



### USEFUL TIPS

Actor Kriti Sanon says it is not healthy to lose and gain weight frequently to nail a look

LEISURE P2



### CM WRITES TO CENTRE FOR FERT

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik urges Centre to supply adequate fertilisers to the state to avoid clashes among farmer

DOWNTOWN P3



### US EVICTION

A nationwide eviction moratorium is set to expire after Biden and Democrats worked furiously but ultimately failed

INTERNATIONAL P10

## BMC claims 100 per cent vaccination

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 31:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Saturday claimed to have achieved 100 per cent vaccination against Covid-19 in the state capital making Bhubaneswar first city in the country to do so.

Briefing the media Saturday, BMC Additional Commissioner Laxmikant

Sethi, said that the civic body had targeted about 18.14 lakh beneficiaries with either first or second dose in all age groups. Out of this, 18.35 lakh doses have been administered till Friday, thereby 100% achieving vaccination in the city.

"Out of the 18.35 lakh doses, 10.59 lakh people have taken their first dose of the vaccine. Similarly, 7.7 lakh beneficiaries in the city have already received their final

shots. We have covered a wide range of beneficiaries including those from rural areas on the outskirts of the town. A huge number of outsiders keep commuting to the city for doses regularly and no one has been ignored," Sethi said.

He added that observing the drop in demand for vaccination, they have now decided to close the drive-in centers in the city. It may be mentioned here that the BMC had

earlier opened more than 10 drive-in centers across the city.

"The rush of beneficiaries has declined substantially. Currently, only people who have missed their dose or who are due for second shot are visiting the centres. The inoculation centres at UPHCs and mobilised centres will remain functional as vaccination of pregnant women in the city is still in progress," he added.

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### COMBATING NATURE'S FURY

A firefighter extinguishes a forest fire near the town of Manavgat, east of the resort city of Antalya, Turkey. REUTERS PHOTO

## Girls outshine boys in CHSE +2 exams

Students dissatisfied with their marks can sit for offline exams

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 31:** Results of the Plus II Science and Commerce examinations assessed by the Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE), Odisha, were declared by the School and Mass Education Minister, Samir Ranjan Das, Saturday evening.

While 95.15 per cent examinees secured pass marks in Plus II (Science), the pass percentage in Plus II (Commerce) is 94.96. Last year, the pass percentage of Plus II (Science) was 70.21, while 74.95 per cent students cleared the examination in the Commerce stream.

In Science stream, 89,951 students of the total of 94,532 who appeared for the examination secured pass marks. While 55,468 examinees secured 1st division, 16,943 got 2nd division, 14,631 passed in 3rd division. Overall, 2,278 students got more than 90 per cent in science.

A total of 50,198 boys and 39,753 girls were assessed for the Plus II (Science) examination this year.

This year too, girl students outshone the boys in the Science stream. The total pass percentage of girl students stands at 96.03 per cent, while 94.46 per cent boys cleared the Plus II (Science) examination.

In the Commerce stream, 24,526 students were assessed for the examination and 23,292 secured pass marks. Of them, 8,355 students got 1st division, 5,692 2nd division and 9,066 secured 3rd division. Overall, 149 students got more than 90 per cent in the Commerce stream.

A total of 14,757 boys and 8,535 girls cleared the Plus II (Commerce) examination.

In the Commerce stream too girl students outperformed the boys this year. The total pass percentage of girl students stands at 95.97 per cent, while 94.39 per cent boys cleared the examination.

The results were uploaded in the School and Mass Education department's websites [chseodisha.nic.in](http://chseodisha.nic.in) and [orissare.sults.nic.in](http://orissare.sults.nic.in) at 8.00 pm Saturday. Meanwhile, School and Mass



School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash (Blue shirt) releasing the Plus II (Science & Commerce) results, Saturday. OP PHOTO

### SCIENCE & COMMERCE

■ **95.15 per cent** examinees secured pass marks in Plus II (Science), while the pass percentage in Plus II (Commerce) is **94.96**

■ Last year, the pass percentage of Plus II (Science) was **70.21**, while **74.95 per cent** students cleared the Commerce stream

Education Minister Dash said students who are dissatisfied with their marks can file complaints with the principals of their respective schools and colleges along with their marksheets and they will be sent it to Controller of Examination on-line for re-valuation. He added that students who want to sit for offline exams can do so after a notification is issued in this regard.

Earlier, state government had declared Class X results and also conducted offline matriculation examination for students who were not satisfied with their results.

The minister further said that results of Plus-II (Arts) and Plus II (Vocational) examinations will be declared soon. The board has submitted a petition in the Supreme Court seeking the time for declaring the Plus-II (Arts) and Plus II (Vocational) results. Earlier, the apex court had directed all the states to declare the Plus II results latest by July 31 this year.

## Pulwama attack conspirator killed in J&K encounter

AGENCIES

**Srinagar, July 31:** A top Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) commander and another militant were killed in a gunfight in south Kashmir's Pulwama Saturday morning. Police claimed the commander hailed from Masood Azhar's family and was behind the 2019 Lethpora car bomb blast.

Mohammad Ismail Alvi, also known by his code names Adnan and Lambou, was killed in a gunfight when a joint team of forces cordoned off Nagberan Tarsar village in the forest area falling under the Dachigam of south Kashmir's Pulwama after inputs about their presence.

The militants opened indiscriminate fire and tried to break the security cordon. The joint team of forces retaliated, leading to an encounter in which the two were killed. Police said the identity of the second militant is being ascertained.



"Mohd Ismail Alvi was from the family of Masood Azhar. He was involved in conspiracy and planning of the Lethpora Pulwama attack and figured in the charge-sheet produced by the NIA," police quoted Kashmir Inspector General of Police (IGP) Vijay Kumar in a tweet.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



We need someone with integrity to calm down people. I think you should not speak on this matter, sir!

## MALLS, CINEMAS, PARKS TO REOPEN

Weekend shutdown will be in force only in three cities - Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Puri

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 31:** The state government Saturday announced fresh Covid-19 unlock guidelines for the month of August. The new norms will be effective from 6 am of August 1 and continue till 6 am of September 1.

According to the new norms, weekend shutdown will be in force only in three cities - Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Puri where the Covid-19 caseload is higher compared to the rest of the state.

The SRC also said that henceforth all shops and malls would be allowed to keep their premises open from 6am to 8pm every day except during the weekend shutdowns in the above three cities. The mall authorities and shopkeepers have now been asked to take special measures to ensure social distancing and follow the Covid-19 appropriate behaviour on their premises.

On the other hand, prohibition on all religious, political and cultural gatherings besides exhibitions, trade fairs, and melas will continue across the state.

Jena further said that sea beaches, parks, malls, restaurants and dhabas will be allowed to open, but with compliance with Covid guidelines. Restaurants, bars and dhabas too have been allowed to operate with 50 per cent of their seating capacity.

In a major development, cinema halls have also been granted per-

mission to open with 50 per cent seating capacity. However, people going to cinema halls would be required to furnish certificates of their second dose of vaccination.

Street food vendors have also been allowed spot eating in accordance with Covid guidelines. Daily and weekly haats have also been allowed to open but the local authorities have been asked to ensure social distancing in such places. All inter-state and intra-state buses have been allowed to operate but with only as per as their seating capacity.

The government has, meanwhile, asked the administrations of Srimandir and Lingaraj temple to decide on the opening of their premises. However, devotees will not be allowed to offer prasad or bhoga. Jatra, operas and open air theatres have also been permitted to operate with 50 per cent of their capacity.

Marriage ceremonies with 25 guests have also been allowed but community feasts are banned. Funeral activities are allowed with not more than 20 persons. Museums, zoos, archeological monuments have also been allowed to open in the state.

Meanwhile, according to an analysis of ICMR's fourth sero-survey by independent epidemiologist Dr Chandrakant Lahariya, for every single Covid-19 case reported in India, there were 30 cases that remained undetected or were missed.

## Sindhu loses to Tai Tzu, to fight for bronze

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**Tokyo, July 31:** Reigning world champion PV Sindhu's hopes of securing India's first ever Olympic gold in badminton came crashing down as she slumped to a straight-game defeat against world No.1 Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei in the women's singles semifinals here Saturday.

The 26-year-old silver-medallist from the Rio Games, however, remained in the hunt for a bronze and will be competing against China's He Bing Jiao in the third place play-off at Musashino Forest Plaza Sunday.

One of the most consistent players, who have claimed medals in all big-ticket events in the last five years, Sindhu couldn't counter Tai Tzu's deception with her aggressive game, going down 18-21 12-21 here.

This is Sindhu's 14th loss to the Taiwanese second seed in 19 meetings, having also lost to her in the last three face-offs.

Tai Tzu tried to play an aggressive game, cramping Sindhu with her sharp returns from near the net.

The two played some exquisite rallies with Sindhu equalling her opponent and also unleashing a few smashes to lead the opening game for most parts.

She was up 7-3 with Tai Tzu com-

mitting a few unforced errors and entered the interval with a healthy 11-8 lead. Tai Tzu, however, quickly erased the deficit after the break. She started putting doubts in her opponent's mind with her deceptive strokeplay.

Sindhu kept retrieving everything thrown at her and gathered points whenever she had the chance to attack.

The duo moved neck and neck from 11-11 to 18-18 before Tai Tzu unleashed a drop and then pushed one away from Sindhu's reach to lead for the first time.

Soon Tai Tzu grabbed two game points and sealed it with a straight down the line forehand smash.

### MISUSE OF SPYWARE

## NSO blocks Pegasus use by some govts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, July 31:** Israeli cybersecurity company NSO Group, which is at the centre of the Pegasus snooping scandal, has temporarily blocked several government clients around the world from using its spyware technology as the firm probes its alleged abuses, according to a US media report.

The alleged use of the Pegasus software to spy on journalists, human rights defenders, politicians and others in a number of countries, including India, triggered concerns

over issues relating to privacy.

The suspensions are in response to an investigation by the Pegasus Project, a consortium of media outlets that reported the company's Pegasus spyware was linked to hacks and potential surveillance.

"There is an investigation into some clients. Some of those clients have been temporarily suspended," National Public Radio (NPR) quoted a source in the Israeli company as saying. The source, a company employee, did not name or quantify the government agencies - or their countries - which NSO has recently

suspended from using its spyware, asserting that Israeli defence regulations prohibit the company from identifying its clients, the report by NPR, an independent, nonprofit media organisation, said.

NSO's ongoing internal investigation checked some of the telephone numbers of people that NSO's clients reportedly marked as potential targets. "Almost everything we checked, we found no connection to Pegasus," the employee said, declining to elaborate on potential misuse NSO may have uncovered. NSO "will no longer be re-



sponding to media inquiries on this matter and it will not play along with the vicious and slanderous campaign," the employee, who spoke

on condition of anonymity because of company policy, said.

The Israeli government has also faced pressure since it regulates the sale of spyware technology to other countries. It has launched a probe into allegations against NSO.

Israeli officials inspected NSO's office in Herzliya, near Tel Aviv, Wednesday "to assess the allegations raised in regards to the company," the Defence Ministry said in a statement. The NSO employee said the company was cooperating fully with the probe and sought to prove to Israeli officials that the

people named in the media reports were not Pegasus targets.

Mercury Public Affairs, which represents NSO Group, Thursday said in a statement: "The company is working in full transparency with the Israeli authorities. We are confident that this inspection will prove the facts are as declared repeatedly by the Company against the false allegations made against us in the recent media attacks." NSO says it has 60 customers in 40 countries, all of them intelligence agencies, law enforcement bodies and militaries, the reports said.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX	31.0°C	32.0°C
	MIN	26.0°C	26.0°C
Humidity		89%	88%
Rainfall		Nil	Nil
Forecast Light rain very likely			

# leisure

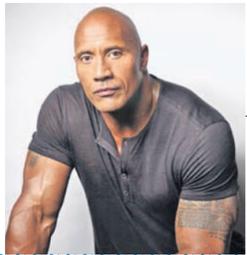


## COURTNEY COX IS REAL-LIFE MONICA FROM FRIENDS

Actress Courtney Cox shares similar traits with her onscreen character Monica Geller from the popular sitcom *Friends*. Courtney on *The Drew Barrymore Show* revealed that she is a 'pretty neat' person just like her character Monica, who in *Friends* came across as a very organised person.

## WHEN DWAYNE JOHNSON GOT 'GHOSTED' BY EMILY BLUNT

Hollywood star Dwayne Johnson was keen to have actress Emily Blunt in the movie upcoming movie *Jungle Cruise* but, when he sent her a video asking if she would like to join the cast, she 'ghosted' him and left him without a reply.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Go with the flow. At least that's what Ganesh suggests where relationships are concerned. You can be your assertive self some other time. Today, you can be large-hearted and fulfill your beloved's wishes, maybe even propose. What say?

**TAURUS**  
Today is a perfect day to relax and enjoy your health, feels Ganesh. However, precaution should be the buzzword while dealing in money matters. You may develop a new interest in jewellers, artists, bankers and orators. Dinner will be laced with all the deserving delicacies of a hearty meal.

**GEMINI**  
It is a good day for you to participate in cultural events and group activities, predicts Ganesh. You are likely to be an important part of some convention or joint venture, but don't get too bogged down by it. In the evening, you may take a fancy to fine arts, such as drawing or classical music.

**CANCER**  
You will take on new responsibilities, says Ganesh. So you will be busy in your task. You may feel exhausted due to hectic work. So it entails mental tension.

**LEO**  
Guides help other people choose the right path in life and to select the correct alternatives. It is a good day for those who are in the teaching or coaching professions. It is also a progressive day for those working in MMC's. Ganesh's blessings are with you.

**VIRGO**  
Expenditures will be like oil spills- wasteful and dirty. But cosmic energies and positivity are gathering wind today, and you should do well to make full use of them in your personal and professional life, says Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
Lady Luck smiles on you today. With all the good fortune on your side, it's assured to be a day when financial gains come your way, especially if you are in the banking business. Agreed everything is going your way today, but be careful not to let your emotions cloud your reasoning and slow you down. Don your rational hat and lower your expectations a little. It never hurts to want less, especially since it is saves you from disappointments later on, advises Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**  
Keep your guards up and be wary today, warns Ganesh. A heat seeker meant for someone else may hit you in mid-flight. But all that watchfulness will save you from embarrassment. Like those old fables, these experiences have a lesson in them, says Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Expect yourself to be hit with religious fervour. You may find yourself in the spotlight for an event or inauguration. Ganesh indicates travelling, so pack your bags for a long-distance business trip.

**CAPRICORN**  
After all the drudgery you endured in a bid to reach a certain point in your career, it's time to sit back and enjoy the rewards, says Ganesh. Today, you can expect to get a transfer, a promotion, a pay hike or all the three. But these will be accompanied by added responsibilities and work, leaving you wondering if it really was an achievement or a bait used to trap you. A lucrative job offer may also come your way, and given the circumstances, you may find it hard to resist.

**AQUARIUS**  
Things have become stagnant but it fails to frustrate your spirit. Slow and steady wins the race and it seems you have imbibed it very well. You will be able to seize opportunities coming your way and march ahead on your path. Financially, you will be on a stable ground, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
You need to tread cautiously today when it comes to matters related to business. Do not make any decisions in haste, or it could come back to haunt you at a later date. All financial dealings will need to be carefully monitored. Do not indulge in speculative activities or undue risk taking. A little consideration now will save you a lot of trouble later, says Ganesh.



## 'Sudden weight loss-gain not a healthy thing to do'

**MUMBAI:** Kriti Sanon walked the extra mile to nail her look in the film *Mimi*. The actress had to put on some extra kilos to play a pregnant woman and gained weight in two and a half months. She agrees it is not a healthy thing to do but adds that she wanted to take an extra step for the character as she felt that there is something for her in it. "Obviously, it's not a very healthy thing to do too often so you have to make sure...I wouldn't do this again and again for a character...I told myself I won't do this again but I think when you get a character which gives you so much to do as an actor then you end up giving yourself a lot back," Kriti said. "Bodily, it's not a very healthy thing to do, especially because I have put on weight like in two, two and half months," added the *Luka Chuppi* actress. Mimi also stars Pankaj Tripathi, Sai Tamhankar, Supriya Pathak and Manoj Pahwa. It is streaming on Jio Cinema and Netflix.

## Jacqueline on her 'super special' Vikrant Rona

**MUMBAI:** Actress Jacqueline Fernandez says the upcoming film *Vikrant Rona* will be super special and memorable for her. The actress has come on board Kannada star Kichcha Sudeep's multilingual film. Jacqueline will be seen playing Gadang Rakkamma who runs a tavern in a fictional place. She will also be seen shaking a leg with Kichcha Sudeep in the film. The makers have unveiled the first look of Jacqueline Fernandez in her screen character of Raquel D'Costa aka Gadang Rakkamma. Talking about the same, Jacqueline shared: "The team of the film has been very welcoming and every moment that's going into its making has been exciting for me. I thank the producers for such a grand poster reveal from the bottom of my heart. This film is going to be super special and memorable for me." The multilingual action adventure film will have a 3-D release in 14 languages and 55 countries. Directed by Anup Bhandari, produced by Jack Manjunath and Shalini Manjunath, co-produced by Alankar Pandian, Vikrant Rona also stars Nirup Bhandari and Neetha Ashok.



## Sritam plays transgender in Mitali Apa

**BHUBANESWAR:** Not too many actors in the Odia film industry prefer to experiment with their onscreen characters. Senior actor Sritam Das is certainly not in that list. After playing a baddie in his directorial *Tu Tha Mu Jauchi Rushi*, Sritam is now playing a transgender in yet-to-be-released movie *Mitali Apa*. Talking about the movie, Sritam says, "Third genders are often portrayed in negative roles. But for a change, my Mitali Apa, an eunuch, will be seen as a protagonist. Even as she is not a biological mother, Mitali sacrifices a lot to offer her adopted daughter a decent life. The movie also sends the message that begging is not the only option for the people of third gender to support themselves." Asked about the challenge of playing Mitali Apa, Sritam adds,

"It was not an easy role. I had to do a lot of homework to get into the skin of the character."

Directed by Prasant Lenka and produced by Rabintra Nath Panda, the film also features Asit, Sonam and Mahima in pivotal characters.



Sritam Das in *Mitali Apa*

## International awards for Odia filmmaker

**BHUBANESWAR:** *Shri Jagannath*, an Odia documentary film produced and directed by Hitesh Kumar, has won two international awards at recently concluded Roshni International Film Festival held in Aurangabad.

The film highlights the minimum use of timber in chariot construction during Rath Yatra by reusing the wood of old chariots. It also talks about the necessity of planting trees in the name of Lord Jagannath to safeguard the environment. Produced under the banner of Hitesh Kumar Films, the three-minute documentary was picked up in two categories - Best Inspirational film and Best Cinematography. Apart from lending the background voice, Hitesh also has worked as the editor and script writer for the film. Speaking about his other achievements, Hitesh has so far bagged about 30 international and a couple of national awards. Two of his films- *Jayatu Jayatu Bharatam* and *Vijayini* - have been officially selected for screening at Liftoff International Film

Festivals in Sydney and London. A native of Vyasanagar in Jajpur district, Hitesh, who had entered the film industry in 2011, has so far made 84 documentary films on various social issues. His grandfather was an eminent tabla player while mother Nivedita Mohapatra is an artist.

