



## STIRRING PERFORMANCE

Nushratt Bharuccha says her role in upcoming anthology film *Ajeeb Dastaans* can help break stereotypes

LEISURE P2



## GLOBAL COVID TOLL 3 MN

It took more than a year for the global coronavirus death toll to reach three million

INTERNATIONAL P10



CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

## BAYERN HOST PSG

Defending champions Bayern Munich to host PSG in the first leg of Champions League quarterfinals today

SPORTS P12

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



In India, democracy is a way of life. You can find an EVM in any household or a car or...

# 10-day anti-Covid drive

THERE IS NO PLACE FOR COMPLACENCY AS VALUABLE LIVES ARE AT STAKE: NAVEEN

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** With an aim to curb the spiraling rise in Covid-19 cases in the state, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday asked State Police DG Abhay to ensure strict enforcement of Covid norms like wearing masks and maintaining social distance in next 10 days.

"We have to enforce the Covid safety protocols strictly to slow down the spread of the virus. DGP will deploy the police personnel in large numbers across the state in a 10-day drive to strictly enforce the Covid safety protocols as notified," Patnaik said while reviewing the status of the Covid management in the state through video conferencing. Abhay has asked all SPs and senior police officials to launch Covid enforcement drive from April 7 to April 16 in their jurisdictions.

The entire world is encountering a resurgence in Covid-19. Many states of India are witnessing a spike in the disease, he said, adding, "We have been observing an increasing trend in the virus spread over recent weeks in Odisha as well." "We have been able to successfully control the first wave of Covid in spite of a challenging situation when the nature of the virus was unknown. We are now battle-hardened and I am sure we will be able to successfully tackle this resurgence of the virus," Naveen said.

He directed senior officials to re-



tivate all protocols and make the entire machinery work with enthusiasm and vigour. Currently, the virus spread seems to be mainly concentrated in the districts adjoining the Chhattisgarh border. Therefore, he asked the Chief Secretary, additional chief secretary, health and family welfare and senior officials concerned to visit western Odisha districts with high incidence of the positive cases. They will make an on the spot assessment and take suitable action. The health department was asked to immediately redeploy doctors, paramedics, lab technicians to

western Odisha districts to strengthen the manpower to fight the virus.

The CM also instructed to ensure sufficient hospital capacity to take care of the rising number of cases. Adequate ambulances with oxygen supply to be deployed in highly-affected areas and proper monitoring systems to be put in place to ensure that any emergency call is addressed in time and with a sense of urgency and sensitivity, he said.

"There should be no complaints about non-responsiveness of ambulances or lack of beds in the hospitals. There is no place for complacency

## NEXT FOUR WEEKS CRITICAL: CENTRE

**NEW DELHI:** COVID-19 is spreading at a fast pace with a rise in the intensity of the pandemic and the next four weeks are going to be very critical, the Centre said Tuesday as it stressed on people's participation to control the second wave of the contagion. At a presser, NITI Aayog Member (Health) Dr VK Paul said the pandemic situation in the country worsened with a sharp rise in cases and a large part of the population is still susceptible to the virus. The tools to fight the pandemic remain the same. COVID-appropriate behaviour, containment measures, testing have to be implemented more efficiently, medical infrastructure has to be ramped up and vaccination drive intensified, he said. COVID-appropriate behaviour like wearing masks, staying away from crowds have to be followed in a campaign mode, Paul reminded people. "The intensity of the pandemic has increased and it is spreading faster than last time. In some states, it is worse than others but the upswing (in cases) can be observed across the country," he said.

as valuable lives are at stake," he warned. I&PR department was advised to start a new awareness campaign to sensitise the citizens to follow norms of face mask, hand hygiene and social distancing.

Start Strong. Grow Stronger.

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# DGP Abhay might resign

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** Speculations over the resignation of the Director General of Police, Abhay, have been doing the rounds in police circle over the past couple of days.

The rumour has it that the 1986-batch Odisha cadre IPS officer will resign from his post before his extension period ends in December 2021.

The 59-year-old Abhay was scheduled to retire in June, 2021 but the state government extended his tenure by six months March 18, 2020 so that the Supreme Court directive of having a minimum tenure of two years in office as DGP is met. Abhay was appointed as DGP in November, 2019. Some sources even claimed

that like Satyajit Mohanty, Abhay might get a decent posting after his resignation. Mohanty, a former DG Home Guard and Fire Services, is currently posted as the chairman of Odisha Public Service Commission. Similarly, another retired DGP RP Sharma had got a lucrative assignment as a member of the Odisha Lokayukta.

Meanwhile, speculations are rife over who would succeed Abhay. The names doing the rounds for the top post include Abhay's batch-mate Pradeep Kapur, 1987 batch IPS officer Sunil Kumar Bansal, 1988 batch IPS officer Manoj Kumar Chabra, currently Spl DG, Special Armed Police, and Santosh Kumar Upadhyaya, DG (Prisons and Correctional Services).

## Justice NV Ramana appointed 48th CJ

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, April 6:** President Ram Nath Kovind appointed Justice Nuthalapati Venkata (NV) Ramana to be the 48th Chief Justice of India. He will take over as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court April 24 after the retirement of incumbent Chief Justice SA Bobde April 23.



The Union Ministry of Law and Justice issued a notification in this regard Tuesday. The warrant of appointment and a copy of the notification of the appointment have been handed over to Justice NV Ramana. "In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Justice NV Ramana, Judge of the Supreme Court, to be the Chief Justice of India with effect from April 24," the notification reads. Justice Ramana will remain as Chief Justice for 16 months before he retires August 26, 2022.

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VIATION
SENSEX	49201.39	▲ 42.07
NIFTY	14683.50	▲ 45.70
DOLLAR	73.92	▲ ₹0.10
EURO	86.92	▲ ₹0.37
GOLD	₹ 45,775	▲ ₹426
SILVER	₹65,719	▲ ₹1157

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	36.6°C	35.6°C
MIN	24.5°C	24.2°C
Humidity	92%	85%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Mainly clear sky	



The service structure is lifted into position around a Soyuz rocket at site 31 of the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. Expedition 65 NASA astronaut Mark Vande Hei, Roscosmos cosmonauts Pyotr Dubrov and Oleg Novitskiy are scheduled to launch aboard their Soyuz MS-18 spacecraft April 9.

# Covid-19 neg report must for Jagannath temple visit

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** The district administration in Puri, where the iconic Shree Jagannath Temple attracts lakhs of visitors Tuesday made it mandatory for travellers from five states to produce COVID-19 negative certificates in view of spiralling cases, an official said. The coastal state reported 588 fresh infections Tuesday, pushing the tally to 3,43,856.

The Puri district administration, in a review meeting, decided that people travelling to the pilgrim town must produce RT-PCR negative reports at the railway station and bus stands. Producing certificates of two vaccine doses will also be accepted, Puri District Magistrate-cum-Collector Samarth Verma said.

The restriction is imposed on visitors from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Punjab and Kerala. "We have made a negative RT-PCR test report (72 hours before start of journey) mandatory for people coming to Puri from these



five states. The final vaccination certification will also be verified," said Verma.

Special arrangements have been made at the railway station for COVID-19 testing of passengers from the five states, he said. Those who test positive will either undergo home isolation or institutional quarantine, the official said.

Of the fresh coronavirus cases, Khurda district reported the highest number of 105 new infections, followed by Sundergarh (84), Kalahandi (64), Jharsuguda (31), Cuttack (30) and Nuapada (29).

The death toll remained unchanged at 1,922 as no fresh fatalities have been reported since Sunday Odisha now has 3,731 active cases, while 3,38,150 patients have recovered from the disease so far.

It has thus far conducted over 92.13 lakh sample tests, including 25,005 on Monday, the official said. Meanwhile, amid reports of vaccine shortage in the state, Health and Family Welfare Director Bijay Panigrahi said 3.47 lakh doses of Covishield are in stock, and Odisha will receive another 3.49 lakh doses by afternoon.

## SAMBALPUR UNIVERSITY TENSE

# Students ransack varsity properties

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, April 6:** Tension flared up at Sambalpur University here after some students ransacked properties on Sambalpur University campus Tuesday. The students are opposing the varsity's decision to conduct offline examinations.

Citing the reason of Covid-19 cases being on the rise over last few days, the students are demanding that Plus III examinations be held in both offline and online modes. After finding the authorities non-committal, agitating students tried to barge into the Vice-Chancellor's office. Police deployed in the campus had to resort to mild lathi charge. This enraged the students who later vandalized the properties of the varsity.



Palpable tension was prevailing in the campus at the time of filing this report. However, two platoons of police forces have been deployed at the campus to avoid escalation of tension. Notably, students of the Bhubanananda Odisha School of Engineering in Cuttack had staged a demonstration in front of the institution March 30, demanding that their tests are held in online mode.

# Google wins multibillion dollar fight with Oracle

AGENCIES

**Washington, April 6:** The Supreme Court ruled for Google in a multi-billion-dollar battle with Oracle Corp over elements of Google's Android smartphone-operating system, a decision that could weaken software copyright protections but allow developers more room to build on each other's products.

