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## To interconnect Gopinathpur with Singhanathpeetha and Baideswar in Cuttack district on Mahanadi

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Works Secretary Dr Krishan Kumar has stipulated a timeline for completion of a high-level bridge over the Mahanadi at Gopinathpur connecting Singhanathpeetha and Baideswar in Cuttack district.

With the completion of the bridge, the State would have the credit of an over-three-km-long bridge, the longest one so far. The massive bridge, being constructed at a cost of more than Rs 130

crore, would be completed by October this year. The Gopinathpur-side approach road has been completed and

## State's longest bridge of 3.139 km to be ready by Oct

the approach road on Baideswar side is under construction. In order to speed up the construction and review quality aspects of the huge bridge, Secretary Works Dr Kumar visited the site recently, where senior officials briefed him about the progress.

Dr Kumar made an intensive review of the construction, in which he directed the Chief Engineer to look into quality aspects of the bridge. The Works Secretary harped on sticking to timeline so that common people will be able to use the bridge as soon as possible as it was their long standing demand, an official said. Chief Engineer Roads

36.5 meter each. Each span consists of three pre-stressed girders and RCC deck slab. The carriageway width is 7.5 meter i.e. two lane with 1.5 meter raised pedestrian foot-path on both sides.

Moreover, there is a 240 meter length and 4 meter carriageway width ramp bridge connecting the main bridge at 1,350 meter from Gopinathpur side and 1,790 meter from Baideswar side to the ASI protected famous Singhanathpeetha Si temple island on the upstream side of the bridge situated inside the Mahanadi river.

On completion, the bridge will reduce the distance from Badamba on left side of the Mahanadi to Banki on right side by 45 km. At present the

approach road on the Gopinathpur side (left) is 240 meter and on Baideswar side (right) is 407 meter, connecting to Badamba and Banki with curvilinear and congested village roads.

A senior official informed that there is a proposal to connect the important bridge with long straight approach road up to the Banki Baideswar Kalapathar (ODR) road with approximately 800 meter on Banki side and 4 km straight road on Badamba side to connect with Raja Athagarh-Narasimhpur Road (SH-65).

It is also proposed to provide tourist amenity centres on both sides of the bridge to facilitate the devotees who are visiting the Singhanathpeetha throughout the year, he said.

## Ganesh Puja allowed in Cuttack Temples' reopening likely in a day or two

PNS ■ CUTTACK

Ganesh Puja, which falls on September 10, will be observed in Cuttack amidst the Covid-19 pandemic as the district Collector allowed observance of the festival in adherence to safety norms.

Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayani said Ganesh Chaturthi would be held at Puja Mandaps across the district though steps would be taken to avoid public congregation and strict action would be taken as per law in case of violation of the

Covid-19 guidelines. Last year also, the festival was observed in the district on a low key without public participation. Only priests and other concerned were allowed inside the Mandaps to perform the rituals.

Regarding reopening of religious institutions, the Collector said, "Discussion is on and we are planning to reopen the religious places within a day or two. All guidelines stipulated by the Government will be strictly followed."

On closure of a few Covid Hospitals, he said, "Since the number of cases has declined, we have decided to ensure treatment to Covid patients at a safe distance from the sea. Even five years back the sea was 100 metres away from the shrine. But, with water level rising constantly, the turbulent sea has come near the temple and the crawling water has started seeping the shrine. A wall of the temple facing the sea has caved in recently due sea water ingress where as lions statues that were installed at the front door of the temple also have been destroyed. Meanwhile, locals have demanded for protection and renovation of the heritage shrine of the district.

## Mo Bus services hit partially in city

As drivers agitate demanding salary hike

**BHUBANESWAR:** The Mo Bus services were partially hit on different routes in the city on Monday after some of its employees staged a demonstration demanding a hike in salary. More than a hundred drivers operating the bus service sat on a dharna at Mo Bus depot near Sum Hospital in the city. Reports said Mo Bus services in as many as 14 routes, including Bhubaneswar, Jatani and Khordha were affected due to ongoing cease-work stir. The drivers alleged that though prices of essential commodities are soaring, there has not been any hike in their salary for last three years. They also alleged that Travel Time, which is in charge of the management of

Mo Bus, has not paid salaries to the staff during lockdown. The drivers have accused the company of cutting their two-day salary i.e. on Saturday and Sunday when buses stayed off the roads due to weekend shutdown. The protesting employees alleged that though company is deducting money for provident fund from their salary, it is not reflecting in their deposit accounts.

"The State Government did not give us any financial assistance during the pandemic situation. Therefore, we were forced to launch strike. We had earlier requested concerned authorities for a hike in our salary from Rs 12,000 to Rs 18,000. However, no steps have been taken in this regard yet. We will not join work until our demands are met," threatened the agitating staffs. **PNS**

## Student Cong alleges job racket in SSC

Activists clash with police during protest



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A large number of Student Congress members held a demonstration before the Odisha State Staff Selection Commission (OSSC) office here on Monday alleging massive corruption in the recruitment drives.

The agitators scuffled with the police while trying to barge into the OSSC office during a protest demanding a probe into the alleged 'bribe for recruitment scandal'.

The agitation was carried out at the OSSC headquarters following the arrest of Binachi Sahoo, Private Secretary to an OSSC member, by the Vigilance police. The police had a tough time preventing party activists led by senior leaders like Suresh Routray, Manas Ghosh and others from storming into the OSSC office. The protesters alleged that sev-

eral top officials at the office are involved in the bribery scandal in which Sahoo's arrest was just a tip of the iceberg. "The bribe culture has been prevalent on the OSSC office for the last 21 years. It has come to light recently only after the bribe money could not be shared properly among the officials. We demand an impartial investigation into the recruitment of ineligible candidates, who got job by giving bribes. The future of many deserving candidates has been put in the dark," said Student Congress leader Manas Choudhury.

The agitation would be intensified further until an investigation into the entire affair is ordered, he added. It is suspected that Sahoo, who has been arrested by the Vigilance on the charge of accumulating disproportionate assets, was running a job racket along with some other officials.

## Rly engineers discuss their issues with MP

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A delegation of the East Coast Railway Engineers' Association (ECREA) discussed with Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi the long-pending issues of railway engineers on Monday.

ECREA president Robin Mohanty explained the pay anomaly pending since two decades. He said the non-safety and non-technical railway employees have been given higher pay structures with promotional avenue neglecting the railway engineers who play vital role in safety and economic growth of railways. Recently accounts staffs were given much higher salary though they are in no way related with train movement.

He further stated that after several demonstrations and the issue was raised in the Parliament by several MPs, the pay anomaly of engineers were considered for the first time in a National Council Joint Consultative Machinery (NC-JCM) meeting and the Cabinet Secretary directed the Railway Board Chairman and CEO to expedite the matter.



Mohanty told Sarangi that after finalisation by the Chairman, the matter would be sent to the Finance Ministry for approval.

However, the upgradation proposal was sent by the Railway Board and DAC in 2009, but till date the Ministry has not agreed in principle. So, now all railway engineers are worried that the same procedure might be repeated by the Finance Ministry.

Mohanty requested Sarangi to impress upon Railway Ministry, Finance Ministry and DOPT for an early approval with justified pay structure which should not be less than accounts staffs.

Sarangi took the matter seriously and assured to raise the issues with the three Ministries very soon. The ECREA submitted a representation in this regard to Sarangi, IA Khem, SB Sapat and Jageswar Sabat of ECREA were present.

## S'bhaya temple soon to meet watery grave

Due to water ingress

RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA

The 1,200-year-old empty Panchabharahi temple located at the sea erosion-prone Satabhaya in Kendrapada district is in a state of global warming and climate change as surging sea water has posed a threat to its existence.

The constantly rising water level of the sea has damaged its structure completely. It is apprehended that within a month or two, the centuries-old temple will completely be devoured by the marauding sea. According to locals, about four to five families, who are yet to be shifted to the resettlement colony at Bagapatia and have been demanding for protection and renovation of the heritage shrine of the district.



water of the sea has damaged the shrine which was built during the dynasty of Bahumitara in the Satabhaya village. The temple now is submerged under three feet high tidal water.

According to locals, the Panchabharahi shrine was earlier at a safe distance from the sea. Even five years back the sea was 100 metres away from the shrine. But, with water level rising constantly, the turbulent sea has come near the temple and the crawling water has started seeping the shrine. A wall of the temple facing the sea has caved in recently due sea water ingress where as lions statues that were installed at the front door of the temple also have been destroyed. Meanwhile, locals have demanded for protection and renovation of the heritage shrine of the district.

## Live streaming of proceedings begins in HC



PRADIP DAS ■ CUTTACK

History was created in the Orissa High Court on Monday in an open justice delivery system when live streaming of court proceedings was done for the benefit of litigants and advocates.

Chief Justice S Muralidhar inaugurated the facility on a trial basis, which would go a long way to serve the most fundamental principle of justice "Justice must not only be done but seen to be done".

The Chief Justice also launched several e-services. He, in the presence of all other HC judges, inaugurated court's mobile app, facility for online payment of fines

in Sessions and District Courts and the system of virtual courts for dealing with traffic e-challan cases in the Cuttack-Bhubaneswar Commissionerate areas.

The Chief Justice profusely thanked the e-committee of the Supreme Court for all the support provided to the High Court to go tech-savvy.

He said that for the time being live streaming would commence in his court on a trial basis and subsequently, it would be extended to all other courts of the HC.

"Openness and publicity are the sine qua non of the right to a free trial under Article 21 of our Constitution, he stated.

## CM hails Women's Hockey Team



**BHUBANESWAR:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday congratulated the India Women's Hockey Team for reaching the semifinals in the Tokyo Olympics by defeating Australia in the quarterfinals. "Glory awaits! Congratulate Indian Women's Hockey Team on registering a thumping victory in the quarter-final against Australia at Tokyo 2020. May the team continue its winning streak & bring glory to the country. Wish the team all the best," Patnaik tweeted. **PNS**

## Biraja Temple to reopen on Aug 4



PNS ■ JAIPUR

The Jaipur district administration has decided to reopen all religious places, including the Biraja Temple, for devotees from August 4. The devotees would be allowed for

darshan and worship of the deities with strict adherence to the Covid-19 protocols, informed Collector Chakravarti Singh Rathore on Monday. All religious institutions, including Biraja Temple, in district, have been closed since May this year.

## 10-15 dengue patients admitted to Cap Hosp daily

Blood banks may face shortage of platelets

**BHUBANESWAR:** Even as the dengue menace continues to haunt residents in the Twin City amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, the Capital Hospital Director Laxmidhar Mohapatra on Monday informed that around 10 to 15 patients are being admitted to the hospital every day. He told reporters, "Currently, 56 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at the hospital. Yesterday, 87 people with fever symptom underwent dengue

test. There is no shortage of blood for dengue patients as there is a decline in the number of Covid cases." If the dengue cases continue to rise, blood banks may face shortage of platelets, which is needed for treatment of the patients, Dr Mohapatra cautioned, adding that about 15 platelets are being provided to the Capital Hospital every day for treatment of dengue patients. Earlier on July 31, the Cuttack Municipal Commissioner (CMC) had informed that eight new dengue cases were identified from different parts of city.

## Sun Temple reopens



PNS ■ PURI

The Sun Temple at Konark reopened for visitors on Monday after being closed for more than three months due to Covid-19 situation. All Covid-19 guidelines issued by State Government were followed at

heritage site. The tourists underwent thermal screening at temple's entry point. Maximum 2,000 persons are allowed to visit site per day. A QR code has been installed for online ticket booking in view of restriction on manual booking to avoid physical contact.

## Malls, parks reopen in city

Cinema halls to open from Aug 5

**BHUBANESWAR:** Shopping malls and parks in Bhubaneswar, which were closed due to the Covid-19 situation, reopened on Monday with adherence to the Covid-19 protocols like wearing of mask, social distancing and use of hand wash or sanitiser. The malls have been allowed by the Government to operate with regulated number of customers. Besides, restaurants in the city also reopened on Monday for dine-in services with 50% seating occupancy. Moreover, cinema halls in the city are all set to welcome moviegoers from August 5 with 50% seating capacity.

## During pandemic Red Cross man donated blood six times

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Due to the increasing dengue cases in the State capital and some districts, blood banks are running short of platelet components. Especially during the Covid pandemic because of misconception many people do not volunteer for blood donations. Both Covid and dengue are putting burden on blood banks. In view of this, Junior Red Cross Officer at the Indian



Red Cross Society, State Branch Laxman Swain donated blood for the sixth time during the pandemic. This has made him a donor of blood for 38th time in lifetime.

## Arrested OSSC staff suspended

**BHUBANESWAR:** Biranchi Narayan Sahoo, Private Secretary to Odisha Staff Selection Commission (OSSC) Member, who was arrested by the Vigilance police, has been suspended by the commission. Besides, the OSSC Chairperson has recommended to the State Government to take stringent action against him. Sahoo was arrested for allegedly amassing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. He was found in possession of disproportionate assets of more than Rs 3.51 crore, which constitutes 268% of his known sources of income. Bank slips indicating huge cash deposits in bank accounts were recovered from his house during raid by Vigilance. **PNS**

## Watch Saturn with naked eye as it is closest to Earth

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Good news for sky-gazers as the Saturn has come closest to Earth and they can see the bright planet in the sky with naked eye for the entire month of August.

"Saturn and Earth have been closest to each other from today (Monday)," informed, Deputy Director of Pathani Samanta Planetarium, Bhubaneswar, Dr Suvendu Pattnaik.

As per the Indian Standard Time (IST), the Saturn came closest to Earth at 11.30 am on Monday. While Earth takes 365 days to orbit the sun, the Saturn, which is the second largest planet after Jupiter in our solar system, takes 10,759 Earth days (about

29.5 years) to complete one revolution around the Sun. "Saturn and Earth come closest to each other once every year while revolving in their orbital path. The planet duo comes nearest to each other in a time span of 1 year and 13 days when Earth and Saturn are positioned on the same side of the Sun.

Such astronomical phenomenon is called 'opposition'. During this period, the average distance between the planets will be around 120 crore km, which is eight times longer between the Sun and Earth," Dr Pattnaik said. After six months, when the Earth will be across the other side of the Sun while revolving in its orbital path, the maximum distance

between Earth and Saturn will be 170 crore km, which is 11 times longer between the Sun and Earth. The Saturn and Earth had come closer on July 20, 2020. The astronomical phenomenon will take place again on August 14, 2022, the

planetarium official informed. "The Saturn will appear in the east after sunset today. It will set in the west 12 hours after its appearance till sunrise. People can see the bright Saturn and Jupiter every night in clear sky," he added.



**OPINION 6**  
 POLITICS AND THE  
 MILITARY DON'T GEL

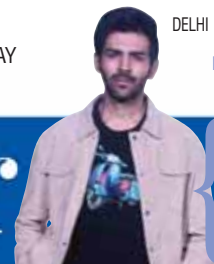
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 NET TAX REVENUES RISE  
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**SPORT 12**  
 INDIA TO FACE  
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# Chak De India moment in Tokyo

Women's Hockey team scripts history with maiden entry in Olympic semis

PTI ■ TOKYO

They seemed courage and tenacity personified as India's women hockey players stunned three-time champions Australia to enter their maiden Olympic semifinals, while debutant discus thrower Kamalpreet Kaur held her own against a world-class field to give the country a lot to be proud of on day 10 of the Games here on Monday.

Rani Rampal and her resolute team brought their 'A' game and lots of determination to the field and the Australians did not know what to do.

It was a case of real imitating the reel as blockbuster 'Chak De India', which told the tale of an underdog Indian women's hockey team guided by a discredited coach winning the World Cup, trended all across. The pinnacle is still some distance away for the real bunch but it has already surpassed all expectations and redeemed itself for the 12th place finish back in the 2016 Rio Games.

This was a day after the Indian men's team entered the Olympic semifinals following a 49-year gap, a phenomenal victory run for both the



Indian players celebrate their victory against Australia during women's field hockey quarterfinal match at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo on Monday

PTI

teams. Drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur rose to the occasion when it mattered and converted India's lone penalty corner in the 22nd minute to surprise the Australians on the day, who cried in disbelief even as the Indians shed tears of joy and let out ear-splitting screams to celebrate.

"I don't know what to say because emotions are too high at the moment, and we all are very happy because it was not an easy game to win from Australia," an elated skipper Rani Rampal said after the

upset win. India will play Argentina in the semifinal on Wednesday.

"I think that belief like we can work really hard throughout the game... And this is only 60 minutes. Don't think further what will happen, just focus on 60 minutes, and give everything that you have got. And I think everyone did that, so yeah, I am super proud," Rani said, a reminder of the "70 minute speech" that had galvanised the reel team in Chak De India.

## SC orders inclusion of Paralympian shooter Nareish

New Delhi: In a major victory before firing a shot in the upcoming Tokyo Paralympics, the Supreme Court on Monday ordered the PCI immediately include Arjuna awardee and five-time Paralympian shooter Nareish Kumar Sharma as an additional participant for the sporting mega-event in Japan.

TOKYO 2020 MEDAL TALLY				
Country	G	S	B	
China	29	17	16	
USA	22	25	17	
Japan	17	6	10	
Australia	14	4	15	
ROC	12	21	17	
Great Britain	11	12	12	
France	5	10	7	
India	0	1	1	

## Corona R-value in State less than 1%

Casualties to decline in 15 days: DMET

PSNBHUBANESWAR: The R-value (reproductive number of coronavirus cases) in the State is currently below one per cent which is proved from the declining trend of the Covid-19 graph, said Director of Medical Education and Training (DMET) Dr CBK Mohanty on Monday. He said that while some States are still reporting more than 1% R-value, Odisha continues with a dip in daily cases which showed the R-value below 1%. There is no need to panic, the infection depends on the reflection of R-value in the community. A Covid survivor, who has already been administered two doses of the vaccine, is less prone to re-infection," Mohanty clarified. On the surging number of Covid deaths, he said the daily casualties are not based on the report of a particular day. "The death report currently published on dashboard is all audited old records. The previous backlog on the deaths is being cleared now, which will end in next 10-15 days. Thereafter, the reported number of fatalities will decrease," he claimed. "Strict restrictions was put in place in Cuttack, Bhubaneswar and Puri due to daily triple-digit infections.