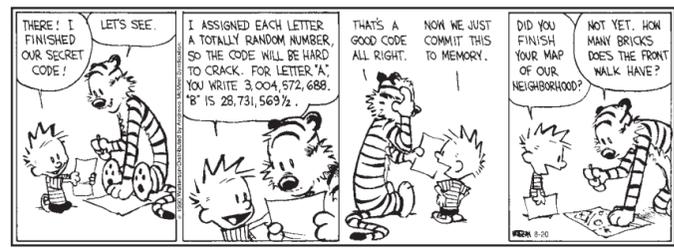


Hitesh Kumar

### PEANUTS



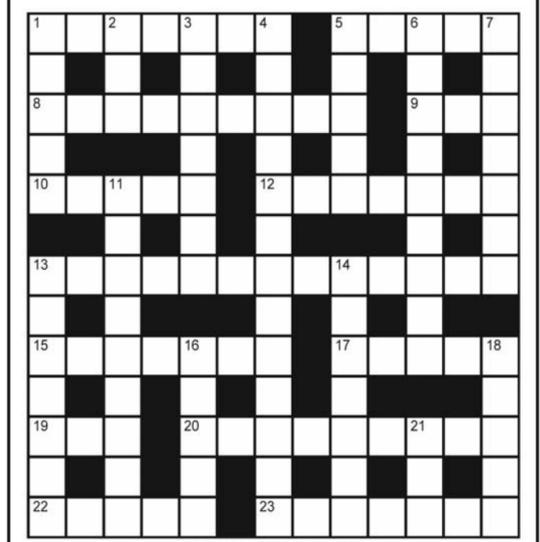
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



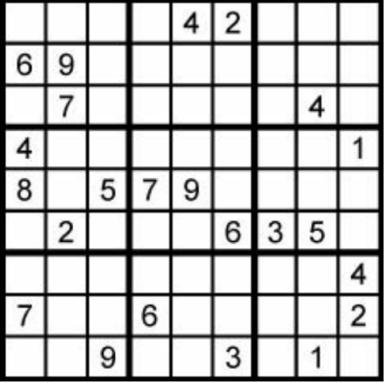
### FUN post CROSSWORD



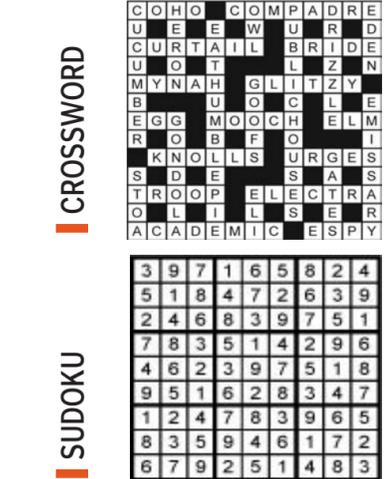
- Across**
- 1 Supper club
  - 5 Lay to rest
  - 8 Fencing, e.g.
  - 9 Silent assent
  - 10 Part of a TV feed
  - 12 Black gold gusher (3,4)
  - 13 Being the ham
  - 15 Flying Dutchman, for one
  - 17 Swamp plants
  - 19 Cuckoo bird
  - 20 Immunise
  - 22 Book parts
  - 23 Razzed
- Down**
- 1 Spain's \_\_\_ del Sol
  - 2 Life story, in brief
  - 3 California sequoia
  - 4 Gossip target (4,2,3,4)
  - 5 Bucolic composition
  - 6 Mandarin orange type
  - 7 Danger sign (3-4)
  - 11 Earsplitting
  - 13 London illumination,
  - 14 Take under one's wing
  - 16 Gemini the \_\_\_
  - 18 Go on a buying spree
  - 21 Cobbler's tool

### SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



### SOLUTIONS



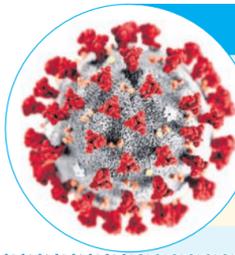
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## SHUTDOWN IN CITY

Police enforcing the Covid-induced weekend shutdown at Raj Mahal Square in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	19,82,59,318	17,91,08,567	42,29,249
India	3,16,13,993	3,07,81,263	4,23,810
Odisha	9,77,268	9,56,828	5,902

# CM writes to Centre over fert crunch

PNN/ AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 31:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday urged the Centre to supply adequate fertilisers to the state as the farmers were facing shortages during the peak of the Kharif cultivation season.

**Naveen said a short supply of fertilisers may 'unnecessarily invite law and order situation in most of the districts'**



there has been severe short supply of different fertilisers. During current Kharif till date, the state has

received only 1,45,145 MT of urea against the allocation of 2,31,530 MT and agreed supply plan of 2,10,000

MT," he said.

The Chief Minister noted that during the period the state received 97,763 MT of DAP against the allocation of 1,52,000 MT and agreed supply plan of 1,45,000 MT.

Overall, the supply of fertilisers was 60-74 per cent against the agreed supply, he mentioned in the letter.

Stating that farmers in the state suffered severe crop loss due to cyclone Yaas, Patnaik said that to optimise their production, the supply of the most critical input like fertiliser should be as per requirement.

In a letter to Union Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, Patnaik said a short supply of fertilisers may "unnecessarily invite law and order situation in most of the districts".

"I, therefore, request your personal intervention in the matter for supply of fertilisers to the state as per the monthly agreed supply plan including the backlog of the previous months for smooth distribution in the greater interest of farmers," he wrote.

Patnaik pointed out that the allocation declined during the peak demand period of May, June and July.

"During May, June and July

## BJD MPs' memo to Mandaviya

**BHUBANESWAR:** A delegation of BJD MPs Saturday met Union Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and drew his attention towards the shortage of fertilisers in the state.

The MPs told Mandaviya that the state is facing a shortage of fertiliser supply for Kharif 2021. While the requirement for urea is 2.1 lakh metric tonne (MT), the state has got only 1.45 lakh MT. Similarly, there are short supplies of Di-ammonium Phosphate (DAP)

and Muriate of Potash (MOP).

The delegation also cited the letter by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to the Union Minister on the issue and demanded his personal intervention for ensuring welfare of the farmers of Odisha.

Meanwhile, the BJP refuted the claims and alleged that the Chief Minister and the BJD MPs are politicising the issue. Party leader Pradeep Purohit said, "Such steps will only lead to black-marketing of fertilisers and create an artificial

shortage of the product. It is not the

Union government who will tackle the issue, it is the duty of the state government to monitor it at local level," he said. He also added, "Every year the state received fertilisers more than it demanded. There is no truth about less allocation of the same. In July, the state needed 0.90 MT of urea whereas it has a total of 2.20 MT of urea available by July 30. Already, 0.90 MT of urea was sold during the month. The state has a surplus urea now," he said.

## Tighten norms in districts with above 10% TPR, states told

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, July 31:** Amidst threat of a third wave of Covid-19 in the country, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan Saturday chaired a high-level meeting to review the pandemic situation in Odisha and nine other states.

The Health Ministry reviewed the public health measures introduced for surveillance, containment and management of Covid-19 pandemic by the health authorities in Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Assam, Mizoram, Meghalaya, AP and Manipur.

In order to contain the spread of the virus, the Health Ministry advised the states to clamp strict restrictions in the districts reporting test positivity rate (TPR) more than 10 per cent. It asked the states to curtail movement of people, formation of crowds and intermingling of people to check the infection.

"More than 80 per cent active cases in these states are reported to be in home isolation. There is need to effectively and strictly monitor these cases so that they are not intermingling and circulating in their neighbourhoods, community, village, mohalla and ward, and spreading the infection," he said.



**The Centre asked the high Covid burden states to curtail movement of people, formation of crowds and intermingling of people**

The ministry also asked the states to keep tabs on those districts where the positivity rate is less than 10 per cent. The health authorities of the states were advised to protect the people of these districts through vaccination.

"The people in home isolation should be effectively monitored while those requiring hospitalisation should be shifted seamlessly and provided with clinical treatment. Detailed SOPs covering various facets of effective clinical management of Covid patients in hospitals have been earlier shared with the states," the Health Secretary said.

## OSSC member PS's wealth 268% more than his income

*Bank officials were asked to share account statements of Sahoo to know whether any applicant had transferred money to his account*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 31:** Biranchi Narayan Sahoo, personal secretary to the member of Odisha Staff Selection Commission (OSSC), who was arrested by the Vigilance Saturday, was found to be possessing disproportionate assets of 268 per cent of his known sources of income.

The anti-corruption sleuths have started the process to find out how Sahoo amassed such huge amount of wealth. The Vigilance department has asked the bank officials to share the account statements of Sahoo to know whether any applicant had transferred money to his account. Vigilance sources claimed that the seizure of admits cards of applicants from Sahoo's residence indicated towards possible recruitment scam in OSSC.

Sahoo could be brought on remand as well for further enquiry. The Vigilance officials will try to find out if there is any involvement of other OSSC staffers/staffer in the alleged examination scam.

Speaking on the issue, Vigilance director YK Jethwa Saturday said that further action would be taken in this regard as per law after verification of seized items.

On the other hand, OSSC chair-



man Nirmala Chandra Mishra denied any wrongdoing in the recruitment processes. He also claimed that action will be taken against Sahoo following an internal enquiry in the matter.

Meanwhile, Sahoo told media that he has no role in examination process and none has taken money for it. He claimed the raid and his arrest were deliberate attempts to harass him.

The officials arrested Sahoo by registering a case (16/21) Saturday. Earlier, the officials of anti-corruption wing Friday carried out simultaneous raids on houses of Sahoo and his relatives at six places in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. They unearthed properties worth over ₹ 3.79 crore that includes ₹ 25 lakh



Urban Development Minister Pratap Jena checks the quality of drinking water provided under 'Sujal-drink from tap mission' in Puri, Saturday

## QUALITY CHECK

## City dengue cases surpass last year's state tally

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 31:** With more than 500 dengue cases recorded in Capital city till Saturday, the count surpassed the total number of cases recorded in the entire state during the season in 2020.

As per sources, Bhubaneswar has reported a total 563 dengue cases as 58 more cases of the vector-borne disease were added to the caseload Saturday. With this, the state capital has become the highest carrier of dengue as the state has so far reported around 600 cases. The dengue cases have surpassed last year's tally which stood at 496.

"Last year, restrictions on movement of people owing to Covid have helped contained the dengue cases. However, we are carefully monitoring the situation and have deployed specialised teams of health workers, sanitation workers and others in affected areas to control the spread of the vector-borne disease. Most of the patients have recovered," said an official of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC).

The civic authority Saturday launched a dengue prevention awareness rally here. The drive includes home visits, counselling, source reduction, slogan and public address system to sensitise community members. Moreover, source reduction activities like taking out tyres dumped by the people, drain-



ing out of water sources that are breeding places of aedes mosquito and on-spot demonstration of regular cleaning of water containers were also carried out.

### Citizens urged to donate blood

With an unprecedented rise in dengue cases in the city, the Red Cross Society has urged people to come forward and donate blood to blood banks which are facing an acute shortage of platelet components. "Lack of blood donations owing to lockdowns is one of the major causes for the shortage. Moreover, many people who are getting vaccinated and are refraining from blood donations due to 14-day restriction as per the instructions. Dengue patients are facing difficulties in getting platelets. This shortage could prove serious if dengue cases continue to increase at the present pandemic period," said Red Cross Officer, Laxman Swain.

## PREVENTION FIRST



Vaccination against Covid-19 underway at a health centre in Rasulgarh area of the Capital city, Saturday

## Mo Bus services on all routes to resume Monday: CRUT

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 31:** With the state government allowing further relaxations in lockdown norms, the Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) Saturday said it would resume Mo Bus services on all routes from August 2.

Detailing about the decision, CRUT's General Manager Dipti Mahapatro said that 194 buses will operate on 25 routes from 7am to 7pm on the weekdays (Monday-Friday). However, regular Mo Bus services will remain suspended Saturday and Sunday due to weekend shutdowns.

"All services will remain non-operational during weekends. However, bus service for incoming passengers will continue from city railway station to Cuttack and Khurda and shuttle service will be available from Airport to railway station," she added.

The CRUT authorities further said that no standing passenger will be allowed to travel in the buses while wearing of mask has been made mandatory for all travellers. "No mask, no entry. We ap-



**194 buses will operate on 25 routes from 7am to 7pm except for weekend shutdowns on Saturday and Sunday**

peal to all the commuters to continue taking precautions while they commute in Mo Bus," Mahapatro added.

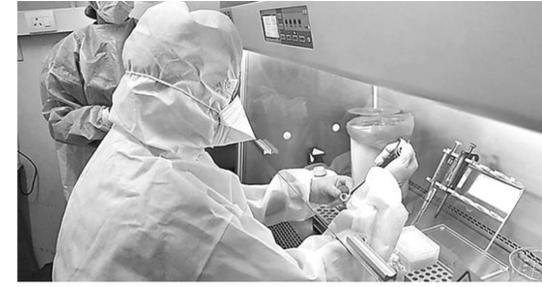
It can be mentioned here that following lockdown restrictions, Mo Bus services had remain sus-

pended since May 5. However, with the state government allowing movement of buses in the city, CRUT had May 19 resumed its services with 87 buses operating on 16 routes.

Furthermore, the CRUT said all the crew members of Mo Buses have been inoculated with two doses of anti-Covid vaccine. Besides, cleaning and disinfection of Mo Buses are being done on a daily basis as per standard operating procedure in the interest of passengers and staffers deployed in the buses.

# Covid: TPR falls below 5 pc in all districts

DEOGARH, KHURDA, BALASORE, KENDRAPARA, PURI AND CUTTACK ARE NOW IN THE GREEN ZONE BASED ON THE TEST POSITIVITY RATE



is under the red zone with 4,614 infections.

Of the new cases, 915 were reported from the different quarantine centres and the rest from contact tracing. Khurda topped the list of fresh infections with 436 detections, followed by Cuttack (212), Jagatsinghpur (113) and Puri (109). The remaining 27 districts logged below 100 new cases, the official said.

Eight fatalities were reported from Angul, seven each from Khurda and Ganjam, and five each from Balasore and Puri. A total of 53 other Covid-19 patients have also died due to comorbidities.

The coastal state has thus far conducted over 1.60 crore sample tests for Covid-19, including 72,233 Friday, the official said, adding, the cumulative positivity rate stands at 6.09 per cent.

The state has inoculated 1,62,99,529 people so far, out of which, as many as 1,24,32,071 people have received the first dose and 38,67,458 have received both the doses.

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 31:** Odisha Saturday reported 1,578 fresh Covid-19 cases, pushing the tally to 9,77,268, while the death toll nudged to 5,902 with 68 more fatalities, a Health department official said.

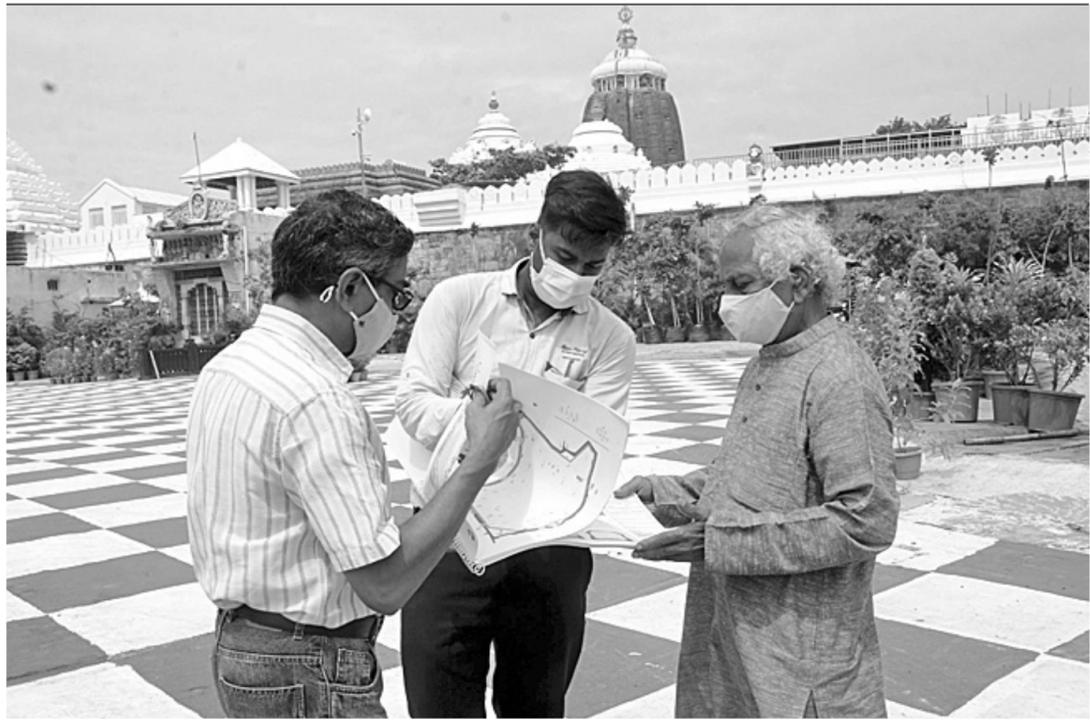
After almost four months, all the 30 districts of the state registered daily test positivity rate (TPR) below 5 per cent. "This is for the first time that the daily TPR has gone

down below 5 per cent in all the districts. Altogether, 16 districts recorded TPR below 1 per cent," the official said.

The state now has 16,394 active cases, and as many as 9,54,929 patients have recovered from the disease, including 1,841 since Friday.

Deogarh, Khurda, Balasore, Kendrapara, Puri and Cuttack are now in the green zone based on the TPR, he said. However, in terms of active cases, only Khurda district

## SHRINE BEAUTIFICATION PLAN



Renowned sculptor Sudarshan Sahoo (R) and officials of Odisha Bridge and Construction Corporation Limited visit the surroundings of Srimandir in Puri for the heritage corridor work, Saturday

# BMC's 'Mo Khata' sells like hot cakes

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 31:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation's 'Mo Khata', an initiative to convert waste into organic compost, has seen a substantial increase in demand with all government departments set to procure the same from the civic body.

The 'Mo Khata' initiative was launched earlier in January this year. It aimed at managing City's waste by producing organic compost out of it at different micro composting centres (MCCs). As per sources, while 80-100 kg of Mo Khata used to be sold daily at only one outlet near Rajmahal Square, the figures rose to 150-200 kg and three outlets.

"As of now, 11 metric tonnes of 'Mo Khata' have been purchased by the customers. The increase in production is also due to the introduction of new MCCs. As of now, 18 MCCs are functional in City as against just eight until February. Moreover, we have also started receiving orders off the counter which mark 40 per cent of the total sales," said a BMC official.

