence and strategic cooperation. Sources said that China wants to end the US-based GPS hegemony and push for its own developed navigation system first in the Asian region. Chinese Satellite Navigation Office (CSNO) has agreed to establish BeiDou enabled Continuously Operating Radar



A model of the BeiDou navigation satellites system is seen at an exhibition to mark China's Space Day April 24, 2019 in Changsha, Hunan province, China

Station (CORS) network in Pakistan. It will help Pakistan in getting precise geo-spatial application partic-

ularly in the field of surveying and mapping, construction and scientific studies. China has established

a monitoring station at its Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) for monitoring and assessing the BeiDou Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS).

The system was completed August 3. "China announced the completion of its navigation system project August 3," said a source adding that China is now looking at expanding the network first in the Asia region.

An agreement on the cooperation in the field of satellite navigation between CSNO and SUPARCO was signed in May 2013. The final launch of the system was done on June 23 after finally ending a project that went on for two

decades. China began to develop the system in the 1990s and the first satellite was launched in 2000 kick starting the journey.

As Pakistan is buying Chinese defence equipment, it would be shifting to and be fully integrated into BeiDou. Gradually, Pakistan Armed Forces will completely switch to the BeiDou navigation system for all its critical military platforms, source said.

Pakistan is on a defence equipment buying spree from China to deploy it along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir region. Be it armour, air defence, artillery, UAVs, ships, submarines or fighter aircraft, Pakistan is buying it all from China.

## SC allows Prayushan prayers in 3 Jain temples in Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 21:** The Supreme Court Friday allowed devotees of 'Shwetamber Jain' community to offer Paryushan prayers for two days in three temples in Mumbai on the condition of "strict compliance" with the standard operating procedures meant to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

Making exception for the three Jain temples located at Dadar West, Byculla and Chembur in Mumbai, a bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde said however that the permission for "Ganpati" festival will have to be taken on a case-to-case basis from the Maharashtra Disaster Management Authority.

"Upcoming Ganpati festival in Maharashtra is altogether differ-

ent and it will become uncontrollable and we understand the situation for that but in this case the situation is different," said the bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian. It said no permission for prayers would be given for any other temple in Mumbai.

The apex court, in a hearing conducted through video conferencing, granted 'reprieve' on the plea of 'Shri Parshwatilak Shwetamber Murtipujak Jain Trust' which has challenged the Bombay High Court order.

The top court considered the undertaking of the Jain trust that it will abide by the Centre's guidelines and the SOP in allowing devotees inside the temples for two days of the rituals.



of the day quote

We vote to honour those who came before us and to protect those who will come after us – because that's what community is all about and that's specifically what this election is all about



MEGHAN MARKLE | WIFE OF PRINCE HARRY

Joe Biden is your worst nightmare. He spent the last half century in Washington selling out our country and ripping off our jobs and letting other countries steal our jobs



DONALD TRUMP | US PRESIDENT

The US push to reimpose UN sanctions on Iran will have dangerous consequences... Iran has exercised restraint in good faith... Now it is the international community's turn to counter the unlawful push by the United States



MOHAMMAD JAVAD ZARIF | IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Israel strikes Hamas sites

**Jerusalem:** Israel launched airstrikes on Hamas sites in Gaza in retaliation after two rockets fired from the Palestinian enclave fell near an Israeli security fence, the military said Friday. An Israeli military spokesperson said in a statement that warplanes struck "a concrete manufacturing site used for underground infrastructure and tunnel construction" that belongs to the Islamic Hamas movement, reports Xinhua news agency. There were no immediate reports of casualties on both sides.

US Fort Hood soldier missing

**Fort Hood (US):** The US Army is asking for the public's help in a search for another missing soldier in Texas. Fort Hood officials issued a missing soldier alert Thursday night for Sgt. Elder Fernandes, 23. Police in nearby Killeen said Fernandes was reported missing Wednesday and was last seen or heard from Monday afternoon when his staff sergeant dropped Fernandes off at his home in Killee.

UK government debt hits \$2.6tn

**London:** The UK government debt has increased above 2 trillion pounds (\$2.6 trillion) for the first time amid heavy spending to support the economy amid the coronavirus pandemic, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealed Friday. Spending on measures such as the furlough scheme means the debt figure now equals the value of everything the UK produces in a year, the BBC reported. Total debt hit 2,004 trillion pounds in July, 227.6 billion pounds more than last year, said the ONS.

Quake hits Indonesia

**Jakarta:** A 6.9-magnitude quake struck eastern Indonesia on Friday, the US Geological Survey reported, but there was no tsunami warning issued and no immediate reports of casualties or major damage. In Kupang city, far south of the quake's epicentre in the Banda Sea, frightened residents ran outside as buildings and streetlights swayed. The undersea tremor struck at a depth of more than 600 kilometres about 220 kilometres south of Katabu on the island of Sulawesi, the USGS said.



We are committed to cooperating with the US Federal Trade Commission's inquiry and answering the questions the agency may have

MARK ZUCKERBERG | FACEBOOK CEO

THOUSANDS EVACUATED AS CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES DOUBLE IN SIZE

Dozens of lightning-sparked California wildfires grew rapidly Thursday, forcing tens of thousands of people to evacuate homes in the San Francisco Bay Area



Biden accepts nomination, vows to end 'dark era'

AGENCIES

**Wilmington, Del., August 21:** Joe Biden accepted the Democratic Party nomination for the White House Thursday, vowing to heal a United States battered by a deadly pandemic and divided by four years of Donald Trump's presidency. "The current President has cloaked America in darkness for much too long. Too much anger. Too much fear. Too much division," Biden said. "Here and now, I give you my word: if you entrust me with the presidency, I'll draw on the best of us, not the worst." Biden's speech - the capstone of nearly five decades in politics - was delivered inside a largely empty arena in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware, at the conclusion of a Democratic convention held virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than 170,000 Americans.