## Rahul invites Opp leaders to plan strategy on Pegasus row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing stalemate in Parliament, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi has invited leaders of Opposition parties to a break-fast meeting at the Constitution Club on Tuesday to chalk out a joint strategy on the Pegasus snooping issue. All Opposition MPs and floor leaders of various parties have been invited for the meeting, sources said.

AICC sources added an invite has also been sent to the Trinamool Congress, which has been skipping all meetings convened by Rahul so far. Rahul met with TMC chief Mamata Banerjee when she called on Congress chief Sonia Gandhi last week. After a meeting with the floor leaders of Opposition parties last week, Rahul said the Opposition has only one question: whether the Government had bought Israeli spyware Pegasus to use it as a "weapon against its own people". While the Opposition has been insisting on a full-fledged debate on the Pegasus issue, the Government's stand has been that it is ready to discuss anything but the tapping scandal.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi leaves Parliament in New Delhi on Monday

PTI

## Nitish backs Opp demand for probe into snoopgate

PNS ■ PATNA

In a major embarrassment to ally BJP, JD(U) supreme and Bihar Chief Minister Kumar has backed the Opposition's demand for a probe in the Pegasus snooping scandal. "A probe should be done, indeed. We have been hearing about telephone tapping for so many days, the

matter should be discussed (in Parliament). People (Opposition) have been reiterating (for talks) for so many days, it should be done," Nitish said on Monday. While Opposition parties have stalled Parliament for ten days over demand for a debate and probe, this is the first time that an ally of the BJP has backed their stand for a probe.

## J&J takes back plea for vax nod in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bad news for those waiting for the US pharma giant Johnson & Johnson's single-shot Covid-19 vaccine 'Janssen' in India. The top drug regulator, Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), said on Monday that the pharma major had withdrawn its proposal seeking accelerated approval of its in the country. It didn't give additional details.

So far, four vaccines have been given Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) in India — Covishield, Covaxin, Sputnik V and Moderna.

In mid-July, Dr VK Paul, Niti Aayog member (health), had said, "We are in talks with Johnson & Johnson regarding their single-dose vaccine." He had added, "As per the plan, this vaccine will also be produced in Hyderabad's Bio E."

The US-based Johnson & Johnson had sought approval in April to conduct a bridging clinical study of its Janssen Covid-19 vaccine candidate in India.

It was reported earlier that a few thousand doses of Johnson & Johnson's vaccine could arrive in India in July. The US FDA authorised



Johnson & Johnson's viral vector Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use in February 2021. However, weeks after its authorisation, the vaccine was linked to a rare but serious blood-clotting disorder.

## Covaxin effective against Delta Plus

Hyderabad: Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin (BBV152) is effective against Delta Plus (AY.1) variant of the coronavirus, according to a study published in bioRxiv by the Indian Council of Medical and Research (ICMR).

## KHARIF PADDY PROCUREMENT

## Ensure no genuine farmer is left behind: CS

'MAKE THEIR FINAL LIST BY SEPTEMBER 30'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, reviewing the progress of farmers' registration for paddy procurement with district Collectors on Monday, directed the officials that no genuine farmer should be deprived of selling paddy to Government during the Kharif procurement season (KMS) 2021-22. He also asked the Collectors to form sufficient numbers of joint verification teams involving field-level officers from the concerned departments for hundred per cent field verification of the actual farmers and their crop areas.

He ordered to prepare a final list of all genuine farmers for paddy procurement by weeding out the possibilities of fake crop areas, registration and sealing the scope for entry of unscrupulous middlemen into the system. The field verification would be combined with verification of actual land record, land category (kisan), crop area, type and source of irrigation, bank details, mobile number of farmers, etc. The paddy-cultivated area would

also be cross verified with satellite data collected through the ORSAC. After registration and field verification, SMSs would be sent to the farmers regarding the extent of the cultivated land registered for procurement. Payment to the farmers would be done through their bank accounts and all payments would be integrated with the online public financial management system (PFMS).

Principal Secretary Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Vir Vikram Yadav said an interactive voice recording system (IVRS) would handle farmers' queries regarding registration and procurement. Toll-free number 1967 would receive the telephone grievances of farmers. Utmost care would be taken to redress the grievances within 24 hours. The field verification would be completed by September 7, digitised data updating by PACS would be over by September 18 and master list of all genuine farmers and sharecroppers would be generated by September 30. Yadav informed that for KMS 2021-22, total 2,857 societies were enlisted by July 15. And by end of July, 1.74 lakh farmers were registered afresh.

Covid-19 IN INDIA	
TOTAL CASES:	3,17,23,560 (+28,190)
DEATHS:	4,25,203 (+395)
RECOVERED:	3,08,86,221 (+36,539)
ACTIVE:	3,99,577
MAHA:	63,15,063 (+4,869)
KERALA:	34,25,473 (+13,984)
K'TAKA:	29,08,284 (+1,285)
TN:	25,63,544 (+1,957)
UP:	17,08,500 (+24)

## State's daily Covid count dips to 1,032

TPR 1.53%; 67 more die; toll mounts to 6,033

PSNBHUBANESWAR: The State on Monday saw a decline in the daily Covid-19 positive cases with 1,032 new infections in the 30 districts and the State total. The daily toll increased to 67, 737. A total of 67,131 samples were tested in the last 24 hours and the test positivity rate (TPR) was 1.53 per cent. Out of the new cases, 598 were from quarantine and 434 local contacts. Khordha district reported the day's highest 237 cases followed by Cuttack with 145. The districts which reported below-100 cases were Jagatsinghpur and Puri with 82 each, Angul 48, Bhadrak 47, Jajpur 43, Baleswar 36, Nayagarh 30, Dhenkanal 25, Keonjhar and

Sundargarh 23 each, Sambalpur 19, Kendrapada 18, Subarnapur and Kandhamal 10 each, Koraput nine, Rayagada, Bargarh, Ganjam and Deogarh eight each, Malkangiri, Gajapati, Nabarangpur and Kalahandi six each, Balangir four, Boudh two and Nuapada one. Besides, 50 cases were reported from the State pool. Another 67 patients succumbed to the disease in the last 24 hours, which took the total death toll to 6,033. The maximum 12 deaths were reported from Khordha district followed by 11 from Sundargarh, 10 from Cuttack, six from Puri, five from Dhenkanal, four each from Ganjam and Jagatsinghpur, three each from Angul and Bhadrak, two each from Baleswar, Jharsuguda and Kendrapada and one each from Bargarh, Jajpur and Keonjhar.

## Arun Dey passes away



BHUBANESWAR: Five-time MLA from Baleswar Arun Dey passed away in the AMRI hospital here at 7.20 pm on Monday. A bachelor, he was 76. He had tested Covid-19 positive three weeks ago. Dey was elected to the State Assembly three times on CPI ticket, once as an NCP member and once as an Independent candidate. He was active in student movement and a prominent trade union leader. In 2014, he unsuccessfully contested Assembly elections from Baleswar.

## Will Jagannath Temple reopen now?

## All wait for SJTA decision tomorrow

PNS ■ PURI

As the State Government has allowed reopening of religious places with appropriate Covid-19 restrictions from Sunday as part of its unlock process, all are now waiting for Wednesday (August 4) when the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) would



take a decision for reopening of the shrine here. SJTA Chief Administrator Dr Krishan Kumar has convened a meeting on virtual mode on the day to decide whether to allow devotees' entry into the temple, a senior official said, adding that the Collector, SP and Chief District Medical Officer, members of the Temple's

Coordination Committee and temple officials would attend the meeting to take stock of the corona situation and decide when to open the shrine. The State Government in its August guideline has categorically said that the SJTA and the Shree Lingaraj Temple Administration, Bhubaneswar, may decide opening of the

temples in consultation with the concerned stakeholders and in compliance with the Covid-19 safety protocols. The Government notification also said that the religious places across the State would be reopened based on an assessment of the local situation by the district authorities. However, no Prasad would be offered to the deities by devotees. The Jagannath Temple continues to remain out of bounds for the public for around 100 days. The devotees were also prohibited to attend the Lord's annual Rath Yatra on July 12. Even, the local residents were not allowed to visit the Grand Road and were also prevented from witnessing the festival from rooftops at all hotels, lodges, guesthouses were shut on the occasion.

## 203 new infections in BBSR

10 more die; 134 recover

BHUBANESWAR: State capital Bhubaneswar on Monday registered a decline in the daily Covid-19 positive cases with 203 new infections. With this, the total tally in the city rose to 1,00,384. Of the new cases, 139 were local contacts and 64 quarantine cases. The local contacts included 15 cases in Patia, seven in Khandagiri and six each in Old Town, Nayapalli, Tankapali and Chandrasekharpur. The active cases in the city stood at 2,557. Meanwhile, 10 more patients succumbed to the disease in the city, mounting the total death toll to 816. However, 134 persons recovered on the day, increasing the total recoveries to 96,990. PNS

# K'handi poet earns global accolades

AJIT PANDA ■ NUPADA

Bhawani Shankar Nial, a noted poet of Kalahandi district, has brought credit for the district as well as for Odisha by participating in an international poetry festival held virtually on March 21.

The festival organised by Italy-based organisation POE-SIA WORLD was attended by several poets from diverse countries like China, Taiwan, Vietnam, the USA and Japan.

Nial, who has three poetry collections in Odia and two in Hindi to his credit, was the only one from India to participate in the event. He reveals that some other collections of his translated poems are in press and would be published soon.

Nial's poetry collection "Lockdown" that reflects his sensitivity towards the sufferings triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic has been trans-



lated into English by Professor Bankim Mund of the Dharamgarh Women's College and into the Italian language by illustrious Italian poet Emanuela Rizzo. This collection has earned huge accolades and recognition in European countries.

Nial joined the World Poetry Day Italy 2021 and also represented India in the World Poetry Meet France 2021. He has been honoured with various global awards like International Ambassador for

Peace, WLEPHR, Bhutan, Global Peace Ambassador by Iraq Foundation India, Global Star Award, Bangladesh and Literary Luminaries Award 21, Nigeria. His poems have also been translated into various other languages like Servic, Russian, Chinese, French, Polish, Arabic and Albanian. Nial at present is editor of literary magazine "Mahur" and monthly newspaper "Bande Kalahandi". He has three Odia and two Hindi poetry collections to his credit.

# 'Tilak's Swaraj dream shattered in today's India'

Speakers lament falling standards in politics

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Like many Bal Gangadhar Tilak's dream for Swaraj (self rule) now stands shattered completely and is far away for citizens of the largest democracy, speakers lamented in a webinar organised to mark the 101st death anniversary of the Swaraj leader on Sunday. The Triveni Sangam of Lal-Bal-Pal trio inspired a number of revolutionaries to sacrifice their lives during the freedom struggle, they said.

It is unfortunate that about 75 to 80 per cent of population of many States including Odisha is dependent on Re 1-rice of five kg a month even after 74 years of independence. So also, the privacy of politicians, judges, media and officials is being eroded by intelligence agencies as raised within and outside the

Parliament, posing a serious challenge to the democracy in the country, they said. Tilak initiated Shree Ganesht Utsav as a tool to unify people of all religions to fight against the British rule. But today for petty political gain there are killings in the name of religion, they said.

Tilak had supported killing of a British official by revolutionary Saheed Khudiram Bose in 1908. He was hanged in Mandal for years together. Barrister Mohammed Ali Jinnah was the lawyer of Tilak.

His version 'Swaraj is my birth right, I shall have it' created fear among the British rulers. 'Mahatma' Gandhi termed Tilak as maker of modern India, they opined. Chaired by Debiprasad Prusti, the meeting was attended by Prabir Bhai Patel, Jyotsna Parasher, Prabhakar Singh and Madan Lal Prasad Prusti. They demanded a halt to continuing operations by security forces. The ultras also threatened police informers of dire consequences and said they would be punished in Praja Courts. Getting angry, the Rajgarh police rushed to spot and seized posters. The cops have initiated an investigation. Notably, security forces are on high alert and beefed up security in Leftwing extremist hit districts. But no untoward incident has been reported from any part.

# Maoist posters trigger panic in N'rangpur

NABARANGPUR: Even as Maoists are observing Martyrs' Week from July 30, some posters put up by Red rebels surfaced in Nabarangpur district on Monday. The Maoist posters and leaflets were found along State Highway 40, triggering panic among locals. The hand-written posters, claimed to be of Mainpur Divisional Committee of the outlawed CPI (Maoist), were found on highway near Jodenga village under Raigarh police station in district. In posters, Maoists have appealed to people to observe ongoing Martyrs' Week and to not untoward incidents. They also demanded a halt to continuing operations by security forces. The ultras also threatened police informers of dire consequences and said they would be punished in Praja Courts. Getting angry, the Rajgarh police rushed to spot and seized posters. The cops have initiated an investigation. Notably, security forces are on high alert and beefed up security in Leftwing extremist hit districts. But no untoward incident has been reported from any part.

# In Baleswar

# Pangolin scales seized by STF; two arrested

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The Special Task Force (STF) of the Crime Branch on Monday conducted a raid near Natapada village under the Berhampur police station in Baleswar district and seized a large quantity of pangolin scales.

Two persons were also arrested in this connection. The arrestees were identified as Manibhadra Samal of Natapada and Choudhury Singh of Bandhasahi village in the district. Based on reliable inputs, a STF team along with officials of the Baleswar Forest Division conducted a raid.

During the search, three kg pangolin scales and other incriminating materials were seized from the duo's possession. The accused could not produce any valid authority in support of possession of pan-

golin scales. For which they were detained and handed over to forest officials for necessary legal action at their end. Further investigation is on.

During 2020, in special drives against the wildlife trade, the STF has seized as many as 15 leopard skins, nine elephant tusks, two deer skins, three live pangolins and 13 kg pangolin scales and arrested 29 wildlife traders.



# 'Expedite setting up of IGNTU K'handi branch'

NRO Prof urges Union Min Pradhan

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Nonresident Odia (NRO) Professor Dr Digambara Patra, who is a native of Kalahandi district and working in the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, has urged Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to take steps for establishment of a branch of the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU) in Kalahandi.

He said that the process for establishing the branch of the tribal university at Thuamul Rampur block has been delayed since long.

The Ministry of Education (formerly HRD) should establish one of its off-campus in Kalahandi district during the 11th plan period. The ADM Kalahandi had identified and forwarded land in Kalahandi for the purpose to PA-run. Additionally, Secretary to Government, Department of Higher Education, Odisha in 2010. However, afterwards, no further progress has been made for over a decade. Patra said

Odisha has a greater responsibility for tribal communities as it houses 62 different kinds of tribal groups and at least one out of every five people in Odisha is a tribal. Besides, Kalahandi has been struggling for a Central University for the past 30 years. There is a strong public demand for it.

Thuamul Rampur is a tribal dominated block having more than 50% tribal population. It is one of the most backward blocks in the State as well as in the nation.

Thuamul Rampur is geographically located in the central location of the major tribal blocks located in Nabarangpur, Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Gajapati and Kandhamal districts. It is also a central point for all backward KBR, Kandhamal, Gajapati districts and tribal and Maoists dominated regions in southern and western Odisha.

Besides its central location, a good road has come to connect proposed and identified site in Thuamul Rampur with Bhawanipatna, which has rail connectivity and soon will have an airport under UDAN scheme," said Patra.

# All eyes now on who becomes Nayak to play a key role, 3 names under rounds

While MLA

Nayak to play a key role, 3 names under rounds

AUROBINDA DAS ■ ROURKELA

Keeping in view the growth of Rourkela city, the Special Planning Authority was constituted during 1964. Later on January 26, 1976, it was converted to the Rourkela Regional Improvement Trust (RRIT).

Since the formation of the RRIT, the managing board was headed by the Government authorities but when Bijay Patnaik led Government came to power in 1990-95 and Dilip Ray was a powerful man in the Government, for the first time his loyal BD Mishra, a political man, was appointed as its Chairman.

Subsequently, on October 2, 1995, the RRIT was upgraded to the RDA (Rourkela Development Authority) and the State Urban Minister was its Chairman.

Former Bonaai MLA Dayanidhi Kissan after being faced disciplinary action by BJP for contesting 2009 Assembly election as an independent candidate while was denied

party (BJP) ticket, he joined the BJP. Later during October, 2010, he was rehabilitated as the Chairman, RDA and continued till 2014. That was the political appointment in RDA. After leaving the 2014 Assembly election, former State Urban Development Minister Sarada Nayak was too rehabilitated in the post on November 27, 2014 and continued till 2019. After Nayak was elected to the State Assembly in 2019, the post is not yet filled up. Since then, speculation has been going on as to who will be the next RDA Chairman.

Though aspirants from BJP and Congress are lobbying in Bhubaneswar to get the post but three names are doing the rounds. They are youth BJP leader Kuna Behari Das, former Rourkela Municipality Chairperson Rashmibala Mishra and BJD Westing District State vice-president Minati Debta.

Das is holding the position of district convener of Jivan Bindu and Odisha Mo Parivar. Besides earlier he was the co-chairman of the Biju Patnaik Foundation and played an important role during Naveen Patnaik's last visit to Rourkela on February 16. He has a good acceptance among

the youth masses here.