The official also stated that the range office here had procured two metric tonne of the compost Thursday. Similarly, the office of the project director, Watershed, Khurda has placed an order of 40 metric tonne of 'Mo Khata'. Meanwhile, Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) and Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology



(OUAT) have also been supplied the compost through the counter.

However, sources said that the demand for the compost from public departments increased after the state government, in March this year, asked all government organisations to procure compost from their respective urban local bodies (ULBs). This was done to support the initiative and enhance revenue earnings which would flow back in form of wages and incentives.

"Further, increase in demand will be met as more MCCs will become functional. The Swachha Sathis engaged in these units have been trained about quality control, sale and popularity of the product by BMC," the official added.

The BMC has fixed the price at ₹125 for 5 kg and ₹445 for 20 kg of Mo Khata. Upon the fixed prices, discounts of ₹25 and ₹45 are given on the 5 kg and 20 kg bags respectively. The price is intended to manage the operational costs only and it will remain unaffected, as per the BMC official.

# SOG trains commandos in guerilla warfare

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 31:** A commando undergoing training for guerilla warfare in Odisha Police's elite Special Operations Group (SOG) has to remain hungry for the entire day and stay awake the whole night, a senior police officer said.

This helps the commando to prepare for the arduous task, stay in the jungle and effectively tackle the Maoists and beat them in guerilla warfare, the officer said.

The SOG, established in Odisha in 2004, has not only helped the state in various anti-Maoist operations, but also provided rigorous training and skills to police personnel from other states and Central police force.

As many as 924 personnel from different states including 600 jawans of CRPF have so far been trained by the SOG of Odisha Police so far, the officer said.



This came to the fore when Director General of Police (DGP) Abhay reviewed SOG related activities along with senior officers of the State Police recently.

IGP (Operations) Amitabh

Thakur said the SOG has so far trained personnel from West Bengal (202), Jharkhand (40), Kerala (1st batch 50), Maharashtra (32) and CRPF (600), Kerala Police has now sent another batch of 33 com-

mandos of "Thunderbolt", which is their Special Force for tackling LWE. The batch will undergo intensive and rigorous training for eight weeks, Thakur said, adding that the main focus is given to the improvement of physical fitness and skills in firing in difficult jungle conditions.

The commandos will also be given training on map reading, weapon handling and firing, fieldcraft, tactics and other allied subjects like explosives, communication and first aid, he said.

"After completion of training, each commando will be able to go from one unknown place to another, even at night. He will be a marksman in firing and will be able to handle explosives confidently," he said.

The personnel trained at SOG will also be able to remain in a jungle without outside support for five days and march a distance of 100 km with their own arms and per-

sonal equipment. "Keeping the trainee hungry for an entire day or keeping him awake for the entire night also helps him prepare for the arduous task and keep him focused on the given task," the IGP said.

The SOG is an elite armed force of the state for counter terrorist/extremist operations. Amongst the mandate of SOG, one is also to develop training curriculum and train its own personnel and those of other units of the state police as well.

It provides training to Odisha Police personnel in anti-terrorist and anti-extremist fieldcraft, non-conventional jungle warfare, storming of hideouts of extremists/terrorists, storming of buildings, installations, aircraft taken hostage by the terrorists and the like, he said.

As the SOG has acquired expertise in training and achieved results on ground, many states are sending their personnel for training here, he said.

## Cyber crooks dupe BSF jawan of ₹20L

**Bhubaneswar:** Cyber fraudsters have duped a Border Security Force (BSF) jawan of ₹20 lakh on the pretext of providing maturity benefits on insurance deposits. Cybercrime cell of state Crime Branch has registered a case on the basis of a complaint lodged by the victim, Gangadhara Tuddu, of Mayurbhanj. According to sources, Tuddu received a phone call from a fraudster in the first week of March. The accused cyber criminal identified himself as an official of insurance department. He told Tuddu that the insurance plans of different companies in which he had invested money have matured and his deposits were invested in Bitcoin and share market. He told him that he was eligible to get maturity benefits to the tune of ₹56 lakh. The cyber criminals also emailed various fake documents in the name of RBI, Income Tax, and Finance Ministry. Tuddu fell into the their trap and started depositing money into the account of the accused persons who demanded money on pretexts like income tax, FDR charges, FDC charges, RBI charges. Speaking to Orissa Post, Tuddu said that he had given ₹30,000 to one Manmohan Pattnaik, an aide of the fraudster in Bhubaneswar.

# Cong alleges ₹300Cr scam in ration scheme, seeks CBI probe

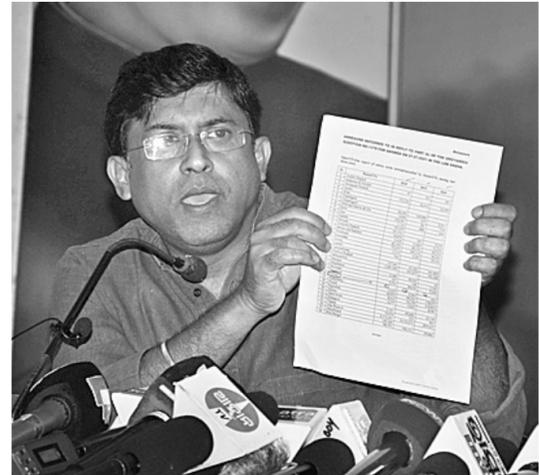
PNN/AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 31:** Odisha Congress Saturday alleged a scam of over ₹300 crore by the state government in distribution of ration during Covid-19 pandemic and demanded a CBI inquiry into the corruption.

Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee Media and Communication department Convener, Satya Prakash Nayak told media in a press conference at Congress Bhavan here that the state government was running the scam through ration cards issued to lakhs of ghost beneficiaries for availing food grains under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

He said, "Though the state has 93,06,202 beneficiaries under the NFSA, ration rice has not been distributed to them in any month. Every month, thousands of metric tonnes (MT) of undistributed rice are lying in stock, but the full quota of rice is being lifted from the centre in the subsequent months. The Congress wants to know the whereabouts of the undistributed rice and described it as a monthly scam programme of the BJD government."

Nayak said that two days back, the Chief Minister, while launching the 'One Nation One Ration' programme, announced to distribute fortified rice in Malkangiri district to eliminate malnutrition. He said it is a Central government programme and has already been started in 15 districts in 15 states of the country two years back. But



While other states were updating the data about ineligible beneficiaries under NFSA, the Odisha govt was not doing it for the last 3 years despite repeated reminders from the Centre

SATYA PRAKASH NAYAK | CONGRESS LEADER

the BJD government delayed launching the programme keeping the coming Panchayat and urban bodies' elections in view.

The leader also said while every state was updating the data about the ineligible beneficiaries under the NFSA, the Odisha government

was not doing it for the last three years despite repeated reminders from the Union government. The state government, he said, sanctioned ₹955 crore to be provided to ration card holders at the rate of ₹1,000 per card as assistance during the pandemic. But ₹20.07 crore was returned to the state exchequer as more than two lakh beneficiaries were not found. This proves that a recycling scam of hundreds of crores worth ration rice was going on in the name of ghost beneficiaries.

He also questioned the silence of the BJP government at the Centre on this issue and demanded a CBI probe into the scam.

## TAKING TO THE STREET



ABVP activists hold a demonstration at Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar, Saturday, to protest against the alleged irregularities in the Odisha Staff Selection Commission

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Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri-Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-977682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

# Illegal maize farming eats into Kalahandi reserve forest



## ECO CONCERN

Illegal cultivation is reportedly going on in Sahajikhol reserve forest for 10 years. Senior officials of the forest department are aware of the development but are yet to launch a crackdown to stop the illegalities. Every year, reports on this illegal cultivation have come out in various media but the forest department has done precious little to check it

The mafia comprising Bihari and Bengali settlers as well as private money lenders of Nabarangpur and Umerkote have engaged tribals in the cultivation and are reaping a bounty by transporting the harvest outside the state. They have settled down in the forest and carry out the cultivation

Anil Kumar Ray, ACF of Kalahandi south forest division, assured of departmental action if the reports on illegal maize cultivation in any area of the reserve forest are brought to his notice

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koksara, July 31:** Sahajikhol reserve forest in Kalahandi district has turned into a safe haven for the maize mafia, a report said. The mafia has reportedly encroached upon 12,989 hectares of forest land under Dharmagarh forest range in Kalahandi southern forest division and are carrying out illegal maize cultivation.

The mafia is felling precious plants and trees on thousands of hectares of forest land and carrying out maize cultivation. This has led to massive loss of green cover in the reserve forest land even as observers suspected the involvement of forest officials in this farming.

As a result of this, the Sahajikhol reserve forest is on its way to extinction. It is apprehended that the day is not far when the reserve forest will turn into a barren land.

Illegal cultivation is reportedly going on in the forest for 10 years. Senior officials of the forest department are aware of the development, but are yet to launch a crackdown to stop the illegal activities. Every year, reports on this illegal cultivation have come out in various media but the forest department has done precious lit-

tle in this regard.

It is an irony that while the forest department spends crores of rupees on plantations with an aim to increase the green cover, a reserve forest is getting denuded for illegal cultivation of maize.

The mafia comprising Bihari and Bengali settlers as well as private money lenders of Nabarangpur and Umerkote are engaging gullible tribals in the cultivation and reaping a bounty by transporting the harvest outside the state. They have settled down along with the tribals in the forest and carry out the cultivation. Recently, they were learnt to have roped in local villagers in this cultivation.

The mafia provides the tribals with seeds and fertilisers at the start of the season. Post harvest, they deduct the expenses and transport all the maize stocks outside the state. However, what the tribals received in exchange for their labour is only peanuts with which they barely manage their families. However, being vulnerable they do not have the courage to demand their share from the cultivation as they fear the mafia could harm them.

Reports said the maize cultivation is carried out in forest lands

of Kandagarh, Gaibandha, Tirlama, Chhakapada, Kuturu, Lekama, Andhijharan, Kadomali, Sargipani and Birimuhan under Amanpani forest section and in Kanakpur, Rainguda and Khaligada under Behera forest section.

Maze farming is also done at Badakachharpada, Dhoben Chanchara and Gotomunda areas in the reserve forest near the Behera dam.

When contacted, Anil Kumar Ray, assistant conservator of forests of Kalahandi south forest division admitted to the development stating that people are being sensitised on the issue. He, however, assured of departmental action if the reports on illegal maize cultivation in any area of the reserve forest are brought to his notice.

## TRADITIONAL DANCE



Artistes of Tribal and Folk Art Centre rehearsing traditional 'Karama' dance for presentation on virtual platform on the eve of Sambalpuri Day in Sambalpur, Saturday

# AP to pay ₹3L each to deceased workers

AGENCIES

**Amaravati, July 31:** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy Saturday announced a compensation of ₹3 lakh each to six migrant labourers from Odisha, who died in Guntur district recently.

Reddy directed the concerned officials to pay ₹3 lakh each to the deceased migrant labourers' kin, said an official.

The Chief Minister said the compensation should be handed over as a humanitarian gesture to the labourers' kin, considering that they came to the state in search of livelihood.

Similarly, Reddy also instructed the concerned officials to ensure that the owners of the shrimp



ponds who engaged the labourers also pay compensation to the labourers' kin.

The six workers from Odisha were found dead near a shrimp pond in Lankavanidibba village

in Guntur district Thursday night. Three to four other labourers are said to have been hurt in the mishap.

The police are investigating the cause of death of the six men

who were working in the shrimp ponds. Some locals suspected that the workers could have died of electrocution. The power lines might have fallen on their shed, as burn injuries were also found on the bodies of the deceased workers, they pointed out.

The six men came to the district in search of livelihood only a few months ago. Earlier, the Odisha government had announced ₹2 lakh ex-gratia to the kin of each deceased labourer. As per preliminary reports, the deceased migrants hailed from Gunupur area in Rayagada district.

Around 25 labourers from Odisha were reportedly engaged at Lankavani Dibba village in Guntur district of the neighbouring state.

# Breach in Indravati canal submerges farmlands

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna, July 31:** A 10-ft wide breach that developed Friday night in Indravati mega lift irrigation canal near Majhiguda area under Koksara block in Kalahandi district has left hectares of farmland inundated.



A 10-ft breach in the canal

According to sources, a small breach eventually broke a large portion of the embankment near Majhiguda village. As a result, large swathes of farmlands were submerged in canal water.

Meanwhile, local villagers have

blamed it on low-quality construction works. The construction firm that had undertaken the mega irrigation project is responsible for the breach, many villagers alleged.

A minor crack had earlier developed in the canal a few days after the project was inaugurated in 2021. As no immediate steps were taken to repair the crack, the 10-ft-wide breach occurred, they added.

Indravati canal was in spate following incessant rains that battered the district recently.

"Either, the breach should have been repaired or excess rainwater released to ensure safety of the embankment. The weak embankment could not withstand the high pressure of water leading to the wide breach in the canal," a local resident said.

It is pertinent to mention that the ambitious project was commissioned by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik January 14, 2021. It was targeted to irrigate the rain-fed farmlands in Koksara and Dharmagarh blocks.

# CS, 5T Secy take stock of 20-year RI for man for rape of daughter



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kesinga, July 31:** Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mohapatra and 5T Secretary VK Pandian Saturday visited Bhawanipatna in Kalahandi district and reviewed the progress of various ongoing developmental projects.

The top officials reviewed the

present status of Utkela airstrip where they landed at 10am. Later, they visited BM School and Town Nodal School.

During their visit, they did rounds of smart classrooms, science labs, e-library and toilets and expressed satisfaction over the progress of the projects. They also interacted with the teachers and

students.

The officials also visited the under-construction medical college at Bhangabari. They laid emphasis on timely completion of the college with quality control as the medical college is set to be completed by December 2021. They also visited the district headquarters hospital in Bhawanipatna town and took stock of the oxygen plant and Covid-19 situation there.

5T Secretary Pandian reviewed the result of the newly inaugurated mega irrigation project on Indravati river and emphasised that no beneficiary should get deprived of irrigation facility.

The delegation reviewed the new bus stand project in Bhawanipatna and directed the officials to ensure the completion of the project within six months. While reviewing the status of Narla Loco Shed project, they asked the Collector to expedite the land acquisition and forest clearance for the project.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, July 31:** The POCSO court here Friday sentenced a man from Sundargarh district to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) for raping his daughter.

Additional district judge of POCSO court Parthasarathi Patnaik awarded the punishment to Raj Kumar Lohar for his crime. The court also imposed a fine of ₹5,000 on the convict, failing which he will undergo one more year of imprisonment, a judgment read.

The POCSO court sounded the quantum of punishment for Lohar based on statements of the rape survivor and 11 witnesses along with police investigation report.

In addition, the court also ordered compensation to the tune of ₹7 lakh to the minor girl.

According to a source, 31-year-old Lohar had repeatedly raped his seven-year-old daughter over three months when her mother was away from home.

**31-year-old Lohar had repeatedly raped his seven-year-old daughter in the absence of her mother. The court also imposed a fine of ₹5,000 on the convict**

After a few days gap, when the man attempted to rape the girl again March 6, 2013, the victim's mother who was present at home opposed him. Irked with opposition, Lohar assaulted his wife and attacked her with a sharp weapon, a police official said.

Grandmother of the rape survivor lodged an FIR with Raghunathpali police against her son.

Acting on the FIR, police arrested the accused and registered a case in this connection under Sections 376(2)(F), 323, 341 506 of the IPC and Section 6 of POCSO Act.

# Man held for chasing lady officer's car

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, July 31:** One person was arrested on the charge of chasing a woman administrative officer's car on a motorbike while she was returning from a raid on illegal transportation of minerals in Jajpur district, police said.

Dharmasala additional tehsildar Sheetal Agarwal and some revenue inspectors went to

Chadeidhara following inputs about illegal transportation of minor minerals at a few places.

During the crackdown, the woman officer seized at least six vehicles on the National Highway 5, police said. When she was returning to her office after the raid, a man who is a resident of neighbouring Dhenkanal district, started following her vehicle on a bike.

Suspecting his movement,

Agarwal informed the local police, following which they reached the spot and caught hold of the man, who could not furnish any satisfactory answer for his action.

"Primary investigation suggests that he is involved in a minor mineral smuggling racket," Dharmasala police station inspector in-charge Saroj Sahu said. A local court later remanded him to judicial custody.

# Eviction drive around Samaleswari temple begins

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, July 31:** The district administration Saturday demolished concrete as well as makeshift structures around Samaleswari temple in Sambalpur to facilitate development and beautification projects of the 16th-century shrine.

According to a district-level official, the demolition was initiated in the first phase from Kamali Bazar area located in close vicinity of the temple. Some government quarters and offices have been demolished. Encroachments in the nearby areas will be evicted subsequently.

Demolition of concrete structures and old buildings are being carried out peacefully. Adequate police forces have been deployed to maintain law and order in the area, the official said.

Several senior administrative and enforcement officials have been directly monitoring the eviction, the source maintained.

It is pertinent to mention, the state government had earlier announced to implement the

## PAVING WAY FOR TOURISM BOOST



Demolition of concrete structures and old buildings are being carried out peacefully. Adequate police forces have been deployed to maintain law and order in the area, an official said

The state government had earlier announced to implement the Samaleswari Temple Area Management and Local Economy Initiatives project during this financial year. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had sanctioned a package of ₹200 crore for development and beautification of the temple

SAMALEI (Samaleswari Temple Area Management and Local Economy Initiatives) project during this financial year. Chief

Minister Naveen Patnaik had sanctioned a package of ₹200 crore for development and beautification of the temple.

## LOST

Our collection agent named as BALAJI DALAI whose ID card No. 210336305400025 (HDFC Bank) has lost somewhere on dated 03.07.2021. If anybody misuse of this ID card we will not responsible for this.

**MAA MANGALA SERVICES**

## EAST COAST RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No.: ST-SBP-TENDER-2021-08 Dated: 28.07.2021  
Name of the Work: SIGNALLING ZONAL WORK FOR SIKIR-RAHENBATA-TITLAGARH-THERUBALI, BHAWANIPATNA-JUNAGARH ROAD SECTION UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER/SIGNALLING/TITLAGARH IN SAMBALPUR DIVISION FOR ONE YEAR.  
Tender Value: ₹24,08,206.00  
Tender closing date & time: at 1500 hrs. of 19.08.2021.  
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.  
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website: <http://www.ireps.gov.in>  
Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigendum issued for this tender.  
Divisional Railway Manager (S&T)  
PR-248/M/21-22 Sambalpur

## FUN FOR KIDS



Children catch fish in a marshy land in Mahakalpara area of Kendrapara, Saturday

OP PHOTO

FOCUS WORLD

# HOW TO END THE PANDEMIC



**Eighteen months into the COVID-19 pandemic, we have what we need to end it. Now, we must apply our knowledge and tools. No single approach will ever be enough**

evidence suggests that vaccine-induced immunity against COVID-19 may fade over time.