Describing the current moment as one of the most difficult times the country has ever faced, Biden offered himself as a uniter who would work "just as hard" for those who do not support him - drawing a stark contrast with the Republican Trump, who has kept the focus on his base of voters. "While I'll be a Democratic candidate, I'll be an American president," said Biden, who faces Trump in the November 3 election. "That's the job of a



Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden hugs his wife Jill Biden after his speech during the fourth day of the Democratic National Convention, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

President. To represent all of us, not just our base or our party. This is not a partisan moment. This must be an American moment. It's a moment that calls for hope, and light, and love."

Democrats used the convention to highlight the broad coalition working to oust Trump, showcasing liberals and moderates, elder statesmen and rising stars - and even some high-profile Republicans, who urged their fellow conservatives to place patriotism above party.

The event also put the Democrats' diversity on display, particularly

the nomination of Senator Kamala Harris, the first Black woman and Asian American on a major-party ticket. While Democrats laid out plenty of areas in which Biden would pursue dramatically different policies than Trump, including immigration, climate change and gun safety, much of Thursday was devoted to themes such as integrity and faith.

The program also emphasised Biden's personal experience with tragedy - his first wife's and infant daughter's deaths in a car accident, and the death of his son Beau from

Biden's Mumbai connection

**Washington:** When Joe Biden was elected as one of the youngest US senators in 1972, one of the first letters that he received was from Mumbai, with the sender having the same last name as his. About five years ago, the Democratic Party's presidential nominee learned that there are five Bidens living in Mumbai, but is probably yet to make a connection with them. The 'Biden from Mumbai', then known as Bombay, had congratulated Biden on his election as the senator from Delaware and told him that they were related to each other. Biden, then 29, wanted to follow up on the letter and get in touch with the 'Biden from Mumbai'. However, his family and active life in politics meant that this wish remained a wish, something he still wants to fulfil nearly five decades later. The wish may have remained unfulfilled, but the 77-year-old Biden never misses a chance to narrate the 'Biden from Mumbai' story when he meets Indian-Americans and the Indian leaders. The former Vice President assures them that he too has an India connection, however, distant it might be.

73 ex-Republicans endorse Biden

**Washington:** Seventy-three former Republican national security officials have endorsed Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, adding they will vote for him in the November 3 election. Shortly before the former Vice President formally accepted the party's presidential nomination Thursday night, the former officials issued a letter, saying they "are firmly convinced that it is in the best interest of our nation that Vice President Joe Biden be elected as the next President of the US, and we will vote for him", Xinhua news agency reported. The former officials said that "are profoundly concerned about our nation's security and standing in the world under the leadership of Donald Trump". "Through his actions and his rhetoric, Trump has demonstrated that he lacks the character and competence to lead this nation and has engaged in corrupt behaviour that renders him unfit to serve as President," they added.

cancer - to underscore his ability to empathize with suffering Americans. Critics accuse Trump,

whose instincts are more combative than comforting, of failing to offer solace at a time of crisis.

NAMASTE GOES GLOBAL



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Bormes-les-Mimosas (France), August 21:** The novel coronavirus doesn't spare anyone and it seems most global leaders are aware of this. Mindful of this indiscriminate nature of coronavirus, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel were seen greeting each other with a 'namaste'.

As French President Emmanuel Macron received German Chancellor Angela Merkel at his Mediterranean holiday retreat Thursday, the traditional handshake was replaced with an Indian-style *namaste*.

Emmanuel Macron welcomed Angela Merkel for her first-ever visit to the presidential summer residence in with a *namaste*, palms pressed together and bending at the waist, in observance of social-distancing guidelines against coronavirus spread. The German Chancellor reciprocated as she too switched to *namaste*.

Emmanuel Macron had also gone for *namaste* as he greeted Spain's king and queen in March. The video of Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel going the Indian way has gone viral on social media.

This is, however, not the first time that a global leader has used the *namaste* greeting. The Indian-style greeting had gone global after the coronavirus outbreak. In an ef-

With hand hygiene emerging as the most crucial preventive measure against the spread of coronavirus, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promoted the namaste

fort to stop the spread of the coronavirus, global leaders avoided handshakes and instead used *namaste* to greet others.

With hand hygiene emerging as the most crucial preventive measure against the spread of coronavirus, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promoted the *namaste*. The PM said the world was increasingly adopting the no-contact way of greeting.

Earlier, videos of US President Donald Trump, Prince Charles opting for the Indian *namaste* at global forums had gone viral on social media. Before him, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had urged his countrymen to use the *namaste* instead of handshake or other physical contact in form of greeting people to prevent the virus' spread. He had also demonstrated the *namaste* gesture for people.

Beijing to soon go mask-free as nCoV cases hit new lows

REUTERS

**Beijing, August 21:** Health authorities in China's capital Beijing have removed a requirement for people to wear masks outdoors, further relaxing rules aimed at preventing the spread of the novel coronavirus after the city reported 13 consecutive days without new cases. Despite the relaxed guidelines, a large proportion of people continued to wear masks in Beijing Friday.

Some said the mask made them feel safe, while others said social pressures to wear the masks were also a factor.

"I think I can take off my mask anytime, but I'll need to see if others accept it. Because I'm afraid that people would be scared if they see me not wearing mask," one 24-year old Beijing woman surnamed Cao told Reuters.