He has also good rapport with a number of influential leaders of the party at Bhubaneswar level. Once upon a time, he was known as the close aide of Rourkela MLA Nayak. That is why months back it was a talk in city that Das will be awarded with RDA Chairman post. But sources said he has a sour relation with Nayak now and RDA Chairman post is the cause of difference between the duo.

Sources said Nayak is not in favour of Das for this post now. Even in many blood donation camps, Das is not seen where Nayak joins. Meghushree Das also claim he will succeed as he has good rapport in Bhubaneswar.

After differences between Das and Nayak the path is open for Rashmibala Mishra, feel many. It is known to all that Das has been instrumental in making Mishra as the Chairperson of Rourkela Municipality. Mishra was just a beginner in politics and in her first entry she became the Chairperson.

However, after intervention of high officials, she was given the post for five years but every important decision in Rourkela Municipality was taken with the knowledge and consent of Nayak. Even it was a talk in the

# RDA chief

city that Nayak had been operating the Rourkela Municipality passively.

Though Nayak is Mishra's political mentor but their relations became sour for some years due to certain reasons. Now they have good understanding and it has been seen for last 2-3 months that Nayak is giving importance to Mishra in various political activities. So, her supporter claim that she may be the first choice for Nayak.

So far as Minati Debta is concerned, she is a popular leader and, on many occasions, she has been raising her voice against social stigma. She has also been instrumental for her entry to BJD after leaving Congress. But gradually the equation between them worsened due to various political reasons.

Situation became so bad that Debta competed for getting party ticket for Rourkela Assembly seat in 2019. When she did not get the ticket, she filed the nomination as an independent candidate.

However, after intervention of high officials, she was given the post for five years but every important decision in Rourkela Municipality was taken with the knowledge and consent of Nayak. Even it was a talk in the

# Birla Tyres unlikely to start operations soon

Tripartite talks between company, workers' unions, dist admin fail

UBACHAK MOHANTY ■ BALESWAR

The fate of Birla Tyres at Chhannpur here hangs in balance as a tripartite talk involving the workers' unions, company management and district administration, including the Labour Department, failed to resolve the deadlock.

It may be noted for over four months the production of the plant has come to a grinding halt and it is currently without any production. The management of the company while maintained that it didn't have adequate funds to clear the backlog salaries and wanted to run the plant without any preconditions of the workers' union. The management demanded that the company must pay them their arrears first.

The meeting chaired by the Sub Collector failed to yield any result as the unions refused

to join duty unconditionally. "The management is saying that it is ready to start the plant if workers agree unconditionally. The authorities maintain that the plant incurred huge losses.

But the fact is for the last 18 months the workers have not been paid. The management if can't give the arrears, it at least should mention when it can be given.

The management says that if workers join the duty unconditionally the plant can run. We have no faith in such promises. They should mention when the arrears would be given.

Since the management doesn't speak of clearing the backlog we rejected the proposal. The workers demanded a leader of a union adding, "About 5,000 workers and their families who were depending on the plant are leading a hopeless life as they have no other means of income." In the meantime, the management of Birla Tyres, a large-scale industry, permanently looms large when company says it doesn't have financial resources and unions demand arrears.

# In Rayagada

# Man commits theft at own house, detained

BADAL TAH ■ RAYAGADA

A person, who committed a robbery at his own home and later complained before the police that he was robbed of Rs 30 lakh cash and gold ornaments in a heist that took place in his house, was detained by police here.

According to an FIR lodged by Bankupalli Viswa Ganapathi Sharma on Saturday morning he found that his mother had been to Palakonda in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh over old age pension issue.

After arrival in his house at Royat Colony in Rayagada town, he found that some unknown culprits committed theft of Rs 30 lakh and 10-tola of gold ornaments, by breaking open the door of his house. After he lodged an FIR, a case



was registered under Rayagada PS case No.159 on the same date and the investigation was conducted by Rayagada PS IIC Rushmi Ranjan Pradhan. During interrogation, complainant Ganapati confessed that with an ulterior motive, he himself had concealed the cash

amounting Rs 24 lakh and gold ornaments. Police seized the cash and ornaments from him. Meanwhile, eyebrows were raised regarding the source of such a huge amount of cash hidden in the house of the complainant, who is a priest by profession.

# In Kendrapada

# 2 die as truck hits motorcycle

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

Two persons were killed in a road mishap near the Khamrapada Chowk on NH-5(A) under the Sadar police station in Kendrapada district when the motorbike by which they were travelling was hit by a truck on Sunday evening.

The deceased were identified as Dipti Ranjan Swain of the Patkura area in the district and Paritosh Chakravorty of Panikoli in Jaipur district.

The mishap occurred when the duo were on their way to Paradip. Getting information, the Sadar police rushed to the spot and sent the bodies for the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) for post-mortem.

However, police failed to arrest the truck driver, as he had sped away from the spot with vehicle after the mishap.

# Memo to expedite AIIMS S'garh campus

VIMSAR docs, civil society members in S'pur meet RDC

MALAY RAY ■ SUNDARGARH

VIMSAR Resident Doctors Association president Sanjay Kumar Mishra and Nagarika Kalyan Samiti, Sambalpur president Mahendra Mishra and other office bearers of the Samiti met the Revenue Divisional Commissioner, Northern Range on Friday and submitted a memorandum addressing to the Prime Minister for taking step for expediting the AIIMS second campus work at Sundargarh.

The development came after the proposed AIIMS Sundargarh campus got delayed and the State Government has begun initiative to set a MCH in collaboration with the MCL there. Notably, a nine-member team of AIIMS under the leadership

of AIIMS Bhubaneswar Director Gitanjali Bhatnagar on April 3 had visited Sundargarh to inspect the NTPC medical college building and other facilities as the State Government had given a proposal to the Centre to run the AIIMS second campus by using the existing infrastructure.

The team members had also held a meeting with senior administrative officials of the district, including the Sundargarh Collector and Chief District Medical Officer, etc.

The district administration headed by Sundargarh Collector Nikhil Pawan Kalayn had given a presentation on available infrastructure along with available logistic facility, before the AIIMS team at the time. The visit of the AIIMS team had kindled hope among various quarters and particularly among people in western Odisha. However, so far while there has been no response

from the Central Government about the AIIMS second campus at Sundargarh after about three months of visit of the Central team, the State Government has started taking initiative to establish a MCH at the same campus.

In an office order of Health Department of the State Government, the District Medical Officer, Sundargarh has been appointed Additional Superintendent Cum Nodal Officer of the Government Medical College and Hospital at Sundargarh.

The Health Department has reportedly taken initiative to complete the formalities so that admission in MBBS course can be started latest by 2022-23. "The District has been appointed as the Additional Superintendent Cum Nodal Officer for the medical college project at the NTPC infrastructure," said CDMO Sundargarh Saroj Mishra. "Our Health Department has already initi-

ated measures to complete all the formalities of medical college, so that the admission can be started by 2022-23," Mishra added. Notably, the State Government had signed an MoU with the NTPC on December 13, 2013 where in NTPC had agreed to develop infrastructure for establishing a 500 bedded hospital with medical college and the State Government had agreed to run the institution. Accordingly, the construction work of the hospital cum medical college was started in 2014 and was completed about 18 months back.

After completion of the hospital infrastructure, the State Government had requested the Centre to establish the hospital as AIIMS second campus. The State Health and Family Welfare Minister Naba Kishore Das then had written to the Centre in which he had requested to establish the second AIIMS at Sundargarh by using the same infrastructure.

# Protect State's oldest church La Girija

ANIL DHIR

The oldest Catholic Church of the State, Lal Girija in Baleswar is on the verge of collapse. The general decay with plaster falling off, termites on the wooden roof rafters and vegetation growing from the walls and on the roof, is cracking and splitting the walls.

In an inspection of the site by this writer, Deepak Nayak and architect Satyam Jyoti, it was found that the structure is in a very precarious and delicate state. The threat of one of the tall trees falling on the structure exists, as the region is cyclone prone. No

# As monument in a shambles

steps have been taken to preserve the heritage structure in the last few decades even though it is just a hundred metres away from the Baleswar Collector's residence and just opposite the Revenue Inspector's office.

The Church now functions as the Balasore Press Club, something which cannot be explained nor understood. In 1864, Fr Delpelchin SJ, the Superior of the Bengal Jesuit Mission, came to Baleswar and found that the few remaining Catholic families there had had no visit from any priest for

the preceding several years. He returned to Calcutta with firm determination to help the faithful and appointed Fr Sappart SJ as the resident priest of Baleswar in 1865 CE. After reaching Baleswar, Sappart tried in vain to get the church back from the Zamindar. He purchased another piece of land and built a fine Catholic church which came to be known as 'La Girija' and was dedicated to St Joseph. The church took six years to complete, and was modeled on the village churches of England. The small church was tucked



away at the end of a short lane next to the residence of the

Collector and the military barracks. Located on a plot approximately one-fourth of an acre, the church is a synthesis of Romanesque and Gothic style. The whole structure is built with fine warm-toned bricks, timber and lime mortar were used in the construction. The main hall was 50 feet in length and 20 ft wide. There were high circular windows on both ends of the church. The stained glass on the windows have since been removed, but in its original state the light streaming through the beautiful stained glass must have been a mosaic of colours.

The church was a solid and functional building built to last, and it has lasted. It has

always been painted red, as the name signifies. It has been many years since any prayer service has been held at the Lal Girija. The abandoned property was used as the Land Settlement Office for decades and later was converted as the Baleswar Press Club.

Surrounded by tall trees, the small church has a picture postcard charm. The Press Club members have made some changes, a badminton court at the entrance and modifications in the interior.

Many activities that should not happen in a church now happen in its hallowed precincts. The Lal Girija may

not be used as a place of worship today, but there is a pervading sense of calmness and peace which is awe-inspiring. Even after years of disuse, this abandoned structure still shows traces of its past grandeur. The church needs immediate repairs.

One of the oldest surviving church of the State, it should be declared a State protected monument so that its history and haunting beauty can be preserved for generations. The Christian community too should get involved and retrieve the Lal Girija from the authorities and restore it to its former glory.

# Breather in Kerala, Covid storm abates

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Kerala, which has been reeling under unabated increase in the number of Covid-19 cases and fatalities, got a small relief on Monday as the cases came down slightly to the comfort of Health Minister Veena George, who is leading the operation to fight the pandemic from the front line.

The Minister's plea to the members of the State Assembly to not to crowd anywhere had its impact as the number of persons diagnosed with the pandemic came down to 13,984 on Monday from the daily average of more than 20,000 new cases.

The Test Positivity Rate too came down from the average figure of 13 to 10.93 per cent on Monday though the fatalities recorded during the last 24 hours showed 118 persons succumbing to the disease. The death toll till date reached 16,955 (excluding the 7,000+ under reported cases).

George said 1,27,903 samples were tested during the last 24 hours. Thrissur topped the number of districts with the highest number of positive cases (2350). Malappuram which was the district with the highest number of patients till Sunday (the district had 3,770 cases) diagnosed 1,925 new patients on Monday.

The Health Minister said

that as on Monday, the State had 1.65 lakh patients undergoing treatment for Covid-19. Idukki district diagnosed 196 new cases while Wayanadu (represented in the Lok Sabha by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi) had 263 patients.

Dr Rajiv B Pillai, senior Ayurvedic physician, was of the view that Idukki and Wayanadu were ideal districts to study about the immunity capability of the population. "Both these districts are known for people who work hard to earn their livelihood and have not changed their lifestyle to what we see in cities which are full of fast food joints and Arab foods," said Dr Pillai while glancing through the day's figures.

## TMC condemns attack on Abhishek's convoy in Tripura

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has strongly condemned the Monday's attack on the convoy of its MP — and the party's second-in-command — Abhishek Banerjee.

Hours after his cavalcade was attacked by alleged BJP supporters the Bengal ruling outfit took to Twitter saying "Shocking display of absolute hooliganism by the Tripura (BJP) government! When it comes to BJP, ruthlessness and DISRESPECT FOR DEMOCRACY seems to be running the show. You can keep trying but you cannot erase us from the hearts of the people of Tripura! Shameful attempt!"

The car of Banerjee who was on a day-long visit of Tripura was attacked with a flag stick by some alleged BJP men while he was proceeding to the Tripura-Tripureshwari Kali Temple, party sources said.

Alleging that the Tripura BJP and its Chief Minister Biplob Deb was "taking the state to new heights," Banerjee later tweeted "Democracy in Tripura under BJP... is a farce. We are protesting the state's heights." He further said "They (BJP) say



'Athithi Devo Bhava' (guest is God) ... but now they are attacking (the visitors). The people of Tripura will judge."

The TMC also accused the BJP of damaging and tearing off posters of Banerjee. The plan of creating trouble for Banerjee was hatched in advance, the party claimed even as its Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien called upon Home Minister Amit Shah to look into the matter and act against the miscreants.

He wrote "Raised the issue in Rajya Sabha of Lok Sabha MP Abhishek Banerjee being attacked today in Tripura. Amit Shah

please come to Parliament and answers the hard questions. Democracy?"

While officials on duty at the Agartala police headquarters claimed "no information on any attack" on the Trinamool Congress leader who is also the nephew of Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Bengal BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said "the BJP does not such an act ... though it is peanuts in comparison to what they have been doing here in Bengal."

He said "I have heard there was a small commotion as people were spontaneously protesting against his party's attempt to vitiate Tripura's political atmosphere when Abhishek Banerjee's vehicle reached there ... the entire cavalcade had crossed the BJP procession and only at the tail end of the BJP rally some youth hurled a stick at his car which is not desirable."

The Bengal BJP later wrote in its social media handle, "While this has been a routine affair in Bengal for any opposition leader, seems you have now dispatched violent TMC cadres to Tripura... Wait till the people of Bengal take this to TMC leaders in West Bengal too."

## Akhilesh remark on ropeway baseless: Min

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Responding to tweets posted by Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on the inauguration of a ropeway by Union Home Minister Amit Shah at Vindhyachal Dham in Mirzapur on Sunday, UP Minister and Government spokesman Sidharth Nath Singh flayed the SP chief for making irresponsible statements.

In his tweet, Akhilesh had attributed the credit for ropeway construction to the SP, capitalising and planning the ropeway in Vindhyachal Dham to the previous Government headed by him.

"Akhilesh Yadav has no future left in 2022 UP Assembly elections and is perpetuating over his party's predictable defeat. Samajwadi Party's defeat in the 2022 elections is a foregone conclusion. In fact, this time Akhilesh and his party will be wiped out of Uttar Pradesh. People are waiting for the elections to kick them out. Akhilesh knows this too well and for this reason, he is making baseless and non-sensational statements on every issue," Singh said in Lucknow on Monday.

Hitting out at the SP chief, the Government spokesman further said that the Samajwadi Party was just making false claims and taking the credit for whatever work the Bharatiya Janata Party had done in the state.

"In regard to the development work of Vindhyachal Dham, the SP chief is making fabricated statements. Akhilesh is a frustrated person, perpetually engaged in misleading the people of the state through fallacious claims. The SP chief is merely reaping the fruits of what he has sown during his chief ministership," he said.

### IN SHORT

#### PMO ADVISER AMARJEET SINHA RESIGNS

New Delhi: Amarjeet Sinha, an Adviser in the PMO and handling projects related to the social sector, has resigned from his post. A Bihar-cadre IAS officer of 1983 batch, Sinha had superannuated as the Rural Development secretary in 2019 and was then appointed to the PMO. He is the second top officer to quit the PMO in recent months after former Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha, who worked there as Principal Adviser, resigned in March. In December 2019, PM's Principal Secretary Nirpendra Mishra resigned.

#### EAM TO REPRESENT INDIA AT IRAN PREZ OATH TAKING

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is likely to represent India at the swearing-in ceremony of newly elected Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran on August 5, people, Raisi, a hardliner and known to be close to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, won the presidential election in June by a landslide.

#### SC SUGGESTS MEDIATION TO AP, T FOR KRISHNA WATER

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday suggested "mediation" to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana for settling their dispute over sharing of Krishna river water, saying it did not want to interfere. "unnecessarily". A bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana was hearing the plea of Andhra Pradesh which has alleged that Telangana has deprived it of its legitimate share of drinking and irrigation water.

#### NIA RE-REGISTERS ISRAELI EMBASSY BLAST CASE

New Delhi: The NIA on Monday took over and re-registered the case pertaining to the blast that took place outside the Israeli Embassy in Delhi on January 29 this year.

#### DELAY IN LAYING OF 378 NOTIFICATIONS

New Delhi: The Committee on Subordinate Legislation, headed by Pratap Singh Bajwa, in its report tabled in the Rajya Sabha on Monday said that there had been a delay in laying of 378 notifications and 141 notifications (26.5 per cent of total delayed Notifications) were delayed by more than 11 months while some others by more than four years.

## BJP attacks Mamata Govt for identifying convicts by religion

PNS ■ KOLKATA

To a "bizarre presentation" of statistics for the number of alleged "life convicts" being released from Bengal jails the Trinamool Congress Government on Monday disclosed their caste and religious identities apart from mentioning their age and sex leading the BJP to come down heavily on the ruling Trinamool Congress saying "this list of convicts being released is the greatest example of the kind of 'secularism' being practiced by the TMC Government."

Speaking on the issue State BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya on Monday said that "we have always known that the criminals have no caste, creed or political affiliation ... they are only criminals ... but here the TMC

Government has prepared a list in which they have claimed that out of those being released 5 are SCs, 3 are STs, 2 are OBCs, 53 are General caste, 51 are Hindus and 12 are Muslims ..."