Antiviral drugs and prophylactics will be needed to fill the gaps and provide a second ring of defense. The US government recently committed \$3.2 billion to develop antiviral therapies for COVID-19. While most of the focus has been on using these drugs as a treatment, their true potential lies in pandemic control, because administering prophylactics can prevent people who have been exposed to the virus from becoming ill or passing on an infection.

True, the current generation of these drugs cannot be used widely, owing to their high production costs and the need for intravenous infusions in a clinical setting. Nonetheless, we have achieved proof of principle. Ideally the next generation of antivirals will come in pill form, giving them enormous potential for use in high-risk settings such as long-term care homes, where there are many immunosuppressed individuals who cannot rely on vaccines for protection. The same approach applies to schools, businesses, professional sports teams, and even

ships at sea. If one person tests positive for COVID-19, everyone around him could take a pill to help stave off infection.

The next ring of defense will come from public-health measures to contain the spread of the virus. Countries such as Australia, China, New Zealand, Singapore, and Taiwan have made effective use of widespread testing, exhaustive contact tracing, mandatory isolation, tight border controls, and quarantines for new arrivals. Such strategies have been critical methods of protection in the face of nearly every infectious disease in recent history. But in the US and other countries around the world, testing and contact tracing have stalled (or never got off the ground in the first place).

Fortunately, new antiviral prophylactic drugs can help make up for some of these failures. As opposed to "test, trace, and quarantine," the mantra may become "test, trace, and swallow a pill" – a much more attractive alternative. These drugs also may help open new opportunities for travel, eliminating the need for long quarantines.

The first three rings of protection form an excellent defense.

But they will be insufficient unless they are implemented everywhere. To provide the final ring of protection, the international community must work together to improve disease surveillance, and to provide universal access to tests, treatments, and vaccines.

Here, the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator and its vaccines pillar, COVAX, were an important first step. But the power of the platform has been diminished by self-interest and vaccine nationalism. Still, there is hope for future now that many high-income countries have a surplus of vaccines. There are also efforts underway to increase local vaccine production in underserved areas.

In addition to these efforts, the international community needs to invest in global disease surveillance to identify new outbreaks, especially ones caused by highly infectious variants that can quickly take hold and spread. This requires an enhanced surveillance presence, increased sequencing of the virus across all communities, and a near-real-time method of sharing the data broadly.

With the proper frontline mechanisms in place, the global community of scientists, researchers, and pharmaceutical manufacturers will have to determine how vaccines and treatments fare against each new variant, and what can be done to mitigate their spread and reduce their likelihood of emerging.

Eighteen months into this pandemic, we have what we need to end it. Now, we must apply our knowledge and tools. No single approach will ever be enough. But, together, the four defensive rings – vaccines, antivirals, public-health measures, and international cooperation – can help us eliminate COVID-19 as a life-threatening disease and allow for the dawn of a better life than the one we left behind.

*The writer is a scientist, biotech entrepreneur, and infectious disease expert.*

PROJECT SYNDICATE



William A. Haseltine

**THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NEEDS TO INVEST IN GLOBAL DISEASE SURVEILLANCE TO IDENTIFY NEW OUTBREAKS, ESPECIALLY ONES CAUSED BY HIGHLY INFECTIOUS VARIANTS THAT CAN QUICKLY TAKE HOLD AND SPREAD**

The United States has now entered its fifth wave of COVID-19 infections. In each one, the country has paid a high price for doing far less than it could. In the first wave, lockdowns and other restrictions were spotty. Then came untested and unproven treatments. With the vaccine rollout, new infections were pushed down substantially, but now the Delta variant has started pushing them back up in unvaccinated populations.

At each stage, the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 was underestimated. From what we know of its ability to adapt and thrive through random mutations, there is only one viable option for long-term disease control: a strategy that combines a rapidly growing arsenal of vaccines and antiviral drugs with strong public-health measures and deeper global cooperation.

Vaccines comprise the first ring of defense against COVID-19. The first generation vaccines in the US are highly effective, and the second, third, and subsequent generations will be even stronger. But even with booster shots in hand and next-generation vaccines tailored to new variants, vaccination alone is unlikely to end the pandemic.

Vaccines won't work for everybody. In the best-case scenario, against the original wild-type virus, vaccines still fail about 5 per cent of the time. And the Delta variant has proven more adept than previous strains at breaking through vaccine protections. Even if the entire US population was vaccinated, 17.5 million Americans would still be at risk of infection and disease if exposed to the virus.

Moreover, there are substantial populations of people with underlying conditions that diminish vaccine efficacy; these include organ-transplant recipients, people taking immunosuppressant drugs, cancer patients, and a fraction of the elderly population. And like the protection offered by the annual influenza vaccine, early

Be fearless and resolute, all obstacles will melt away before you.

THE MOTHER



## Olympics & Audience

The current Olympics have the lowest viewership in the last three decades, a news report said the other day. Not the physical audience at the stadia of course, because that is absent given the pandemic. It is the global television audience where the lack of interest is showing. Viewers have dropped by a third since just 2016. Remember that this is happening despite far more streaming services and viewing options than there were during the 1988 Games in Seoul, after which the world's population has grown by 50 per cent but viewership has fallen.

It will be interesting to consider why this is the case. The Olympics began in Greece more than 2000 years ago, but these did not extend into the modern era. The modern Olympics began in 1896 and have a different character than the Greek ones. Even the Olympics motto ('citius, altius, fortius', meaning faster, higher, stronger) is in Latin and not in Greek. The Greeks would have been horrified to see women participating, as has been the case with our Olympics since 1900. To return to the motto, being fastest, highest and strongest is not that big a deal. Men have been running 100 metres under 10 seconds but more than 9.5 seconds since 1968. In that sense not much has changed in this sport in 50 years. The high jump Olympics record of 7 feet and 8 inches was established 25 years ago. In the last Olympics, the gold medal winner jumped one cm less than that. The Olympics record for the long jump has been unbroken for 50 years.

As a race, we are not getting faster, higher and stronger and if we are it is not by much. The human being's physical achievements are less interesting to us at a time when our physical selves are less interesting than the virtual spaces we have access to. Synthetic biology, steroids and prosthetic limbs mean that the idea of a perfect physical specimen is now impossible. The terms 'fastest human' or 'strongest person' do not mean much in our times. It may interest readers to know that the viewership of Miss Universe pageants has also been plummeting over the last few years.

Yet another aspect of the decline of the Olympics is the ending of hostility between nations on a global scale. One of the greatest moments of the Olympics came in Berlin in 1936 when the young African American Jesse Owens won four gold medals including for fastest sprinter and longest jumper in the world. His victory delivered a shattering blow to the Aryan supremacy theory of the Nazis, which said that the white man was the perfect physical specimen of the human race.

After the Second World War, the hostilities between the US and the USSR provided some of the tensions that the Games could feed off. But since the end of the Cold War even that has gone. The Seoul Olympics came in the same period. Today the world is more at peace than it has ever been in history. Wars between nations are few and outside of the usual violent hotspots in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, armed conflict is low.

Even the US-China rivalry, the most significant in the world, is possibly the least violent one we have seen. Both nations are each other's largest and strongest trading partners and have been for a long time now.

Of course primitive enmities remain in some parts of the world, and India and Pakistan are archrivals, but we are irrelevant to the others and do not occupy anyone's attentions. In any case, we are not significant at the Olympics. The other thing is that we have international competition that is outside of the Olympics and most world records are not set at the Olympics.

These are the reasons I think that the Olympics are past their peak. We will not return to a time when the stars of the Games are global figures and perhaps in time even the inhabitants of nations will lose interest in the performances of their own individuals on this stage. Popular team sports, which involve the audience more viscerally because they respond to our basic tribalism and parochialism, might perhaps have a longer life than events concerning individuals. Football and cricket will not face as sharp a decline in audience and viewership as the Olympics. But that decline is also already happening. I can remember struggling to get a seat at a Ranji Trophy game in Surat 40 years ago. That would never happen now. Our world has changed in our lifetimes. The decline in viewership of athletics might be an insignificant aspect generally speaking but perhaps it says something more deep and profound about the time we live in and how it has shaped us.

### WISDOM CORNER

All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others. **GEORGE ORWELL**

I feel that there is nothing more truly artistic than to love people. **VINCENT VAN GOGH**

To say nothing, especially when speaking, is half the art of diplomacy. **WILL DURANT**

### WORDSWORTH

#### Oojah

"Pass me that oojah," you might once have said. You could have meant some useful little device which doesn't have a name, or something which does have a proper name but which you've temporarily forgotten. You might instead have called it a thingumabob, doohickey or whatchamacallit. The word is rather old-fashioned British English slang. Its heyday was the First World War, when British soldiers created it as part of a private vocabulary. An eyebrows-raised article about the slang of an Army hospital that was found in the Washington Post of 22 July 1917 provides one of its earliest recorded appearances: "Pass the oojah," says the one-armed man who is playing billiards. What is the oojah? The oojah is any object in Heaven or earth; it is the thing which has no name or the name of which you have temporarily forgotten. The one-armed man, about to make his stroke, requires the little twisted wire bridge, mounted on a lead pedestal, that forms the cue rest which – poor chap! – he ought to have formed with his lost hand. So he demands the oojah, which is army for what-d'ye call-it. It became greatly elaborated, especially after the war ended and the word was transferred with its speakers to civilian life. It's known in many forms, including oojah capivvy, oojah-cum-pivvy, ooja-ka-pivi, and oojipoo. Another form is oojah-cum-spiff, which came to mean that something was all right, in order, or OK. This turns up several times in the novels of P G Wodehouse, as here in Right Ho, Jeeves: "Yes, I agree with you, Aunt Dahlia, that things are not looking too oojah-cum-spiff at the moment, but be of good cheer. A Wooster is seldom baffled for more than the nonce." Woosters may not be, but etymologists often are. Though many of these British Army slang terms of the period were imported from India, oojah has no known origin. If it did come from that country, nobody can tell from what word in which language.

### SPECTRUM NATION

## Are salaries of govt employees justified?

The objective of the government is to secure the welfare of its citizens, according to our Constitution. Indeed, government employees are to be appointed to secure the welfare of the citizens. However, the welfare of government employees themselves, and not the citizen, has become the primary objective of the government today.

According to a World Bank study titled "Government Employment and Pay in Global Perspective," the average salary paid to government employees was 0.9 times the per capita GDP of Vietnam. In other words, the average salary paid to government employees was ₹90 if the average income of the Vietnamese citizen was ₹100. By the same reckoning, China paid an average salary of ₹110. The average salary paid to government employees in India, however, was seven times the per capita GDP or ₹700 by the same reckoning. Unsurprisingly, Vietnam and China have both outpaced India in GDP growth rate.

Another study by the World Bank tells that the global tendency for government consumption has been to move downward over the last decade. The share of government consumption in GDP globally was 18.0 per cent in 2009. This reduced to 17.2 per cent in 2014 and 17.1 per cent in 2019. According to the Budget

papers of the Finance Ministry, the share of government consumption in India increased from 10.4 per cent in 2014 to 12.6 per cent in 2020. The salaries of government servants in India are disproportionately high and are going up and up. This increase is even more disturbing in view of an International Labour Organisation (ILO) study reporting that the wages of workers in the formal sector in India have declined by 3.6 per cent and in the unorganised sector by 22.6 per cent during the pandemic. Salaries of government employees appointed to secure welfare of citizens are going up; while the salaries of citizens are going down. Is this the Constitutional mandate?

The condition of the state governments is worse. The government of Kerala spends 70 per cent of its revenue on paying salaries to its employees; while Tamil Nadu spends 71 per cent. A school headmaster gets a monthly salary of ₹103,000 in Tamil Nadu. A headmaster in a private school may be getting ₹15,000—and the latter begets better results. This leaves little money with state governments to spend on welfare of citizens. The government has become a huge vacuum cleaner that is sucking every penny from the hands of the citizens and providing it to government employees. These high wages have been recommended by successive pay commissions to attract competent workers. The high salaries paid to high-end government employees become applicable across-the-board. All headmasters in Tamil Nadu draw a salary of ₹103,000 per month irrespective of their performance. No wonder another study by the World Bank titled "Are Public Sector Workers in Developing Countries Overpaid?" says that less educated and lower rung government employees are paid much higher salaries in comparison to their counterparts in the private sector. The high salaries of government employees in India have actually come along with rampant inefficiency. The Fifth Pay Commission had explicitly said that it was recommending increase in salaries as a combined package that should be implemented along with steps to improve efficiency such as external evaluation of Class 'A' officers every five years. The government, in its wisdom, raised the salaries more than that recommended by the Commission but showed the accountability measures under the carpet. The Sixth and Seventh Pay Commissions have made similar empty statements about raising efficiency. The way forward is to make a huge cut in the salaries of government employees to bring them at par with those in the fast-grow-

ing economies of Vietnam and China. Economics has a concept of propensity to consume. A government employee may consume an additional ₹20 worth of goods if he gets an additional income of ₹100. This propensity to consume at 20 per cent is low. His stomach is full. He already has a refrigerator and a car. The slum-dweller may consume ₹80 if he gets the same additional income of ₹100. He is hungry. This propensity to consume at 80 per cent is high. A number of countries have cut the salaries of government servants during the pandemic. Paraguay, for example, has cut their salaries by 20 per cent, according to an ILO report.

There are 139 government employees per one lakh population in India, much less than 668 per one lakh in the United States. This, if at all, only suggests that a reduction in salary to one-seventh and increasing the numbers employed by seven times would rectify the imbalance. Ultimately, the government must make an 85 per cent cut in the salaries of its employees and redistribute that money among citizens. This will both secure the welfare of our citizens and rev up the economy.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore. Views are personal.



Bharat Jhunjhunwala

**THE SALARIES OF GOVERNMENT SERVANTS IN INDIA ARE DISPROPORTIONALLY HIGH AND ARE GOING UP AND UP**

## 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**  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

#### Lovely Lovlina

Sir, Lovlina Borgohain scripted history by confirming at least a bronze medal in the Tokyo Olympics 2020. She will be the first Olympic medallist from Assam. Coming from a humble background she proved that economic hurdles can never stop real talent. A total of eight athletes were selected from the northeast to represent India and two of them have emerged successful till now. Being from the northeast, we are beaming with joy that our girls have made us proud on the big stage. I want to urge the government of India to declare the northeast as the sports capital of India which will encourage our younger generation to take up sports as a career. Lastly, I want to congratulate Lovlina for her wonderful achievement. I wish she shines with a golden punch. **Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR**

#### Taliban offensive

Sir, This refers to the editorial 'US-Russia Deal on Af?' published in Orissa POST, July 30. The Taliban are allergic to peace. The increased violence and the rapid territorial gains made by them in Afghanistan since the US began its troops withdrawal signify that they have no intentions for maintaining stability in the country. For India, this must be a cause of great concern. First, if the Taliban capture the Afghan government by force, then it is most certain that insurgents will be used by Pakistan for conducting terror attacks in India. Second, even though the Afghan defence forces have succeeded in maintaining peace in Kabul and its nearby regions, it is likely that the Taliban will disrupt and destroy the infrastructure and projects functioning in the countryside which they have already seized. As the US has assured an annual aid of \$1 billion to Afghanistan for countering the Taliban, New Delhi must use this opportunity to salvage its investments worth \$3 billion. **Tushar Anand, PATNA**

#### SC on snooping

Sir, The Supreme Court's nod to hear a plea against snooping next week is a welcome development. The petition filed by senior journalists N Ram and Sashi Kumar sought an independent probe into the mass surveillance of over 140 'targets' using the military-grade Israeli spyware Pegasus. Citizens are in the dark on whether the government authorised the snooping. The Pegasus spying row has also disrupted parliamentary proceedings, with the Opposition up in arms against the Centre. **NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE**

DENGUE MENACE

# Alarm bells go off on dengue in Buguda NAC

# Vig director reviews pending graft cases

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jeypore, July 31:** Director of Vigilance, Yeshwant Jethwa, Saturday visited Jeypore and reviewed progress of pending vigilance cases in six districts including Kalahandi and Nuapada. At the review meeting, Vigilance SP of Koraput Banamali Dhal and DSPs of all the six districts were present. Reviewing the progress of investigation into pending vigilance cases, Jethwa directed the officials to carry out raids on corrupt officials. As for the raids on the PA to the Odisha Staff Selection Commission, the Vigilance di-

rector said that action will be taken as per law. "Vigilance has been trying to root out corruption," he observed. He directed the officials to hasten the investigations into 70 cases of corruption in Jeypore municipality. He emphasised on using technology and forensic science to strengthen detection, investigation and prosecution in corruption cases. He underscored the need for greater application of DNA fingerprinting, voice analysis and other advancements to assess deception and mapping digital footprints to enhance investigation outcomes.

# Cousins drown in under-construction well

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kamakhyanager, July 31:** Two girls fell into an under-construction well and drowned at Kanhejpal village under Bhuban police limits in Dhenakamal district, Saturday evening. The deceased were identified as Sruti Patra, 5, daughter of Sesha Patra and her cousin Priyanka, 6. The incident occurred when the two had gone to buy snacks from a

local eatery in the village. They were returning home when they accidentally slipped into the well and drowned. As they did not return home, family members searched for them and traced them inside the well after a long time. They were immediately rushed to the Kamakhyanager hospital where doctors pronounced them brought dead. Police reached the spot and started an investigation.

# Case found in Jaleswar as well; locals scared

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jaleswar, July 31:** A case of dengue was detected in Jaleswar area of Balasore. Its appearance has been a cause of concern for local people and the health department as well. The patient was admitted to the special dengue ward at the district headquarters hospital. The patient is a 30-year old woman of Remuna Golei area. She used to stay in Infocity area of Bhubaneswar. Four days ago, she was down with fever and came back home. She tested positive for dengue and was immediately admitted to the special dengue ward. It is alleged that though the health department is taking up



preventive measures, the latter have no impact on disease. Villagers have demanded an effective drive by the health department to prevent the spread of the disease. Chief district medical officer Dr Sashank Choudhry said a special dengue ward has been opened at the district headquarters hospital while all Anganwadi workers, ASHAs and ANMs were directed to carry out awareness drive on the disease.

to bring the situation under control," they observed. When contacted, executive officer, Buguda NAC, Rashmiranjan

Dash said steps will be taken to sprinkle bleaching powder, phenyl in drains and to use TIFA fogging machine to spray smoke.



The mosquito menace has increased many times with fear of catching dengue fever looming large in the town. The NAC has a TIFA fogging machine but the machine has not been used for a long time now and lying idle

A tank on the premises of Buguda PHC breeding Gambusia fish to kill larvae of dengue spreading Aedes mosquito has vanished as buildings have come up on its place

It's high time that the NAC authorities take steps to use TIFA fogging machine, clear drains and other water bodies with stagnant water

It's time the NAC authorities took steps to use TIFA fogging machine, clear drains and other water bodies with stagnant water.