The court, in a 6-2 opinion Monday by Justice Stephen Breyer, threw out a lower-court ruling for Oracle that said Android infringed its copyrights on the Java software platform. The high court said Google's copying of some Java API code was fair use. APIs, or application programming interfaces, are prewritten packages of computer code that allow programs, websites or apps to talk to one another. "Google's copying did not violate the copyright law," Justice Breyer wrote.

Oracle, which acquired the Java

technology when it bought Sun Microsystems Inc. in 2010, accused Google of illegally copying more than 11,000 lines of Java API code to develop Android, which runs more than two billion mobile devices world-wide. Oracle previously sought as much as \$9 billion in damages from Google, though the company might have faced challenges in collecting that much in penalty proceedings had it won in the high court. In his opinion for the court's majority, Justice Stephen Breyer wrote that Google "took only what was needed" and that "Google's copying was transformative," a word the court has used "to describe a copying use that adds something new and important."

Google had said its actions were long-settled, common practice in the industry, a practice that has been good for technical progress. It said there is no copyright protection for the purely functional, noncreative computer code it used, something



that couldn't be written another way. But Austin, Texas-based Oracle argued Google "committed an egregious act of plagiarism."

The case has been going on for a decade. Google won the first round when a judge rejected Oracle's copyright claim, but that ruling was overturned on appeal. A jury then sided with Google, but an appeals court again disagreed.

Breyer wrote that in reviewing the lower court's decision, the justices assumed "for argument's sake, that the material was copyrightable." "But we hold that the copying here at issue nonetheless constituted a fair use. Hence, Google's copying did not violate the copyright law," he wrote. At one point in the decision, Breyer used a recipe-finding robot as part of an analogy to ex-

plain how code works. At another point, he invoked a one-sentence short story to acknowledge that copying a small amount could still be significant. Breyer included both the story, originally in Spanish, and its translation: "When he awoke, the dinosaur was still there."

Justice Clarence Thomas wrote in a dissent joined by Justice Samuel Alito that he believed "Oracle's code at issue here is copyrightable, and Google's use of that copyrighted code was anything but fair." Only eight justices heard the case because it was argued in October, after the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg but before Justice Amy Coney Barrett joined the court. Google's chief legal officer, Kent Walker, called the ruling a "victory for consumers, interoperability, and computer science." "The decision gives legal certainty to the next generation of developers whose new products and services will benefit consumers," Walker wrote.

# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
Today is reserved for your hobbies and obsessions. Doing the things you love will give you a high, and it will reflect in the way you treat your loved ones, says Ganesh. Your mind may not be at work, but your seniors may thoughtfully allow some concessions.

**TAURUS**  
A trip to the mall with your beloved may end with a trunk loaded with shopping bags, suggests Ganesh. Purchase is on the cards and a home or a vehicle may be on your list. Financial gains and family joys will make this day one to remember.

**GEMINI**  
Financial matters could become a cause of worry. You need to cut down on unnecessary expenses. You could look at investing in real estate. You will spend the evening blissfully with your spouse or partner, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Can too much of love be a bad thing? Well, you will find it today, warns Ganesh. Today you may find your relationship in throes of chaos. There may be an outburst of emotions by both of you. And, if you both share the same sun sign then the situation may get out of control due to such overflow of emotions.

**LEO**  
You will experience mixed feelings today. There are chances of conflicts with your spouse or life partner. Avoid ego clashes with your better half in the evening. You will have to discuss some matter very seriously. Do not take on important tasks as the time is not right, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Ganesh advises you to knit emotions and reasoning together. There may be an emotional overkill in the afternoon today. However, luck will turn out to be in your favour later in the day when you decide impulsively to go for an outing.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says today is a good day for any government-related work. Those of you who are government officials will find the day beneficial to them. Your life partner will prove lucky for you and you will be able to spend quality time with your dearest friends.

**SCORPIO**  
Lucky are your children today, as you shower love, care and affection on them. Promotion or increment awaits you at work. There's a woman behind every successful man they say. In your case, your spouse is likely to be your constant supporter. This will make you feel complete and satisfied, says Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Family ties will be like slender chains for you, as they keep you occupied almost throughout the day. Kids may become a reason to worry, practice caution in their matter. According to Ganesh, a day full of familial activities and responsibilities.

**CAPRICORN**  
Some unexpected turn of events may leave you upset, but you will still manage put up a happy face and continue with your work. You'll divert your mind somewhere else and eventually change your mood, too. If you expecting some good news from the foreign shores, today the wait will be finally over, foresees Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
You don't only speak for yourself, but also for those who suffer from injustice and discrimination. Don't take more load on your shoulders than you can carry, advises Ganesh, otherwise others will criticise you. Listen to your loved ones; understand their desires and needs to build a more harmonious environment at home.

**PISCES**  
You will have no unnecessary worry today. You will be very tolerant and generous today and thus will readily forgive people. This may be very good but ensure that people don't take advantage of you.



## GOT CONFLICTING ADVICE FROM PRESLEY, SINATRA: TOM JONES

Singer Tom Jones has confessed that he was given conflicting advice from music legends Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra. "So I had Elvis Presley pulling on me to do more rock and roll tunes and Sinatra telling me to do Fly Me To The Moon," Jones said in an interview.

## SALMA'S PET OWL LIKES GOOD WINE

Hollywood star Salma Hayek, who adopted the southern white-faced owl named Kering two years ago, says, "When my husband is not in town, she sleeps in the room with me. Even though owls don't drink liquids because they take everything from their prey, Kering likes good wine."

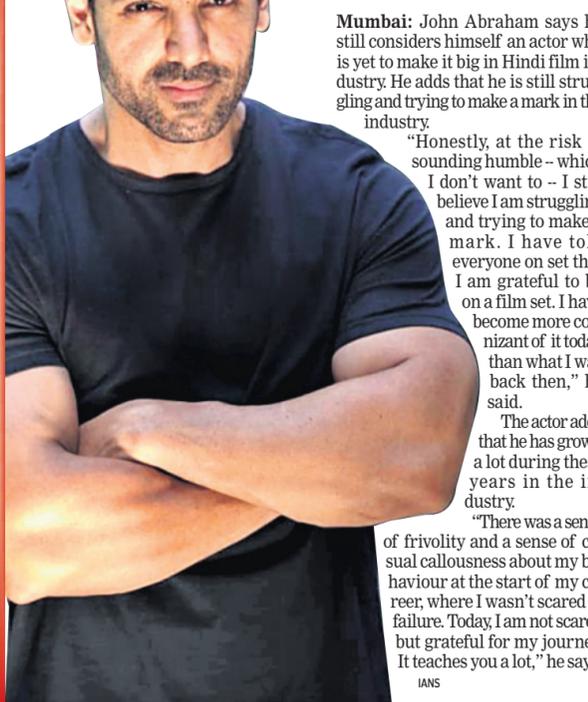


## Antara records solo for her second Hindi movie

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar:** Antara Chakraborty, Odia cine industry's one of the top-ranked playback singers, recorded a solo song for upcoming Hindi movie *Ramrajya* recently. The number was recorded in Aadesh Srivastava's studio at Juhu, Mumbai. Cuttack-based Antara, who has already rendered soulful songs in many regional lan-



## John believes he is still struggling



**Mumbai:** John Abraham says he still considers himself an actor who is yet to make it big in Hindi film industry. He adds that he is still struggling and trying to make a mark in the industry. "Honestly, at the risk of sounding humble - which I don't want to - I still believe I am struggling and trying to make a mark. I have told everyone on set that I am grateful to be on a film set. I have become more cognizant of it today than what I was back then," he said. The actor adds that he has grown a lot during these years in the industry. "There was a sense of frivolity and a sense of casual callousness about my behaviour at the start of my career, where I wasn't scared of failure. Today, I am not scared but grateful for my journey. It teaches you a lot," he says.

## Ajeeb Dastaans helped break stereotypes:

# NUSHRRATT

**Mumbai:** Actress Nushratt Bharuccha says she had a splendid time shooting for the upcoming anthology film *Ajeeb Dastaans*. She adds that her role helped break stereotypes.

Nushratt plays a house help named Meenal in the segment named *Khilauna*, directed by Raj Mehta alongside Abhishek Banerjee and Inayat Verma. The story highlights her struggle to get a decent life for her and her sister, and has a shocking gruesome twist in the end. Nushratt said: "We shot the film just for eight days but being extremely honest, I have not had so much fun shooting any other film that I've worked on. Raj is a genius but is also hilarious, funny and too cool. He is genuinely a really passionate filmmaker, and he truly enjoys the process of directing a film and being on a set." "Breaking out of stereotypes added to the experience," added the Dream Girl actor. *Ajeeb Dastaans* is slated to see an April 16 release on Netflix.



## Digital space explores lesbianism

MOVING AWAY FROM RUN-OF-THE-MILL STUFF, THE DIGITAL SPACE IS FEARLESSLY PRESENTING CONTENT WHERE A WOMAN WOULD EXPRESS LOVE TO ANOTHER WOMAN UNINHIBITEDLY

Same-sex love stories with female protagonists, although rare, have still been explored on the Hindi screen, but lesbianism is relatively rarer. The rise of OTT culture has created a platform to explore a variety of subjects. Lesbianism, a taboo word in India, is finding space, too, over the recent past.