He added, "by classifying the convicts according to their religion the TMC is only pursuing its divide-and-rule politics ... based on communal and caste lines. Nowhere in India the convicts have been released by identifying them by their castes or religion ... It is nothing but a way to show that 'look in Bengal more number of Hindus are criminals than the Muslims ... and when we will raise this issue they will call us names'."

The Mamata Banerjee government on Monday said that it had ordered the release of 63 life

convicts from Bengal prisons so that the prisons could be decongested ahead of the third wave of the corona pandemic.

A senior official said that "there was a need to decongest the prisons because of the prevailing Covid-19 situation. Section 432 of the CrPC (Code of Criminal Procedure) empowers the state government to consider the premature release of life convicts who have already served 14 years in jail."

The release of the convicts serving life sentence was recommended on humanitarian grounds by the state sentence review board. Accordingly 61 male convicts above 60 years and two female convicts aged above 55 years would be released before the Independence Day.

## Cong to observe Dalit Swabhiman Diwas in UP today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To woo the Dalit community ahead of the 2022 Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, the Congress has decided to organise 'Dalit Swabhiman Diwas' today.

Desperately trying to find its lost political foothold in the state, the Congress had earlier organised conferences of various castes which could play important role in the State politics, like Nishad-Kevat-Mallah conference, Maurya-Shishya-Saini-Kushwaha conference and Pal-Gaderia-Dhangar conference.

Formerly with Congress, Jitin Prasada too had started a Brahmin Sabha to woo the community, alleging harassment by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party across the State before recently switching allegiance to the saffron outfit. The Dalit cell of UP Congress will be celebrating 'Dalit Swabhiman Diwas' across the state on August 3 and will also take out a Dalit Swabhiman Yatra in all 75 districts of the state.

"After Independence in 1947, first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet had passed a resolution to make Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar the Law Minister on August 3 and the UP Dalit Congress will celebrate the day as Swabhiman Diwas," said state chief of Dalit cell of UP Congress, Alok Prasad, in Lucknow on Monday.

## ATS arrests hawala trader funding terror module

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The sleuths of the Anti-Terrorism Squad claimed to have made a breakthrough in terror racket when they arrested a man from Gorakhpur district for his alleged involvement in sending money through the hawala route to Pakistani handlers, officials said on Monday.

The accused, Dinesh Kumar Singh alias Ajay Kumar Singh alias AK Singh (46) of Gorakhpur, was arrested on Sunday. He was evading arrest for the past three years and carried a reward of ₹50,000 on his arrest, the officials said.

In a statement issued here, the ATS said, "Information was received that on the instructions of Pakistani handlers, some people were using fake documents to open accounts in different banks, duping people to deposit money and withdrawing the deposited money and sending it to the Pakistani handlers through the hawala route."

## Pondy Min: Decision on reopening of schools only after Aug 15

Puducherry: Minister A Namassivayam on Monday said the Puducherry Government would decide on re-opening of schools and colleges in the Union Territory after consulting the Lieutenant Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan and Chief Minister N Rangasamy after August 15. The Home and Education Minister, in a press statement, said he held a meeting with educational officials to discuss about Covid-19 and its third wave.

He said the government has decided not to re-open the schools and colleges for now. PTI

## Kerala HC: A stray dog is made ferocious by its circumstances

Kochi: A dog is made ferocious by the circumstances and it is a myth that a stray canine is dangerous by nature, the Kerala High Court said on Monday while dealing with the issue of poisoning of street dogs in Thrissurkara municipality area of Ernakulam district.

A Bench of Justices A K Jayasankar Nambiar and P Gopinath said killing or maiming the street dogs was not the way to make people safer and the better option was to capture the canines and rehabilitate them at animal shelters. It also said, "This kind of dog catching using hammers cannot be done."

The court said a balance has to be maintained between the interests of the residents of the area who feel threatened by the street dogs and the welfare of the animals. It was also skeptical with regard to the municipality's claims that one of its junior health inspectors paid for the poisoning of the canines from his own pocket.

The court directed the municipality to identify in its area any animal shelters run by private organisations who would be able to capture the street dogs and shelter them in their premises. It issued the direction while

observing that it understands that presently the municipality would not be able to spend funds for setting up such shelters.

The Kerala Government was asked to give details of the animal shelters -- run by the state and private ones -- in all the districts.

With these directions the court listed the matter for hearing on August 6. The court had taken up the issue of the poisoning of the dogs after a video on the same was brought to its attention. While seeking the stand of the municipality over its role in the entire matter, the bench had also directed the civic body to ensure no such incident takes place within its territorial limits in future and to put in place suitable machinery to ensure the same.

On Monday, the municipality told the court that it had no role in the matter. Last week, the junior health inspector -- arrayed as an accused in the case with regard to killing of the canines -- moved the High Court, seeking anticipatory bail and claimed that he was being falsely implicated in the case to divert the probe from the Chairperson and of the municipality and the chairperson of its standing committee on health.

## Sena workers damage 'Adani Airport' signboard in Mumbai

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

An irate group of Shiv Sainiks vandalised a brand new 'Adani Airport' signboard erected by Adani Airport Holding Ltd. (AAHL) outside the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) here on Monday, in protest against the AAHL's move to rename the city airport christened after the Maratha warrior which they dubbed as "an insult" to the people of Maharashtra.

Still fresh from jubilation of taking over the management of CSMIA from the Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL), the Adani group tasted anger of the Shiv Sainiks over the renaming of CSMIA, as the Shiv Sainiks went on a rampage and tore down a brand new 'Adani Airport' signboard erected by the AAHL. Raising slogans like 'Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj ki jai ho', Shiv Sainiks climbed up the landscaped garden outside the city airport where the controversial boardings had been erected, uprooted AAHL sign boards in English and Marathi languages and planted saffron flags there.

Monday's protests by the Shiv Sainiks were in line with the serious reservations expressed by Sena MP and party spokesperson Sanjay Raut over the renaming over the CSMIA as Adani Airport Holding Ltd. (AAHL). "It is Chhatrapati Shivaji



Police officials inspect the site after Shiv Sena workers damaged an Adani group signboard near the Shivaji Maharaj statue in Mumbai on Monday

Maharaj International Airport. We do not undertake an agitation and had the city named as CSMIA. We do not accept if the airport is named after any industrialist. It will remain as CSMIA," Raut said.

"The AAHL employees have been given T-shirts with Adani Airport written on them. You have to use binoculars to see the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj written in such small letter. This is an insult to the great Maratha warrior. When the Adani group ignores our reservations about the renaming of the airport, you can expect the kind of angry reaction from the Shiv Sainiks as the one you witnessed in the afternoon," Shiv Sena MP Arvind Sawant said.

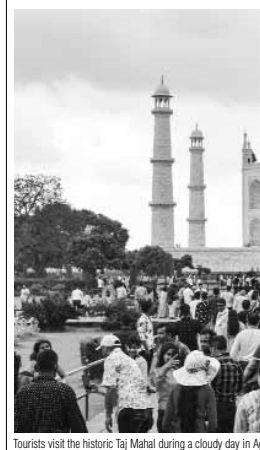
"The name of Chhatrapati Shivaji is not known just in Maharashtra but in the entire country. Earlier we had a big company GVK group that was managing the Airport. But, it did not name the airport after the group. Has Industrialist bought the entire Airport? Why is the industrialist trying to destabilise Mumbai and Maharashtra by resorting to this kind of acts? And for what?" Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar asked.

Meanwhile, reacting to the Shiv Sena's protests, an AAHL spokesperson said: "In light of the incidents around Adani Airports branding at the Mumbai International Airport, we firmly assure that Adani Airports Holding Limited (AAHL) has merely replaced the previous branding

with Adani Airports branding and that no change has been made to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport's branding or positioning at the terminus."

The branding at CSMIA is in compliance with the norms and guidelines of Airport Authority of India (AAI). AAHL will continue to adhere to all the guidelines laid out by the government in the interest of the aviation community at large," the spokesperson added.

The AAHL's move to erect a new sign board came nearly three weeks after AAHL a wholly owned subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Ltd, took over the management control of Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) from the GVK Group. It may be recalled that on July 13, the AAHL had taken over the management control of Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) from the GVK Group. The development had followed approvals received from the Government of India, the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) of Maharashtra, and the Government of Maharashtra.



Tourists visit the historic Taj Mahal during a cloudy day in Agra on Monday



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Power play

Ignoring Indian protests, Pakistan is trying to legitimise its occupation of Gilgit-Baltistan

In what India claims is a violation of its natural right over Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan, the Imran Khan Government gives shape to a law to award the region the status of a 'provisional' province. Khan had made that promise last November. This is an attempt by Islamabad to legitimise its illegal occupation by applying the provisions of Pakistani law and the election commission to the region. India has lodged a strong protest over the decision, asserting once again that Gilgit-Baltistan, along with the entire Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, is an integral part of India by virtue of its legal accession. The region, or the provisional province which it may soon be, is of immense strategic importance to India, Pakistan and China. It is Pakistan's only territorial frontier with China. It meets China's Xinjiang autonomous region at that point. It is also a land route between the two provinces. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passes through it. Its neighbours also give Gilgit-Baltistan a vantage location: Afghanistan to its west, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to its south, and Jammu and Kashmir to the east. Till a decade ago, it was a nameless region — merely called Northern Areas — and administered from Islamabad, unlike Pakistan-occupied Kashmir with its own Constitution and Assembly. That changed with the Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and Self-Governance) Order of 2009 that introduced the legislative Assembly in the region in place of the Northern Areas Legislative Council.

The reason why Pakistan never annexed the region is because it did not want to weaken its international case for a plebiscite in Kashmir by annexing Gilgit-Baltistan or, for that matter, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. It hopes that if ever a plebiscite is held, the votes in Gilgit-Baltistan would become vital to influencing the result. This explains why the region's provincial status is 'provisional'. India has begun to assert afresh its right over the region since Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to it in his Independence Day speech in 2016. Previously, Indian Parliament passed a resolution in 1994 re-affirming its right over the region. In 2017, the British Parliament also asserted that Gilgit-Baltistan, under Pakistan's control, belongs to India. Gilgit is crucial to China's expansion of its land trade routes across the Himalayas. Without the control of Gilgit, the Gwadar port that establishes a direct access to the Indian Ocean via the CPEC is of little value to China. The whole idea of China's \$46 billion CPEC is to have surface transport and pipeline connectivity between Gwadar and Xinjiang via Gilgit, extending China's sphere of influence to Gilgit-Baltistan and right up to Hormuz Strait. Even as Pakistan makes the region a province, it cannot deny that it ceded control over the region to China and the Chinese Army. The latest development poses a challenge to India's claim to the whole of Jammu and Kashmir and brings closer home the threat of China's presence in Gilgit. Pakistan has made its move and the ball is in India's court now.

## PICTALK



People bathe at Prabhakur Khol waterfall after monsoon rains in Jaipur

PTI

## The Kerala crisis

After the distinction of being the first COVID-free State, Kerala is now caught deep in the quagmire

Kerala wakes up every morning to an eerie silence. The State was the first to declare itself free of COVID-19 on the 100th day of diagnosing the first pandemic case in the country. But the last week saw Kerala diagnosing 20,000 new cases per day with an average Test Positivity Rate of 13. The death toll is surging at an unprecedented rate. When Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan declared on May 8, 2020, that the State was COVID-free, Kerala rejoiced and sang paeans to former (and then) Health Minister KK Shailaja. But it did not take long for the façade of the success of the "Kerala model" to collapse. "Kerala was known for its good healthcare system at low cost. The colonial masters and the Royal Family of Travancore, who were the rulers till 1947, have to be feted for this. The State's good climate and availability of pure water and air had laid a strong foundation for an excellent public health infrastructure," says Dr SS Lal, an internationally renowned expert on contagious diseases. He has been alerting the authorities about the danger which they were going to face. But the doctor says that the policymakers had become prisoners of their own image.

The Government failed to co-opt the services of private hospitals, where 80 per cent of the State's doctors are employed. The Kerala Government Medical Officers Association's plea to appoint 1,000 doctors on a war footing fell on deaf ears. The unscientific lockdown rules and the failure to operationalise the existing infrastructure worsened the situation. The RTI probes have revealed that the authorities suppressed details about 7,000 COVID-19 related deaths. There were instances of COVID patients committing suicide in these hospitals because of the failure of the authorities to attend to them. An interesting point is the fewer number of cases being reported from Idukki and Wayanad, the districts atop the Western Ghats, apparently because of the hardworking lifestyle of the people there. Vijayan's decision to bring in personalities like filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan and a bishop as members of a committee to advise the Government on how to tackle the COVID menace evoked laughter. No wonder, the State is adding 50 per cent of the new patients to the daily national tally. It once again underlines the fact that we should have the right people for the right job even during the pandemic.

## Politics and the military don't gel

It would be in the interest of the political establishment to desist from politicising the military, lest it creates an uncontrollable monster

The former President of the United States, Donald Trump, has always had the reputation of being a man of questionable moral and ethical integrity with close connections to the radical right. Yet, there were those who voted for him in 2016 because they genuinely believed that he was the lesser of the two evils, and strongly felt that only an "outsider" like him was capable of draining the "Washington Swamp", a phrase alluding to the seemingly all-pervasive corruption surrounding the Washington power elite. They would certainly have been disappointed by his insipid performance as President, especially the extent of his chicanery and selfishness. These have been laid bare in a recent book by two Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington Post journalists, investigative staff writer Carol Leonnig and former White House Bureau Chief Philip Rucker, on Trump's final year in power, titled "I Alone Can Fix It". A fitting sequel, and as perceptive and illuminating, is "A Very Stable Genius".

One of the most fascinating aspects of their latest book pertains to the manner in which the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark Milley, responded to President Trump's brazen attempts to overturn the election results by peddling his "Big Lie" that the elections had been "stolen" by the Democrats resorting to widespread fraud. Despite his legal challenges being summarily dismissed, he continues to peddle these allegations to this day. There can be little doubt that his incitement of his supporters culminated in a violent but abortive attempt on January 6 to disrupt proceedings at Capitol Hill to formalise the election results.

Prior to this, one may recall, General Milley had been excoriated by military veterans, politicians and the media for having unwittingly dragged the military into politics by being present, in uniform, at Trump's infamous "Bible photo op" at the St John's Church, immediately after peaceful protesters had been forcefully evicted while demonstrating for racial equality. Indeed, that he then went on to tender a public apology for his error of judgement speaks volumes of his forthrightness, integrity and



strength of character.

He then initiated action to ensure that the military was not dragged into the political sphere, despite Trump having appointed his own lackeys to key positions within the Pentagon. If the authors are to be believed, he went so far as to compare Trump to Hitler and refer to the January 6 insurrection as the "Reichstag Moment" for the US. On Trump's attempts to cling to power through force, he reportedly told his colleagues in the Joint Chiefs: "They may try, but they're not going to [sic] #succeed... You can't do this without the military. You can't do this without the CIA and the FBI. We're the ones with the guns."

His actions have lessons that our military leadership would do well to imbibe. It is inconceivable that our senior military hierarchy can, or ever will, adopt such a confrontational attitude towards the leadership of a democratically elected Government, whatever be the provocation, or however unconstitutional be their actions. The aloofness displayed by the military during the 1977 Emergency is a case in point. True, there have been the likes of General Thimmapaya, Field

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IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT OUR SENIOR MILITARY HIERARCHY CAN, OR EVER WILL, ADOPT SUCH A CONFRONTATIONAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE LEADERSHIP OF A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT, WHATEVER BE THE PROVOCATION, OR HOWEVER UNCONSTITUTIONAL BE THEIR ACTIONS

Marshal Manekshaw and a few more of that vintage who have displayed spine and opposed Government directions, but these have been few and far between, and restricted only to professional matters within their purview. Moreover, till recently, the military's senior leadership has been quite circumspect in ensuring that its actions were completely unbiased, apolitical, secular and within constitutional parameters. In fact, it was their adherence to such behaviour that made the military the most popular and respected institution within the country.

Unfortunately, while the bulk of our military remains apolitical and secular, the actions and public statements of the Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat, have created perceptions that the military's senior leadership has become excessively politicised. Then there is the fact that some very senior officers have taken the plunge into active politics immediately on shedding their uniform.

While some within the ruling elite may see this turn of events as advantageous to their ideological cause, and in fact encourage this shift within the military hierarchy

through the process of "deep selection", as some allege, they may well be biting off more than they can chew. If there is anything to learn from history, it is that once the military gets sucked into politics, it will not be satisfied acting as a mere handmaiden of those in power. As General Milley so eloquently put it, they are the ones with the guns! We just need to look closely at our own neighbourhood for examples.

It would be in the interest of the political establishment to desist from politicising the military. Creating an uncontrollable monster, that will go on to bite the hand that feeds it, is nothing but sheer stupidity. The Government and the legislature would do well to put rules in place that prevent members of the military and even the Civil Services from joining politics without an appropriate cooling-off period. That would go a long way in insulating them, especially the military, from politics.

(The writer is a military veteran, who is a Visiting Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation and Senior Visiting Fellow with The Peninsula Foundation, Chennai. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## HAS DELHI LOST ITS WARMTH AND DIL?

Sir — Nowadays, we often hear about the northeastern people being harassed in the national Capital. These unfortunate incidents pain me somewhere because I have always regarded Delhi as my second home. I was there for the most part of my early childhood, from 1994 to 1999. Since my father used to travel frequently, my mother and I were in a quarter which we can term "Mini India" as there were people from various States.