It's the second time Beijing's health authorities have relaxed guidelines on mask wearing in the capital, which has largely returned to normal after two rounds of lockdowns brought it to a standstill.

Beijing's municipal Centers for Disease Control first said residents could go without masks in outdoor areas in late April, though the rules were swiftly reversed in June after a new outbreak in a large wholesale market in the city's south.

China has reported no new locally transmitted cases on the mainland for five days after successfully controlling flare ups in the capital, Xinjiang and elsewhere.

Experts say the key to the country's success in controlling the disease has been the strict enforcement of local rules, including wearing masks, mandatory home quarantine and participating in mass testing.



In this photo released by Donghai Rescue Bureau, a rescue vessel tries to put out fire emerging from an oil tanker after it collided with a cargo ship near the Yangtze River estuary off Shanghai, Thursday. More than a dozen sailors were missing Friday

PTI PHOTO

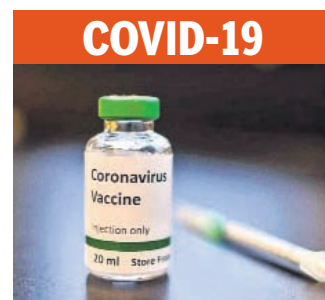
PNG demands China explain vaccine trial on Aussie miners

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Canberra (Australia), August 21:** Papua New Guinea prevented the arrival of a flight carrying Chinese workers after a Chinese mining company claimed to have immunised employees against COVID-19 in an apparent vaccination trial, authorities said Friday.

The Pacific nation's pandemic response controller, David Manning, banned COVID-19 vaccine testing or trials after Ramu NiCo Management (MCC) Ltd. claimed to have vaccinated 48 Chinese employees.

Manning also said he had sent back a flight carrying 180 Chinese workers on Thursday as a precaution. "In light of the lack of information of what these trials are and what possible risks or threat that it might cause our people if they were to come into the country, I had canceled that flight yesterday



just to ensure that we continue to act in the best interests of our people and our country," Manning told reporters in the capital, Port Moresby.

"Until the Chinese government through the Chinese Embassy in Port Moresby provides that information, I will be best guided by our health and medical experts here as to what would be the appropriate steps to take when considering looking at applications of Chinese nationals that have been subjected to

these vaccination trials entering the country," Manning added.

The vaccine was administered to the 48 Chinese in China three days before they landed in Port Moresby August 13, Health Minister Jelta Wong said. "Details of the vaccine used ... are still not known," Wong said in an email to the AP late Friday. Manning said the National Department of Health had not approved any trials.

"Any vaccines imported into PNG must be approved by NDoH and must go through vigorous vaccine trials, protocols and procedures" and must be pre-qualified by the World Health Organisation, he said. Wong said no applications for such a trial had been received by his government.

A document on company letterhead titled "Vaccination Statement" said 48 Chinese employees "have been vaccinated with SARS-COV-2 vaccine" August 10.

Pandemic could push 100mn into extreme poverty: World Bank

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Washington, August 21:** The coronavirus pandemic may have driven as many as 100 million people back into extreme poverty, World Bank president David Malpass has warned.

The Washington-based development lender previously estimated that 60 million people would fall into extreme poverty due to COVID-19, but the new estimate puts the deterioration at 70 to 100 million, and he said "that number could go higher" if the pandemic worsens or drags on.

The situation makes it "imperative" that creditors reduce the

amount of debt held by poor countries at risk, going beyond the commitment to suspend debt payments, Malpass said in an interview with this news agency.

Even so, more countries will be obliged to restructure their debt.

"The debt vulnerabilities are high, and the imperative of getting light at the end of the tunnel so that new investors can come in is substantial," Malpass said.

Advanced economies in the Group of 20 already have committed to suspending debt payments from the poorest nations through the end of the year, and there is growing support for extending that moratorium into next year.



But Malpass said that will not be enough, since the economic

downturn means those countries, which already are struggling to

The World Bank has committed to deploying \$160 billion in funding to 100 countries through June 2021 in an effort to address the immediate emergency

provide a safety net for their citizens, will not be in a better position to deal with the payments.

The amount of debt reduction needed will depend on the situation in each country, he said, but the policy "makes a lot of sense."

"So I think the awareness of this will be gradually, more and more apparent" especially "for the countries with the highest vulnerability to the debt situation."

The World Bank has committed to deploying \$160 billion in funding to 100 countries through June 2021 in an effort to addresses the immediate emergency, but even so, extreme poverty, defined as earning less than \$1.90 a day, con-

tinues to rise.

Malpass said the deterioration is due to a combination of the destruction of jobs during the pandemic as well as supply issues that make access to food more difficult.

"All of this contributes to pushing people back into extreme poverty the longer the economic crisis persists."

Newly-installed World Bank Chief Economist Carmen Reinhart called the economic crisis a "pandemic depression," but Malpass was less concerned with terminology.

"We can start calling it a depression. Our focus is on how do we help countries be resilient in working out on the other side."



## of the day quote

With linkage of Aadhaar with GST and PAN, there would be a centralised data base available with the government which will facilitate data analytics and help in checking tax evasion



**PRATIK JAIN** | PARTNER & LEADER  
(INDIRECT TAX), PWC INDIA

With gas demand (growing at) CAGR (of) 8%, gas is expected to account for around 10% of India's primary energy supply by 2025



**ES RANGANATHAN** | DIRECTOR  
(MARKETING), GAIL

COVID-19 has rippled a weakening economy not only in India but all over the world. This, coupled with already prevailing BS-VI changeover norms, affected the automobile industry too hampering significantly its growth in the last quarter



**RAMESH SURI** | CHAIRMAN, SUBROS LTD

## SHORT TAKES

### Yes Bank to exit MF biz

**New Delhi:** Yes Bank Friday said it will exit mutual fund (MF) business by selling its holdings in asset management and trustee subsidiaries. The bank August 21, 2020 executed a definitive agreement for the sale of 100% of the equity shareholding of Yes Asset Management (India) Ltd and Yes Trustee Ltd, both wholly-owned subsidiaries of Yes Bank to GPL Finance and Investments Ltd (purchaser), it said in a regulatory filing.