Moving away from formula-driven content, the digital space has been intrepid in narrating stories where a woman would express love to another woman uninhibitedly. There are quite a few projects that have come up spotlighting lesbian love. Here goes a list of some of these movies. **Ajeeb Dastaans** The upcoming anthology is all about love and longing. However, one story featuring actresses Konkona Sen Sharma and Aditi Rao Hydari explores a relationship between two women. Titled

*Geeli Puchi* and directed by Masaan maker Neeraj Ghaywan, the story revolves around two women who long for an emotional connect and end up finding it in one another. **Bombay Begums** The show, starring Pooja Bhatt, Shahana Goswami, Amruta Subhash, Plabita Borthakur and Aadhya Anand, touches upon themes of ambition, desire, struggle for power and vulnerability

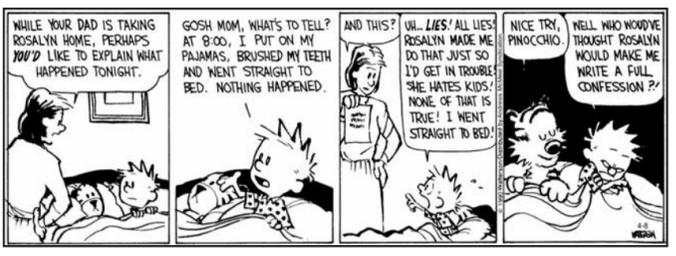
through the stories of five modern Indian women in Mumbai. When it dropped, a sensual kissing scene between Plabita and co-actress Sanghmitra Hitaishi created quite a stir. **The Married Woman** The web series is about a relationship two women develop, and the circumstances that lead to it. The show stars Monica Dogra and Ridhi Dogra, and is based on author

Manju Kapur's bestseller novel of the same name. **Four More Shots Please!** The show isn't just about lesbian relationships but one of the lead characters, played by Bani J, is bisexual. Soon, the story shifts to Bani's character falling in love with Lisa Ray's character and the story revolves around their relationship.

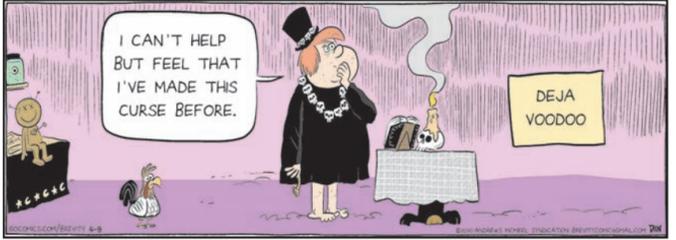
## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

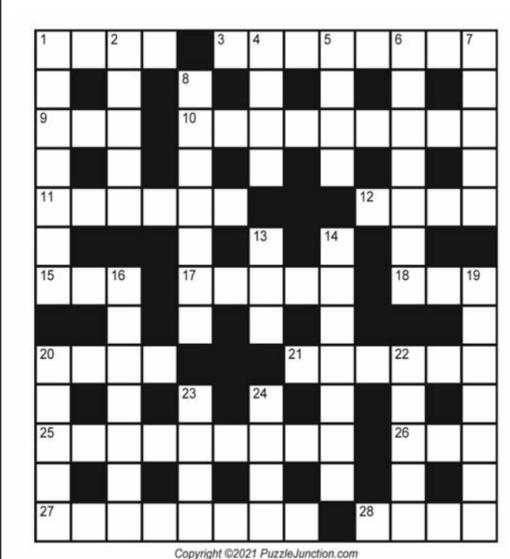


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD



- Across**  
1 Bridge option  
3 Con man  
9 Horatian work  
10 On the up and up  
11 Second of two  
12 Clunkers  
15 Brit's raincoat  
17 Excuse  
18 Small pouch  
20 Down in the dumps
- Down**  
21 Yield  
25 Pool game (5,4)  
26 Tartan cap  
27 Go on holiday  
28 Greek war god
- Across**  
7 Flightless birds  
8 Cache of weapons  
13 Routing word  
14 Brush-footed butterfly  
16 Acerbic  
19 Movie theatres  
20 Shady spot  
22 Absolute  
23 Puccini piece  
24 Ping follower

## SUDOKU

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



## SOLUTIONS



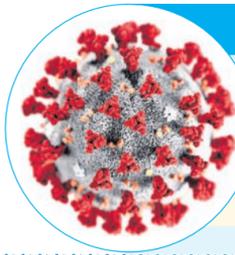
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## FOR GOOD LUCK

Women offer puja to Goddess Mangala at Nayapalli area of Bhubaneswar, Tuesday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	13,26,35,347	10,69,29,634	28,77,604
India	1,18,46,855	1,17,32,279	1,65,547
Odisha	3,43,856	338416	1,922

# Police probe ordered into ganja found in jail

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** The tall claims of the state prison authorities notwithstanding, trafficking of illegal substances and narcotics continue unabated making a mockery of the security checking at the entry and exit points of the jails in the state.

Confidential departmental letters reveal that substances like ganja and brown sugar are regularly smuggled into the jails across the state. The fact that the prison inmates are availing such substances easily raises questions not only about the security of the jails, but also about the connivance of the jail staff.

Recently a huge quantity of contraband ganja was seized from inside the Jharpada special jail. A bag containing the contraband item



was found behind the Administrative block in the special jail in February.

However, the jail authorities succeeded in keeping the matter away from the media glare fearing backlash.

Sources revealed to Orissa POST that the DG (Prisons and Correctional Services), Santosh Kumar Upadhyaya, Monday directed the Superintendent of the Jharpada jail to initiate a probe into the matter.

Upadhyaya has also directed the IIC of the Laxmisagar police, under whose jurisdiction the jail falls, to investigate the matter and identify the person responsible for the trafficking of ganja into the jail.

Meanwhile, when questioned about the development, Jharpada jail authorities claimed that someone might have thrown the bag containing ganja into the prison premises. It is difficult to accept the clarification offered by the au-

thorities, even with a pinch of salt, in view the high boundary walls around the jail.

Earlier, in 2020, viral videos of illegal brown sugar trade inside the Khurda and Jharpada prisons had sparked a major controversy. It is common knowledge that it is not possible to take or bring any material into or outside the jail without undergoing strict security check. Hence, when ganja and other narcotics are found in the prison cells, there is little doubt that they were trafficked with the help of some unscrupulous jail employees.

DG (Prisons and Correctional Services), Santosh Kumar Upadhyaya's directive to the IIC of Laxmisagar police to probe the matter has raised many eyebrows, as the police rarely conduct raids inside the jails in their locality.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Caste papers can be received in 15 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** As part of its 5T initiatives, the state government has reduced the timeline for issuance of caste certificates. Now, ST, SC, SEBC and OBC certificates will be issued within 15 days instead of 30 days.

Revenue and disaster management secretary Bishnupada Sethi has written to all Collectors in this regard, Tuesday.

Revising the guidelines for issuance of miscellaneous and caste certificates, the government has decided to issue resident, income & asset certificates within 10 days, henceforth. At present, these certificates are issued within 15 days.

Similarly, solvency, legal heir and guardianship certificates will continue to be issued within 30 days. However, legal heir certificates will be issued for all purposes so that citizens will not be required to apply more than once for different purposes, he said.

# CP to declare monetary reward

POST NEWS NETWORK

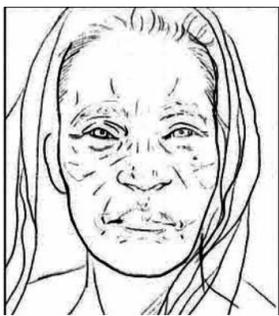
**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** Despite the lapse of several months in the recovery of a woman's skeleton in a seized vehicle in Janla outpost, the city police are yet to get any clue regarding the identity of the woman. Following the release of sketches of the deceased, the police have received a number of calls. A lot of speculations are also doing rounds about the identity of the lady.

While speaking to media, DCP Umashankar Dash Tuesday revealed that he would soon write a letter to the Commissioner of Police, Saumendra Pridarshi urging him to declare some monetary reward for the person who would identify the deceased through the sketch.

Sources claimed that Commissioner Priyadarshi is yet to take any decision in this regard.

Notably, The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the Director General of Police (DGP) to take appropriate action in this regard within eight weeks.

Earlier, the twin city Commissionerate Police had released a sketch of the woman and put up posters at various



The sketch released by police

strategic points in order to find out her identity. The sketch was prepared by a Bangalore-based forensic consultant after examination of the skeletal remains.

Notably, the skeletal remains of a 45-year-old woman were found in a four-wheeler that was seized by Berhampur police in 2019 in connection with a Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act case.

They had left behind the vehicle on Janla police outpost premises as its

## JANLA SKELETON CASE

Commissionerate Police had released a sketch of the woman and put up posters at various strategic points in order to find out her identity

The skeletal remains of a 45-year-old woman were found in a four-wheeler that was seized by Berhampur police in 2019 in connection with an NDPS Act case

An assistant sub-inspector, who was also in-charge of the police outpost, was suspended for dereliction of duty

driver had fled and they had no key. The incident came to the fore after the Berhampur police sought its release from Janla outpost in February. The matter was, however, taken up by the authorities only recently after the media got a whiff about the incident and enquired about it.