We used to exchange our local food with their delicacies. The aunts would 'kidnap' me to take me along on their evening walks and sometimes to mandirs, gurdwaras and mosques. My mother, who would go to the bazaars alone, never faced any untoward incident; in fact she was helped by people with her bags. What has happened to the Capital now? Has it been hijacked by hoodlams? Delhi earned the title of "Dhivalo ki Dilli" for a reason but such incidents are bringing shame to it and to the real "Dhivalas" of Delhi. I urge the Government to be more strict on this front so that our northeastern people keep feeling safe and loved, like my family did in the national Capital.

Noopur Baruah | Tezpur

## BEWARE OF THE THIRD COVID-19 WAVE

Sir — India will witness another alarming rise in COVID-19 cases in the middle of August with the third wave peaking, and nearly 1,50,000 infections a day is the worst scenario. A study by a group of researchers led by Mathukamali Vidyasagar and Manindra Agrawal at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Hyderabad and Kanpur predicts that if the third wave occurs, it will hit us sometime around the middle or end of August and continue increasing till October.

This peak can be of two types. If the variant is more infectious, the peak can be more like the first wave. If it is not that infectious, the cases will not be that high. India reported 40,134 new cases of COVID-19 and 422 deaths in the last 24

## Kerala must not be vilified



The State of Kerala continues to detect over 20,000 COVID-19 cases daily through more than 1.5 lakh tests. There seems to be no let-up in the furious spread of the Delta variant of the virus in the State. Yet, the campaign against the State Government's COVID management using the pretext of the latest surge needed to be contested. Though Kerala's overall tally of 34.11 lakh cases accounts for 10.76 per cent of the total cases reported in the country, the death toll of 16,837 is 3.96 per cent of the total number. Against the country's fatality rate of 1.34 per cent, Kerala's is

0.49 per cent, indicative of its success in saving lives. The State has succeeded in keeping the fatalities low through early detection, timely hospital admission and better medical care. Lives do matter more in God's Own Country.

A new study conducted by the researchers in India, Canada and the United States has put India's real death count between 31 and 34 lakh. The studies have also found that the actual death toll in Kerala is 1.4 times the official figure. Computed on the estimate of the uncounted deaths, the national fatality rate would be 9.78 per cent of the total cases reported and Kerala's would come to 0.69 per cent. The shortage of oxygen or non-availability of a hospital bed or ventilator, or shortage of a life-saving drug has never been the cause for any death in the State until now. Pampa, the holy river, has been flowing serenely; it never had to bear the sorrow of carrying bloated, abandoned dead bodies. The Kerala model of COVID-19 management has been successful in saving countless lives.

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

## CAST IN HAPPY BRONZE

Sir — After missing the glorious chance of bagging the gold, Pusarla Venkata Sindhu settled for the bronze medal with a clinical performance at Tokyo Olympics 2020. PV Sindhu fixed her hair, shuffled her feet three times, leaned forward and muttered "come on" as she took up the challenge and settled for a bronze. She took a deep breath before letting the shuttle sail over the net. The point ended with a thunderous cross-court smash, and she let out a scream.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

She had scaled the mountain of expectations, beating China's He Bingbiao 21-13, 21-15 to clinch the Olympic bronze medal. She is now the first Indian woman to clinch back-to-back medals at the Olympics. Sindhu had her Chinese opponent scrambling around the court and a couple of authoritative shots put the Indian 11-8 ahead and she never looked back.

In the end, Sindhu's power and guile proved just too much. Bingbiao began to engage Sindhu in longer rallies in the second game to control the tempo of the game, but the Indian was prepared. She finished points early and derived great success from her ferocious forehand cross-court smashes. Thus, Sindhu cast her name in bronze in a fierce battle for supremacy.

CK Subramanian | Navi Mumbai

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

## SOUNDBITE

I have directed the Assam Police to withdraw the FIR against K Vanlalaveina, Hon'ble MP, Rajya Sabha, from Mizoram.

Assam Chief Minister  
— Himanta Biswa Sarma

What is their (Taliban militants') change? They have become more cruel, more oppressive, more non-Muslim.

Afghanistan President  
— Ashraf Ghani

When it comes to trolling, it is at times scary how a nameless, faceless individual could say anything about anybody without getting caught!

Actor  
— Tiger Shroff

I showed the team a movie about staying in the moment and I think that made a big difference in this match against Australia.

Indian women's hockey coach  
— Sjoerd Marjine

The BJP's end is near and those who cast an evil eye on the party headquarters, will be found floating in the Worli gutters.

Shiv Sena president  
— Uddhav Thackeray



## FIRST COLUMN EDUCATION IS NEXT CALAMITY IN MAKING

The current learning gap and reduced social skills can lead to a widening knowledge gap



SHUBHANG RATHI

There is a calamity in the making in the field of education, especially school education, in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has affected every stakeholder, be it the parents, teachers, students, and school administrators. Innovative ways and technical tools are being developed to make students come close to get the feel of classroom teaching. According to *Azim Premji Foundation*, more than 60 per cent of children cannot access online education and around 90 per cent of students with disabilities are unable to participate in online classes. Delhi-based NGO, Child Fund India, says as many as 64 per cent of children in rural India are facing the prospect of being dropped out of school. For students, the biggest challenge is the absence of physical interaction with peers and teachers. Primary school students cannot even comprehend what is happening to them. Not only are learning standards affected, physiological pressure on senior students is becoming immense. There



is little physical activity because local parks and school playgrounds are also shut. Students in X, XI and XII are irritated about the new methodology of exam evaluation. For parents, it is challenging to teach different concepts and methods to their children every day. Parents are juggling between house chores, office work, and handling the education needs of their children. One parent of my school said: "If this year it is online classes, I am shifting back to my village as I am here in the city only for my children's studies." Parents who have suffered financially due to COVID-19 are taking extreme steps to cut down on education expenses. Unfortunately, it is also their first response, resulting in a heavy blow to the child's future. For teachers, the biggest challenge is teaching by using technology and understanding students' body language. Old and experienced teachers face issues related to online teaching. Teachers are dissatisfied with learning outcomes after putting in extra effort.

**I see a calamity coming:** Many students have left any formal form of studying in 2020-21. Something needs to be done to rectify the situation. For instance, when we return to work after a gap of 10 days, we feel we have to start work from scratch even though we have been doing the same work for the past several years. Imagine how will a child in the 5-10 age group cope with a break of over 18 months and still attain previous academic levels? Even though we have the infrastructure to teach children, what we lack is continuity. It might become difficult for students to remember the past concepts and relate them to the new ones. It is a challenging task to bring the students back to their previous academic levels. There is already a fear of many small schools closing down because of the spiraling running costs. The administrators are bogged down by unpaid fees in spite of the Supreme Court's verdict. The current learning gap, reduced social skills, and poor handling by educators can lead to a widening knowledge gap of students when offline classes commence again. This can create an educated but unskilled and incapable workforce in the future. We are also looking at an education divide between the rich and the poor and urban and rural. We require the government's intervention to come up with a plan to allow students to visit their schools once or twice a week while continuing their online classes. A hybrid model to clear doubts and reduce the physiological pressure of the students will be most welcomed by schools.

*(The writer is the owner of a private school in Morena, Madhya Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)*



SHIVAJI SARKAR

Thirty years and India is still waiting for the dream to become real. The liberalization of the economy in 1991 is erroneously taken as being limited to divesting government assets and holdings in industry. Liberalisation was not a voluntary decision but was nudged by major lenders, the IMF and World Bank, who threatened to stop lending without a firm commitment to "reforms". The country went through a foreign exchange crisis in the late 1980s and 1990s and family jewels were pawned because forex reserves plunged to unexpected lows. In July 1991, the RBI pledged 46.91 tonnes of gold with the Bank of England and Bank of Japan to raise \$400 million to meet its international obligations. The

*(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)*

# Power reforms — a distant dream

Unshackling of discoms will take away the leverage parties enjoy to serve their populist goal of giving cheap/free power to people at election time



UTTAM GUPTA

Since last year, there have been several announcements regarding the reformation of power distribution companies (discoms). They include the Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2020, Reforms-Linked, Result-Based Scheme for Distribution (RLRBS), and a special loan of ₹90,000 crore (subsequently raised to ₹130,000 crore) to discoms in 2020, and the new draft National Electricity Policy, 2021.

The key reform measures included (i) developing an efficient market for electricity distribution; (ii) de-license the distribution business, bring in competition, and give the consumer power to choose supplier (or 'open access'); (iii) direct benefit transfer (DBT) of subsidy; (iv) putting a cap on the hike in power tariff; (v) linking payments by discoms to letter of credit (LoC); (vi) denying grants or loan to loss-making discoms, etc.

An overwhelming share of power generated by PSUs such as the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), etc., independent power producers (IPPs), besides generating stations of State electricity boards (SEBs) is procured by discoms (these are mostly owned and controlled by State governments) under power purchase agreements (PPA). Most of these PPAs are long-term contracts up to 25 years. A mere five per cent of the electricity is traded.

The State governments order discoms to sell electricity to some preferred consumers, viz., poor households and farmers, either at a fraction of the cost of purchase, transmission, and distribution, or even free. On the units sold to these groups, they incur colossal under-recovery. This is aggravated by aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses - most of it is plain theft. In flatted tariff allowed to IPPs/PSUs under a cost-plus formula (under the PPAs) adds to the revenue shortfall.

A deadly cocktail of these three factors contributes to persistent and increasing losses of discoms. In 2015-16 it was ₹52,000 crore, Rs. 17,000 in 2017-18 (this reduction has to do with a massive bail-out given in November 2015 under Ujjwal Discom Assurance Yojana), ₹30,000 crore in 2019-20, and ₹58,000 crore in 2020-21.

In this backdrop, let us analyze the reform measures: (i) A pre-requisite for the development of an efficient market for electricity distribution is that a major chunk of power should be available for sale in the open market. But, with 95 per cent of electricity tied to PPAs, that too long-term, this is unthinkable.

About (ii), considering that the entire distribution network — transmission lines, feeder lines, transformers (that caters to households), industries, etc. — is owned and controlled by discoms, any talk of letting in private entities is a misnomer.

As for 'open access', a provision was made even under the amended Electricity Act (2003). Under this policy, it to be imple-



BY FIXING THE SURCHARGE AT A HIGH LEVEL AND NOT BOTHERING TO REDUCE IT (AS MANDATED UNDER THE ACT), THE STATE GOVERNMENTS ENSURED THAT POST-SWITCH, THE EFFECTIVE COST OF POWER TO THE CONSUMER — TARIFF CHARGED BY THE NEW SUPPLIER PLUS OAC — IS HIGHER THAN WHAT THEY PAY TO SEBs. THAT RENDERED THE SWITCH UNECONOMICAL

*(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)*



mented within five years of its enactment, i.e., by 2008, the choice was given to the bulk consumers (having consumption more than 1 megawatt) to choose their supplier. But another provision in the Act required such customers to pay an 'open access surcharge (OAC)' to the concerned SEB they wanted to leave.

State governments used this lacuna to the hilt to shield the SEBs who are prone to charging exorbitant tariffs from farmers' leaders. By fixing the surcharge at a high level and not bothering to reduce it (as mandated under the Act), they ensured that post-switch, the effective cost of power to the consumer — tariff charged by the new supplier plus OAC — is higher than what they pay to SEBs. That rendered the switch uneconomical.

They have not even spared the Railways which spends over ₹12,000 crore annually on the purchase of electricity. Under the Railways Act, it is allowed to distribute and supply power and is a 'deemed' licensee as it is buying electricity for its consumption and is exempt from payment of the surcharge. Yet, it has to pay OAC as States will not give 'Net' — a requirement for availing exemption.

Coming to (iii), under DBT, the State Government gives subsidies directly to the target beneficiaries, even as discoms fix tariff in a manner as to fully recover their cost of purchase, wheeling, and distribution, thereby avoiding any under-recovery on such sale. They also need not charge more from industries and businesses which they have

to do under the present regime to cross-subsidize supplies to preferred users. With direct cash transfer, discoms can be freed from state control which will help them reduce costs including by reining in theft. Under this regime, it will also be easier to implement 'open access'.

Despite these positive spin-offs, the Union Government has not shown the gumption to implement the DBT. In fact, following strong protests from farmers' leaders on its inclusion under the Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2020, it has even promised that the status quo will continue. If the existing system of supplies at heavily subsidized tariff or even without charge to farmers has to continue, then, logically, the same should apply on supplies to households as you cannot have two different methods of delivering subsidy to different sections of the society. So, there is no hope of the DBT ever seeing light of the day.

As for (iv), discoms can recover only up to 15 per cent of under-recovered power supply cost from other consumers. Simply put, if their under-recovery from supplies to farmers/households is say, 'X', then they will be allowed to recover only 0.15X by hiking tariff on supplies to industries and businesses. This will end up further bloating the losses of discoms (though industries will face a modest hike in tariff vis-a-vis the existing scenario of no cap). But this will not prompt them to set their house in order at all the more when they know that eventually, the Government will bail them out.

As for (v), under the LC

arrangement, the banks guarantee that a buyer's payment to a seller will be received on time and for the correct amount. If the buyer is unable to pay, the bank will be required to cover the full or remaining amount, which, in turn, it will recover from the buyer using all available legal means. Here, the buyer being the discom - owned by the State - it will be a daunting challenge for the bank. As for (vi), denial of loan to loss-making discoms will not make them feel the heat as experience shows that help reaches them by hook or crook.

To conclude, measures such as those mentioned under (iv), (v), and (vi) are merely cosmetic while the political brass does not have the gumption to act on other measures — as discussed under (i), (ii), and (iii) — which are real reforms. This is because it will require the unshackling of discoms and that will take away the leverage that all parties currently enjoy to serve their populist goal of giving cheap/free electricity to the people who matter at election time. No wonder that we hear proclamations about reforms only to justify mammoth capital infusion whenever discoms need salvaging.

Under UDAY (2015), discoms were given a package worth ₹400,000 crore but are still saddled with under-recovery of ₹0.42 on every unit of electricity sold and a debt of about ₹450,000 crore as on March 31, 2021. Under RLRBS, the government will be spending another ₹300,000 crore but with no hope of trimming under-recovery. The vicious cycle will continue.

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THESE PEOPLE (CONGRESS) WERE THE JAMES BOND OF SPYING (WHEN IN POWER). THEY SPIN A WEB OF SPYING WHEN IN GOVERNMENT.  
— UNION MINISTER  
MUKHTAR ABAS NAQVI



NO GOVERNMENT ALLOWS OTHERS TO SNOOP ON ITS PEOPLE, BUT THIS WAS ALLOWED TO AN ISRAELI COMPANY. IS SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY SAFE?  
— CONGRESS LEADER  
MALLIKARJUN KHARGE

# Thirty years later, 'reform' yet to happen

Liberalisation was not voluntary but was egged on by global lenders who would not lend without a firm Indian commitment on 'reforms'

Thirty years and India is still waiting for the dream to become real. The liberalization of the economy in 1991 is erroneously taken as being limited to divesting government assets and holdings in industry. Liberalisation was not a voluntary decision but was nudged by major lenders, the IMF and World Bank, who threatened to stop lending without a firm commitment to "reforms". The country went through a foreign exchange crisis in the late 1980s and 1990s and family jewels were pawned because forex reserves plunged to unexpected lows. In July 1991, the RBI pledged 46.91 tonnes of gold with the Bank of England and Bank of Japan to raise \$400 million to meet its international obligations. The



SHIVAJI SARKAR

reforms that meant losing government assets to the private sector started with a 'bang' but did not bring the private sector to par with the government. The reforms initiated by the then finance minister, Manmohan Singh, were not a roaring success but a piece of confusing policy that has dumped subsequent governments into a policy quagmire. While liberalizing the society from licence-permit raj was welcomed, the process of doing so gradually became complicated. Changes were made in industrial policy, monopolies law was annulled, import licensing was abolished, India joined WTO and TRIPS, quantitative restrictions on import of manufactured goods and farm products were removed, and current



account convertibility was introduced, business processes were eased, and the GST was introduced. But divestment of public assets caught all attention. Every government took pride in selling assets or being seen doing that. Still, the private sector is suspect in the eyes of the bureaucracy. It is still a mystery why a partial opening up was considered revolutionary. India is still not free of its socialist

mindset and a preference for government control on the pretext of 'concern for people's welfare'. The "reforms" worked a bit. But the pandemic impoverished 80 crore people. Growing joblessness during the lockdown pushed the middle class to the edge of poverty. This is reflected in the slow growth of the GDP. In 2020-21, India's economic growth slowed and contracted by 7.3 per cent, the NCAER says. Liberalisation in 1991 was followed by a series of ₹7 lakh crore scams - Harshad Mehta to Ketan Parekh, UTI, LIC (about ₹2 lakh crore), and a series of banks, leading to a JPC probe. The top scams are coal allocation (₹1.86 trillion), 2G spectrum (₹1.76

lakh crore), Waqf Board land (₹1.5 lakh crore), Commonwealth Games (₹70,000 crore), Telgi stamp (₹20,000 crore), Satyam (₹14,000 crore), and Hawala scandal (₹100 crore). Scams of such magnitude had never happened since Independence. Every divestment deal was also questioned. While the large private houses acquired these assets with loans from public sector banks, it also opened up an era of high bank losses (NPAs) particularly after the Lehman meltdown in 2007-08. The RBI Financial Stability Report (FSR) says despite banks writing off ₹23,786 crore loans in 2019-20, enabling the PSU banks to show lower NPAs, banks could go into severe stress as it fears the NPAs may

escalate to 16.2 per cent by September 2021 as borrowers are saddled with unpaid dues. Repeated reorganization and mergers of banks have not boosted confidence. The latest move to sell four major banks and LIC is not being seen as a happy event. Many buyers could be from the list of 50 major defaulters. Since 1991, government assets worth ₹3.63 lakh crore were divested. During 2014-19, ₹2.79 lakh crore worth assets were divested. The target set for 2020-21 is ₹2.1 lakh crore. The money received is adjusted in budgetary expenditure and is not known to have been used for building assets. In 2016, demonetization shook the economy. The cash flow was severely hit, affecting

sales of goods and commodities. People's purchasing power collapsed, delaying the post-pandemic industrial, real estate, and market recovery. It might lead to years of moderate to slow post-pandemic growth and that means a severe resource crunch. Thirty years since the reforms, the power sector is in a mess again and agriculture remains the mainstay of the economy. Have we made progress? Prime Minister Narendra Modi says his government is working for a targeted \$5-trillion economy. But former PM Manmohan Singh says that the future economic path is tougher than in 1991. Either way, the country must bite the reforms bullet and recast its policies keeping in mind growth in the next 30 years.