### KVIC sends legal notice

**New Delhi:** Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has issued legal notices to two firms: Khadi Essentials and Khadi Global for "unauthorised" and "fraudulently" using the brand name Khadi. In the notices served to the two Delhi-based firms in the first week of August, KVIC has asked them to immediately stop selling or promoting products using the brand name Khadi and cancel the domain names khadiessentials.com and khadiglobalstore.com.

### SBI to raise ₹8,931 crore

**New Delhi:** The country's largest lender SBI Friday said its board has approved a proposal to raise Rs 8,931 crore by issuing Basel III compliant bonds to investors. The committee of directors for capital raising at its meeting held today accorded its approval to allot 89,310 Basel III compliant non-convertible, taxable, redeemable, subordinated, unsecured, fully paid-up debt instruments aggregating to Rs 8,931 crore to bond subscribers August 21, 2020, SBI said in a regulatory filing.

### P-notes investment continues to soar

**New Delhi:** Investments through participatory notes (P-notes) in the domestic capital market soared to Rs 63,288 crore till July-end, making it the fourth consecutive monthly rise. P-notes are issued by registered foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to overseas investors who wish to be part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly. They, however, need to go through a due diligence process.



The UK is still seeing a V-shape bounce in activity. But...a hot summer can quickly turn to a cold autumn

**ELIZABETH MARTINS** | SENIOR  
ECONOMIST, HSBC

## 'CONSUMER SENTIMENT SUBDUES'

India's consumer confidence has dipped in August, 2020 by 1.6 percentage points, according to the monthly Refinitiv-Ipsos Primary Consumer Sentiment Index (PCSI). The monthly PCSI, which is driven by the aggregation of the four weighted sub-indices, has shown a drop for at least 3 of the 4 indices in August, a statement from Ipsos said



# 'Covid to leave PSBs with capital shortages again'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, August 21:** A sharp slowdown in India's economic growth induced by the coronavirus outbreak will hurt the public sector banks' (PSBs) asset quality and profitability, Moody's Investors Service said in a report Friday.

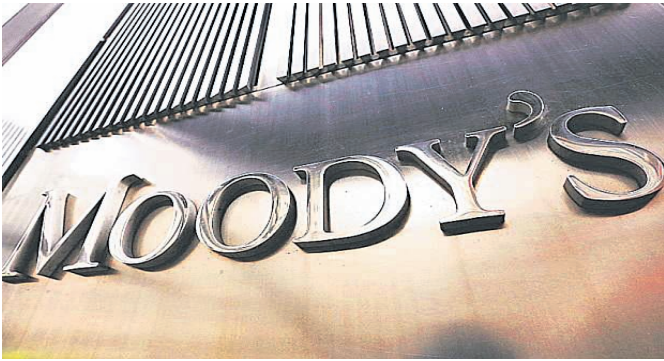
Consequently, the PSBs' already weak capital buffers will be depleted, said Moody's Investors Service report on the Indian public sector banks titled "Coronavirus fallout will leave banks with capital shortages again".

"We estimate PSBs will need INR 1.9 trillion-INR 2.1 trillion (\$25 billion-\$28 billion) in external capital over the next two years to restore their loss absorbing buffers," the report said.

"The most likely source of capital to plug the capital shortfalls will be government support, despite the completion of a large recapitalisation by the government several months ago."

Accordingly, the report predicts that PSBs' asset quality will deteriorate, led by retail and small business loans. "We expect the Indian economy will contract sharply in fiscal year ending March 2021 (fiscal 2020) before returning to growth, though modestly, in fiscal 2021. As a result, formation of new non-performing loans (NPLs) will accelerate substantially, driven by the retail and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) segments," said the report.

"Although one-time loan restructuring allowed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will prevent a sudden increase in NPLs, NPLs



According to the report, the Indian economy is expected to contract sharply in fiscal year ending March 2021 before returning to growth, though modestly, in fiscal 2021

and credit costs will increase in the next two years, hurting PSBs' already weak profitability and depleting their capitalisation."

According to the report, the PSBs will face large capital shortfalls again as credit costs rise.

"Under our base scenario, we estimate PSBs in the aggregate will need external capital of about INR 1.9 trillion-2 trillion in the next two years. Of the total amount, PSBs will need about INR 1 trillion to build loan-loss provisions to about 70 per cent of NPLs, which will leave them with enough capacity to grow loans 8-10 per cent annually, faster than

the 4 per cent in fiscal 2020," the report said.

"With a capital infusion of this magnitude, banks would also be able to maintain capitalisation at levels comparable to those of similarly rated peers globally, with Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) ratios of at least 10 per cent."

As per the report, to maintain financial stability the government will continue to provide capital support for PSBs.

"Uncertainty surrounding India's economic recovery as well as the ongoing cleanup of balance sheets are making it difficult for most PSBs to raise equity capital from markets. This means PSBs will continue to need support from the government to plug their capital shortfalls, and we expect the government to infuse fresh funds into them as it has done in the past," it said.

"If PSBs, which dominate the banking system in India, fail to function properly in the absence of state capital support, the country will face a deepening credit crunch, hampering its economic recovery."