An assistant sub-inspector, who was also in-charge of the police outpost, was suspended for dereliction of duty as the police were clueless as to how and when the incident happened.

# Cong stages protest near OERC office



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** Leaders of the Congress party Tuesday protested before the office of the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Corporation (OERC) against the recent hike in power tariffs in the state.

The protest was organized jointly by the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) and the Bhubaneswar District Congress Committee to press for the demand of retracting the hiked electricity rates to avoid extra pressure on the poor and middle class of the

state. OPCC President Niranjan Patnaik, who took part in the stir, claimed that the State government was having a secret nexus with the power companies which were leading to increased woes of the consumers at large.

"The poor and the middle class in the state are badly hit by the sudden and consistent rise of the power tariffs in the state. People are already affected with loss of income due to Covid-19 issues and at the same time the government is leaving no stones turned to ha-

## POWER TARIFF HIKE

Bhubaneswar District Congress Committee President Biswajit Das said, "Odisha is coal rich state. Several areas like Delhi which do not produce coal are giving its consumers electricity at cheaper rates but the Odisha government, which has huge coal reserve and power surplus, is moving ahead to add more burden to its people with increases rates," Das said.

A 10-member delegation handed over the demand letter to the OERC chairman and Governor Ganeshi Lal.

# DEMAND FOR KHURDA FLYOVER GETS LOUDER

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** Several political parties have extended their support to the demand for a flyover at Khurda town.

Leaders of various political parties have also opposed the construction of an underpass on National Highway-16 near Khurda district Collector's office. A few elected representatives of Khurda district Tuesday sat together at Khurda and deliberated on the issue.

Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi, Jatani MLA Suresh Kumar Routray, a few other leaders and representatives from the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) were present in the meeting held near Khurda Collector's office.

Sarangi said leaders from BJP, BJD and Congress are in favour of the construction of a flyover at Khurda. "Today, all political parties are united on the issue. We all support the demand for a flyover at Khurda. The flyover can be constructed with an expenditure of ₹25 crore while the underpass construction requires," she added.

# Thunderstorm warning for 3 days from April 8

## TITLAGARH BECAME THE HOTTEST PLACE IN ODISHA TUESDAY WITH A MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE OF 42.5 DEGREES CELSIUS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** The western Odisha town of Titlagarh Tuesday recorded a maximum temperature of 42.5 degrees Celsius and became the hottest place of the state.

As per a bulletin issued by the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre, nine places in Odisha, including Titlagarh, recorded a maximum daytime temperature of 40 degrees Celsius or above. Bolangir town recorded a day temperature of 41.5 degrees Celsius while Malkangiri, Sonepur and Boudh recorded 41 degrees each.

The maximum temperature at Bhawanipatna was 40.8 degrees Celsius while it was 40.2 degrees at Rayagada, 40.1 degrees at Sambalpur and 40 degrees at Jharsuguda. The twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack witnessed a relatively low day temperatures of 36.6 degrees and 35.6 degrees, respectively, said the bulletin.



FILE PHOTO

The MeT Centre said the daytime temperature is very likely to rise by 2-3 degrees Celsius during next 2-3 days and it will again fall gradually by 2-3 degrees thereafter in many places across the state. Also, the maximum temperature is likely to be 40 degrees

Celsius or above at several places over the districts of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Angul, Sonepur, Boudh, Bargarh, Bolangir, Nuapada and Nawarangpur. Therefore, the MeT Centre has advised people to take precautionary

measures while going outside.

Meanwhile, the MeT department has issued thunderstorm warning for three days starting from April 8. Some places of the districts of Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Jajpur, Ganjam, Kandhamal and Malkangiri to witness thunderstorm Thursday while similar weather to prevail in few places of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Cuttack, Balasore, Bhadrak, Gajapati, Ganjam, Angul and Khurda on the next day.

Thunderstorm and lightning with gusty surface wind speed reaching 30-40 kmph is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Gajapati, Ganjam, Kandhamal, Malkangiri, Koraput and Mayurbhanj April 10, said the MeT department.

Moreover, light to moderate rainfall would occur in many places of the state during the above three days, the Met Centre added.

## FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CREDITORS OF METRO BUILDERS (ORISSA) PVT LTD

**FORM A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT**  
(Under Regulation 6 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016)

RELEVANT PARTICULARS	
1. Name of corporate debtor	Metro Builders Orissa Pvt Ltd
2. Date of incorporation of corporate debtor	27/08/1993
3. Authority under which corporate debtor is incorporated / registered	RoC-Cuttack
4. Corporate Identity No. / Limited Liability Identification No. of corporate debtor	U70101OR1993PTC003393
5. Address of the registered office and principal office (if any) of corporate debtor	Metro Builders Orissa Pvt Ltd Metro river view complex-sunshine field Ring road Cuttack, Orissa, India, Pin:753002
6. Insolvency commencement date in respect of corporate debtor	31.03.2021 (Order Received Date: 05.04.2021)
7. Estimated date of closure of insolvency resolution process	27th September 2021
8. Name and registration number of the insolvency professional acting as interim resolution professional	Name : Mr. Sunil Kumar Keswani Registration No.: IBB/PA-001/IP-P00819/2017-2018/11396
9. Address and e-mail of the interim resolution professional, as registered with the Board	Address : House No. 31, Canal Linking Road Ravi Nagar, Raipur, Chhattisgarh 492001 Email : sunil.keswani.co@gmail.com
10. Address and e-mail to be used for correspondence with the interim resolution professional	Address : House No. 31, Canal Linking Road Ravi Nagar, Raipur, Chhattisgarh 492001 Email : Metrobuilders.ip@gmail.com
11. Last date for submission of claims	14th April 2021
12. Classes of creditors, if any, under clause (b) of sub-section (6A) of section 21, ascertained by the interim resolution professional	Will identify on verification of Books of Accounts.
13. Names of Insolvency Professionals identified to act as Authorised Representative of creditors in a class (Three names for each class)	Not Applicable at present
14. (a) Relevant Forms and (b) Details of authorized representatives are available at:	Web link: https://ibbi.gov.in/home/downloads Physical Address : Not Applicable

Notice is hereby given that the National Company Law Tribunal has ordered the commencement of a corporate insolvency resolution process of the M/s Metro Builders Orissa Pvt Ltd. The creditors of M/s Metro Builders Orissa Pvt Ltd are hereby called upon to submit their claims with proof on or before 14th April 2021 to the interim resolution professional at the address mentioned against entry No. 10. The financial creditors shall submit their claims with proof by electronic means only. All other creditors may submit the claims with proof in person, by post or by electronic means. A financial creditor belonging to a class, as listed against the entry No. 12, shall indicate its choice of authorised representative from among the three insolvency professionals listed against entry No. 13 to act as authorised representative of the class in Form CA- Not Applicable. Submission of proof of claims should be made in accordance with Chapter III of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Person) Regulations, 2016 ( CIRP Regulations). The forms can be downloaded from the link mentioned against entry no. 14. **Submission of false or misleading proofs of claim shall attract penalties.** Sunil Kumar Keswani Interim Resolution Professional (In the matter of M/s Metro Builders Orissa Pvt Ltd.) Registration No: IBB/PA-001/IP-P00819/2017-2018/11396

**COVID SCARE**

**FOUNDATION DAY**

# Engineering college, apartment sealed in City



A civic body official seals a private engineering college in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

**N**O ONE, EXCEPT THE AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL OF THE BMC, WOULD BE ALLOWED TO MOVE INTO OR OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT PREMISES FOR 10 DAYS.

**T**HE SUPPLY OF ESSENTIALS, IF REQUIRED, WILL BE FACILITATED BY THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION THROUGH ITS WARD OFFICER

In case of any emergency, the apartment residents' society is advised to contact the BMC Control Room for immediate assistance, added the notice.

The BMC also sealed an educational institution in the city here for violation of Covid-19 norms. The authorities concerned had earlier served a show-cause notice on Silicon Institute of Technology, Patia for violation of the Covid-19 norms. "The civic authorities decided to seal Silicon Institute of Technology after finding the institute's reply as unsatisfactory," said a source.

The enforcement squad of BMC had earlier sealed a private coaching institute at Jaydev Vihar for violation of Covid-19 norms.

Notably, a commerce student of BJB Higher Secondary School tested positive for Covid-19. The civic authorities have advised those who came in contact with the infected student to isolate themselves for a week.

be facilitated by the municipal corporation through its ward officer, added the notice.

"The detected positive cases are directed to remain in Isolation at their respective residences for a period of 10 days, followed by seven days of self-monitored home quarantine. Further, if any positive case needs medical attention, his/her family members or the apartment residents' society are asked to intimate the same to the BMC," the notice said.

been sealed for a period of 10 days from April 6 to April 16. The apartment premises would be sanitised by its residents' society in strict adherence to the guidelines issued by the Centre and the State government," said a notice issued by the BMC.

The notice further said that no one, except the authorised personnel of the BMC, would be allowed to move into or outside the apartment premises for 10 days. The supply of essentials, if required, will

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Tuesday sealed a residential apartment complex at Tankapani Road in the city here in the wake of detection of a series of Covid-19 positive cases on the apartment premises.