# Af Prez seeks defence of cities as Taliban advance

**Kabul:** The Afghan President on Monday bled the American troops' speedy pull-out for the worsening violence in his country and said that his administration would now focus on protecting provincial capitals and major urban areas in the face of the rapidly advancing Taliban.

Ashraf Ghani also urged lawmakers to back a national mobilisation drive against the

Taliban amid an intensifying war between the Taliban and Afghan government forces over the past few months as US and NATO troops complete their pullout from the war-torn country. An imported, hasty peace process a reference to Washington's push for negotiations between Kabul and the Taliban not only failed to bring peace but created doubt and ambiguity among Afghans, Ghani said in his address to Parliament.

The Afghan President arrived by helicopter for the extraordinary session of the house, called because of the dire situation on the ground. Ghani touched down at the Darul Aman Palace in Kabul

and inspected an honor guard before heading inside.

The Taliban are now trying to seize provincial capitals as US and NATO troops complete their pullout from the war-torn country. An imported, hasty peace process a reference to Washington's push for negotiations between Kabul and the Taliban not only failed to bring peace but created doubt and ambiguity among Afghans, Ghani said in his address to Parliament.

The Taliban do not believe in lasting or just peace, Ghani said. He predicted a sea change on the battlefield in the next six months that would push the Taliban back, without elaborating. He claimed that Afghan forces are up to the task and have the capacity to defeat the insurgents. But in past weeks, Afghan forces have struggled against the Taliban onslaught, and have often been left with-

out reinforcements and resupply. On Sunday, the Afghan armed forces spokesman, Gen. Ajmal Omar, said that the city's seventh district in southern and western Afghanistan face critical security situations.

Southern Kandahar the birthplace of the Taliban as well as Helmand and Herat provinces have witnessed several attacks.

Helmand provincial council chief Attullah Khan said the Taliban are also advancing in the provincial capital of Lashar Gah, and now have control over the city's seventh district. On Monday, elite Afghan commando units were dispatched to Lashar Gah to help

defend the city.

There has been relentless gunfire, air strikes and mortars in densely populated areas. Houses are being bombed, and many people are suffering severe injuries, said Sarah Leahy, Helmand coordinator for Doctors Without Borders.

The group, also known as the Medecins Sans Frontiers or MSF, said in a statement Monday that life in Lashar Gah was at a standstill as residents hunkered down inside their homes, afraid to venture out.

Some of our colleagues are staying overnight in the hospital as it's safer, but also so they can keep on treating patients," the organization said. The situation has been dire for

months but now it is even worse.

Faizullah, who like many other Afghans goes by one name, told The Associated Press over the phone that he fled Lashar Gah with his family and was now following the Helmand River to safety.

Clashes between the Taliban and Afghan forces have intensified, he said, and Afghan security forces are out of supplies and food in the city.

Back in Kabul, Ghani claimed his government has the financial and political support of the United States and the international community to turn the tide even as he urged the insurgents to rein in peace talks. **AP**

## Citing Taliban violence, US expands Afghan refugee program

**Washington:** The Biden administration on Monday expanded its efforts to evacuate at-risk Afghan citizens from Afghanistan as Taliban violence increases ahead of the US military pullout at the end of the month.

The State Department said it is widening the scope of Afghans eligible for refugee status in United States to include current and former employees of US-based news organizations, US-based aid and development agencies and other relief groups that receive US funding. Current and former employees of the US Government and the NATO military operation who don't meet the criteria for a dedicated program for such workers are also covered. **AP**

## Malaysia lawmakers protest Parliament closure as ploy by PM

**Kuala Lumpur:** Police blocked Opposition lawmakers from marching on Monday to protest a two-week lockdown of Malaysia's Parliament, which they consider another ploy for the embattled Prime Minister to dodge a no-confidence vote.

With a crucial parliamentary session due, Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin instead postponed it and Parliament will be shut for two weeks. The health ministry said Parliament was deemed a high-risk venue because of 11 COVID-19 cases detected among staff and others were

suspected to be the fast-spreading delta variant.

Lawmakers and activists questioned the timing of the announcement of Parliament's closure, which came after the risk rebuked Muhyiddin's government on Thursday for misleading Parliament on the status of ordinances issued during the seven-month coronavirus state of emergency. The opposition immediately filed a motion of no-confidence against Muhyiddin that was expected to have been raised Monday.

## Florida breaks record for Covid hospitalisations

**Orlando:** A day after it recorded the most new daily cases since the start of the pandemic, Florida has broken a previous record for current hospitalisations set more than a year ago before vaccines were available.

The Sunshine State had 10,207 people hospitalised with confirmed Covid-19 cases,

according to data reported to the US Department of Health & Human Services.

The previous record was from July 23, 2020, more than a half-year before vaccinations began to take hold. At the time, when Florida had 10,170 hospitalisations, according to the Florida Hospital Association. Florida is now leading the

## Iran records highest number of daily Covid cases

**Tehran:** Iran on Monday reported more than 37,000 new coronavirus infections, the country's single-day record so far in the pandemic, state media reported. State TV said health workers registered 37,189 new Covid-19 cases since Sunday - surpassing the previous daily record of 34,951 infections reported on Tuesday. Also,

# Millions under Covid lockdown; China battles Delta Variant outbreak

**Beijing:** Millions of people were confined to their homes in China on Monday as the country tried to contain its largest coronavirus outbreak in months, including seven positive tests found in Wuhan, where the virus first emerged in late 2019.

China reported 55 new locally transmitted cases on Monday as an outbreak of the fast-spreading Delta variant reached over 20 cities in more than a dozen provinces.

The Wuhan cluster came after the official daily tally was released, but it was confirmed by state media which said the infections had been traced to a train.

"The seven were identified as migrant workers," Xinhua reported, citing Covid-19 prevention and control officials.

Major cities including Beijing have now tested millions of residents while cordoning off residential compounds and placing close contacts under quarantine.

Authorities in the capital

met and agreed on the need to "raise vigilance, take strict precautions and defend (the city) to the death, sparing no expense," in comments put up by the Beijing Government.

Elsewhere, over 1.2 million residents were placed under strict lockdown for the next three days in the central city of Zhuzhou in Hunan province Monday, as authorities roll out a citywide testing and vaccination campaign, according to an official statement.

"The situation is still grim and complicated," the Zhuzhou government said. China had previously boasted of its success in bringing domestic cases down to virtually zero after the coronavirus first emerged in Wuhan, allowing the economy to rebound. But the latest outbreak, linked to a cluster in the city of Nanjing where nine cleaners at an international airport tested positive on July 20, is threatening that success with more than 360 domestic cases reported in the past two weeks. **AFP**

**RE-TENDER NOTICE**  
No.SSA/CWB/KGBV-VI to X/254/2020/ 7042 Dated -26/07/2021

The Mission Director [C], SSA, Assam, invites fresh bids for the following work from registered contractors (Class-I [A, B & C]) under A.P.W.D. (Building) Assam, having experience of similar nature of work.

Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. [www.assamenders.gov.in](http://www.assamenders.gov.in) and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 02/08/2021 (04.30 PM) to 12/08/2021 (2.00 PM)

The bidders must be enrolled in [www.assamenders.gov.in](http://www.assamenders.gov.in)

Name of Work	Package No	Place	Approx. Value of Work	Time of completion	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	E.M.D. to be drawn in favour of	Tender Cost
CONSTRUCTION OF KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA (CLASS VI TO X) (ACADEMIC BLOCK ASSAM TYPE WITH RCC HOSTEL BUILDING (3-2) (KGBV TYPE II), SSA, ASSAM	1S	SOUTH SALMA RA, S.S. MANKA CHAR	Rs.1,91,28,90 0.00 (Per site)	12 (twelve months)	Rs.3,82,57,00 (for General) Rs.1,91,28,90 (for reserved Category) (PER SITE)	The Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Guwahati-19	Rs.5000.00

Janasanyog No. CF/813/21

Sd/- Mission Director I/c, SSA, Assam, Kailashpura, Guwahati-19

**DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SW-I)**  
**OVER HEAD TANK: OPP. BHARTI COLLEGE**  
**JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI-58.**  
e-mail: [eesw1janakpuri@gmail.com](mailto:eesw1janakpuri@gmail.com)

**"STOP CORONA; Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"**  
Press N.I.T. NO: 16 SW/1 (2021-22)

S. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (INR)	Date of release of tender in E-procurement solution	Last deadline of receipt of tender through E-procurement solution
1.	Replacement of sewerage system by Providing Laying 550 mm dia sewer line from Tax Factory road to Sankh Chowk, Vishwas Park in Pitham Gola Sector AC-37 under E&S&B.	25,09,237/-	2021-08-26/24-11 up to 31.07.2021	17.08.2021 up to 3.00 pm

Further details in this regard can be seen at (<https://e-procurement.delhi.gov.in>)

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)  
Advt. No. J.S.V. 238/2021-22

Sd/- (Munish Kumar)  
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SW-I)

**JASCH INDUSTRIES LIMITED**  
Regd. Off. : 502, Block C, NDM-2, NSP, Pitampura, Delhi 110034 CIN : L24302DL1985PLC383771  
Website : [www.jaschindustries.com](http://www.jaschindustries.com), Email : [accounts@jasch.biz](mailto:accounts@jasch.biz)

Extract of Unaudited Ind AS Financial Results for the Quarter ended on 30th June 2021 (Standalone & Consolidated Financial Results under Regulation 47(1)(B) of Listing Regulations) (₹ in Lakh)

Sl No	Particulars	Standalone		Consolidated*		Quarter Ended		Year Ended	
		30.06.21	31.03.21	30.06.20	31.03.21	30.06.21	31.03.21	30.06.21	31.03.21
		Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited	Audited
1	Total Income from Operations.	3704.21	4984.58	1488.66	13567.63	13077.64	3704.21	-	-
2	Profit before interest, Depreciation & Taxes (EBITDA)	512.70	754.17	181.40	1909.27	1154.72	512.70	-	-
3	Net Profit for the Period (before Tax and Exceptional Items)	430.37	669.93	85.37	1561.97	620.02	430.37	-	-
4	Net Profit for the Period before Tax (after Exceptional Items)	430.37	669.93	85.37	1561.97	620.02	430.37	-	-
5	Net Profit for the period after Tax (after Exceptional Items)	310.37	493.37	63.88	1135.20	453.72	310.37	-	-
6	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)	310.37	493.37	63.88	1135.20	453.72	310.37	-	-
7	Equity Share Capital	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	-	-
8	Reserves	6129.21	5818.84	4720.45	5818.84	4656.57	6129.21	-	-
9	Earnings Per Share (of ₹10/- each) Basic & Diluted:	2.74	4.35	0.56	10.02	4.00	2.74	-	-

**Notes:**  
1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosures Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the website of Stock Exchanges at [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) and also on Company's website at [www.jaschindustries.com](http://www.jaschindustries.com).  
2. The financial results of the Company have been prepared in accordance with Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS).  
3. Figures for the previous periods have been regrouped, wherever necessary, to conform to the current period's classification.  
4. "The Financial Results of Jasch Industries Ltd ("JIL") have been consolidated with that of Jasch Gauging Technologies Ltd ("JGTL") - a wholly owned subsidiary of JIL which was incorporated into on 25-05-2021 and received approval to commence business on 06-07-2021. Therefore, standalone and consolidated figures as at 30-06-2021 are the same. Since JGTL was not in existence on 31-03-2021, a dash "-" appears in the relevant column of consolidated data as on 31-03-2021.

Sonipat, 24th July 2021 **sd/- (J. K. GARG) CHAIRMAN & MANAGING DIRECTOR**

## UK eases travel curbs as industry lobbies for more

**London:** Britain opened its borders to vaccinated travellers from the US and European Union on Monday as travel industry leaders urged the Government to further ease restrictions and allow people to enjoy the benefits of a Covid inoculation programme.

The new rules came into effect amid reports that Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government may add a new category to Britain's traffic light system of travel restrictions, a move industry officials said would make many people decide to stay home. As of Monday, fully vaccinated travellers from destinations on Britain's "amber list" are allowed to enter the country without self-isolating for up to 10 days. **AP**

## UK calls Iranian ambassador over oil tanker attack

**London:** Britain summoned Iran's ambassador to the Foreign Office on Monday after an attack on a merchant vessel off the coast of Oman.

James Cleverly, the minister for the Middle East, summed up the attack as a "serious breach of international law" and a "direct challenge to the rule of law."

Iran's ambassador to the UK, Mr. Hossein Baharvand, was summoned to the Foreign Office on Thursday, which killed a British national and a Roman.

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## Skipper: Documents show no coverup in submarine sinking

**Portland:** The release of about 3,000 pages of documents delving into the deadliest submarine disaster in US history has not yielded any sinister effort to hide the truth, a retired Navy skipper says.

Instead, documents show the Navy's policies and procedures failed to keep pace with fast-moving technological advances during the Cold War, allowing a series of failures that led to the sinking of the USS Thresher on April 10, 1963, said retired Capt. James Bryant, **AP**

## Pelosi, Democrats call on Biden to extend eviction ban

**AP ■ WASHINGTON**

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the House Democratic leaders on Sunday called on the administration to immediately extend the nation's eviction moratorium, calling it a "moral imperative" to prevent Americans from being put out of their homes during a COVID-19 surge.

An estimated 3.6 billion Americans are at risk of eviction, some as soon as Monday.

Congress was unable to pass legislation swiftly to extend the ban, which expired at midnight Saturday, and the Democratic leaders said in a statement that it was now up to President Joe Biden's administration to act.

## Death toll from floods in China's Henan reach 302

**Beijing:** The death toll from floods triggered by torrential rains in China's Henan province has increased to 302 as of Monday, according to the information office of the local Government.

Another 50 people remain missing, Xinhua news agency quoted the office as saying.

A total of 292 people were confirmed dead and 47 missing in Zhengzhou, the provincial capital.

There were seven fatalities in Xinxiang city, while Pingdingshan and Luobe reported two and one death, respectively. **IANS**

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

Large scale riots occurred in February-2020 in North East District, Delhi. The rioters had indulged in violence and arson to public and private properties and inflicted injuries upon a number of public persons and police personnel.

In this regard, criminal cases are being investigated in various police stations. General public is hereby requested to help identify the culprits who indulged in these riotous activities. Any information leading to arrest of rioters, the identity of the informant will be kept secret. Delhi Police reserves the right to decide actual information and its decision will be final.

Following persons were seen in Video Footage during the riots which took place near Sharmshan Ghat, Kabil Nagar, Delhi on 25.02.2020.

The information can be given in person to the SHO/IO of the respective police station or can be communicated on phone number 011-22822746, 011-22826608, 011-22829335 or on email id [dcnpnortheast-d@nic.in](mailto:dcnpnortheast-d@nic.in) and [adcp1-northeast-d@nic.in](mailto:adcp1-northeast-d@nic.in) S.H.O. P.S. Welcome, North East, Delhi

DP/938/NE/2021

# PM Modi launches digital payment solution e-RUPI

Initiative starts with facility for health services

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday launched e-RUPI, a person and purpose specific digital payment solution that is aimed at improving transparency and targeted delivery of benefits. Over the years, several programmes have been launched to ensure that the benefits reach its intended beneficiaries in a targeted and leak proof manner, with limited touch points between the Government and the beneficiary. The concept of electronic voucher takes forward this vision of good governance. To begin with, e-RUPI facility is available for health services and will be expanded to other segments.

"Today the country is giving a new dimension to digital governance. E-RUPI voucher is going to play a huge role in making digital transactions, and DBT more effective. This will help everyone in



Prime Minister Narendra Modi launches e-RUPI in New Delhi

targeted, transparent and leak proof manner, with limited touch points between the Government and the beneficiary. The concept of electronic voucher takes forward this vision of good governance. To begin with, e-RUPI facility is available for health services and will be expanded to other segments.

Not only the government, if any general organisation or organisation wants to help someone in their treatment, their education for any other work, then they will be able to give e-RUPI instead of cash, he said. This will ensure that the money given by him is used for the same work for which that amount has been given, he added.

e-RUPI is a cashless and contactless instrument for dig-

ital payment, an official statement said, adding, it is a QR code or SMS string-based e-voucher, which is delivered to the mobile of the beneficiaries. The users of this seamless one-time payment mechanism will be able to redeem the voucher without a card, payments app or internet banking access, at the service provider. e-RUPI is developed by the National Payments Corporation of India in its UPI platform, in collaboration with the Department of Health & Family Welfare and National Health Authority.

# Markets march higher on strong earnings, global cues

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks opened the week with robust gains on Monday as strong corporate results, supportive macroeconomic data and a bullish trend overseas turbocharged sentiment.

Auto stocks were propelled by recovery in July sales numbers, while IT counters also saw brisk buying. The 30-share BSE Sensex rallied 363.79 points or 0.69 per cent to finish at 52,950.63, while the broader NSE Nifty surged 122.10 points or 0.77 per cent to 15,885.15.