"Prevention is always better than cure. If no preventive measures are taken in advance, the day is not far when the NAC will be struggling

# TEACH THEM YOUNG



Schoolchildren taking part in a plantation drive in Buguda area of Ganjam district

OP PHOTO

# Land docus of genuine farmers tampered

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nabarangpur, July 31:** Online registration of farmers for procurement of paddy in Malkangiri district has run into anomalies. People in Kalimela area are said to be using land documents of genuine farmers to take advantage of the paddy MSP, causing resentment among genuine farmers. According to reports, the government has made a provision for online registration of farmers at primary agriculture cooperative societies. Trained staff have been engaged at Kalimela LAMPS so that farmers would not face difficulties. The district administration has started online registration of farm-

ers from July 15 and it will go on till August 16. According to reports, over 20 farmers of Mudakhal under Kalimela block went along with their land documents to local LAMPS for registration. However, they were surprised to know from the LAMPS staff that

their registration has already been done in the names of others. The staff turned them away denying to register their names. They wonder how such an anomaly would be allowed when they had not submitted their documents. The farmers wanted to know whose names have been attached with their documents, but they failed to get satisfactory replies from the LAMPS. They were worried if they would be able to sell their paddy this year. Such incidents have proved that genuine farmers are kept away from procurement while others are pushed into the system in the names of genuine farmers. The registration of 32 farmers including Mukunda Madhi,

Sommath Madhi, Jaga Madhi, Deba Sodhi and Irma Beti was denied. Interestingly, they alleged that their land records were used for online registration in favour of other people. They have demanded a thorough investigation into such irregularities. Last year, an MD of the LAMPS was arrested for irregularities. The farmers warned that they would take up the issue with the Collector and knock the doors of the court in this matter. Bikash Mishra, MD of Kalimela LAMPS, said the allegations will be looked into. The anomalies will be corrected if the tehsildar gets it inquired by revenue inspector and sends a report.

# VWDT: Month-long stir against govt's indifference

Water tribunal's order favouring Andhra has triggered resentment in Gunupur

## NEREDI PROJECT



FILE PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Gunupur, July 31:** After the Vamsadhara Water Dispute Tribunal (VWDT) allowed the Andhra Pradesh government to construct a barrage at Neredi across Vamsadhara river and directed the state government to acquire land for the project, such decisions of the tribunal and the inaction of the state government have triggered discontent among people in Gunupur area in Rayagada district and the Vamsadhara basin region. Vamsadhara Surakshya Samiti, a local outfit, which has been fighting for the protection of the river water has decided to carry on agitation for a month. The outfit held a meeting under the chairmanship of Brahmananda Patnaik. The outfit has decided to start a month-long agitation from August 1. The activists of the outfit have taken up the issue with Gunupur MLA Raghunath Gamang and state advisor of Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana Sudhir Das and deliberated on the advantages and disadvantages of the Neredi project

by the project, he added. It was decided that a delegation of people from the region will hold discussions with the state government over the issue. It may be noted that while giving green signal to the neighbouring state, the tribunal set certain conditions for carrying out the project. The barrage would have a right head sluice through which Andhra can draw 8,000 cusecs of water and have a Left Head Sluice (LHS) to cater to the needs of Odisha. According to the tribunal, both the states would have the right over the water of the river. The tribunal also directed the state government to acquire 106 acres of land required for the barrage and hand it over to AP within a year from the date of publication of the present order. In return, the AP government would have to give compensation to the affected people in Odisha. Rehabilitation of land losers should be given priority. Notably, an agreement had been signed between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh in 1961 for construction of a barrage at Neredi. Some villagers residing in the left side of Neredi are unhappy over the decision as they apprehend submergence of huge tracts of farmland. The tribunal had ordered the construction of the barrage in September 2017. But the Odisha government had sought a clarification on the matter from the tribunal, which came recently. Odisha has also moved the Supreme Court seeking detailed clarification on the project.

in the region. The outfit has come down heavily against the state government for its apathy and silence on such a 'sensitive issue'. "We will launch an agitation with the help of various organizations to build pressure on the state government to oppose the project by the Andhra Pradesh. People living in Gunupur and in the river basin region will be part of the agitation," Patnaik said. From August 15, the outfit will carry out a padayatra from Panidangar and pass through villages to make people aware of the issue. Meetings will be held in those villages that are going to be affected

# Mayurbhanj farmers turn away from dairy

Absence of a processing plant, refrigeration facilities in the district forcing farmers to shun dairy

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, July 31:** Many farmers have become self-sufficient by taking up dairy farming in Mayurbhanj district. However, due to sale of milk at lesser prices and absence of refrigeration facilities, farmers incur heavy losses. Absence of a processing plant in the district is affecting them. As a result, dairy farming is losing its charm for farmers. Instead, farmers are showing interest to try their hands at poultry, goatery and sheep rearing. Riparian villages in the district have lush pastures for dairy farming. Farmers in the blocks of Baripada, Kuliiana, Rasagobindapur, Badasahi and Udala situated on the banks of Budhabalanga, Subarnarekha, Gangahar, Sone and Jambhira rivers produce milk as green surroundings are suitable for livestock and cattle. Keeping this in view, 12 milk refrigeration plants were opened by Omfed in the district. While the ones present in Anla, Patalipura,



Bijipur, Badasahi and Baripada are functioning, those opened in Murukandia, Udala, Kumbharamundakata, Hatabadada, Badampahar and Karanjia are lying defunct and shut. Also, owing to the absence of a processing plant, Omfed is transporting the collected milk from the refrigeration centres to the plant in Remuna. The farmers are suffering huge losses as they are not getting proper prices for their produce, said the farmers of

Badasahi area Laxmidhar Giri, Sarat Giri and Prakash Barik. According to 2019 count, there are 2,87,910 cows of domestic breeds, 27,405 jersey cows and 7,357 buffaloes in the district. There are 420 families engaged in milk production as members of Omfed. 2,500 litres of milk is produced daily in the district. Unavailability of markets during the Covid imposed lockdown has deterred the dairy farmers from their profession. Sudhanshu Das, a farmer from

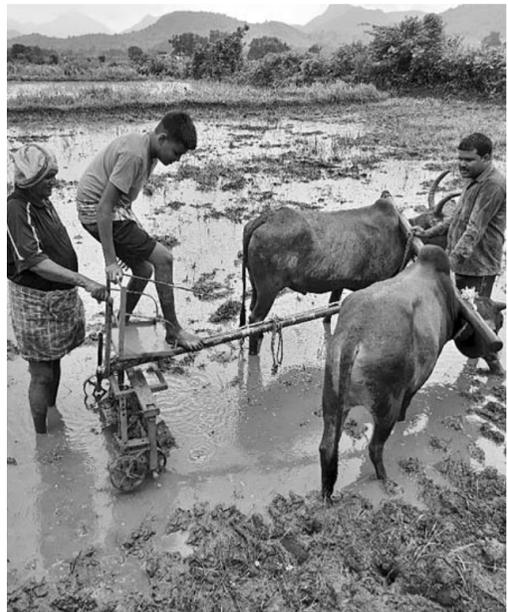
Kendudihara said milk production has dropped from 300 litres to 150 litres now compared to pre-pandemic times. Lack of sale has forced them to reduce the number of cows from 40 to 22 in his farm, he added. A decade ago, 745 farmers were provided with better breed of cows through loans under the 'Kshirsagar' scheme. But the scheme was a failure due to the unavailability of milk refrigeration plant and proper markets for sale. As a result, the number of farmers availing loans given by the animal resources department and ITDA for dairy activities is falling. If the dairy farmers are given proper prices and better technology, a large number of unemployed youths would become self-reliant bringing progress to the district in dairy farming, farmers Purushottam Panda, Jateendra Jena and Santosh Panda opined. Demands are growing among the farmers' community for the establishment of a milk processing plant by the government in the district.

# ITI, Berhampur unveils 2 tiger sculptures

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, July 31:** Students of Berhampur ITI here prepared two artificial tiger sculptures with iron scraps and artificial grass as part of an awareness drive on the occasion of the International Tiger Day, Thursday. These tiger sculptures will be permanently kept in the campus to drive home the message on tiger conservation. The matter came to the fore as Berhampur MLA Bikram Panda unveiled the sculptures in the presence of Ganjam DFO Amlan Nayak and principal Rajat Panigrahy at a programme organised on the ITI campus, Thursday. People and students visiting the campus will be able to witness the tiger sculptures and be sensitized on the protection of the tigers. These tigers are made out of scraps, iron bars weighing around 400 kg and artificial grass and took around 20 days for completion, principal Panigrahy said.

## FARM MECHANISATION



Farmers tilling their land with a mechanised plough in Bisamkatak area of Rayagada district

OP PHOTO

# 50% of Delhi's eligible population got at least 1 shot of vaccine: CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: The total number of anti-coronavirus vaccine doses administered in Delhi so far crossed the one-crore mark Saturday and of the eligible population in the city, 50 per cent have received at least one jab, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said.

He hoped that more vaccine doses will be soon available for the city. The national capital has a population of about two crore and among them, about 1.5 crore are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination, the chief minister said.

"Out of the 1.5 crore eligible population, 74 lakh have received vaccine doses. So, about 50 per cent have received at least one dose. Of the 74 lakh, 26 lakh have been administered both the jabs," the chief minister said in an online briefing.

"The number of Covid vaccine doses administered in Delhi since the start of the inoculation drive, crossed the one-crore mark today."

Congratulating the medical staff for administering over one crore doses in the national capital, Kejriwal said there was an acute shortage of vaccines for which inoculation could not be scaled up.

"We have the capacity to vaccinate three lakh people daily. But due to shortage, only 50,000-80,000 people are getting the Covid jabs



**We have the capacity to vaccinate three lakh people daily. But due to shortage, only 50,000-80,000 people are getting the Covid jabs every day**

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | CHIEF MINISTER

every day," he said.

The chief minister said the Delhi government is in regular contact with the Centre and hoped the city, along with the rest of the country, will soon have adequate vaccine doses. There are two challenges before the government: to vaccinate those who have not yet taken even the first dose and to administer the second dose to those who have got

the first jab, Kejriwal said.

The state government has been vaccinating the maximum number of people each day with the stock it is receiving, he said while pointing out the enthusiasm among people to get inoculated.

"As per the stock of doses we are receiving, our doctors, nurses and healthcare workers are putting in their best day and night to vaccinate the people of Delhi. The people are also enthusiastic about getting vaccinated and are coming forward to get their shots," the chief minister said.

Delhi has so far received 24,74,850 doses of Covaxin and 73,18,070 doses of Covishield, said the vaccination bulletin of the Delhi government Saturday.

# DMK pushing for rehabilitation of beggars

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, July 31: The DMK government in Tamil Nadu under Chief Minister MK Stalin is in the process of rehabilitating the beggars in the state.

The Supreme Court had stated in a recent verdict that begging cannot be banned through legislation, adding that the court cannot take an 'elitist' view in the matter.

Taking a cue from the Supreme Court observation, the Tamil Nadu government is planning to open rehabilitation centres across districts. According to a study conducted by the state's Social Welfare Department, a large number of people are out on the streets in each and every district of Tamil Nadu.

During a recent meeting of the welfare department, Stalin had stressed the need for rehabilitation of beggars and making them meaningfully employed.

While several social organisations working among beggars are divided over banning begging, some groups are vociferously advocating the implementation of the Tamil Nadu Prevention of Begging Act.

M. Swaminathan, Director of the NGO 'Cause and Action', which works among the marginalised and deprived people, including beggars, in Salem, told IANS, "There is a need to implement the Tamil Nadu Prevention of Begging Act. However, the gov-



A CUE FROM SC

THE SUPREME COURT HAD STATED IN A RECENT VERDICT THAT BEGGING CANNOT BE BANNED THROUGH LEGISLATION, ADDING THAT THE COURT CANNOT TAKE AN 'ELITIST' VIEW IN THE MATTER

TAKING A CUE FROM THE SUPREME COURT OBSERVATION, THE TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO OPEN REHABILITATION CENTRES ACROSS DISTRICTS

ernment should ensure that all the beggars who are out on the streets are properly relocated and given proper rehabilitation and not dumped in places that are similar to jails. Most of those who are on the streets are highly vulnerable and their mental condition will get affected if they are not properly rehabilitated."

There are others who are against the implementation of Prevention of Begging Act, as they feel it would

a deprived life. Hence, according to me, banning begging is no solution and the government should tackle the issue at the grassroots level so that the people don't land up on the streets."

According to senior officials in the Social Welfare Department, the Tamil Nadu government will conduct hearings in all the districts in which the district collectors, district superintendents of police, district social welfare officials and other officials concerned will take part and based on the feedback, the state government will formulate a policy on the rehabilitation of beggars.

According to the officials in the welfare department, there are several reasons behind people ending up on streets and a policy that the government would formulate will be based on the feedback.

As a first step, the department is contemplating to have a detailed study on beggars in each category.

Continuing education, including skill education for children, in association with NGOs and the skill development department of the government of India to provide vocational skills to the children on the streets is one of the policy frameworks which the government would implement in the near future, sources said.

Vaccination of beggars on priority is the first measure the state government has taken up, the sources said.

# Air pollution in Delhi-NCR shows decreasing trend

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 31: An early estimate from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIT-D), has shown a decreasing trend in PM2.5 concentration over Delhi-NCR over the last four years.

"Our data is showing that pollution levels have gone down. In 2020, it had anyways gone down because of the lockdown. But data from 2017 to 2018 and 2018 to 2019 has shown a decreasing trend," said Sagnik Dey, associate professor at the Centre for Atmospheric Sciences, IIT-Delhi.

A number of policy measures have been taken in the National Capital Region (NCR) to curb air pollution such as switching to cleaner BSVI fuel, installing CEMS monitoring across industries, cleaner zigzag technology in brick kilns, completion and use of Eastern and Western Peripheral Highways, which bypass heavy traffic away from Delhi limits, and deployment of happy seeders, which address crop residue burning to an extent.

"With all these measures, the data from the government monitoring has shown a decreasing trend in PM2.5 concentration over Delhi-NCR," said SN Tripathy, head of the Civil Engineering Department at IIT Kanpur.

But Tripathy also put an immediate caveat: "The time series

is very short, and yet, the data is showing some decreasing trend."

Because of this, both Dey and Tripathy declined to hazard a guess to put a quantum on the levels of pollution, which may be in the range of 10-15 per cent or 15-20 per cent.

Tripathy is part of the National Knowledge Network, which has been set up to provide scientific guidance to achieve National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) goals and has been pushing for adopting an airshed approach as a provincial management expanding to the states.

The government Saturday introduced a Bill in the Lok Sabha to constitute a commission for air quality management in Delhi-NCR and its surrounding regions based exactly on the airshed approach.

"Domestic policies such as the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, which has provided a successful solution in the form of 14 crore LPG connections in India, too has been making a huge difference. Household cooking contributes to one-fourth of the mortality burden due to air pollution in the region. Not just domestic cooking, the street vendors shifting to LPG too may have helped," said Tripathy.

Lead is a carcinogen generated from solid fuels used in household cooking while nitrogen dioxide emissions (NOx) are mostly attributed to transport.

## CIVIC WOES



A portion of a road that caved in near IIT flyover in New Delhi, Saturday.

PTI PHOTO

# Wary of BJP, AIADMK cadres push for EPS to head party

There is growing unrest among the party cadres against the style of functioning of Panneerselvam and about his waning clout in his home turf

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, July 31: The AIADMK cadres and leaders are pushing for a strong single leadership in the party after the BJP came out with a statement that the fight in Tamil Nadu is between the BJP and the DMK and that the AIADMK is an alliance partner.

In the recent Assembly elections, the BJP was able to wrest four seats in an alliance with the AIADMK and the PMK. The saffron party now wants to take this forward and become a major political force in the state.

While the AIADMK is presently being led by former Chief Ministers and senior leaders O. Panneerselvam and Edappadi K. Palaniswami, there is growing unrest among the party cadres against the style of functioning of Panneerselvam and about his waning clout in his home turf of Theni district.

In the 2021 assembly elections, the AIADMK could win only the Bodinaikar seat of Panneerselvam in the predominantly Thevar dominated Theni district. In Salem, the home turf of Palaniswami, the party could win all but one assembly seat thus leading to the growing clout of Palaniswami among the cadres and leaders.

The AIADMK cadres were apprehensive about Panneerselvam not coming out strongly against expelled former party interim



general secretary V.K. Sasikala as both are from the powerful Thevar community which has dominance in the southern belts of Tamil Nadu including Theni district. Sasikala has been trying to contact party cadres and lower level functionaries and this has been causing a lot of heartburn within the party.

After the New Delhi visit of EPS and OPS and meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, OPS has come out against Sasikala. A large section of the party is of the opinion that Palaniswami with a clean slate should lead the AIADMK from the front and not a dual leadership.

Palaniswami has immense clout in his home turf of Salem and among his Gounder community but the same cannot be said of Panneerselvam as the election results in his home district, Theni showed.

# 66% of TN population has antibodies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 31: The third Tamil Nadu Cross Sectional Serosurvey in July, covering over 26,000 samples revealed that at least 66.2 per cent of the population has developed antibodies to SARS-CoV-2, the virus which causes covid-19.

Among the 26,610 samples tested, 17,624 individuals had IgG (Immunoglobulin G) antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 virus.

While the overall seroprevalence was 66.2 per cent, the highest seropositivity was observed in Virudhunagar district at 84 per cent while Erode in west Tamil Nadu reported the lowest at 37, according to the latest serosurvey conducted by the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine in 888 clusters across the state.

It was released by state Minister for Medical and Family Welfare Ma Subramanian in the presence of Principal Health Secretary Dr J Radhakrishnan and Director of



Public Health (DPH) and Preventive Medicine Dr TS Selvavinayagam, here Saturday.

In the earlier state-wide serosurveys conducted by DPH&PM, the seropositivity was 31 per cent in October/November 2020, and 29 per cent (in the second conducted in April 2021).

The overall seropositivity of 66.2 per cent detected during the third survey could be attributed to various possible reasons including the timing of serosurvey conducted

during the declining phase of the Covid second wave in Tamil Nadu, it said.

"Intense vaccination drives across the state from January 16, 2021 and inclusion of 18+ age individuals for vaccination would have generated protective antibodies in the population. As on June 10, 2021, 97.6 lakh people got vaccinated (either single or double dose) in Tamil Nadu," the survey report said.

Western districts like Erode,

Coimbatore and Tiruppur reported around 45 per cent seropositivity which could be attributed to the consistent reporting of new covid-19 cases in these regions, it said.

The serosurvey was successfully completed under the supervision of Selvavinayagam and his team at the state and district level.

Each cluster consisted of 30 participants drawn randomly from a village in a rural area or a street in the case of an urban one.

Blood samples were collected from a total of 26,610 participants and tested for the presence of SARS-CoV-2 IgG antibodies using Chemiluminescence based Immuno Assay (CLIA).

All the samples were tested at six referral labs of DPH & PM located in Chennai, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Coimbatore, Tirunelveli and Salem for the detection of IgG antibodies.

Over 2.15 crore persons have taken the jabs through government-run and private hospitals in the state, so far.