"In larger public interest and with a view to contain further spread of the virus, Taru Apartments, Tankapani Road, has

## Odisha seeks 15L Covishield doses

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** The state health department Tuesday wrote to the Union Health Ministry seeking adequate allocation of Covishield vaccine to Odisha.

In the letter, PK Mohapatra, Additional Chief Secretary, Health department, informed the Centre that Odisha had exhausted Covishield vaccine stocks. The state received 3,49,130 doses of Covishield vaccine, manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, Tuesday.

"There was no Covishield vaccine in any regional and district vaccine stores in the state. We received 3,49,130 doses of Covishield Tuesday afternoon. The vaccine would be sent to the regional stores soon," Mohapatra said.

The Chief Secretary informed the Centre that with the present stock of vaccine, the state can conduct vaccination drive for another three days only.

"After three days, we will run out of Covishield vaccine in Odisha," Mohapatra said in his letter.

According to the Chief Secretary, Odisha has already administered more than 35.67 lakh doses of vaccine to Health Care Workers, Front line Workers and citizens above 45 years.

"Now, the state has 3,47,180 doses of Covishield and 1,36,820 doses of Covaxin vaccine at our peripheral cold chain points," he said.

"The prevailing situation may adversely affect vaccination drive in Odisha. I would like to reiterate that at least 15 to 20 lakh doses of Covishield vaccine may kindly be allocated to Odisha immediately for smooth conduct of vaccination sessions in coming days," said Mohapatra in his letter.

# STATE REGISTERS 588 FRESH COVID CASES

*This was the highest single-day spike in Covid cases in Odisha in 2021*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** Odisha Tuesday registered 588 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, the I & PR department said in a tweet.

This incidentally is the highest single-day spike in 2021. There has been a steady increase in the number of new COVID-19 cases for the last one week increasing the worries of the state health department. Odisha had reported 573 COVID-19 cases Monday.

**The total number of positive cases in Odisha has gone up to 3,43,856. The current active COVID-19 cases stand at 3,731**

Of the 588 fresh COVID-19 cases reported Tuesday, 342 were from quarantine centres and 246 were local contact infections. In the last 24 hours, 215 patients have recovered, taking the total recoveries to 3,38,150. Khurda district has been reporting highest number of daily cases for last couple of days. It re-



People flout the social distancing norms at an Aahar centre at Sishu Bhawan in Cuttack, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

ported 105 fresh cases Tuesday, followed by Sundargarh (84), Kalahandi (64), Jharsuguda (31), Cuttack (30), Nuapada (29), Sambalpur (28), Ganjam (27), Puri (24), Bargarh (21), Jajpur (15), Balasore (13), Bolangir and Sonepur (11 each), Bhadrak, Koraput and Mayurbhanj (nine each), Nabarangpur (eight), Nayagarh (seven), Rayagada and

Dhenkanal (six each), Angul (five), Deogarh (four), Jagatsinghpur and Kandhamal (three each), Keonjhar (two) and Gajapati (one). The State pool stood at 23.

With the new COVID-19 additions, the total number of positive cases in Odisha has gone up to 3,43,856. The current active COVID-19 cases stand at 3,731.

## Politics over Lord Ram not good: Swami Abhishek Bramhachari

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** Swami Abhishek Bramhachari, an eminent religious speaker, visited the temples of Lord Jagannath, Puri and Lord Lingaraj, Bhubaneswar and spoke to the media on several issues.



ernment which had enacted laws and policies on GST, demonetization and others, has failed to frame laws on cow protection," he said.

He also urged the people to safeguard the unity of the state. The religious leader said that Yuva Chetana had been doing good works

**The BJP government at the Centre failed to live upto the expectations of people. The government, which had enacted laws and policies on GST, demonetization and others, has failed to frame laws on cow protection**

He said that religion had been a subject of self belief and politics should not be used to taint it. He lamented on the recent politicizations of Lord Ram and claimed that the lord belongs to all.

"The BJP government at the Centre failed to live upto the expectations on the people. The gov-

to unite the people and trying to bring all people into the mainstream.

The leader also applauded the works done by Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. He said that Patnaik is among India's most honest CMs and other politicians need to learn from him.



BJP workers observe party's 41st foundation day in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

## MoPNG Secy visits STPI

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas Secretary, Tarun Kapoor visited Software Technology Park Of India (STPI ELITE) Building, Bhubaneswar Tuesday to see the secondary data centre of Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH). The centre is set up at STPI building for secured data repository to preserve and disseminate petroleum exploration and production data of the country.



During his visit to DGH, he also saw other STPI facilities at STPI ELITE and discussed with Manas Panda, Director, STPI Bhubaneswar.

During discussion, Panda briefed him about the seminal role played by STPI in terms achieving quantum jump in IT exports, building next wave of budding entrepreneurs through STPI Centre of Excellence and future roadmap of STPI in boosting Innovation and creation of IPR and promotion of startups.

Kapoor was shown the Electropreneur Park (ESDM Incubation), Fab Lab, STPI Tier III Data Centre. He appreciated efforts of STPI for promoting IT and Startup culture in the state and the country.

Kapoor was accompanied by Chairman, IOCL, S.M Vaidya and ADG, DGH, Dr. C. Laxma Reddy.

## RSP surpasses records on major fronts in 2020-21



AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has surpassed the previous best figures on all major fronts in 2020-21 despite the adverse impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, an official said Tuesday.

The steel plant achieved the ABP targets for the first time since inception to create history. RSP produced 35,73,000 tonne of hot metal in FY 2021 to achieve a growth of 5.7 per cent over the previous fiscal.

Similarly, the steel plant produced 32,07,284 tonne of saleable steel compared to 32,05,318 tonne achieved in FY 2020.

The raw materials handling plant (RMHP) dispatched 1,05,65,951 tonne of the base mix (excluding sinter) to record the best fiscal performance since inception in FY 2021.

Best March performance was registered in the field of production of hot metal (4,00,666 tonne).

The blast furnace-5 'Durga' contributed its best March production figure of 2,45,184 tonnes. The Steel Melting Shops produced 3,60,606 tonne of crude steel notching up its best March performance, improving the earlier best figures of 3,25,553 tonne achieved in 2019.

The mills of the steel plant excelled in tandem to clock best March production of saleable steel at

RSP produced 35,73,000 tonne of hot metal in FY 2021 to achieve a growth of 5.7 per cent over the previous fiscal

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The blast furnace-5, Durga, contributed its best March production figure of 2,45,184 tonnes

3,42,230 tonne, the earlier best being 3,03,175 tonne achieved in 2019.

The state-of-the-art new plate mill rolled out 85,700 tonne of plates to clock its best month performance.

Similarly, RSP dispatched 1,30,000 tonne of HR coils to register the best dispatch achieved for any March.

Notably, RSP ended the financial year on a bang with a string of marvellous performances by individual departments in March 2021.

It is worth mentioning here that the steel plant made six single-day records March 27, 2021.

**WORLD HEALTH DAY**

# Mind your food to keep health complications at bay, say experts

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** On the occasion of World Health Day, doctors working in the state suggested adapting to healthier way of life to thwart the chances of developing health ailments at an early age.

The medical practitioners claimed that with a balanced diet, exercise and other lifestyle modifications, people can boost their immunity while bolstering their body muscles and keep away any threat to their health for longer period of time.

"There are several good ways to keep you fit despite a hectic work schedule. A good diet plan, regular exercise and distressing yourself can help. Inclusion of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and lean protein, avoiding harmful foods



and timely immunisations can keep the threat of health hazards at bay," said Gurrit Kaur Sethi, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of CARE Hospital.

Dr Rajesh Padhi, critical care expert from the hospital, said that modern day sedentary lifestyle aids in triggering lifestyle diseases like

**M**ODERN DAY SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE AIDS IN TRIGGERING LIFESTYLE DISEASES LIKE OBESITY, CANCER, DIABETES AND HEART DISEASES

**F**EW TIPS CAN HELP TO AVOID LIFE STYLE PROBLEMS LIKE REDUCTION OF FAT AND OIL FROM THE DIET, REDUCED FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION AND EATING A HIGH-FIBRE DIET

obesity, cancer, diabetes and heart diseases.

Dr Pragyan Routray, another critical care expert, said that few tips can help to avoid life style problems like reduction of fat and oil from the diet, reduced fast food consumption and eating a high-fibre diet.

## Timing of 4 spl trains revised

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** From operational point of view, East Coast Railway (ECOR) decided to revise the timing of four pairs of special trains including Howrah-Puri-Howrah Special.

The 02837/02838 Howrah-Puri-Howrah Special will leave Howrah at 22:40 hrs instead of 22:35 hrs and will arrive at Howrah at 04:40 hrs instead of 04:45 hrs with effect from 1st April.

The 02863/02864 Howrah-Yesvantpur-Howrah Special from 5th April will leave from Howrah at 10:55 hrs instead of 10:50 hrs and from Yesvantpur from 7th April and will reach at Howrah at 16:45 hrs instead of 16:50 hrs.