# HONDA AIMS TO FOCUS ON EXPORTS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 21:** Atsushi Ogata took over as President, MD and CEO of Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI). He is also an Operating Executive at Honda Motor Co, Japan. Ogata landed in India July 10 and had his first digital media interaction. While interacting Ogata was quiet optimistic about Indian Market.

According to Ogata, COVID 19 pandemic is a global disaster in one way but has brought with it new opportunities as well. Starting from maintaining safety and hygiene, HMSI has come forward for own mobility which will give boost to sale of vehicles and HMSI is ready to grab this opportunity.

Responding to a question about cutting down the ongoing expansion of manufacturing set up, Ogata refused and assured that all pre-COVID plans are active and will continue to do so; abiding by all the COVID-19 guidelines. He has stressed that HMSI will thrust on 'export'.

Catering to price sensitive Indian rural market, HMSI is in the process of rolling out new models, though he did not mention any specific timeline. However, he assured that it's neither very soon nor far away.

Responding to a question on fuel



**ATSUSHI OGATA**  
President, MD and CEO, Honda Motorcycle

price hike and its impact on 2-wheeler business, he told that this may bring a short-term impact but in the long run things will be normal as personal mobility is and will remain priority.

Assured consumer satisfaction, safety and especially safety during COVID is the priority for HMSI and many digital and contactless facilities has been roped in by the company for customers to see, chose and book the vehicles.

With his unparalleled 35 years of rich experience at Honda across Europe and APAC, Ogata now assumes duty in India.

## FIGHTING COVID

## BIZ BUZZ

### Central Bank holds e-seminar

**Bhubaneswar:** Central Bank of India, the first Swadeshi Bank of the country organised e-Rajabhasha seminar under the aegis of Nagar Rajabhasha Implementation Committee (Bank), Bhubaneswar under the chairmanship of Assistant General Manager Ranjit Kumar Mohanty at the Regional Office, Bhubaneswar. Nirmal Kumar Dubey, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Official Language, Regional Implementation office (East Zone), Kolkata were present as esteemed guests. The programme was successfully completed with the support of Alok Chaturvedi, Member Secretary, Official Language Implementation Committee (Bank), Bhubaneswar and all member banks.



### SBILD shifted to Pahala

**Bhubaneswar:** To provide better training environment for the internal employees SBILD, Bhubaneswar Circle shifted its Learning Centre from Lewis Road to Pahala. State Bank Institute of Learning & Development (SBILD) Bhubaneswar was inaugurated by SBI Chief General Manager (CGM) Ruma Dey in the presence of General Manager NW-I CLN Charyulu, General Manager NW II Bejoy Kuzur, Dy. General Manager & CDO Satyajit Das at Pahala, Bhubaneswar August 20, following all the COVID-19 guidelines. CGM has reiterated on full utilisation of new SBILD in imparting knowledge and improving skills of employees. In this new set up, 104 participants can be trained simultaneously with hostel facility for 66 employees. There are adding on facilities like conference rooms and auditorium on the premises. The Director of SBILD Nibedita Mohapatra acknowledged and thanked all the dignitaries' presence.



## AITUC plays airport privatisation, demands rollback



**New Delhi:** The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) Friday condemned privatisation of airports and asked the government to withdraw the move. "AITUC condemns the Central Government's fetish for privatisation and sale of all their assets to their cronies and warns that this step is against the interests of the ordinary commuters, and urges the Central Government to withdraw its latest proposal," it said in a statement. The government had last year decided to privatise six airports under the public private partnership (PPP) model. The Adani Group had won the bids for the six airports -- Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Thiruvananthapuram and Guwahati. The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the proposal for leasing out Jaipur, Guwahati and Thiruvananthapuram airports through the PPP mode.

tion solutions provider and Visa and with support of these global partners, the company will introduce a technology that will enable "true democratisation of payments and accelerate the contactless revolution in India, resulting in huge socio-economic benefits".

On the recent launch of its product 'Bank Box', he said that the payment solution will "revolutionise" the digital payment landscape for MSMEs by ushering in the era of zero rental and zero MDRAA (Merchant Discount Rate) for POS (point of sale) and payment gateway card payments for small businesses.

Traditionally SMEs prefer accepting cash over cards since there are costs associated with ownership and transactions on POS terminals, Patel said. He noted that through Bank Box the company is helping MSMEs and merchants eliminate the cost of ownership.

## IT dept refunds ₹88,652 cr issued to 24.64L taxpayers

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 21:** The Income Tax department Friday said it has issued refunds worth Rs 88,652 crore to over 24 lakh taxpayers so far this fiscal. This include personal income tax (PIT) refunds amounting to Rs 28,180 crore issued to over 23.05 lakh taxpayers and corporate tax refunds amounting to Rs 60,472 crore to over 1.58 lakh taxpayers during this period.



"CBDT has, so far, issued refunds of over Rs 88,652 crore to more than 24.64 lakh taxpayers from 1st April, 2020 onwards. Income tax refunds of Rs 28,180 crore have been issued in 23,05,726 cases & corporate tax refunds of Rs 60,472 crore have been issued in 1,58,280 cases," the Income Tax department tweeted.

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

The government has emphasised on providing tax related services to taxpayers without any hassles during COVID-19 pandemic and to that end has been clearing up pending tax refunds.

## Kharif sowing rises 9%

**New Delhi:** Total area under coverage so far during this kharif (summer sown) season has risen 9% to 1,062.93 lakh hectares on better monsoon, the agriculture ministry said Friday. As on August 21, total kharif crops have been sown on 1,062.93 lakh hectare area, against 979.15 lakh hectare area during the corresponding period of last year. "There is no impact of COVID-19 on progress of area coverage under kharif crops as on date," an official statement said.