Titan was the top gainer in the Sensex pack in its consolidated net profit at Rs 5.31 crore for the June quarter. HDFC gained 0.88 per cent after the country's largest mortgage lender reported a 31 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit at Rs 5.31 crore for the June quarter.

On the other hand, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, NTPC, Dr Reddy's and HDFC Bank were among the laggards, shedding up to 1.66 per cent.

Domestic equities re-

# Rupee gains 8 paise to close at 74.34 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee gained 8 paise to close at 74.34 against the US dollar on Monday, supported by a firm trend in domestic equities and a weak American currency. Forex traders said the rupee is trading in a narrow range as investors are awaiting the RBI's monetary policy meeting outcome for further cues.

Further, modest recovery in financials, IT and pharma also supported market, he said, adding that realty stocks were in for a sharp improvement in property registrations in Mumbai for July.

# Reliance slips 59 places on Fortune list, SBI jumps 16 notches

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's oil-to-telecom conglomerate Reliance Industries Ltd slipped 59 places to rank 155th on the 2021 Fortune Global 500 list released on Monday.

Reliance took a beating on the rankings as revenues dropped owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is its lowest ranking since 2017.

Walmart continues to top the Fortune list with a revenue of USD 524 billion, followed by China's State Grid at USD 384 billion.

With USD 280 billion revenue, Amazon came in at the third spot, replacing Chinese giant, China National Petroleum was ranked fourth and Sinopec Group fifth.

Reliance's revenue fell 25.3 per cent to USD 63 billion, because oil prices plunged in the second quarter of 2020 when the global spread of the pandemic wiped away demand.

Other Indian oil companies on the list too slipped ranks as their revenues tumbled because of the fall in oil prices.

State Bank of India (SBI)

moved up 16 places to rank 205 but Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) dropped 61 places to 212th rank.

This is the second straight year of SBI improving the global ranking. It had moved up 15 places last year.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) was ranked 243rd, 53 notches lower than last year's ranking.

Raise exports worth another firm that improved its ranking with a massive 114 positions jump to 348th rank.

Tata Motors slipped 20 places to rank 357 and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) fell to 394 from 309 last year.

Fortune said companies are ranked by total revenues for their respective fiscal years ended on or before March 31, 2021.

While SBI had a revenue of USD 52 billion, IOC had revenue of USD 50 billion, ONGC had revenue of USD 46 billion and Rajesh Exports USD 35 billion.

"Walmart claimed the top spot for the eighth consecutive year, for the 16th time since 1995," Fortune said.

# Exports up 47.91 pc in July to \$35.17 bn

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country's exports grew by 47.19 per cent to USD 35.17 billion on account of healthy growth in the out-bound shipments of petroleum, engineering, and gems and jewellery, according to the provisional data of the commerce ministry.

Imports during the month also rose by 59.38 per cent to USD 46.40 billion, leaving a trade deficit of USD 11.23 billion. Exports of petroleum, engineering, and gems and jewellery in July increased to USD 3.82 billion, USD 2.82 billion and USD 1.95 billion respectively, the data showed.

However, exports of oilseeds, rice and meat, dairy and poultry products have recorded negative growth in the month under review.

Imports of petroleum, crude, and products rose by 97 per cent to USD 6.35 billion. Similarly, imports of gold, iron and steel, and other metals rose by 135.5 per cent to USD 2.42 billion and pearls, precious and semi-precious stones inbound shipments stood at USD 1.68 billion in July.

However, imports of transport vehicles, electrical goods and silver have recorded negative growth in July.

# Net tax revenues rise 5 pc in FY21: FM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government's net tax revenues grew 5 per cent in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2021, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday.

The net tax (sum of direct and indirect taxes) revenue in 2020-21 was over ₹14.24 lakh crore, a nearly 5 per cent growth from ₹13.56 lakh crore in the previous financial year. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Sitharaman said the Government has taken many steps to boost both direct and indirect tax revenue collection, through curbing tax evasion, widening the tax base, and simplifying tax laws, promoting voluntary compliance, reducing litigation and promoting digital transactions. However, non-tax revenue collection dipped 36 per cent to ₹2.08 lakh crore in 2020-21 from ₹3.27 lakh crore in 2019-20. The government's net revenue (tax-non tax) collection in the last financial year declined 3.09 per cent to ₹16.32 lakh crore.

# Mini Ipe takes charge as Managing Director of Life Insurance Corporation of India

Mini Ipe has taken charge as Managing Director of Life Insurance Corporation of India on 2nd August, 2021. She was appointed as Managing Director vide Government of India notification dated 5th July, 2021.

Mini Ipe is a post graduate in Commerce from Andhra University and has joined LIC in 1986 as a Direct Recruit Officer.

She has rich and diverse experience in LIC having worked in various capacities. Prior to taking charge as Managing Director, she was Executive Director, Legal Department, LIC of India. Mini Ipe was the first woman Zonal Manager (In-charge) of LIC and headed SCZO, Hyderabad. She has also worked as Executive Director (International Relations), Director & CEO of LICHL Financial Services Ltd. and was instrumental in taking LICHL Financial Services Ltd. to new heights in business revenue and profits during her tenure. She has also worked as Regional Manager (P&IR) and Regional Manager (Estate) of Western Zone.

# Govt sanctioned prosecution in 366 cases related to CSR norms violations: Sitharaman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prosecution proceedings in 366 cases related to violation of CSR provisions under the companies law, the Government said on Monday. Under the Companies Act, 2013, certain class of profitable entities is required to shell out at least two per cent of their three-year average annual net profit towards CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities.

As part of amendments to the act, non-compliance with CSR provisions has been made "civil wrong" with effect from January 22, 2021. "Whenever any violation of CSR provisions is reported, action against such non-compliant companies are initiated as per provisions of the Act after due examination of records and following due process of law. All CSR related defaults are compounding.

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# NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE (Through e-Tendering)

Name of work with its location	Provision of Automatic fire suppression for more than 4000 cable station of Delhi Division.
App. Cost of the work	Rs. 2,04,30,214/- only
Address of the office	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer, C/Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annex-1, DMR Office, New Delhi-110056.
Date & time for opening of tenders	Under e-tendering, opening date & time: 25.08.2021 up to 15.00 hrs.
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website <a href="http://www.nwrail.co.in">www.nwrail.co.in</a> & Notice board at SAT Branch, 3rd Floor, DMR Office, State Enclave Road, New Delhi-110056.
SS-588-Sig-16-M-TENDER-1364	Dated: 02.08.2021 1726/2021
Serving Customers with a Smile	

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is to inform to the public at large that Mohd. Heludhulla S/o. Mohd. Zahiduddin who has purchased the Residential House No. 16, and area measuring 66 sq. yds. at Old Rajinder Park, New Delhi-110028, has been found to be in possession of the said property in the name of Sh. Chandan Kumar, who is a partner in the firm Sh. Chandan Kumar & Co. Pvt. Ltd. In favour of Mrs. Sharda Gupta W/o. Mr. Mahesh Chandra Gupta in respect of the said property, the Court of Sessions, District Court, New Delhi-110028, has issued a decree dated 16.06.2021, whereby the said property has been found to be in possession of the said property in the name of Sh. Chandan Kumar, who is a partner in the firm Sh. Chandan Kumar & Co. Pvt. Ltd. In favour of Mrs. Sharda Gupta W/o. 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## CovaxinWorks

Covaxin is effective against the Delta plus variant of COVID-19, claims Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in its study released on Monday. Covaxin is developed by the Bharat Biotech in collaboration with ICMR and National Institute of Pune. The study states that individuals who were fully immunised (with two doses) didn't show significant fold-reduction in the NAb titer against Delta, Delta AY.1 and B.1.617.3.\*



## DOCYARD

DR SHAILESH JAIN

Principal Consultant,  
Neurosciences

NEW DELHI

## It's complicated



COVID in the last 18 months has shown a devastating effect on human life. Apart from affecting the lung, it also affected different parts of the body. However, it mainly affects the lung and increases level of ferritin, D-Dimer, CRP and cytokines eg IL-6. High levels of all these chemicals may have catastrophic effect on vital organs.

Neurological involvement is a spectrum of loss of olfactory senses to necrotising encephalitis and involving almost every aspect of central (CNS) and peripheral nervous system (PNS). Prevalence is around 0.1-1 per cent of COVID infections. Most complications are seen by second to fourth week of COVID infection. CNS-related events were more common than PNS manifestations. Common CNS manifestations are headache, disturbance in consciousness, dizziness, acute cerebrovascular disease, ataxia, and seizures. PNS symptoms are impairment in taste, smell, and vision. Musculoskeletal symptoms were observed in form of myalgia and nonspecific pain.

Stroke comprises of 60-70 per cent, encephalopathy 30-40 per cent and neuropathy around 6 per cent and all other neurological complications in 0.1 per cent cases of neurological cases related to COVID.

Neurological involvement is mainly categorised into CNS and PNS involvement. CNS involvements are in form of stroke, encephalopathy, delirium, psychosis, necrotising encephalitis and fungal infections eg. Fungal abscess or rhinocerebral mucormycosis. PNS involvements are facial palsy, acute inflammatory demyelinating neuropathy (AIDP) and paraesthesia in all limbs and myalgia.

Strokes are ischemic type usually due to large vessel occlusion with high degree of morbidity or mortality and it is more prevalent with diabetic, hypertensive and Coronary artery disease. It is also associated with large coronary occlusion or sudden cardiac death upto six-eight weeks after COVID.

Encephalopathy or delirium or psychoses were seen by third to fourth week of COVID. It is a non-specific term used to describe the acute impairment of brain function which presents clinically as alteration in the level of consciousness and triggered by viral infections. It is completely reversible with appropriate medications. Neuropathy may be in form of facial palsy or severe weakness of all limbs in form of G B Syndrome. Both are completely reversible with medications. Headache, myalgia and paraesthesia and fatigue are minor symptoms and it disturbs sleep but doesn't cause any disability. These recover with time and medications.

Some unusual complications are necrotising encephalitis and myelitis. They have high level of morbidity and mortality. Encephalitis is a serious condition with significant impact and burden. About 20-50 per cent of encephalitis cases are caused by viruses, and half of the cases have no known etiology. The disease causes a variety of neurological abnormalities, such as altered consciousness, hallucination, confusion, abnormal movement, and aphasia.

Smoking accelerates the process of atherosclerosis all over body and leads to endothelial dysfunction, thrombus formation and hypercoagulable state. It also aggravates dyslipidemia.

## COVIDCARE

**COCOA:** Cocoa is considered to be one of the best medicinal foods. It is full of flavonoids. It helps control diabetes and cocoa based products are advised to be included in the daily diet to improve the insulin resistance and level of glucose in the body.

Cocoa powder is good for the heart and prevents fatal blood clots. Hence, avoiding severe cardiac problems.

The flavonoid and anti-oxidants in cocoa beans lowers blood pressure and improves the elasticity of veins and blood vessels. Cocoa is great for the skin. It is also considered to cure cancer—used particularly in the cure of prostate and colon cancer. It has anti-depressant properties that can help prevent mental exertion and facilitate certain physiological processes and elevate the mood.

With rains come plethora of diseases including leptospirosis,  
DR TRUPTI GILADA tells SHALINI SAKSENA

Even though the monsoon brings with it the much-needed relief from the scorching heat, it does have a down side as well. Dengue and malaria are some of the diseases that are common during this season. Then there are diseases that come due to flooding and water-logging of low-lying areas. One such disease is leptospirosis.

## WHAT IS IT

It is mainly a monsoon associated infection associated with exposure to water, soil or mud contaminated with the urine from infected animals. It is caused by a bacteria called Leptospira. It is carried by many animals. It lives in their kidneys and is found in the urine and faeces.

## WHO IS AT RISK?

Anyone who wades through flooded water is at risk. When there is water-logging, the water gets contaminated by bacteria because of the mixing of the stool or urine. The bacteria then enters the body through skin cuts or abrasions when a person wades through this contaminated water, and occasionally through the lining of the mouth, nose and eyes. Farmers are also at high risk as they may get exposed to the urine and excreta of field rats while working.

## SYMPTOMS

Symptoms usually develop after five to 14 days following exposure. The most common initial symptoms of this disease include either few or all of these symptoms: Fever, severe headache, sore muscles, chills, vomiting, and red eyes. Since these mimic other monsoon-related illnesses like malaria and dengue, clinical diagnosis can sometimes be difficult.

Few people with leptospirosis can develop severe disease and may need hospitalisation. This can include kidney failure, jaundice, liver failure, bleeding and respiratory complications. Lesser common complications include meningitis where the lining of the brain and spinal cord gets involved and causes altered sensorium.



ANYONE WHO WADES THROUGH FLOODED WATER IS AT RISK. WHEN THERE IS WATER-LOGGING, THE WATER GETS CONTAMINATED BY BACTERIA BECAUSE OF THE MIXING OF THE STOOL OR URINE. THE BACTERIA THEN ENTERS THE BODY THROUGH SKIN CUTS OR ABRASIONS

gits where the lining of the brain and spinal cord gets involved and causes altered sensorium.

## TREATMENT

This disease is commonly treated with antibiotics. Treatment is thought to be most effective when detected early. The testing can take some time and the disease may be severe in some patients. A doctor may therefore sometimes choose to start antibiotics prior to confirming the diagnosis with tests. However, some people recover spontaneously without antibiotics.

## LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Most individuals recover from leptospirosis without further sequelae. But in some individuals who were undiagnosed and untreated in the early or acute illness, there can be long-term effects. People can have a chronic-fatigue-like illness that lasts for months. Others can have persistent headaches, depression or other neurological complaints. Occasionally the bacteria can persist in the eyes and cause chronic eye complaints.

## PREVENTION

As far as possible, avoid wading through puddles and water-logged areas. Wear well covered footwear in monsoon. Cover any cuts and abrasions with waterproof dressings. Wash hands and legs with soap, as leptospira bacteria are quickly killed by soap, disinfectants and drying. Rodent control is of paramount importance and requires efforts both at individual and government level. Prompt cleaning up of garbage dumps and removing food sources that are close to housing is essential. Appropriate personal protective gear for those who work with animals or on the farms (like waterproof boots).

Those who may have been exposed to the bacteria because they waded through floods must contact their doctor immediately. The doctor may prescribe certain antibiotics (like Doxycycline) that can be taken to prevent the disease.

## A DOSE FOR YOUR CLOTHES

MUSBA HASHMI speaks with SASHA BOSE, Director & CEO of Nanochemiqs Pvt Ltd, about the nano tech application that allows garments to not only be protective in nature but also makes it long lasting

■ What was the idea behind the inception of Faibr-x?

Faibr-x was conceptualised on the idea of safe space for every human and child. Clothes are the biggest carrier of virus and bacteria and we strongly believe that clothes can also be the biggest protector against both. Faibr-x was conceptualised to add an element of protection, certified protection in this case, to our daily wear clothes to protect us against virus, bacteria and insects including mosquitoes. And to be honest, this was called for by the situation caused by the COVID pandemic. Now we may have started to move out of our houses but it is still not safe, the pandemic isn't entirely over yet and we do need an extra line of defence against this virus.

■ How is it different from already treated antiviral clothes?

Faibr-x uses nanotechnology to impart protective nature to garments against virus and bacteria. The protective finish as added to garments is done on a nano level (1 nanometre is 10<sup>-9</sup> metre) wherein the protective finish is applied on the fibre of the cloth. This nano level application allows the garment to not only be completely protective in nature but also makes it long lasting. A once treated garment would remain protective even after 10 washes. Here we are not fighting a specific virus, we are taking down all kinds of viruses and disease causing bacteria. Along with the bacteria that cause odour. This is what sets the clothes treated with Faibr-x apart from already treated antiviral clothes.

■ What are the challenges that you face?

Biggest challenge is to make the end consumer understand and acknowledge our solution. We realise Faibr-x is a first of its kind solution and therefore many people may not be aware of our vision and the impact of our solution. With that said, we are making a constant stride forward, towards brand awareness and making people realise how significant can Faibr-x prove to be during this pandemic.

■ How safe are Faibr-x treatments for various individuals?

Faibr-x nanotechnology and its ingredients are certified by Oeko-Tex Class 1 and have been evaluated by CDCO, ISO, and NABL labs human and environment safety. Non metal, no silver, no itching treatment is safest not only for various individuals but even for newborn and young toddlers.

■ How can one get their clothes Faibr-x treated?

As mentioned above, we have tied up with grocery stores, medical stores, dry cleaners, and departmental stores that act as collection points for us. People can drop their clothes with these stores, from where they would be picked up and sent for Faibr-x treatment. And then returned.

■ How does the people's response to such treated clothes?

People's response to the treated clothes has been positive so far. Our services have been perceived by our customer base as a unique concept of protection. People do feel donning Faibr-x treated clothes acts as a defence mechanism against virus and bacteria. Customers have been happy with the affordability and the accessibility of our services, given we have collaborated with local grocery stores and dry cleaners, we are easily accessible.

## Only 0.01 per cent Indians consent to donate

Organ donation in India is only just beginning to take off — reason for the delay being lack of awareness, spiritual belief of life after death, and generally negative attitudes towards organ donation, says RAGHAV KHANNA

Thousands of lives can be improved through organ and tissue transplants, enabling people to live better, and in many cases, survive. So, why are only 0.01 per cent of Indians consenting to donate their organs after their death?