Wef. 2nd April, the 02807/02808 Santragachhi-Chennai Central-Santragachhi Special will leave from Santragachhi at 18:00 hrs instead of 17:55 hrs and on its way back, will reach at Santragachhi at 10:45 hrs instead of 10:50 hrs.

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Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8995550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

# Silk City faces vaccine shortage



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, April 6:** With a surge in Covid-19 infections in the state, the demand for vaccination has increased. However, much to the anger of the local residents of this town, the vaccination has reportedly come to a halt due to shortage of vaccines.

Notices have sprung up in many vaccination centres to this effect. It is stated that non-availability of vaccines have forced the shutdown of the centres. Another notice said that vaccination will remain suspended Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in this town and resume again Thursday.

The district administration and healthcare officials, however, as-

sured people that the vaccines will be replenished by Thursday.

Notably, Additional Chief Secretary (Health) PK Mohapatra has written to Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan urging him to supply at least 15 lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccines to Odisha immediately.

Notably Ganjam district Tuesday reported 27 fresh Covid-19 cases. These fresh cases took the district's tally up to 22,039. Of them, 21,720 have recovered and 63 are undergoing treatment.

The administration has taken up a host of preventive measures in various parts of the district as migrants people from hotspot states are arriving in trains. It has kept a close watch on them.

## Jharsuguda farmers protest Covid restrictions, destroy veggies

**JHARSUGUDA:** Protesting against the Jharsuguda district administration's decision to close the vegetable market near the bus stand here, scores of local vendors and farmers dumped their vegetables on the road Tuesday. They lamented that their income will be affected by the closure of the market.

In view of the surge in Covid-19 cases in the locality, the market in this town has been closed to check



## Bank sealed after staffer tests positive for Covid

**BAUNSUMI:** Amid a spurt in Covid-19 infection cases, the administration has sealed a branch of SBI in Boudh district after a bank employee tested positive. Such action was taken after the health department alerted about the case to the administration.

According to reports, the Boudh BDO went to Manthpalli village Tuesday and declared the bank

premises as micro containment zone. Meanwhile, health workers and officials have started contract tracing in the area.

Customers and all the bank employees have been asked to get themselves tested for Covid. The rate of infection could only be known after test reports are available, it was said.

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Customers and all the bank employees have been asked to get themselves tested for Covid. The rate of infection could only be known after test reports are available, it was said.

## SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN



Students take part in a signature campaign launched against the Centre's move to close down Phatak Railway Station in Sambalpur, Tuesday

## Labourer killed as under-construction well caves in

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kamakhyanager, April 6:** In a tragic incident, a casual labourer was buried in an under construction well due to mudslide while digging soil from the well located behind the NAC busstand here in Dhenkanal district Tuesday.

The deceased was identified as Dhulia Mallick, a resident of Digodia Sahi near Kamakhyanager College. Four other workers, who were around the well, escaped death by a whisker.

Reports said, the five labourers were engaged in digging the well when mudslide occurred. Dhulia had gone inside and was taking out mud

when he got trapped inside. On being informed, fire officials reached the spot and launched a rescue operation with the help of three earth moving equipment. Following a massive rescue operation that lasted three hours, Dhulia was pulled out from the mud, while the other labourers were

also taken to safety. However, by the time Dhulia was taken out of the well, he had already breathed his last.

"Dhulia was at the lower base of the well, while the others were in the upper level. We luckily escaped the death, but Dhulia could not," a labourer said. Kamakhyanager sub-collector Bishnu Prasad Acharya, tehsildar Sanjay Rout, police IIC Abhinav Dalua and fire officer Saroj Kumar Mohapatra supervised

the search operation. The district administration gave Rs 10,000 from the district Red-Cross fund and another Rs 3,000 from the fund of Harishchandra Yojana to the bereaved family. Police have registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem.

## Admin effects 3 micro containment zones in Sundargarh

**Sundargarh:** With a spurt in Covid positive cases, the district administration of Sundargarh has declared three micro containment zones Tuesday.

The three micro containment zones are Murkia Musalman Bastipara under Bandega Gram

Panchayat (GP) which reported 19 positive cases, Bandega Ultidih Fittingpara, Bastipara under Bandega GP recording 24 positive cases and near Lulkidih High School under Bandega GP having reported two positive cases.

According to an official, it is nec-

essary to make the locations as no access zones to contain further transmission of Covid-19. The containment order will be in force till April 12, 2021.

All vehicular and public movements other than medical staff, authorized persons and service

providers have been restricted.

The panchayat executive officer (PEO) of Bandega GP and the PEO of Lulkidih GP were appointed as nodal officers so that smooth supply of essential items to the people in the containment zones would be supplied smoothly.

## Forest dept does it again; manganese smuggling caught

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Joda/Keonjhar, April 6:** The forest department has again caught illegal mineral being smuggled from Silajoda forest under Bamabari section of Keonjhar Tuesday.

It is alleged that such illegal activities have not been curbed in Joda mining circle despite repeated crackdowns on mineral mafia by forest, police and mines officials.

According to forester Jatindra Pal, forest officials received tip-off about illegal manganese smuggling in Silajoda area at 1 am Tuesday. Thereafter, the officials raided the area and seized a dumper with manganese worth about Rs 2 lakh.

However, the mineral mafia man-

aged to flee in the darkness. The manganese weighed about 8 tonnes.

In the last one week, the forest officials and police have seized over a dozen of heavy vehicles carrying illegal minerals in the Joda mining circle. March 30, police had seized huge quantities of iron ore loaded in five trucks at Jagdala under Bamebari police limits and another truck at Jurudi. Six people were arrested.

There are several instances of seizures of minerals in various parts of Keonjhar in the last two months. In most cases police and forest officials have caught such illegal activities while the mines department fails to curb such things despite having its task forces at the district and the state level.

## Ganjam fringe villages abuzz with hectic hustings

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Patrapur, April 6:** Hectic electioneering has begun in some villages under this block in Ganjam district bordering Andhra Pradesh for the elections to the local panchayat bodies in the neighbouring state scheduled for April 8, a report said.

The neighbouring state after successfully conducting panchayat polls in the disputed Kotia region of Koraput district and in villages of Patrapur block Ganjam district earlier, has issued a fresh notification Sunday to conduct elections for the post of Panchayat Samiti as well as Zilla Parishad members in the region.

The neighbouring state will hold the polls April 8.

Andhra Pradesh had earlier held elections in the same fringe areas February 14. The Odisha government had then opposed the move and requested its AP counterpart to refrain from the electoral process as the matter is still sub-judice in the Supreme Court. However, Andhra Pradesh is holding the polls in Odisha region notwithstanding the opposition from the state government.



Elections will be held for the Mandal Praja Parishad, samitis and Zilla Parishad bodies in Andhra Pradesh. According to reports, people of over six villages in this block bordering Andhra Pradesh are participating in this election.

Andhra Pradesh had earlier held elections in the same fringe areas February 14. The Odisha government had then opposed the move and requested its AP counterpart to refrain from the electoral process as the matter is still sub-judice in the Supreme Court. However, Andhra Pradesh is holding the polls in Odisha region notwithstanding the opposition from the state government.

the electioneering are found moving in Kuladi, Satapuri, Gudikhala, Babanasahi and Banjuasahi villages while scores of tribals from these villages were seen participating in the campaigning.

Several villages in this block are on fringes of Andhra Pradesh where its government is carrying out developmental works, providing educational facilities and luring the residents with various welfare benefits. Residents of Kuladi in Tumba panchayat and Gudikhala in Satapuri Buratal panchayat have earlier participated in the panchayat polls of Andhra Pradesh.

Earlier, in elections for the post

of sarpanchs in Andhra Pradesh, the residents had cast their votes in the polls despite the presence of administrative officials of Odisha. Currently, hectic electioneering has started in the area for the post of Samiti members and Zilla Parishad bodies.

Notably, at that time, the tribal villagers had assured the officials in writing not to participate in the Andhra Pradesh panchayat elections. However, the villagers visited the booths in Andhra Pradesh and exercised their franchise when the Patrapur block officials were busy conducting an awareness programme under Mo Gaon, Mo Tehsil scheme.

## No action against illegal patho labs

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, April 6:** Illegal pathological laboratories have mushroomed in various parts of Nayagarh district. Only 15 pathological labs in the district have obtained licenses while over 150 labs have been operating over years without the approval of the health department. It has become a cause of concern for conscious people, a report said.

The administration is allegedly taking no action against these illegal patho labs while the government is losing revenue of lakhs as license fees every year. Various outfits have demanded quick action against these unauthorized labs where many technicians and other staffs have allegedly

obtained certificates from less known institutes. Given such situation, testing reports given by these labs lack credibility. It is alleged that in case of unreliable medical test reports, patients might lose their lives.

Chandra Bijay Mishra of Nayagarh town said that how patients can differentiate between registered labs and unregistered ones.

Sudam Swain of Gania, Bhaktaballabh Sahu of Nuagaon and Sita Pradhan of Ranapur questioned on the reliability of the test reports of these testing labs.

They alleged that such patho labs are playing with the lives of innocent people. They demanded that the health department should crack down on these labs.