# Yamuna flowing below danger mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: The water level in the Yamuna receded below the danger mark of 205.33 Saturday morning, a day after the Delhi administration sounded a flood alert and expedited efforts to evacuate people living in the river floodplains.

The water level was recorded at 205.01 metres at the Old Railway Bridge at 8 am. It was 205.44 metres at 1 am and 205.20 metres at 6 am, an official said.

Friday, with Haryana discharging more water into the river from the Hathnikund Barrage, the Delhi Police and the East Delhi district administration started evacuating people living on the floodplains of the Yamuna in the capital.

The Irrigation and Flood Control Department deployed 13 boats in different areas and put 21 others on standby. A flood alert is declared when the Yamuna crosses the "warning mark" of 204.50 metres. The situation is being monitored round-the-clock, a district administration official said. According to



Indian Railways employees check the water level in Yamuna river after heavy rains in New Delhi.

AFP PHOTO

the Delhi flood control room, the discharge rate at the Hathnikund Barrage peaked to 1.60 lakh cusecs Tuesday afternoon, the highest this year so far.

The water discharged from the barrage normally takes two to three days to reach the capital.

Haryana had been releasing water from the Yumananagar-located barrage at the rate of 37,109

cusecs at 8 pm Friday, it increased to 45,180 at 1 am Saturday which resulted in the water level reaching 205.44. At 6 am Saturday, the water was released at the rate of 35,109 cusecs. In 2019, the flow rate had peaked to 8.28 lakh cusecs August 18-19, and the water level of the Yamuna had hit the 206.60 metre-mark, breaching the danger mark of 205.33 metres.



Our police personnel even sacrifice their lives for security of the country, maintaining law and order and for fighting terrorism. They are unable to go home for days, they are unable to go home even during festivals but when it comes to the police's image, people's perception is different  
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

VICE ADMIRAL GHORMADE APPOINTED NAVY VICE CHIEF  
Vice Admiral SN Ghormade assumed charge of the vice chief of Naval Staff Saturday. He has succeeded Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar who retires after more than 39 years of illustrious service



## of the day quote

They are used to questions like 'how do you eat mangoes', therefore, they are scared of discussion in Parliament on issues that concern people like price rise  
PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

Like the demon king Ravana, the BJP is using 'e-Ravanas' on social media to spread its propaganda and hatred. Like Ravana, they are there on social media in disguise and spread lies and rumours  
AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

There has been a significant decline in triple talaq cases after the law against the practice came into effect and Muslim women across the country have overwhelmingly welcomed the legislation  
MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | MINORITY AFFAIRS MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

**Lalan Singh voted as new JD(U) chief**  
Patna: The Janata Dal United JD(U) office in Patna turned into a celebration venue for party members and leaders after Munger MP Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh was elected the national president of the party Saturday evening. IANS Friday had reported that Lalan Singh is the most probable leader for this post. Singh was elected as party president in the party executive committee meeting held in its New Delhi Jantar Mantar office in the presence of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Saturday.

**NIA arrests LeM militant**  
Jammu: The National Investigation Agency Saturday arrested a Lashker-e-Mustafa (LeM) terrorist as it conducted raids at 15 locations across Jammu and Kashmir in connection with two terror-related cases including the recent recovery of a drone-dropped IED from Pakistan, officials said. A large quantity of incriminating material including digital devices, shells of used bullets, plastic face masks that guard stone-pelting and handwritten jihadi material were also recovered during the raids, they said.

**2 Pak intruders shot dead by BSF**  
Chandigarh: The Border Security Force (BSF) Saturday said its troopers shot dead two intruders from Pakistan in Punjab's frontier district of Ferozepur. On July 30 at about 8.48 pm, BSF troops deployed in Thehkelan (Amarkot) in Ferozepur observed suspicious movement of intruders sneaking inside Indian territory. The troops challenged them to stop, but the intruders did not pay any heed to repeated warnings and continued to move towards the Indian side in an attempt to cross the border fence, the BSF said in a statement.

**2 BRO officers lose lives in rescue ops**  
New Delhi: Two Border Roads Organisation (BRO) officers lost their lives during rescue and relief operations in Himachal Pradesh, which is witnessing flash floods and landslides due to heavy rainfall. The BRO lost an engineer and a project officer during relief and rescue operation in the state. In Lahaul and Spiti Valley, the strategic Manali - Sarchu road was closed for traffic at various places due to multiple landslides.

# 'For every single Covid case, 30 cases went undetected'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: For every single Covid-19 case reported in India, there were 30 cases that remained undetected or were missed, according to an analysis of ICMR's fourth sero-survey by independent epidemiologist Dr Chandrakant Lahariya.  
The public health expert shared his analysis on Twitter in which he showed for every reported Covid-19 case in India, how many cases were missed.  
He, however, clarified that it does not mean this was deliberate but simply reflects the performance of the disease surveillance system and the response to pandemic in the state in tackling the cases.  
Many cases are asymptomatic so they are likely to go unreported. If contact tracing is done well, even asymptomatic cases can also be reported. This has been reflected in the fact that a few states have done better than others as they can report on more cases as compared to other states, Lahariya told PTI. The Union health ministry Wednesday shared the findings of the fourth round of national serosurvey conducted by ICMR across 70 districts of India.  
While Madhya Pradesh leads the chart with 79 per cent sero-

prevalence, Kerala is at the lowest with 44.4 per cent followed by Assam with 50.3 per cent and Maharashtra with 58 per cent.



SERO-SURVEY ANALYSIS  
prevalence, Kerala is at the lowest with 44.4 per cent followed by Assam with 50.3 per cent and Maharashtra with 58 per cent.

ing to the analysis.  
Among states and union territories, the analysis by Lahariya showed that Uttar Pradesh missed the highest number of cases. With every case reported in that state, 98 cases were missed or remained undetected.  
The under-counting factor was lowest for Kerala at 6 which means for every case reported six cases were missed, according to the analysis. The under-counting factor for India was 30 which means for every case reported 30 cases were missed, according to the analysis. For Madhya Pradesh, the under-counting factor was 83 - highest after Uttar Pradesh fol-

lowed by Jharkhand at 63, Rajasthan at 62, Gujarat at 61 and Bihar at 59.  
Speaking about the analysis, Lahariya said, What we need to remember is that sampling of sero survey has been done in a scientific manner from 21 states and UTs so we know India has 67.6 per cent seropositivity at national level which is undisputed and the government says it so this essentially means there are 90-95 crore people in India who are sero-positive and a majority after natural infection. So they will come in the same proportion from states through which we have arrived at this conclusion.

## FARMERS' ISSUE & PEGASUS ROW OPPN PARTIES SEEK PREZ INTERVENTION



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: Some opposition parties, led by the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), met President Ram Nath Kovind Saturday to seek his intervention in asking the government to set up a JPC on farmer deaths and allow a discussion in Parliament on the farmers' issue and the Pegasus snooping controversy.  
Leaders of SAD, NCP and JKNC met the president and handed over a letter signed by the representatives of various parties for his intervention. The Congress, however, was not a signatory to it.  
The letter by various parties, including SAD, Shiv Sena, NCP, BSP, JKNC, RLP, CPI and CPI(M), seeks the president's intervention to ensure the formation of a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) to ascertain the details of farmer deaths during their agitation against three agriculture laws of the Centre and allow a discussion on their issues in Parliament.  
After meeting the president,

SAD leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal said the entire Opposition is demanding from the government for the last two weeks to allow them to speak in Parliament on issues concerning people. Among those who met Kovind included Mohammed Faizal (NCP), Hasnain Masoodi (JKNC), Ritesh Pandey (BSP) and Balwinder Singh Bhundar (SAD).  
Badal said she herself had approached the Congress and the TMC and wanted these parties to accompany them during the meeting with the president, "but unfortunately, it is before you that no one has reached here. We had sought time from the president".  
All opposition parties are giving adjournment motions in Parliament on the farmers' issue and the Pegasus snooping row, she said, alleging that it is the government's duty to enable Parliament to function, but it is stonewalling the Opposition. She said they may belong to small political parties, but represent people from across the country, from Jammu and Kashmir to Lakshadweep.

## Parl functioned for 17 pc of total time

Rocked by protests from opposition parties on Pegasus snooping and other issues since the start of the Monsoon session, Parliament has only functioned for 18 hours out of the scheduled time of 107 hours, resulting in a loss of more than Rs 133 crore of taxpayers' money, government sources said Saturday. Sources said so far 89 hours have been wasted in the ongoing session which started on July 19 and is scheduled to conclude on August 13. According to the details shared by official sources, while Rajya Sabha has functioned for nearly 21 per cent of its scheduled time, Lok Sabha has managed to function for less than 13 per cent of the scheduled time.

"We have urged the president to put pressure on the government to let Parliament function smoothly so that people's issues are addressed," the Akali leader said.  
She said farmers are sitting on the roads for the last one year and at Delhi's borders for eight months, and 500 of them have lost their lives. The opposition leaders have demanded that tributes be paid in Parliament to the farmers who have died during the agitation.  
Asked about the government accusing the Opposition of stalling Parliament, she said the government just wants to buy time.

## Babul Supriyo quits politics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 31: Days after he was dropped in the central cabinet reshuffle, former Union Minister and BJP leader Babul Supriyo said Saturday that he has decided to quit politics and will be resigning as an MP.  
He hinted the decision was partly due to losing the ministerial berth and also differences with the state BJP leadership.  
Supriyo (50), who had held several portfolios as MOS in the Narendra Modi government since 2014, was



removed earlier this month in a major cabinet rejig. Leaving, Goodbye. I spoke to my parents, wife, friends, and after listening to the advice, I am saying that I am leaving. I am not going to any other party - TMC, Congress, CPIM, nowhere. I am confirming that nobody has called me. I am going

nowhere. I am a one-team player! I have always supported one team, #MohunBagan - Have been with only one party - BJP West Bengal. That's it! Leaving, Supriyo said in a Facebook post.  
I have stayed for too long... I have helped somebody, have disappointed someone... It is for the people to decide. If you want to do social work, you can do it without being in politics. Yes, I am resigning from the post of MP, his post read.  
The singer-turned politician also said he will vacate his government accommodation within a month.

## India set to take over as President of UNSC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, July 31: India will take over the Presidency of the UN Security Council August 1 and is set to host signature events in three major areas of maritime security, peacekeeping and counterterrorism during the month.  
"It is a singular honour for us to be presiding over the Security Council the same month when we are celebrating our 75th Independence Day," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador TS Tirumurti said in a video message on the eve of India assuming the rotating Presidency of the powerful 15-nation UN body.  
The first working day of India's Presidency will be Monday, August 2 when Tirumurti will hold a hybrid press briefing in the UN headquarters on the Council's programme of work for the month.  
Tirumurti will also provide a briefing for member states of the United Nations which are non-members of the Council on its work for the month, according to a schedule released by the UN.  
India's two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council began January 1, 2021. The August presidency will be India's first Presidency during its 2021-22 tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. India will again preside over the



Council in December next year, the last month of its two-year tenure.

During its Presidency, India will be organising high-level signature events in three major areas - maritime security, peacekeeping and counterterrorism.  
In the video message, Tirumurti said maritime security has a high priority for India "and it is important for the Security Council to take a holistic approach to this issue".  
Peacekeeping is a topic "close to our hearts, given our own long and pioneering involvement" with peacekeeping, he said, adding that India will focus on how to ensure the safety of peacekeepers, especially by using better technology and how to bring perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers to justice.  
As a country that has been at the forefront in the fight against terrorism, India will continue to keep the spotlight on counterterrorism.

## Rape victim seeks SC permission to marry tormentor

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, July 31: A victim of rape has approached the Supreme Court seeking permission to marry her 'tormentor', a 53-year-old Kerala Catholic priest Robin Vadakkumchery who has been sentenced to 20 years in jail and was dismissed from priesthood by the Vatican.  
The petition filed by the victim will now come up before the apex court Monday and the victim has also sought bail for Vadakkumchery so that their marriage can take place. The petitioner says this has been filed according to her wish.  
Earlier, Vadakkumchery had approached the Kerala High Court with a petition seeking to marry the victim, but it was turned down.  
Vadakkumchery was serving as a parish vicar near Kannur and was the manager of the Church-backed school, where the victim, a Class 11 student was studying.  
It was a Child line agency that works among school children that had registered the complaint against the priest. The priest came under pressure after the girl gave birth to a child February 7, 2017 at a hospital run by the management.  
The priest was arrested February 27, 2017 from near Kochi International airport while he was preparing to slip out of the country.

## BACK TO THE SEA



Fishermen load essentials on their boats to start trawling following the end of trawling-ban, at Puthiyappa fishing harbor in Kozhikode, Saturday  
PTI PHOTO

# FB developing AI, new ways to detect users under age 13

Facebook and Instagram weren't designed for people under the age of 13, so the company is now creating new ways to stop those who are underage from signing up

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 31: Admitting that it is not easy to detect and remove accounts belonging to people under the age of 13, Facebook has said that it is looking at ways to convince people under age 13 to not lie about their age, including using the artificial intelligence (AI) technology.  
Facebook and Instagram weren't designed for people under the age of 13, so the company is now creating new ways to stop those who are underage from signing up.  
We're developing AI to find and remove under-aged accounts, and new solutions to verify people's ages. We're also building new experiences designed specifically for those under 13, said Parni Diwanji,

VP of Youth Products at Facebook. Facebook is also working with operating system (OS) providers, internet browsers and other providers so they can share information to help apps establish whether someone is of an appropriate age.  
Many argue that collecting ID is the answer to this industry problem, but there are significant limitations to this approach many young people don't have an ID, ID collection isn't a fair or equitable solution, nor is it foolproof, the company said.  
It said that access to government IDs varies depending on where you live in the world, as does the information contained in an ID such as a birthday



Some have access to IDs but don't get them unless they choose to travel, and some simply can't afford one. Indeed, lack of ID access disproportionately impacts underserved communities around the world, particularly young women, Facebook mentioned.  
Currently, when people open Facebook apps to sign up for an account, they are asked for their birthday. This is called an age

screen. But verifying someone's age is not as simple as it might sound. While age screens are common in our industry, young people can - and often do - get around them by misrepresenting their age.  
The reality is that they're already online, and with no foolproof way to stop people from misrepresenting their age, we want to build experiences designed specifically for them, managed by parents and guardians, Diwanji said in a statement.  
This includes a new Instagram experience for teens.  
We believe that encouraging them to use an experience that is age appropriate and managed by parents is the right path. It's going

to take a village to make this experience compelling enough so that this age group wants to use it, but we're determined to get it right, the company emphasised.  
Facebook has already developed a technology that allows it to estimate people's ages, like if someone is below or above 18.  
We look at things like people wishing you a happy birthday and the age written in those messages. We also look at the age you shared with us on Facebook and apply it to our other apps where you have linked your accounts and vice versa. So if you share your birthday with us on Facebook, we'll use the same for your linked account on Instagram, Diwanji explained.

# international



**Delta is a warning: it's a warning that the virus is evolving but it is also a call to action that we need to move now before more dangerous variants emerge**  
MICHAEL RYAN | EMERGENCIES DIRECTOR, WHO

**80 KG BLUE SAPPHIRE UNEARTHED FROM LANKA**  
A blue sapphire weighing approximately 80 kilograms was discovered in a gem mine in Rakwana, Ratnapura in Sri Lanka Friday, local media reported. This gemstone is worth approximately \$50 million



## of the day quote

This GBP 338 million package marks the start of what promises to be a great summer of cycling and walking, enabling more people to make those sustainable travel choices that make our air cleaner and cities greener

This malnutrition crisis in Tigray is taking place amid extensive, systematic damage to the food, health, nutrition, water and sanitation systems and services that children and their families depend on for their survival

I know the constitutional texts very well, respect them and taught them and after all this time I will not turn into a dictator as some have said

## SHORT TAKES

### Karachi lockdown

**Islamabad:** Pakistani authorities have imposed a lockdown in the southern Sindh province, including the commercial hub of Karachi and other urban centres, amid an alarming increase in Covid-19 cases. The lockdown began Saturday and is set to last until Aug 8, despite opposition from the federal government and the local business community. The new surge appears linked to many of the crowd-attracting activities earlier this month during the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha.

### 13 killed in IS attack in Iraq

**Baghdad:** At least 13 people were killed and 45 others injured in an attack by carried out by the Islamic State (IS) terror group on a funeral and a nearby checkpoint in Iraq's Salahudin province, a police source said Saturday. The attack took place Friday evening when IS militants attacked a funeral tent in the village of Albu Jily near the town of Yathrib, some 80 km north of Baghdad, the source told Xinhua. The IS militants also attacked a nearby checkpoint in the village, al-Bazi said, adding that three policemen were among the killed.

### US issues new Cuba sanctions

**Washington:** The United States imposed sanctions on the Cuban police force and two of its leaders Friday in response to the Havana government's crackdown on protesters, and President Joe Biden promised Cuban-American leaders more actions were coming. Targets of the sanctions are two Cuban police force leaders, as well as the Cuban interior ministry's national police force, the department said.

### Malaysian PM postpones Parl

**Kuala Lumpur:** Malaysia's embattled Prime Minister postponed a critical parliamentary session set for Monday, citing Covid-19 infections and allowing him to avoid a no-confidence vote amid growing calls for him to resign. A circular sent to lawmakers Saturday said the session will be held at a later date, after the Health Ministry deemed Parliament a high-risk venue. Malaysia's political crisis deepened when the king rebuked the government for misleading Parliament on the status of ordinances it issued during the Coronavirus state of emergency. The opposition, which has filed a motion of no-confidence against PM Muhyiddin Yassin, slammed the postponement as an excuse for him to stay in office.

## BLOODIEST BATTLE

# Taliban attack major Af cities

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kabul, July 31:** Amid the ongoing violence in Afghanistan, the country witnessed the bloodiest day in a month as security forces repelled mass Taliban attacks on the capital cities of Herat, Helmand, Takhar, and Kandahar provinces, according to media reports.

Besides being the bloodiest, Friday was also one of the busiest days for the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) in the past one month. The media reports said the Taliban entered Herat province and launched attacks on Afghan government forces' outposts inside the namesake capital city. The city's airport and the UN's main compound in the city came under attack by rocket-propelled grenades and gunfire.

"So-called 'anti-Government elements' targeted entrances of the clearly marked UN facility with rocket-propelled grenades and gunfire just hours after Taliban fighters penetrated Herat city and clashed with Afghan security forces near UNAMA's provincial headquarters," the world body said.

Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry said that the ANDSF launched operations during which the militants were pushed back and the district of Guzara recaptured. The media reports also said

Taliban entered Herat province and launched attacks on Afghan government forces' outposts

The city's airport and the UN's main compound came under attack by rocket-propelled grenades and gunfire

226 Taliban insurgents were killed during the security operations

Security forces has also uncovered and defused 15 Taliban-mines

that US Army also conducted airstrikes in support of the Afghan government forces in Herat.

The Ministry of Defence said the deaths were reported in Kunar, Paktia, Maidan Wardak, Kandahar, Herat, Jawzjan, Helmand, Baghlan and Kabul.