# Balcony turned into interaction medium



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dubai, August 21:** Restricted to their rooms for six days, players who have landed in the UAE for the IPL, spent their opening day talking to each other through ‘balconies’ besides following a fitness plan handed out by the teams’ trainers.

Rajasthan Royals and Kings XI Punjab players arrived in Dubai Thursday evening while Kolkata Knight Riders landed in Abu Dhabi in the night.

While Royals’ squad completed its day one testing as per BCCI’s Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) at the airport itself, KXIP went for a repeat test Friday.

As per the BCCI SOP, testing will be done on day one, three and six and after that teams can start training for the league, beginning September 19.

Since no one is allowed to step out of the room in the six-day isolation period, players made full use of their dedicated balconies to speak to each other but following all social distancing guidelines.

The Royals have demarcated the outdoor area which a player cannot use if his next door teammate too is outside.

“The players can use the outdoor area alternately. For example, I can’t be in the balcony when the player next door too is outside

but I can be out with the player in the following room,” a team source told this agency.

KXIP players can talk to their immediate neighbour while using the balcony but the heat in Dubai would ensure they do it in daytime.

Royals pacer Jaydev Unadkat also posted a video on social media, covering his first morning in Dubai. Going by the video, he has an air cycle in his room to keep him in shape and he used the outdoor area for his Yoga session.

Chennai Super Kings, Royal Challengers and Mumbai Indians left for UAE Friday. Delhi Capitals and Sunrisers Hyderabad players will leave India over the weekend.

# Sakshi, Mirabai denied Arjuna award

The Sports Ministry Friday decided against bestowing the Arjuna award on former Khel Ratna winners Sakshi Malik and Mirabai Chanu, pruning the list to 27, including ace Odia sprinter Dutee Chand, but accepted an unprecedented five recommendations for the country’s highest sporting honour this year.

While Sakshi won the Khel Ratna in 2016 for her bronze in Rio, Mirabai was bestowed with the prestigious honour in 2018, after her exploits at the World Championships the previous year.

## RAJIV GANDHI KHEL RATNA AWARD



ROHIT SHARMA



MANIKA BATRA



RANI RAMPAL



VINESH PHOGAT



T MARIYAPPAN

## DRONACHARYA AWARD:

(LIFETIME CATEGORY): Dharmendra Tiwary (Archery), Purushotham Rai (Athletics), Shiv Singh (Boxing), Romesh Pathania (Hockey), Krishan Kumar Hooda (Kabaddi), Vijay Bhalchandra Munishwar (Para Powerlifting), Naresh Kumar (Tennis) & Om Parkash Dahiya (Wrestling); (REGULAR CATEGORY): Jude Felix Sebastian (Hockey), Yogesh Mahviya (Mallakhamb), Jaspal Rana (Shooting), Kuldeep Kumar Handoo (Wushu), Gaurav Khanna (Para Badminton)

## ARJUNA AWARD:

Dutee Chand (Athletics), Atanu Das (Archery), Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy (Badminton), Chirag Chandrasekhar Shetty (Badminton), Vishesh Bhargavanshi (Basketball), Subedar Manish Kaushik (Boxing), Lovlina Borgohain (Boxing), Ishant Sharma (Cricket), Deepti Sharma (Cricket), Sawant Ajay Anant (Equestrian), Sandesh Jhingan (Football), Aditi Ashok (Golf), Akashdeep Singh

(Hockey), Deepika (Hockey), Deepak (Kabaddi), Kale Sarika Sudhakar (Kho Kho), Dattu Baban Bhokanal (Rowing), Manu Bhaker (Shooting), Saurabh Chaudhary (Shooting), Madhurika Suhas Patkar (Table Tennis), Divij Sharan (Tennis), Shiva Keshavan (Winter Sports), Divya Kakran (Wrestling), Rahul Aware (Wrestling), Suyash Narayan Jadhav (Para Swimming), Sandeep (Para Athletics) & Manish Narwal (Para Shooting);

## DHYAN CHAND AWARD:

Kuldip Singh Bhullar (Athletics), Jincy Philips (Athletics), Pradeep Shrikrishna Gandhe (Badminton), Trupti Murgunde (Badminton), N Usha (Boxing), Lakha Singh (Boxing), Sukhvinder Singh Sandhu (Football), Ajit Singh (Hockey), Manpreet Singh (Kabaddi), J Ranjith Kumar (Para Athletics), Satyaprakash Tiwari (Para Badminton), Manjeet Singh (Rowing), Late Shri Sachin Nag (Swimming), Nandan P Bal (Tennis) & Netarpal Hooda (Wrestling).

# INDIAN CHALLENGE ENDS IN PRAGUE POST DOUBLES LOSS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Prague, August 21:** The Indian challenge came to an end at the ATP Challenger Prague Open with the defeat of all three players competing in the doubles event.

Top seeded Divij Sharan and Robin Haase lost their quarterfinal 3-6, 6-7(8-10) to Jiri Lehecka and Tomas MacHac Thursday.

N Sriram Balaji and his partner Kimmer Coppejans were also defeated in straight sets, going down 4-6, 3-6 to Steven

Diez and Blaz Rola.

Sumit Nagal, who lost to World No.17 and three-time Grand Slam winner Stanislas Wawrinka in the singles, also lost his doubles match to bow out of the tournament. Nagal and Ilya Ivashka lost 2-6, 4-6 to Pierre-Hugues Herbert and Arthur Rinderknech.

It was the first competitive tournament for these three Indian players since the game was halted by the COVID-19 pandemic in March this year.