## Bhadrak engineer takes up white pig, rabbit rearing

UDAYNATH HAS ALSO BEEN GROWING KASHMIR APPLES IN HIS FARM, IMPARTS TRAINING

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bant, April 6:** While people of his age are either unemployed or sitting idle after unsuccessfully chasing after jobs, an engineer in Bant area of Bhadrak has taken up farming - mainly of white pig, rabbit rearing and Kashmir apple farming. Becoming self sufficient with this farming, he has etched his own identity in the region more as a farmer than an engineer.

He is Udaynath Kar, son of late Kanhu Charan Kar of Silindi village. After completing his diploma in mechanical engineering in 1995, Udaynath refrained from chasing after jobs in private and government sectors. He rather wanted to do something on his own. Initially, he did

paddy farming and then switched off to business.

But business was not his cup of tea. He started farming again on his 22 acres of land. In his farm, he has taken up a variety of farming like pisciculture, poultry, goatry, rabbit rearing, peal culture, duck farming, dairy, dog breeding, grass farming and above all the Kashmir apple farming. In 2017, his initiative to grow Kashmir apples was appreciated by a high level official from the Centre while visiting his farm.

Now, he has added another farming - white pig rearing on experimental basis. He has brought 20 white pigs from Gurdaspur in Rajasthan and is planning to bring 30 more to his farm.

"White pig rearing is highly lu-



crative," he exuded hope. Besides, he is trying to impart training to people on rearing on

white pigs. On his own effort, he is going to organize a four day-training programme for local people from

April 20.

"Krushna Chandra Lenka, the livestock inspector from Basantia, extends a helping hand in the treatment and vaccination of the fowls, ducks, rabbits, cattle, pigs and dogs," Udaynath said.

Block veterinary surgeon Dr Nirmal Kumar Barik said that one and a half acres of Udaynath's farmland was included for grass farming under the state plan.

He added that all kinds of help will be provided to him for development of his farm. Udaynath hopes that given the extant and a variety of farming he is expected to earn about Rs 12 lakh per annum. Most importantly, he has engaged some local in his farm and created scope of livelihood for them.

**OFFICE OF THE DEAN & PRINCIPAL, MAHARAJA KRISHNA CHANDRA GAJAPATI MEDICAL COLLEGE, BRAHMAMPUR-760 004, GANJAM, ORISSA.**  
No. 2786/ICB-2021/Welfare./ Dated, Berhampur the 06th April, 2021

**TENDER CALL NOTICE**

No. E-06/- Sealed Tenders are invited from the Registered firms for "Supply of Equipment/Instrument" for PG Departments where seats has been increased at MKCG Medical College, Berhampur in two bid system (Technical & Financial) so as to reach the office of the undersigned within Twenty One days from the date of publication of the advertisement till 5 P.M. The detailed Tender paper, Terms & Conditions, list of Equipment/Instrument, specifications can be obtained from the office of the undersigned on payment of Rs.5000/- cash (non-refundable) at the Accounts Section. The details are also available in the website [mkgcmch.org](http://mkgcmch.org). Those who will download the tender documents from Website should enclose a DD for Rs.5000/- towards cost of Tender paper in favour of Dean & Principal, MKCG Medical College, Berhampur payable at the S.B.I., MCC Branch, Berhampur.

The undersigned reserves the right to cancel the Tender in full or parts at any time without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Dean & Principal, MKCG Medical College, Berhampur  
OIPR-10013/11/0001/2122

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** No. B-07  
**"e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE**  
Bid Identification No. E.E. GTN(R&B) - 31/2020-21  
E-mail address: [eeghatagaon2015@gmail.com](mailto:eeghatagaon2015@gmail.com)

**Letter No. 2352** Dt.31.03.2021

- The Executive Engineer, Ghatagaon (R&B) Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in Single Cover System in Online mode from the eligible contractor's for road works as mentioned below.
- Nature of the Work : Civil Works
- Number of Work : 02 (Two) Nos.
- Estimated Cost : Rs.25.06 lakhs to 46.60 lakhs (Approx.)
- Period of Completion : 2 (Two) to 4 (Four) Calendar Months
- Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 11.30 A.M. of Dt.08.04.2021 to 05.00 P.M. of Dt.15.04.2021
- Last Date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal : 05.00 P.M. of Dt.15.04.2021
- Date of Opening of Bid : 11.00 A.M. of Dt.16.04.2021
- Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the same website only.

Sd./- Executive Engineer  
Ghatagaon (R&B) Division  
OIPR-34140/11/0001/2122

**NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, ASKA**  
**e-Procurement Notice**  
**BID REFERENCE No.**  
**ASKA NAC/PUBLIC WORKS/02/2021**  
**TENDER CALL NOTICE**  
**No. 904/NAC/2021, Dated: 06.04.2021**  
**TENDER ID: 2021\_ORULB\_31648**

Bid Documents consisting of specification, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the Govt. website i.e. [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in).

- Nature of Work : Civil Construction works as mentioned in website.
- No. of Works : 09 Nos.
- Bid Value : Varies from Rs.5.43 lakhs to Rs.17.43 lakhs
- Period of Completion : 3 Months
- Date and time of availability of the bid documents in the portal from : Dt.07.04.2021 at 10.00 A.M. to 20.04.2021 at 5.00 P.M.
- Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal : Dt.20.04.2021 at 5.00 P.M.
- Last date & time of receiving of Documents relating of tender offline : 22.04.2021 before 3.00 P.M. through Speed Post.
- Bids received online : Dt.22.04.2021 after 4.00 P.M. shall be opened on onwards
- Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Officer, NAC, Aska (GM)
- Further details can be seen from the procurement portal: [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in).

Sd./- Executive Officer  
N.A.C., Aska

There is a thirst for love which no human relation can quench. It is only the Divine's love that can satisfy that thirst.

**THE MOTHER**



## Money Really Talks

The revelation on April 4 in an online French journal, Mediapart, based on findings of AFA or Agence Française Anticorruption, that the Rafale fighter jet deal involved a payment worth one million euros (Rs 8.62 crore) by its maker Dassault to an Indian middleman has brought that controversy back into focus. Predictably, the BJP government immediately denied there was any irregularity in the purchase and sought to shoot the messenger, instead of assuring the nation of a proper impartial probe that could try to find out whether there is any truth in the report.

Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, in a glib rejoinder, gloated over the 'clean chit' given by the Supreme Court to the Narendra Modi government in its judgement on 14 December, 2019 dismissing the petitions for ordering a probe into the deal. It is anybody's guess how the Supreme Court could give out such a message when it did not have all the details available with it at that time, as the new claim proves.

The same Supreme Court had, very recently, turned down a petition of former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh. The serving Indian Police Service officer had jumped the ladder up to the highest legal authority of the country with a very cunning plan. The Apex Court, instead of entertaining the petition against the Home Minister of Maharashtra, Anil Deshmukh, asked the officer to go to the state's High Court. Predictably, multiple PILs were filed against the Minister and the High Court ordered a CBI enquiry into the matter. The Minister resigned and the state government went on appeal against the High Court order to the Supreme Court. This has started an interesting game worth watching.

There is no doubt the whole nation is seemingly on a rowdy path to obliterate corruption from its roots. Every Indian screams it aloud and the new born nationalists are at the forefront of such honesty-is-our-birth-right movements. Such a mindset must be welcomed but the end results will need close scrutiny. For instance, who are the ones at the vanguard of such anti corruption drives? The nation saw an earlier movement against corruption led by Anna Hazare and the results of demanding one quasi-judicial official seat or position that was supposed to kill corruption. On hindsight it was a petty political move that met with success in what it had set out to achieve.

Now let us examine Param Bir Singh's claims and allegations. Most of us have read in details whatever he has uttered in the last few months. We also noticed how his statement was undone by his own officers in the matter involving the arrest of a powerful and loud mouthed tv anchor few months back. That was the first public indication that showed something had gone wrong somewhere. The Top Cop's statement to the Court being negated by a junior officer would not be a daily event. Later, Param Bir was removed from his post after serving as Mumbai CP for nearly a year.

What is surprising is his claim now, after being removed from one of India's most lucrative governmental posts, is that his political boss, the Home Minister of Maharashtra, had asked his subordinate(s) to collect and give ₹100 crore every month. The allegation might be true. No one denies the fact that politicians across the globe are tuned to be corrupt. However, this Police officer never thought it fit to speak out such a damning fact while in office. He is doing so only after being jacked out. It is also not an unknown fact that the police in India, not just Mumbai, are the biggest goons in this country. They are extortionists, kidnappers, killers (in so called encounters), ill behaved, pot bellied and generally pretty inefficient in unearthing random crimes. It is only when tremendous media, public, politician and above all seniors' pressure mounts that the police in India decides to move in any particular matter. When the crime is random and they are incapable to locate the real culprits, like the Hyderabad rape and murder case, they pick up unknown untraceable poor people and shoot them down mercilessly without a trial and the whole nation rejoices at the spilling of blood. Therefore, it might have been more appropriate had the Bombay High Court asked Param Bir to prove his honesty in his carrier. The age old saying: 'When you point an accusing finger at someone, four fingers are pointing at you' could be very correct in this instant case. In India's system of governance, it is impossible for any elected representative to be majorly corrupt as a stand-alone case. Just like the Rafale money could not have been spirited away by the BJP leadership alone but distributed in much larger quantities in the Delhi bureaucracy, similarly the collection of money purportedly instructed by former Maharashtra minister Anil Deshmukh would have necessarily involved the mammoth bureaucratic hierarchy which normally keeps the hidden chunk of the iceberg. Today Lalu Prasad, a corrupt politician from Bihar, is in jail since long but the officers who facilitated and definitely kept the bigger part of the fodder scam kickback money have availed promotions and are safely ensconced in their comfortable villas along the Ganga at Patna.