In the past 24 hours, the security forces has also uncovered and defused 15 Taliban-mines



from insecure areas in a number of provinces.

## 'TROIKA PLUS' TO DISCUSS AF CRISIS

Amid escalating bloodbath in neighbouring Afghanistan -- Pakistan, China, Russia and the US will be meeting in Doha August 11, to discuss the security situation there and ponder on ways to prohibit the Himalayan South Asian nation from plunging into yet another civil war. The "Troika Plus" meeting in Doha holds great importance as Afghan and Taliban continue to make major inroads and take control of parts of Afghanistan, since the start of the US and NATO forces' withdrawal. The Troika Plus meeting is also important as the US is keen to have China and Russia on board on the situation in Afghanistan, despite having serious concerns against China. It is pertinent to mention that both Russia and China, have strongly criticized the US for opting to a hasty withdrawal, blaming the American for failing to bring peace in Afghanistan. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that the country is ready to have good relations with any one, who forms the government in Afghanistan.



## HARDSHIP IN HAITI



People gather around a car where volunteers distribute food to refugees at a shelter for families displaced by gang violence at the Saint Yves Church in Port-au-Prince

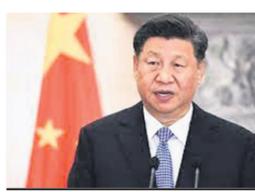
# Xi tells military to hurry modernisation process

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Beijing, July 31:** On the eve of China's Army Day, Chinese President Xi Jinping Saturday asserted that it is the ruling Communist Party that "commands the gun" and asked the military to make resolute efforts to become the world's best army by 2027, on par with that of the US.

Addressing a group study session of the CPC Political Bureau Saturday, Xi -- who heads the CPC and the powerful Central Military Commission (CMC), besides the prospects of lifelong tenure in power unlike his predecessors -- called for resolute will and determination to work hard to achieve the goals set for the PLA centenary to be celebrated in 2027.

Reviewing the history of the



CPC, which celebrated its centenary July 1, Xi stressed that "the party commands the gun", upholding the absolute leadership over armed forces, official media here reported.

According to the 14th Five-Year Plan which is being implemented from this year by the PLA's 100th anniversary, the centennial goal of military development should be achieved.

Besides stressing for rapid modernisation of the military through heavy defence budgets, which this

**A key conclave of the CPC last year finalised plans to build a fully modern military on par with that of the US by 2027**

year amounted to USD 200 billion, and military exercises in real battle conditions to win wars, Xi has also been emphasising repeatedly since he took over the leadership of the CPC in 2012, that the PLA must function under the party leadership.

Xi extended regards to officers, soldiers and civilian personnel of the PLA and the People's Armed Police Force, and members of the militia ahead of the 94th birthday of the PLA, which falls August 1.

## French police clash with anti-virus pass protesters in Paris

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Paris, July 31:** Thousands in France protesting a special virus pass marched through Paris Saturday, with French police in full riot gear using their fists to push some demonstrators back and firing tear gas against some crowds.

Some 3,000 security forces deployed around the French capital for a third weekend of protests against the pass that will be needed to enter restaurants and other places. Police took up posts along Paris' Champs-Elysees to guard against an invasion of the famed avenue by violent demonstrators.

Anti-pass marches were being held in scattered cities across France, and four separate protests were held in Paris, the third weekend of anti-health pass protests.

With virus infections spiking and hospitalizations rising, French lawmakers have passed a bill requiring the pass in most places as of Aug 9. Polls show a majority of French support the pass, but some French are adamantly opposed.

The pass requires vaccinations or a quick negative test or proof of a recent recovery from Covid-19 and mandates vaccinations for all health care workers by mid-September.

As marchers headed eastward, police fired tear gas into the crowds, plumes of smoke filling the sky. A male protester was seen in the chaos with a bleeding head.

French authorities are implementing the health pass because the highly contagious delta variant is making strong inroads. More than 24,000 new daily cases were confirmed Friday night -- compared to just a few thousand cases a day at the start of the month.

# Evictions loom after US fails to extend ban

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Washington, July 31:** A nationwide eviction moratorium is set to expire Saturday night after President Joe Biden and Democrats in Congress worked furiously but ultimately failed to align on a long-shot strategy to prevent millions of Americans from being forced from their homes during a Covid-19 surge.

More than 3.6 million Americans are at risk of eviction, some in a matter of days, as nearly \$47 billion in federal housing aid to the states during the pandemic has been slow to make it into the hands of renters and landlords owed payments.

Tensions mounted late Friday as it became clear there was no resolution in sight. Hours before the ban was set to expire, Biden called on local governments to "take all possible steps" to immediately disburse the funds. Evictions could begin as soon as Monday.

The stunning outcome, as the

White House and Congress each expected the other to act, exposed a rare divide between the president and his allies on Capitol Hill -- one that could have lasting impact as the nation's renters face widespread evictions.

Biden set off the scramble by announcing he would allow the eviction ban to expire instead of challenging a recent Supreme Court ruling signaling this would be the last deadline. He called on Congress Thursday to swiftly pass legislation to extend the date.

Landlords, who have opposed the moratorium and challenged it repeatedly in court, are against any extension. They, too, are arguing for speeding up the distribution of rental assistance.

The National Apartment Association and several others this week filed a federal lawsuit asking for \$26 billion in damages because of the impact of the moratorium.

**There can be no excuse for any state or locality not accelerating funds to landlords and tenants that have been hurt during this pandemic. Every state and local government must get these funds out to ensure we prevent every eviction we can**  
JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US



## WILDFIRE RAGES

# Turkey evacuates panicked tourists

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Istanbul, July 31:** Panicked tourists in Turkey hurried to the seashore to wait for rescue boats Saturday after being told to evacuate some hotels in the Aegean resort of Bodrum due to the dangers posed by nearby wildfires, Turkish media reported.

Coast guard units were leading the operation and authorities asked private boats and yachts to assist in evacuation efforts from the sea as new wildfires erupted. Video showed plumes of smoke and fire enveloping a hill close to the seashore.

The death toll from wildfires raging in Turkey's Mediterranean towns rose to six Saturday after two forest workers were killed, the country's health minister said.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited the area Saturday, inspecting the damage from a helicopter. Speaking from the town of Manavgat, Erdogan announced that the Turkish government would cover the rents for people affected by the fire and rebuild their homes. He said taxes, social security and credit payments would be postponed for those affected and small businesses would be offered credit with zero interest.

Erdogan said the number of planes fighting the fires had been increased from six to 13, including planes from Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran, and that thousands of Turkish personnel as well as dozens of helicopters and drones were assisting the firefighting efforts.



# Pressure on major emitters ahead of climate summit

**A TOTAL OF 15 COUNTRIES WITH RELATIVELY LOW CO2 EMISSIONS SUBMITTED NEW PLEDGES THIS WEEK, AHEAD OF A JULY 30 DEADLINE FOR THEM TO BE COUNTED IN A UN REPORT**

AGENCIES

**Brussels, July 31:** A group of mostly smaller countries submitted new, more ambitious climate pledges to the United Nations this week, raising pressure on big emitters including China to do the same ahead of a major UN climate summit in November.

UN climate chief Patricia Espinosa said that as of Saturday the United Nations had received new pledges from 110 countries, out of the nearly 200 that signed the

2015 Paris climate accord.

"It is still far from satisfactory, since only a little over half the parties (58%) have met the cut-off deadline," Espinosa said in a statement, urging laggards to "redouble their efforts" and make more ambitious commitments to protect the planet.

The smaller countries include Sri Lanka, Israel, Malawi and Barbados. Malaysia, Nigeria and Namibia were among the larger countries to submit tougher climate targets this week.



The world's two most populous countries, China and India, are among dozens that ignored the deadline of July 30 set by the UN

**WITH DEADLY HEATWAVES, FLOODING AND WILDFIRES, CALLS ARE GROWING FOR URGENT ACTION TO CUT THE CO2 EMISSIONS**

**CHINA - THE WORLD'S BIGGEST EMITTER OF CO2 - AND COUNTRIES INCLUDING INDIA AND SOUTH KOREA HAVE NOT YET SUBMITTED NEW CLIMATE PLEDGES**

**THE US AND EU, THE WORLD'S SECOND AND THIRD BIGGEST EMITTERS, HIKED THEIR TARGETS IN RECENT MONTHS, PROMISING TO SLASH EMISSIONS FASTER THIS DECADE**

climate change agency to provide an update on their plans for curbing the release of planet-warming gases. Tina Stege, climate

envoy for the Marshall Islands, an island country near the Equator in the Pacific Ocean which is highly vulnerable to rising sea

levels, urged rich nations who have not yet hiked their pledges to step up.

"If the major economies submit 1.5C-aligned NDCs, it would make a world of difference," she said. A country's climate pledge is known as a "nationally determined contribution".

Countries that miss the deadline for inclusion in the UN report can still submit new pledges before the summit in November; by which time every country is expected to submit a new pledge.

## of the day quote

Under these (Covid) circumstances, we request the finance minister to reintroduce the scheme for grant of ex-gratia payment of the difference between compound interest and simple interest for six months to borrowers from the hospitality sector

**GURBAXISH SINGH KOHLI**  
VICE PRESIDENT, FHRAI

The most alarming signal is the new export order index, which is at lowest level (in China) since July last year

**ZHIWEI ZHANG** | CHIEF ECONOMIST,  
PINPOINT ASSET MANAGEMENT

Nifty has repeatedly run into resistance in the 15,862-15,899 band over the past 6 sessions. However the lower shadows (area between the lows and close) are growing over the past three weeks, suggesting sharp recovery post higher selling pressure

**DEEPAK JASANI** | HEAD OF RETAIL  
RESEARCH, HDFC SECURITIES



Real estate sector which was slowly recovering by March was hit by the second wave. Going ahead, we may witness resizing of units, marketing led discounts, amenities and special payment schemes to be offered by developers to boost demand

**SAMIR JASUJA** | FOUNDER AND MD, PROPEQUITY

## ACTL TO CONSTRUCT J&K'S FIRST FREIGHT TERMINAL

Associated Container Terminals Ltd (ACTL) Saturday said it will construct Jammu and Kashmir's first freight terminal by 2022 and work for the same is under progress in Samba



## INDO-US RELATIONS

# Services trade to boost ever expanding biz ties, says Goyal

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, July 31:** Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal Saturday said that India and the US are "natural partners" and services trade will play a critical role in ever expanding business ties. The minister also said that the services sector holds a lot of promise in aiding India's economic recovery in the post Covid period.

"India and the US are working towards peace and stability across the world," he said addressing the 2nd Indo-US Services Summit, organised by Indo American Chamber of Commerce (IACC).

The services trade, Goyal said, will play a very important role in the two countries' ever expanding relations. "India and the US are two natural partners and our relationship has stood the test of time due to shared values of equality, liberty and democracy," he added.

India is now moving beyond a "low-cost service provider" to a "high value added partner" and



the back offices in India are evolving into brain offices, he noted adding that "our services exports are back to 97 per cent of the previous year".

The minister further said total services export from India to the world was USD 17 billion in 2001-02 and it has now leapfrogged to USD 205 billion in 2020-21, registering a 12-fold increase.

"When we talk of India-US part-

nership, we each have areas of strengths where we excel. The US is a hub of innovation, technology, research and quality education. India has skilled and intelligent manpower at competitive cost. Uniting our strengths will create an unbeatable combination," he stated. Goyal further said that India is also rapidly progressing to become one of the world's largest digital markets.

# 'Globalisation tripled India's GDP but workers left out'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 31:** Globalisation has tripled India's GDP in a generation but workers in the country have been left out, eminent economist and Nobel laureate Eric Maskin said Saturday while observing that the problem of increasing inequality may be harder to solve than the Covid-19 pandemic.

Addressing students of an university virtually, he mentioned that globalisation has brought over-all prosperity in emerging economies and has increased wages and income inequality.

"Globalisation has tripled Indian GDP in a generation, an amazing accomplishment. But the workers of India have been left out," Maskin, a professor of Economics and Mathematics at Harvard University, said.

Noting that the rise of inequality in so many developing countries is surprising, he said inequality cannot be solved by market forces.

"Yet, India will still be facing some huge challenges, challenges that may be even harder to solve than the pandemic....The problem of increasing income inequality," he noted.

Maskin pointed out that even though the world has witnessed enormous economic growth in the last 25 years, the gap between haves and have-nots in developing countries has risen.

"People who support globalisation have predicted that globalisation will bring prosperity to emerging economies. And on that score, they have often been right.



People who support globalisation have predicted that globalisation will bring prosperity to emerging economies. And on that score, they have often been right

**ERIC MASKIN** | EMINENT ECONOMIST AND NOBEL LAUREATE

"In India for example, GDP per capita, which is crude but common measure of prosperity, has grown in spectacular fashion since 2000, thanks to global market," he said. However, Maskin said according to its supporters, globalisation was also supposed to reduce income inequality.

"Yet in many such countries, wage inequality has actually increased. And once again, India is a leading example," he said.

The eminent economist noted that eliminating poverty is closely connected to inequality and in developing countries, anti-poverty measures are often anti-inequality measures too.

## SHORT TAKES

### Signature Global to invest ₹700cr

**New Delhi:** Realty firm Signature Global, which focuses on affordable homes, Saturday said it will invest ₹700 crore to develop a new housing project in Gurugram. Signature Global will develop 1,296 independent floors in a 20.6-acre project in Sector 37D, Gurugram. This is the company's 25th project. It has already completed seven projects. The project 'Signature Global City 37D' will be developed under Deen Dayal Jan Awas Yojana (DDJAY). On 324 plots, it will construct 1,296 independent premium floors, the company said in a statement.

### MoEngage raises \$32.5mn funding

**New Delhi:** MoEngage, an insights-led customer engagement platform, Saturday said it has raised \$32.5 million (Rs 241.7 cr) in a funding round, led by Multiples Alternate Asset Management. Existing investors, Eight Roads Ventures, F-Prime Capital and Matrix Partners, also participated, while Exfinity Venture Partners made a healthy exit in this round, a statement said.

### Mexico's economy rebounds 19.7%

**Mexico City:** Mexico's economy rebounded 19.7 per cent year-on-year in the second quarter of 2021, buoyed by good performance across all sectors, according to preliminary figures released by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (Inegi). Seasonally adjusted figures showed Mexico's gross domestic product (GDP) grew 1.5% in Q2 compared to the previous, Xinhua news agency quoted Inegi as saying in a statement Friday.

### SpiceJet to launch new 16 flights

**New Delhi:** SpiceJet Saturday said it will launch 16 new flights, including direct services connecting Bhavnagar with the national capital, Mumbai and Surat. The budget carrier will also start 10 more flights that will connect Gwalior with Jaipur, Kishanganj (Ajmer) with Mumbai, Belagavi with Delhi and Vishakhapatnam with Bangalore, besides adding an additional frequency on the Delhi-Jammu sector. In a statement, the airline said it would launch 16 new flights, including adding Bhavnagar (Gujarat) to its domestic network.

## State's mobile subscribers' base down by 42K in May

**Bhubaneswar:** The overall mobile subscribers' base in Odisha has declined by 42,334 in the month of May, 2021, according to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's (TRAI's) report. The total mobile subscribers' base for the same month is 3,445 crore in Odisha while it was 3,449 crore in April, 2021. The private telecom service provider Airtel lost over 1.46 lakh subscribers in May, 2021 followed by Vodafone Idea that lost over 61,086 subscribers in the state in the same month; revealed the subscriber data released by TRAI. However, Reliance Jio added the highest i.e. 1,47,535 lakh new mobile subscribers in Odisha, taking its total subscriber base in the state to over 1.47 crore. Apart from Jio, BSNL was the only other operator to add subscribers in the month. It added 17,738 subscribers in May, 2021. Jio and Bharti Airtel were the only two operators to add new subscribers in the state in April, 2021. While Jio added 2.69 lakh new subscribers in the state in same month, Airtel added just 16,513 subscribers. Meanwhile, BSNL lost 84,640 subscribers in the month, followed by Vodafone Idea which lost 49,707 subscribers during the same period. As per TRAI's report, Jio added over 35.54 lakh subscribers pan-India in May 2021. During the same period, Airtel lost the highest, 46.13 lakh subscribers followed by Vodafone Idea which lost over 42.8 lakh subscribers.

## BIZZ BUZZ

### Micromax to launch IN 2b

**Bhubaneswar:** Micromax Informatics Ltd launched 'India ka No Hang Phone' IN 2b in the budget segment. The brand also announced its foray into the audio accessories' category with its first range of True Wireless Stereo Earbuds - AirFunk 1 and AirFunk 1 Pro. Successor to the budget champion IN 1b, the Micromax IN 2b comes with a powerful ARM Cortex A75 architecture-based Octacore processor with Mali G52 GPU. A first in the sub ₹10,000 segment, the phone will be available in 4GB +64GB and 6GB+64GB RAM variants at ₹7,999 and ₹8,999 respectively from August 6, 2021. Moreover, AirFunk 1 will be available at ₹1299 and AirFunk 1 Pro at ₹2499. Both products will be available starting from August 18, 2021.



### V-Mart Retail to enter South India

**New Delhi:** V-Mart Retail Ltd. (V-Mart), India's leading value fashion retailer, has signed definitive agreements to acquire all of existing running stores of 'Unlimited' from Arvind Lifestyle Brands Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Arvind Fashions Ltd for cash consideration. As part of the transaction, V-Mart will acquire the assets of all stores, warehouse, inventory as well as



the store brand 'Unlimited' at their book value, with an estimated outlay of about ₹150 crore, and certain contingent payments based on certain milestones achieved in these stores over next few years, post the acquisition. Lalit Agarwal, CMD of V-Mart Retail Ltd said, "With this acquisition, we will have another 74 stores in our portfolio for catering to the fashion needs of families in the southern and western markets of India. At V-Mart, we have been opening around 50 stores every year."

# NHSRCL casts first full height pier for bullet train project

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 31:** The National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) Saturday said it has cast the first full height pier on the 508-km Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) project, popularly known as the bullet train project.

NHSRCL spokesperson Sushma Gaur said the NHSRCL took a significant step forward in its construction work by casting the first full height pier near Gujarat's Vapi at Chainage 167 on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor which will run through 12 stations connecting Maharashtra, Dadar & Nagar Haveli and Gujarat.

The average height of the pier on this corridor is nearly 12-15 metre and exact height of this pier is 13.05 metres, which is almost equivalent to a four-storey building, she added.

She said the pier was cast with 183 cubic metres of concrete quantity and 18.820 MT of steel. The special shuttering arrangement in the lift is one of the major features of the corridor providing better quality in eight hours, Gaur added.



This major construction milestone has been achieved despite severe shortage of manpower, logistical challenges because of the ongoing pandemic and the monsoon season

This major construction milestone has been achieved despite severe shortage of manpower and other logistical challenges because of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing monsoon season

in the region. There are number of such piers planned to be cast in coming months paving way for the first high speed rail corridor, she said.