Organ donation is the process of retrieving or procuring an organ legally with the intention of being used to medically help someone in need. Consent is given either by the donor while they're still alive, or after death by their Next of Kin. First the organ is recovered, or harvested, before being transplanted into the recipient in need. Organ donation in India is regulated by the 1994 Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act. The act aims to control the removal, storage, and transplantation of organs and prevents any commercial dealings, while the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation facilitates procurement, allotment, and distribution of organs within India. With a budget of ₹149.5 crore, the Government implemented the

National Organ Transplant Programme for promoting organ donation.

Despite the Government identifying need for organ donation, there is a disparity between demand and low supply. Organ donation in India is only just beginning to take off — reason for the delay being lack of awareness, spiritual belief of life after death, and generally negative attitudes towards organ donation. Donation is encouraged as a charitable act that saves or enhances life; therefore, it requires no action on the part of the religious group.

India's Statistical Data as of 2015 shows that in response to the demand for 1.75 lakhs of kidney transplants, only 5000 transplants were completed. With 50,000 people dying of terminal liver disease, only 1000 got transplants. These statistics are even more distressing in organs like hearts and lungs. About 0.5 million people in India die every year from causes that could have been prevented by organ transplants that were not available to them.

## Government should undertake the responsibility for establishing proper infrastructure to facilitate speedy transport and harvesting of organs

Organ donation rates in India sit at 0.01 per cent, a minuscule figure in comparison to countries like Croatia's which sits at 36.5 per cent and Spain's at 35.3 per cent.

One donation from a deceased whose brain gave way before their heart can save lives of up to eight people who are suffering from end stage organ failures. If India's donation rates were to be improved to one donation per million deaths, it would satisfy the country's organ requirement completely.

The process of pledging is simple. A donor card is provided to a person who is willing to donate the organs after death. Donor cards are not a legally binding document — it is only an expression of a person's willingness to be a donor. At the time of organ donation, the family of the patient will make the final decision on whether to donate organs or not. Any person willing to donate his/her organs can do so by filling out the donor consent form available on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India website.

Government of India should undertake the responsibility for establishing proper infrastructure — it is only an expression of a person's willingness to be a donor. At the time of organ donation, the family of the patient will make the final decision on whether to donate organs or not. Any person willing to donate his/her organs can do so by filling out the donor consent form available on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India website.

The writer is a final year student of Sri Ram College of Commerce, University of Delhi

## INBRIEF

## SIGN OF ENDOMETRIOSIS

Endometriosis is an often painful disorder in which tissue similar to the tissue that normally lines the inside of your uterus — the endometrial — grows outside your uterus. Endometriosis most commonly involves your ovaries, fallopian tubes and the tissue lining your pelvis. Rarely, endometrial tissue may spread beyond pelvic organs.

Dr. Sharda, professor and HOD of Obstetrics and gynaecology department, Sharda Hospital, said at the time of endometriosis "complaints of painful menstruation, cramping, painful sex, constipation, back pain, leg pain, pain while urinating, and rectal bleeding. It can affect women of any age. It's a long-term condition that can have a significant impact on one woman's life and also the main cause of ovarian cancer."

Foods rich in Omega-3 fatty acids, fresh fruits and vegetables, avoiding intake of alcohol and caffeine, avoid stress and fatty foods add regular exercise and yoga in your routine that helps in to resolve the problem and if it is not treated on time it leads to infertility or heavy bleeding during the time of menstruation and having pregnancy at an older age. "Primary treatment of this disease and if it is not diagnosed at an early stage then surgical treatment is the option. Usually, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are used to relieve pain. If symptoms are severe and women do not plan to become pregnant, for most women with moderate to severe endometriosis, the most effective treatment is removing endometrial tissue and endometriosis," says Dr. Goel.



## ONE STEP AT A TIME

PRATIK SUD advises caution against exerting yourself too much after recovering from COVID-19



Exercise is an important part of recovery after falling prey to COVID-19. As the number of COVID-positive cases is on the rise, remember that irrespective of how restless you may feel after being restricted to your home, if you were stricken by the disease, you should take it easy and remember to act only natural to take some time to achieve the fitness level you possessed before you got infected.

Generally, doctors recommend a break of three-six months, even after the symptoms subside, depending on the severity of the infection in the patient. Provided below are some guidelines to ease your transition to the active lifestyle you once led.

- Always warm up before and cool down after exercising. Begin with breathing exercises and mild walking. You will be shocked to see how you gasp for breath even after walking for 100 metres.
- Wear comfortable clothes that



circulate air to help you breathe normally. Also, wear comfortable shoes for free movement.

■ Eat healthy and nutritious food in sufficient quantities an hour before the exercise. Forget about dieting post-COVID-19 illness.

■ Staying hydrated while recovering from the illness is imperative. Ensure that you drink ample water before and after exercising.

■ Don't exhaust yourself by exercising in hot weather. Try working out early in the morning or in the evening. If by chance you can't work out in the morning, then meditate during the afternoon, but don't indulge in rough workout sessions.

■ At the same time, avoid exercising indoors with the air conditioner on. Extreme cold weather can leave you breathless which can lead to an uneven flow of blood in the vessels and stressed muscles.

Doctors claim that weakness can last up to six months after recovering, depending on a person's immune system and energy levels. If your friend can run 20-25 laps of the field post-recovery, doesn't mean that your body can also tolerate the same.

Immediately stop working out if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Nausea
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Breathlessness is common while exercising. However, stop if the breathlessness worsens and doesn't subside even after resting
- Excessive sweating

- Tightness in the chest area
- Increased pain especially in the arms and jaw

The moment you experience any uncommon symptoms, you should stop exercising and contact your doctor immediately. There is no harm in discussing the symptoms with your fitness expert as well. Remember, medical staff and doctors are there for our assistance.

The best way to start exercising is by warming up. Mild exercises can loosen the muscles and increase blood flow. This will help in exercising properly without any room for injuries, soreness or uneasiness in the body.

Few exercising tips that can loosen muscle and increase strength

■ Warm-up exercise

Roll your shoulders slowly to loosen the muscles and increase blood flow. You need to roll them clockwise and anticlockwise five times consecutively. Continue this motion for five minutes.

■ Fitness exercise

We all have marched during the school graduation ceremony, so it will not be difficult to march on one spot for 10 minutes. You can also walk/run up and down the staircase for 10 minutes. It helps in improving breathlessness.

■ Stand facing the wall and raise both hands and place your palms on it. Now push yourself towards the wall, against the force and then return to your position. This exercise helps in building strength in arms and joints.

■ Start with mild exercises. Gradually, increase the frequency, intensity and duration of your workout at your ease. This is the best way of challenging yourself by increasing one level further. Breathlessness is normal while exercising, but too much of it can be harmful and should be addressed immediately. Increase the intensity of your workouts according to your tolerance. Fatigue and extreme pain can be signs of over-exertion. It is advised to work out with a fitness expert so that if you feel breathless or are in extreme pain, s/he can provide you with emergency assistance.

(The author is co-founder of Synqfit, a one-stop solution for your home workouts.)

## Back in the game

Actor KARTIK AARYAN is all set to star in the forthcoming romantic thriller, *Freddy*. By TEAM VIVA

Who is Freddy, you might ask? This introduction needs a drum roll or rather some suspenseful staccato played at a steadily increasing pace.

Producer Ekta Kapoor, in collaboration with Jay Shevakramani, is all set to kickstart their next production, *Freddy*. The film, directed by Shashanka Ghosh, is a romantic thriller starring Kartik Aaryan in the titular role.

Incidentally, Shashanka's last outing *Veeer Di Wedding* with Balaji Telefilms was a super-hit and now they're teaming up again. Full of unpredictable twists and sharp turns, characters in this movie are set to take us on a dark and chilling roller coaster ride, where the lines between love and obsession blur! *Freddy* is jointly produced by Balaji Telefilms and Northern Lights Films.

Ekta, who's known for genre-bending content is excited as the movie is all set to go on floors. "I'm thrilled to have Kartik on board. His choices of the subject have always been unique and this one is no different and collaborating with Jay makes it even more special," she says.

Jay adds, "It is the first time I am collaborating with Ekta and Kartik on a film and for it to be on a script like this, makes it all the more exciting! *Freddy* is a script we worked on incessantly for a long time. I am sure that Shashanka will bring to life these crazy characters!"

Speaking about the movie, an ecstatic Kartik shares, "As an actor, I crave to explore different facets of entertainment and with *Freddy*, I'm venturing into an uncharted territory where both exciting and intriguing in equal measure. I look forward to marking my presence in Freddy's world and bring alive this dark romantic thriller. This will be my first collaboration with a visionary like Ekta Kapoor and creative forces such as Jay and Shashanka. Couldn't have asked for a better team on this journey."

The director, Shashanka, further adds, "As a filmmaker, there is a lot to play with the genre, like a thriller. I am more than excited to work with an incredible team on a project as inspiring as *Freddy*. I am sure that the film is going to be one of the best thrilling cinematic experiences for the audience across the nation."



## The fight for inclusion

SONU SOOD joins Special Olympics Bharat as brand ambassador

Bollywood actor Sonu Sood has been appointed as the brand ambassador of Special Olympics Bharat as its brand ambassador. At a virtual event attended by over 500 athletes, coaches, families, officials and volunteers, Sonu interacted with the special athletes responding to their queries while admiring and appreciating their sporting achievements.

The inaugural session introduced him to the #WalkForInclusion, an initiative of the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Region, demonstrated by the athletes, marking his entry into the Inclusion Revolution of the Special Olympics movement.

Speaking about his role as the ambassador, Sonu said, "Today is a very special day for me and I am delighted to join this journey of inclusion with Special Olympics Bharat. Through their sporting achievements, each athlete redefines the human spirit that stands tall in the face of every challenge. I wish luck to all of them to do their best and showcase their abilities with confidence which in itself would send a strong message to the world that they deserve to be mainstreamed. I feel privileged to join the Special Olympics Bharat family and vouch to make this platform even bigger and resonate with people all over the country."

Not to be confused with the Paralympics, the Special Olympics is for individuals with intellectual disabilities, whereas the Paralympics is

generally for athletes with any disability, including physical, and only at an elite level. Sonu will lead the team of Special Olympics Bharat Athletes who will travel to Kazan to participate in the Special Olympics World Winter Games in January 2022.

He went on to express his gratitude, "I feel honoured to have this opportunity to be with our team in Russia for the Special Olympics World Winter Games. We will together encourage our athletes to give their best and cheer them on with such enthusiasm that the roar of support will echo back home in India as well."

Speaking on the occasion, Mallika Nadda, chairperson of Special Olympics Bharat, remarked, "I wish to convey my gratitude to Sonu Sood for accepting our invitation to join the Special Olympics family. We are certain that he will play a major role in giving a new direction to the Special Olympics movement in India and help the cause of persons with intellectual disabilities all over the world. Sonu Sood has offered his support to Special Olympics Bharat on several occasions in the past, and we are thrilled that he is now going to lead the Special Olympics movement. We look forward to working together with Sonu Sood in our effort to provide an equal opportunity and the dignity of life for persons with intellectual disabilities." —JANS



Gauhar Khan has managed to find her fan base in every section of the audience.

From featuring in TV reality shows like *Bigg Boss*, *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa*, *Fear Factor: Khattron Ke Khladi*, to sharing screen space with Bollywood stars like Ranbir Kapoor, Saif Ali Khan and Vidya Balan in films like *Rocket Singh: Salesman of the Year*, *Begum Jaan* and recently in the web series *Tandav* and her latest film *14 Phere*, Gauhar has done it all.

Even though she is mostly grabbing headlines for her social and personal life on social media, in a recent interview, the actress shares that with time, her parameters on choosing projects, especially films, has changed because she is looking to explore her acting skills now.

"Honestly speaking, I do not look at anything with regret. I do not regret why I could not have the role of the female protagonist opposite Ranbir in a Bollywood film or why directors, producers are not considering me for lead roles. For films, the footage did not mat-

Currently, most of the prominent social media platforms have become vehicles that proliferate negativity, drive divisiveness, and enable cyberbullying. While they each have standards for behaviour outlined for all to see, they are not being consistently applied, and at worst completely ignored. The sites have become so toxic that not a day goes by where many regular users are not exposed to some level of negativity. People regularly report the loss of interactions with friends, family and colleagues online.

The call for reform has been side-stepped by these companies. The likes of key social media platforms have held up the freedom of expression flag in their defense, though many believe this is just a way to justify a business model that is lucrative to them and their shareholders. There is little doubt that extreme societal damage has been done from these platforms' unwillingness to make meaningful changes to address these issues. To date, the conversation has largely been about the issues with these platforms. However, now is the time for solutions. It is time to bring about a more positive way to interact online where members can connect in a safe and secure environment openly and freely.

Various new-age networking

## Basking in the glory

Model-turned-actress GAUHAHAR KHAN looks back on how she has thrived in the entertainment industry for 19 years



ter to me, the character did. If you look at my character in *Ishaqzaade* and *Begum Jaan*, those scenes and moments in the story were important. For me, it is always about creating something on-screen that resonates with the audience, and it did," expresses Gauhar.

"Initially, for me, I tried to use every opportunity to the best of my ability because I started from zero. It has been around 19 years for me in the entertainment business and I have seen so much change... Especially with OTT platforms, actors like myself are getting the opportunity to showcase their skills, earlier in

cinema chances were limited," she adds.

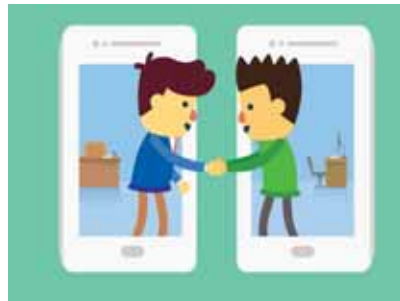
She was one of the participants in 2002 for the Femina Miss India beauty pageant. She went on gaining popularity with many non-fiction TV shows like *The Khan Sisters*, *Ticket to Bollywood*, *India's Raw Star*, *I Can Do That* and different seasons of *Bigg Boss*. She was the winner of *Bigg Boss* season 10.

"The web-series space is interesting for me and I am getting good offers from OTT platforms. *Tandav* was an important show for me that was released on Amazon Prime Video. I have a couple of things lined up for OTT and again, all of them are very versatile and interesting. Now my parameter of choosing a project is to collaborate with directors and storytellers who will use my potential; I want to be challenged with new and exciting roles," shares Gauhar who also appeared in the Hotstar special sitcom show *The Office*.

—JANS

## No to negativity

MARC KAPLAN shares how new-age social media platforms are providing users with a revamped experience



platforms are focussing on improving online forums while making concerted efforts to mitigate negativity and cyberbullying. Their sole

aim is to bring about a social revolution that counterbalances the online negativity and toxicity that is perpetuated, enabled and perhaps

unknowingly supported by major social media platforms today.

These modern social networking platforms enable people to give and receive guidance for free and the members help each other in achieving their respective goals. These targets could be related to fitness, career, health, parenting, hobbies, personality development, or any other topic.

These platforms are a community where like-minded people and those who share common interests and goals come together to support each other and render a helping hand to each other. The members in such a scenario can interact and engage one-on-one amongst like-minded individuals or other communities across the globe instantly and seamlessly. They are devoid of ads, negativity, fake news, trolling, and cyberbullying and work beyond the popularity contest approach of garnering maximum likes and shares.

New-age networking platforms leverage the power of content moderation, identity verification, and technology mix to come up with state-of-the-art community-enabled solutions that help resolve all the associated issues. People with real identities facilitate an increase in level of trust, credibility, and safety amongst the members and prefer

platforms that provide a safe and protected environment where their privacy is secured.

Trust, respect and genuine connections form the core of these social networking platforms and they are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that their community is free from negativity and toxicity. All they want is to leave a positive impact on the members' lives.

These new-age networking platforms don't function as the usual social media platforms but rather lend a helping hand to solve the problems faced by people in the social space. They aim to come up with a new social contract so that people can interact quickly, easily, and instantly with each other. They are aware that negativity, divisiveness, polarisation and fake news rule the social media space today. However, they wish to take a bold stance and bet on the goodness of the people. They desire to uplift each other rather than tearing each other down.

The broader vision of these new-age platforms is to normalise a different online experience and provide an alternative way to spend your time online which is positive, interactive, engaging, and fosters connections!

(The author is co-founder & CEO of ChokMar, a social platform that enables impactful one-on-one connections.)

## TREND BLAZER

fairtalk  
TIGER SHROFF



"From the time my first film was released people said 'ye ladka hai ya ladki', people commented on my face and said I look like a girl. When it comes to trolling, it is at times scary how a nameless, faceless individual could say anything about anybody without getting caught! As long as love is coming in for me from my fans, I am okay."

dailytalk  
ONIR



"I think modern-day slavery is one of the themes prevalent in our society that we do not address as much as we should. It is one of the worst forms of human depravity and since cinema is a powerful medium, we need to take the opportunity to address the matter and provoke the thought in the minds of people."

WHAT A BIG JOB: KIT HARINGTON

Game Of Thrones star KIT HARINGTON and his wife Rose Leslie welcomed their first child, a baby boy, five months ago. The actor admits he wasn't prepared for just how 'big' a job raising a family is.

"Everyone goes, 'look, it's big what you're about to go through.' You have no way of knowing that until it happens. What surprises you is that you go, 'Oh, this goes on forever.' Like, you don't get a break from it," Harrington told Access Hollywood.



'WE DON'T DESERVE A MEDIA TRIAL'

Actor SHILPA SHETTY KUNDRRA took to social media on Monday to issue a statement, saying she and her family do not deserve a media trial.

"All I will say is, as it's an ongoing investigation, I have full faith in the Mumbai Police and the Indian judiciary. I request everyone to respect my family's and 'my right' to privacy in these times. We don't deserve a media trial. Please let the law take its course. *Satyamev Jayate!*" she said via a post on Instagram.