# Bhagat hopes to meet Sachin post Para Games

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, August 21:** The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has turned a nightmare for many, but for Indian para-shuttler Pramod Bhagat, it has turned out to be a ‘blessing in disguise’. The five-time World Champion has now started court training after four months gap at the Railway Indoor Stadium in Bhubaneswar.

Bhagat, a World No.1 and the reigning World Champion in SL3 singles and doubles category, has been confined to his home in the state capital for more than four months now. But he has no complaints. Instead he has used the downtime to attain better fitness and mental strength and is now raring to go all out for his dream of a Paralympic medal at the Tokyo Games.

“I have made the most of this lockdown time to work on my fitness and strengthen my weaknesses. During our usual training time, we distribute our time on our skills, technique, tactics and fitness. Now that our training has been halted, I had ample of time to focus on my fitness and mental well-being,” said Bhagat.

“And I am more than satisfied with the outcome of these four months of work out at home. I have never felt so good about my body;



I’m fitter than ever before and, have gained strength in my left (disabled) leg and strengthened my core. I am able to move the leg more comfortably, which is a great satisfaction. Mentally I feel very confident about my movements now.”

The 32-year-old said the postponement of the Games had brought ‘disappointment’.

For now, his dream is to win a paralympic medal in Tokyo next year and meet his idol and cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar, whom he describes as a ‘humble human being and true sportsman’.

“A paralympic medal will fulfil two of my dreams at a time. Tendulkar ji is my idol and he met the Olympic and Paralympic medalists of Rio 2016, even congratulated them. I hope I can meet him next year after the Tokyo 2020 Games with a paralympic medal around my neck.”

# 3rd Test: Crawley propels England to 184/4 at tea

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Southampton, August 21:** Zak Crawley (97 batting, 165b, 11x4) was on the verge of posting his first Test century as England reached tea on 184/4 on the opening day of the third and final Test against Pakistan at the Rose Bowl Friday.

Crawley was on a career-best Test score of 97 and sharing an unbeaten 57-run partnership with Jos Buttler (24 batting) after England lost captain Joe Root (29) and Ollie Pope (3) after lunch.

Root edged a beautiful deliv-

ery from paceman Naseem Shah (1/45) that seamed away, with wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan taking a flying catch to his right.

Pope lasted 15 balls before he was bowled by Yasir Shah (2/60) trying to play the leg-spinner off the back foot, leaving England 127/4.

Playing his eighth Test, Crawley’s previous best score was 76 against the West Indies at the same ground in Southampton last month. Buttler is also seeing the ball well, striking four boundaries.

England lead 1-0 and are looking to clinch a first series victory over Pakistan in 10 years, as well as a second of the summer after beating the West Indies 2-1.

Fast bowler Jofra Archer was recalled by England in place of Sam Curran in the only change from the drawn second test on the same ground in Southampton. Pakistan selected an unchanged team.

**BRIEF SCORES:** England 184/4 (Zak Crawley 97 batting; Yasir Shah 2/60) vs Pakistan. Match to continue.



# BARCA EVOLUTION ON CARDS

AGENCIES

**BARCELONA:** New Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman warned that any players who lack commitment or professionalism will be shown the door as he vowed to lead the team back to glory after last week’s 2-8 humiliation in the Champions League by Bayern Munich.

“What we need to do is give a different image to what we gave against Bayern, that’s not the Barca we or the fans want to see,” Koeman said at his presentation Wednesday after signing a two-year deal with Barca.

“You have to be very happy wear the Barca shirt. You have to show that with commitment, professionalism, with everything you have inside. If we do that, the image will be totally different to what it was last week.”

Koeman left his role as Netherlands coach to take charge of Barca, who he helped win a first European Cup in 1992 during a golden six-year spell in Johan Cruyff’s so-called ‘Dream Team’.

The Dutchman said that Barca was his home, although he admitted it was not an easy time to return to the club, who are reeling from their first trophy-less campaign in 12 years.

“We’re going to work very hard to build a strong team but we’ll have to make changes because the image of the other day is not what we want. We’ll have to work hard to recover our prestige,” he said.

“It’s a big challenge and it won’t be easy because Barca always demands the best of you, which is the way it should be. Barca are still the biggest

club in the world. Now we have to work hard to make sure Barca gets back to where they should be. There is enough quality in the team to demand the best results and to win trophies.”

Koeman did not reveal which players he would seek to move on from the club, although he made it clear he only wanted to work with those who were fully committed.

“I don’t want to mention names, we have to look in the club’s best interests and make the best squad possible to try and win games,” he said.

“There are players of a certain age who you can start to doubt, although a player who is 31, 32 or even 33 is not necessarily finished, it all depends on your hunger and whether you want to give everything for the club.

“I only want to work with players who want to be here, and if they are not happy here then they should say so. I only want people who are going to give everything for Barca.”

# First team players facing axe

*A herculean rebuilding job awaits Barcelona and their incoming manager Ronald Koeman. But president Josep Bartomeu has – wisely or not – shown Barcelona’s hand by saying just eight members of the first-team squad are guaranteed to be staying for the new campaign. Marc-Andre Ter Stegen, Clement Lenglet, Nelson Semedo, Frenkie de Jong, Antoine Griezmann, Ousmane Dembele as well as Ansu Fati along with the talisman Lionel Messi, who is termed as ‘untouchable and non-transferable’ by Bartomeu. And he left the door open for Philippe Coutinho, returning from his loan at Bayern Munich, to stay if Koeman wants him*

## LUIS SUAREZ

The biggest name on the for-sale list, Suarez could be on the move despite an impressive return of 21 goals and 12 assists in 36 matches this season. And it appears the 33-year-old Uruguayan could be poised to return to Ajax, where he played between 2007 and 2011. Reports say Ajax’s director of football Marc Overmars is already working on efforts to get him back to Amsterdam. It certainly seems a worthwhile move for Suarez, who was out of contract at Barcelona next year anyway. Juventus are also reportedly eyeing a move for the striker.