NHSRCL is the executing agency mandated with building India's first high speed rail corridor between Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe September 14, 2017 had laid the foundation stone for the ambitious ₹1.08 lakh crore (\$17 billion) project. The bullet trains are expected to run at speeds of 320 km per hour covering the 508-km stretch in nearly two hours.

# 70% professionals feel skill gaps hampering productivity: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 31:** About 70% of employees feel there is a gap between the skills they have and the skills they actually need to best perform their job, according to a study by job site SCIKEY Market Network. The survey further revealed that 70% professionals interviewed feel that their organisation is either already facing this issue of skill shortage or is expected to encounter this as a major challenge in next 2-3 years.

Only 10% of the respondents felt that the knowledge they acquired in their educational institutions has proved to be useful in what they do today, the study noted.

The study is based on an online survey with over 2,500 respondents from across industries including

IT/IT services, finance, FMCG, and others.

According to the study 35% employees felt that the skill shortage can lead to loss of revenue for businesses, while 45% also said it leads to poor quality of work.

Employee growth and productivity has a direct correlation to organisational growth and productivity, it said.

Moreover, it found that 70% of the respondents felt that this can severely hamper the productivity of the business and 40% feel it can stagnate the business expansion.

With the transition to the virtual mode of working, 60% respondents said there is an urgent need to address this issue in the field of IT and 33% for Data Analytics, it stated.

The survey also revealed that sectors such as Data Analytics,



Web Design and IT are currently facing or are likely to face skill shortage in the future, which contributed to 60%, 38%, 33%, respectively.

Sectors such as Research and

Development, Customer Service, Talent Management and Recruitment and Finance also recognised expected shortage of skills in the near future at 28%, 20%, 29% and 15%, respectively.

## MAJOR CHALLENGE

According to the study 35% employees felt that the skill shortage can lead to loss of revenue for businesses

The survey also revealed that sectors like Data Analytics, Web Design and IT are likely to face skill shortage in future

Only 10% felt that the knowledge they acquired in their educational institutions has proved to be useful in what they do today

The survey revealed that the respondents felt that the skill gap resulted in major loss of productivity (70%) followed by higher rate of staff turnover (33%), lower morale (40%), inferior work qual-

## SBI announces 100% waiver on home loan processing fee

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 31:** The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) Saturday announced waiving processing fee on home loans till August-end. Currently, the processing fee on home loans is 0.40%.

SBI said it is the bank's limited period 'Monsoon Dhamaka Offer', through which a home loan customer can gain substantially. The state-owned lender said the offer will help revive the consumer sentiments.

"There could not be a better time to buy a house, considering SBI home loan interest rates start at just 6.70%," SBI said in a release. The Monsoon Dhamaka Offer is for a limited period ending August 31, 2021, SBI said.



"We believe this offer of processing fee waiver will facilitate and encourage home buyers to take decision with ease, as interest rate is at its historic low. We strive to be a banker to every Indian and thereby, be partners in nation building," CS Setty, MD (Retail & Digital Banking), SBI said.

There will be a concession of 5 bps (0.05 percentage) for home loans applied through the bank's one stop YONO App. Women borrowers will be eligible for concession of 0.05 percentage (5 basis points/bps) on the loan rate.

## JK Lakshmi net profit up by 167% in Q1 FY22

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 31:** JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd., one of leading cement companies of India, reported a profit of ₹119.32 crore, a jump of 167% in the first quarter of FY 2021-22 over same quarter of previous fiscal. The company achieved a turnover of about ₹1,232 crore in Q1 as against ₹825 crore in the corresponding quarter of previous fiscal.

JK Lakshmi Cement has faced pressures on the cost of production due to steep increase in price of petroleum coke and diesel. The company has been able to partly mitigate input cost with further optimisation and improvement in the logistics costs, enhanced premium product sales. These measures enabled company to report 54% jump in its EBITDA from ₹151.51 crore in April-June, 2020 to ₹232.93 crore in April-June 2021.

After providing for interest and depreciation, Prpfit before tax (PBT) stood higher at ₹161.28 crore an increase of 147% over ₹65.30 crore in April-June, 2020.

JK Lakshmi Cement's 10 MW waste heat recovery power project is expected to be completed and commissioned in the third quarter of current financial year which will enable the company to reduce its power cost further.

# Vandana hat-trick lifts India



**MATCH TO REMEMBER:** Vandana Kataria points skyward in celebration after one of her three goals against South Africa, Saturday

**Tokyo, July 31:** Striker Vandana Kataria scored a historic hat-trick to keep alive the Indian women's hockey team's quarterfinals hopes in the Olympics with a fighting 4-3 victory over lower-ranked South Africa in its must-win final group match here Saturday.

Vandana (4th, 17th, 49th minutes) achieved a rare feat by becoming the first Indian woman hockey player to score a hat-trick in the Olympics. Young Neha Goyal (32nd) was the other goal getter as the Rani Rampal-led side registered its second consecutive win at the Games.

South Africa's goals came from the sticks of Tarryn Glasby (15th), skipper Erin Hunter (30th) and Marizen Marais (39th).

With two wins from their final two pool matches, India have finished the group stages with six points from five games. By virtue of this win, India have jumped to the fourth position in Pool A, but Ireland still have a chance to leapfrog the Indians.

India's fate now depends on the outcome of the last Pool A match between Great Britain and Ireland. The Indians will have to wait to know their fate. An Ireland loss or a draw will be enough for India to seal their place in the quarterfinals. The top four teams from each pool will qualify for the knockout round. Needing a win to stay alive in the competition, the Indians meant business and pressed hard on the South African defence from the start.

It didn't take India long to open their account and in the fourth minute, Vandana gave her side the lead, tapping in from close range after being set up by Navneet Kaur's great run from the right flank.

But seconds from the end of first quarter, a lapse in concentration from the defence cost India dearly as South Africa drew level through Tarryn Glasby, who deflected in a long shot from Taryn Mallett.

Two minutes into the second quarter, Vandana restored India's lead when he deflected in Deep Grace Ekka's flick from their fourth penalty corner. The Indians had three more chances to extend their lead in the second quarter but they couldn't do so. Just like in the first quarter, India gave away their lead seconds away from halftime when Hunter found the net from her team's first penalty corner.

Two minutes after the change of ends, Neha restored the lead again, deflecting in a Rani hit from a penalty corner as the Indians executed a fine variation.

The fragile Indian defence wilted under pressure once again, when South Africa drew level for the third time in the match, through a Marais strike. South Africa enjoyed a good run of play in the initial minutes of final quarter and, in the process, secured three penalty corners quickly, but this time the Indian defence did enough to thwart the danger.

In the 49th minute, a brilliant Vandana saved the day for India when she deflected in Gurjit Kaur's flick from another penalty corner.

# Kamalpreet in discuss throw finals

**TOKYO:** Discus thrower Kamalpreet Kaur produced one of the best performances by an Indian in the Olympics, though in a qualifying round, as she made it to the finals of the ongoing Games after finishing second here Saturday.

The 25-year-old Kaur, competing in qualification B, sent the discus to a distance of 64m in her third and final attempt to be one of the only two automatic qualifiers for the final round, the other being American Valarie Allman (66.42m). The final will held August 2.

The Indian ended ahead of defending gold-medallist Sandra Perkovic (63.75m) of Croatia and reigning world champion Yaime Perez (63.18) of Cuba. Perkovic qualified at third and Perez at seventh.

But veteran Seema Punia made an exit after finishing sixth in qualification A and 16th overall with a below-par best throw of 60.57m.

Kaur began with a 60.29m effort and then improved it to 63.97m before her third throw of 64m. Every



competitor gets three throws. Those who touch 64m or at least 12 best performers in the two qualifying rounds advance to the final.

The Punjab athlete has been in impressive form this year as she breached the 65m mark twice recently. She threw 65.06m during the Federation Cup in March to break the national record and become the first Indian to breach the 65m mark.

Then in June, she bettered her own national record with a throw of 66.59m during the Indian Grand Prix-4 to sit at world number six.

Punia, who had booked a last minute Olympics berth, was way below her season and personal best marks. She fouled her first throw and had 60.57m and 58.93m in her next two attempts to make an exit from what would be her last Olympics.

# Panghal, Pooja bow out



Amit Panghal (in red) exchanges punches with Yuberjen Martinez

**TOKYO:** In a thoroughly disappointing day for Indian boxing, Pooja Rani (75kg) joined World No.1 Amit Panghal (52kg) in exiting the Olympic Games after an underwhelming performance, going down 0-5 in her quarterfinal bout against China's Li Qian here Saturday.

Qian, who is a former World Champion and a Rio Olympics bronze-medallist, thoroughly out-punched Rani in the quarterfinals, quite literally taking away her belief with a clinical performance.

This was after Panghal bowed out with a stunning 1-4 loss to Rio Games silver-medallist Yuberjen Martinez, beaten by the Colombian's relentless attacks and pace in a draining pre-quarterfinal bout.

Friday Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) became the first Indian boxer to secure a medal at the ongoing Games after advancing to the semifinals. She defeated former world champion Nien-Chin Chen of Chinese Taipei in her quarterfinal bout.

**MEDAL TALLY**

RANK	COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
1	China	21	12	12	45
2	Japan	17	5	8	30
3	USA	16	17	12	45
4	ROC	11	15	11	37
5	Australia	10	13	14	27
6	Great Britain	8	9	11	28
7	South Korea	5	4	7	16
8	France	4	9	6	19
9	Netherlands	4	7	5	16
10	New Zealand	4	3	3	10
55	India	0	1	0	1

**INDIA'S SCHEDULE**

**GOLF:** Anirban Lahiri and Udayan Mane in Men's Individual Stroke Play Round 4: **04:00am IST;**

**EQUESTRIAN:** Fouaad Mirza in Eventing Cross Country Team and Individual: **04:15am IST;**

**BOXING:** Satish Kumar vs Bakhtdir Jalilov (Uzbekistan) in men's super heavy (+91kg) quarterfinals: **9:36am IST;**

**BADMINTON:** PV Sindhu vs He Bing Jiao (China) in women's singles bronze medal play-off match: **5pm IST;**

**HOCKEY:** India vs Great Britain in Men's quarterfinal: **5:30pm IST.**

**Singles gold for Bencic**

**TOKYO:** Belinda Bencic of Switzerland won the women's tennis gold medal in singles and she could add another in doubles. The 12th-ranked Bencic beat Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic 7-5, 2-6, 6-3 for the first major title of her career. Bencic will also contest the women's doubles gold-medal match Sunday. Bencic and Swiss partner Viktorija Golubic face the top-seeded Czech team of Barbora Krejckikova and Katerina Siniakova.

**Xiaojun oldest Olympic weightlifting champion**

**TOKYO:** Age isn't weighing Lyu Xiaojun down. The 37-year-old Chinese weightlifter became the oldest man to win an Olympic gold medal in the sport Saturday after a tense finish in the men's 81-kilogram category. Wearing his signature shiny gold shoes, Lyu lifted 170kg in the snatch and 204kg in the clean and jerk for a total 374kg. That was 7kg more than Zacarias Bonnat of the Dominican Republic in second and 9kg ahead of Italian rival Antonino Pizzolato, who won bronze.

**Indian archery campaign ends**

**TOKYO:** India's archery campaign at the Olympics ended without a medal after Atanu Das lost to home favourite Takaharu Furukawa 6-4 in an intense five-setter in the men's individual pre-quarterfinals here Saturday. Das failed to find a 10 in the fifth set and slipped to the red-circle for an 8 that proved costly as Furukawa sealed the issue by one point margin in the decider. Das was the lone archer in the fray after his World No.1 wife Deepika Kumari succumbed to a 0-6 rout by eventual gold medallist An San of Korea Friday.

**No finals for Anjum, Tejaswini**

**Tokyo:** Indian shooters Anjum Moudgil and Tejaswini Sawant failed to make the finals of the women's 50m rifle 3 positions event, settling for the 15th and 33rd position respectively, at the Olympics here Saturday. This meant the Indian shooting team's disastrous outing at the Games continued with none of its participants except for Saurabh Chaudhary qualifying for the finals, having entered Tokyo on the back of some stunning performances and soaring expectations. World Championship silver-medallist Moudgil finished with 1167 and 54 inner 10s, while the veteran Sawant scored 1154 over the three series of standing kneeling and prone at the Asaka Shooting Range. Sanjeev Rajput is now the only Indian shooter left in fray at the Games.

**Djoko returns empty-handed**

**TOKYO:** Novak Djokovic came to the Tokyo Olympics aiming for a Golden Slam. He'll leave without a medal and will need some time to recover from a draining performance in extreme conditions that didn't meet expectations. The top-ranked Djokovic lost his cool and abused his racket several times during a 6-4, 6-7(6-8), 6-3 loss to Pablo Carreno Busta of Spain in the bronze-medal match of the tennis tournament Saturday. It was Djokovic's third defeat in two days and it came less than 24 hours after he was beaten by Alexander Zverev of Germany in the singles semifinals. That ended his bid for a Golden Slam, which is winning all four Grand Slam titles and Olympic gold in the same year.

**Diksha leaves for Tokyo**

**TOKYO:** Indian golfer Diksha Dagar, who has qualified for the Olympics following a last-minute withdrawal, left for Tokyo Saturday, hoping to make the opportunity count. India's golf challenge at the ongoing Olympics got a boost with Diksha being given a late entry into the women's golf competition beginning August 4. Diksha,

who was among the reserves when the list was finalised earlier in the month, was conveyed the news by the International Golf Federation through the Indian Golf Union (IGU). Before the news came in, Diksha was entered and scheduled to play the ISPS Handa Invitational in Ireland. She will join Aditi Ashok, in the team. Aditi is playing her second Olympics.

**Dressel wins gold with world record**

**TOKYO:** Caeleb Dressel won his third gold medal of the Tokyo Olympics with a world record in the 100-meter butterfly Saturday. Katie Ledecky won gold in the 800-meter freestyle, her second of the Tokyo games. Dressel led right from the start and held off Hungary's Kristof Milak to touch in 49.45 seconds, breaking the mark of 49.50 that the American set at the 2019 world championships in Gwangju. Milak, winner of the 200 fly, earned the silver with a blistering 49.68. The bronze went to Switzerland's Noe Ponti.

**Biles withdraws from vault, uneven bars**

**TOKYO:** USA Gymnastics says Simone Biles has decided to withdraw from the Olympic event finals in the vault and uneven bars. She continues to be evaluated daily to determine whether she'll compete in the finals for floor exercise and balance beam. Biles said she was putting her mental health first when she withdrew from the gymnastics team event after one rotation. The US Women won silver there. She also decided not to compete in the all-around. American Sunisa Lee won gold in that event.

**Lahiri needs miracle for medal**

**TOKYO:** Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri salvaged his third round with a late birdie and an eagle to card a three-under 68 at the Olympics but it may not be enough to give him a chance to make a run for the medal. Lahiri, who returned early this morning to complete his second round had a bogey in one of the two remaining holes for a round of 1-over 72, which placed him T-24th at that stage. He ended Tied-28th after the third round with a total of 6-under 207. Udayan Mane carded a 70 for a share of 55th place on 2-over 215 as the third round was completed with a split start - from first and 10th tees. The leader after the second round is Xander Schauffele (USA), has the 54-hole lead after shooting a 3-under 68 today to move to 14-under overall.

**Indian sailors languish at bottom**

**ENOSHIMA:** Indian sailing pair of KC Ganapathy and Varun Thakkar continued to languish at 17th overall after the penultimate race in the men's skiff 49er event at the Tokyo Olympics here Saturday. Ganapathy and Thakkar finished 16th, ninth and 14th in the three races on Saturday to remain unchanged at 17th spot out of 19 competitors with 154 net points.

# Hungarian GP: Hamilton takes pole Pant opens up on his evolution as player

**Budapest, July 31:** Lewis Hamilton took pole position for the Hungarian Grand Prix ahead of Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas, with championship leader Max Verstappen lagging behind them in third place Saturday.

Hamilton's record-extending 101st pole in Formula One puts him in a strong position for a record-extending 100th win on a circuit where he has won the past three races and a record eight times.

Hamilton was 0.315 ahead of Bottas and 0.421 clear of Verstappen. Verstappen was chasing a sixth pole this season for Red Bull. His teammate Sergio Perez placed fourth.

Verstappen led Q1 - the first section of qualifying - from Hamilton and Q2 from Norris. The orange-shirted Dutch fans in one section of the main grandstand roared every time he came past them on the long straight.

But Hamilton and Bottas were quicker than Verstappen on their first runs in Q3. Pole could prove crucial Sunday, given that the



siney and tight 4.4-kilometer (2.7-mile) Hungaroring circuit is arguably the hardest track to overtake on after Monaco.

About halfway through Q2, Carlos Sainz Jr. lost the rear of his Ferrari and slid off into a wall. The front wing dropped off the car and slid under the front tires. The Spaniard jogged away and he will start from a lowly 15th Sunday.

Teammate Charles Leclerc, who has two poles this season and nine

**Nottingham, July 31:** The supremely talented Rishabh Pant is glad that he has seen a lot of "ups and downs" and evolved as a player, having "learnt from his mistakes" in his short but eventful international career.

Pant, who recently recovered from COVID-19, is fighting fit and ready to play his 22nd Test for India at the very same venue (Trent Bridge), where he had announced his arrival in the Test match arena with a huge six in 2018.

"It's been an amazing journey as I have seen lots ups and downs early in my career. As cricketers, you evolve, learn from your mistakes and improve yourself and comeback to the ground and perform well.

"I am glad that I have learnt from my mistakes and I capitalised whatever opportunity I got after that. I am happy," Pant told 'bcci.tv' Saturday.

Pant said that he is trying to learn from everyone in the leadership group in order to become a



Rishabh Pant with Rohit Sharma, Axar Patel and a support staff after he joined the team after recovering from COVID-19

better player. "I talk to Rohit bhai a lot - like talking about the game as what we have done in previous matches and what we could have done. Also what we should look to do and look at possible outcomes in future games. What all I can add to my game.

"I also take technical inputs from Virat bhai. Especially playing in England, standing up to stumps or going back," said the 23-year-old man from Rourkee.

He wants to pick everyone's brains in order to become better. "I speak to Ravi bhai (Shastri) a lot as

he has played enough cricket all over the world. Ash bhai (Ashwin), when he bowls, he has an idea what the batsman's intentions are.

"So as a batsman, I can ask the bowler as to what he is thinking. As a player, I want to learn from each and every person."

With 1400 plus runs at an average of 43 plus and three hundreds with another 83 dismissals with the gloves, Pant's certainly one of world's finest young players, who had singlehandedly won the Test series against Australia earlier this year.

To top it, he also had a stellar role during the home Test series against England, where he played an audacious reverse sweep off Jimmy Anderson. It all boils down to one's "processes".

"I think as a cricketer, I have evolved in the last one year or so, because (even though) you keep doing your processes right, you don't get results but if you have trust your process and keep doing that again and again. I have been trusting my process and I am getting the results and that's the happy part now."