## GERARD PIQUE

It was Pique who came out and said what every Barcelona fan – and no doubt quite a few of his teammates – were thinking (about all necessary changes) in the wake of Friday night’s humiliation. Pique also said he would be ‘the first to leave’ if necessary and it would seem Bartomeu would agree that might be a good idea. And even newly-promoted Premier League side Fulham have reportedly put an offer on the table, and it’s now up to the 33-year-old and Barcelona to see if there’s any interest in heading to west London.



## SERGIO BUSQUETS

You’d have thought a wise old head like the 32-year-old midfielder could come in handy as Barcelona completely revamp their squad. That’s especially true when he has such a high buy-out clause of 440mn pound on a contract lasting until 2023 that he is essentially unable to move anywhere. Surely there will be interest in Busquets, valued at around 25mn pound, who should have two or three more years at the top to offer. His unexpected non-inclusion in Bartomeu’s list means stories of interest have yet to appear but you can see him doing a job for Juventus or one of the Milan clubs.



## JORDI ALBA

Having been a mainstay at left-back, Alba suddenly finds his career at a crossroads. He signed a new five-year contract, with an astronomical 500million euro buy-out clause, in March last year, so no doubt Alba expected to see out his days at the Nou Camp. Obviously Barcelona will have to reduce their asking price – maybe to 30mn pound or under – and they’ll be hard pressed in the current climate to find anyone willing to match Alba’s 10mn euro-a-season salary for a 31-year-old.



## IVAN RAKITIC

The Croatian midfielder, 32, appeared to be one of those transfer-listed for this summer even before the Bayern result happened with his contract set to expire next summer. Links with Sevilla have been played down by their sporting director Monchi and Rakitic has now been linked with a move to the Premier League with Arsenal, Tottenham and Manchester United the names in the frame. The experienced player should be available for around 9mn pound.



## ARTURO VIDAL

The Chilean midfielder is out of contract next summer anyway so Barcelona were always likely to try and get a bit of cash



for him this year. Since it appears Bartomeu and Koeman have no place for the 33-year-old batter, he will certainly be on his way out. Reports in Spain this week say PSG are interested in Vidal, while he’s also been linked with Manchester United and Inter Milan. While obviously any suitor is only likely to get a couple of seasons out of him, Vidal could prove a snip at 8mn or 9mn pound.

## SAMUEL UMTITI

It really has been a season to forget for the French centre-back, whose prominence in the side has been diminished by foot and knee injuries that restricted him to just 18 appearances. Umtiti lost his place at the heart of defence to Clement Lenglet but has always insisted he will see out his contract until 2023 and fight for his place. Bartomeu appears to disagree and Barcelona will hope to recoup most, if not all, of the 22.5mn pound they paid for him in 2016. It seems like most of the EPL’s top six are looking for decent centre-halves at the moment so there could be interest, but will they take a gamble on someone with such a chequered injury history?



# NEW FACES IN FRAY & NEW SIGNINGS

## MIRALEM PJANIC

Barcelona signed the midfielder on a deal that could rise to be worth 65 million euro. He was involved in a swap deal with Arthur who headed to Juventus. Prior to his move to Juventus where he was a regular first-team player, Pjanic blossomed into one of the world’s best midfielders at Roma.



## PEDRI

The exciting attacking midfielder joined the Catalans for just five million euro. The 17-year-old has admitted he has looked to learn from



## TRINCAO

Barcelona signed Francisco Trincao and Braga president Antonio Salvador believes the attacker will be one of the world’s best in 10 years. Trincao signed a five-year deal with Barca in January for 31 million euro. The 20-year-old Portuguese has a 500 mn euro release clause in his contract. He is capable of playing in all positions across the front line and will offer Barca an extra attacking dimension when he moves to Spain next season.



## DONNY VAN DE BEEK

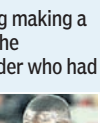
Koeman is reportedly pretty keen on Ajax midfielder Van de Beek. The 23-year-old has previously been linked with both Real Madrid and Manchester United but those

rumors have faded recently. Koeman has obviously worked with Van de Beek with the Netherlands national team, while a move to Barca would see him link up with Frenkie de Jong again.



## MALANG SARR

Barcelona are reportedly considering making a move for former Nice center-back. The Frenchman is a stellar central defender who had a great season with Nice. His free agency is purely due to the inability of the two sides to come to an agreement on a new contract. Eric Abidal had apparently already reached out to Sarr about a move to Barcelona given his free agency before he left the club Tuesday.



## ERIC GARCIA

Barcelona are planning on making Manchester City defender Eric Garcia the first signing under

new boss Koeman. A report in ‘Diario Sport’ claims the Catalan club will now push ahead with their pursuit of Garcia this week. It follows on from City boss Pep Guardiola claiming the player would not renew his deal at the English club and the defender is now taking center stage of Barcelona transfer news this summer.



## GEORGINIO WIJNALDUM

Koeman reportedly wants to bring Liverpool midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum to the Camp Nou. According to ‘Algemeen Dagblad’, Wijnaldum is pretty high up on Koeman’s wishlist and is thought to be ‘affordable’ as his contract expires in summer 2021. There has been speculation Koeman has advised the Dutch midfielder not to renew at Anfield.