The new India of today is simply baying for blood but the howling is definitely not pointed at the correct directions. The instruments of justice are purposefully being used to serve the ends of a select few and thwart efforts at general good of the people.

### WISDOM CORNER

- Happiness is a butterfly, which when pursued, is always just beyond your grasp, but which, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you. **NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE**
- My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style. **MAYA ANGELOU**
- When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hang on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn. **HARRIET BEECHER STOWE**

### WORDSWORTH

#### By hook or by crook

This curious phrase has bothered many people down the years, the result being a succession of well-meant stories, often fervently argued, that don't stand up for a moment on careful examination. As good a place to start as any is the lighthouse at the tip of the Hook peninsula in south-eastern Ireland, said to be the world's oldest working lighthouse. It is at the east side of the entrance to Waterford harbour, on the other side of which is a village and parish called Crook. One tale claims that Oliver Cromwell proposed to invade Ireland during the English Civil War by way of Waterford and that he asserted he would land there "by Hook or by Crook". In another version the invasion of Ireland was the one of 1172 by Richard de Clare, 2nd Earl of Pembroke, also known as Strongbow.

### LOL

#### Where is the toast?

There was an elderly couple who in their old age noticed that they were getting a lot more forgetful, so they decided to go to the doctor. The doctor told them that they should start writing things down so they don't forget. They went home and the old lady told her husband to get her a bowl of ice cream. "You might want to write it down," she said. The husband said, "No, I can remember that you want a bowl of ice cream." She then told her husband she wanted a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream. "Write it down," she told him, and again he said, "No, no, I can remember: you want a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream." Then the old lady said she wants a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream and a cherry on top. "Write it down," she told her husband and again he said, "No, I got it. You want a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream and a cherry on top." So he goes to get the ice cream and spends an unusually long time in the kitchen, over 30 minutes. He comes out to his wife and hands her a plate of eggs and bacon. The old wife stares at the plate for a moment, then looks at her husband and asks, "Where's the toast?"



## FOCUS SOCIETY

# OUR SOCIAL CAPITAL



Dhanada K Mishra

**MANY LEADING ECONOMISTS BELIEVE THAT THE DOWNTURN IN INDIAN ECONOMY HAS MORE TO DO WITH SOCIAL DISHARMONY THAN DISASTROUS POLICY DECISIONS SUCH AS DEMONETISATION AND A FLAWED GST IMPLEMENTATION**

Two years ago I moved into the household of my current hosts - an Italian and Chinese husband-wife couple in Hong Kong. I found them using AirBNB - a service that allows people to host complete strangers as paying guests in their homes. They have since become very close friends and great benefactors. Trusting one another in general is an important factor for societies to function smoothly and be prosperous. In the USA, the UK and India there is a visible decline in social trust in recent decades, whereas in countries like Canada, Australia, NZ, especially Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, seem to be heading in the opposite direction. Many leading economists such as professor of economics at Cornell University Kaushik Basu believe that the downturn in Indian economy has more to do with social disharmony caused by divisive politics more than disastrous policy decisions such as demonetisation and a flawed GST implementation. Essentially social capital consisting of trust among close knit units such as family and friends and social harmony among diverse ethnic, religious or racial groups.

David Halpern, the head of the UK's Behavioral Insights Team, says social trust is like the proverbial 'dark matter' when it comes to economics or well being. Its effect is important but it gets very little attention. It has a stronger impact on future national economic growth rate than even skill level in the population. Therefore, it is very important to be able to measure the level of social trust and that's what social scientists have been doing for decades by asking questions like "Do you trust others, especially strangers?" and variation of the same. There is a big difference among countries when asked "what percentage of people can be trusted?" While countries like Brazil, it could be in the range of 10-20%, in the Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Sweden or the Netherlands it may be in the higher range of 60-70%. Countries like the USA and UK would fall somewhere in between.

**Just like physical capital (infrastructure) and financial capital (GDP), social capital also has an important role in what makes a community or country prosperous in a broad sense. Research shows that people with a larger network of friends, family members, and colleagues tend to do better financially and even in terms of their health**

Just like physical capital (infrastructure) and financial capital (GDP), social capital also has an important role in what makes a community or country prosperous in a broad sense. Research shows that people with a larger network of friends, family members, and colleagues tend to do better financially and even in terms of their health. This applies both at the individual and community level. Prof Robert Putnam, a public policy expert at Harvard University and author of a landmark book 'Bowling Alone' published in the year 2000, established that a presence of a healthy civic network or civil society organisations that made people trust each other more. It also made the governments function better. Social networks have value first of all for the people who are in the networks helping us find jobs and have a sense of social security and safety. At the same time, in societies with high levels of social capital, children do better in school, crime rates are lower and economic growth rate is higher. In a society or community with low levels of mutual trust, people have to constantly look over their shoulder,

have more lawsuits, try to avoid paying taxes or recycle. Small business owners tend to employ their relatives to work for them rather than strangers even if they are much better at the job. There are two types of social capitals - 'bonding social capital' refers to your closeness to your friends, your family and those you interact with often. This is important for health outcomes and sense of personal security. 'Bridging social capital' on the other hand is trust between strangers, particularly among diverse groups, say whites and non-whites, Hindus and Muslims or higher castes and lower castes or the well off and the poor. This is really important for a healthy business environment leading to general well being and prosperity of the society at large. It's universally agreed that more ethnically and racially diverse communities do much better in terms of innovation and creativity and lead to a more vibrant social environment. In India, our diversity has always been considered a great strength. Diverse teams always do better than less diverse ones in business sports or any other group endeavour. The world

is becoming increasingly diverse with global travel and migration. Unfortunately, increase in diversity also seems to correlate with decrease in social capital. The increasing social tensions in India over inter-caste marriages or relationships across religious divides are results of such decline of trust or bridging social capital.

It is well established that the decline in social trust can be addressed in a number of ways. For example, university education that allows young people to meet and know their peers from different backgrounds helps build social trust. People connecting with one another across lines of race or economics or gender or age are helpful in increasing social capital. Some examples are sports teams, the military, college, social service like NSS/NCC, travelling, etc. Addressing rising inequality is important as illustrated by the Netherlands, which has made a conscious effort to build a more equitable society and thereby increase its social capital successfully.

Before the age of cell phones and social media, television was considered the biggest enemy of civic engagement as it made people literally couch potatoes. With the ubiquitous cell phones it was thought that people will connect with each other more and, hence, it will mitigate some of the negative effects of TV. Same was expected of social media. However, both the phone - especially the smartphone and social media - seemed to have caused a negative impact on social capital by all counts. This was most dramatically illustrated by the recent incidents in Washington DC where a violent mob ransacked the US Congress leading to loss of lives. Let's hope we will not allow such divisive tendencies to develop in India and Odisha by being watchful of our power hungry politicians and their machinations.

*The author is the professor at KMBB College of Engineering under Biju Patnaik University of Technology currently working in Hong Kong. He can be reached by email at dhanadam@gmail.com.*

### IN JEST THIS

## Celebs risk dying more than once



Melvin Durai

**WHILE OBITUARIES ARE SOMETIMES PUBLISHED PREMATURELY, CELEBRITIES ALSO FALL VICTIM TO MISTAKEN IDENTITIES AND OTHER MIX-UPS**

A couple of weeks ago, BBC News sent out a tweet that announced the death of a legendary American actress.

"Emmy award-winning US actress Mary Tyler Moore dies aged 80, her publicist says," BBC tweeted from its "Breaking News" account.

When I saw the tweet, I felt sad. It is always sad when a celebrity you adore dies. It is even sadder when the celebrity dies for the second time.

Moore, who starred on the popular 1960s TV shows "The Dick Van Dyke Show" and "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," actually died more than four years ago—on January 25, 2017.

But as a celebrity, she was at great risk of dying again. If you're a celebrity or other public figure, you run the risk of dying several times, both before and after your actual death.

This risk has always existed, but it's even greater in the Internet age, when a single keystroke can produce a Web page or release a Tweet announcing your untimely death. Imagine what it's like to be reading your Twitter feed and suddenly discover that you have died. BBC said that the tweet about



Mary Tyler Moore

Moore's death was sent "due to a technical error." I wonder how many Twitter users were shocked to hear about Moore's death, unaware that she had died four years earlier. It wouldn't surprise me to learn that any memorabilia related to the actress increased in value following the tweet. If an autographed photograph of her doubled in value upon her death in 2017, surely it doubled again upon her second death.

If Moore is in heaven, as many of her fans believe, she might have heard about the BBC tweet.

Angel: "Mary, the BBC just announced your death on Earth."

Moore: "But I came here four years ago!"

Angel: "Are you upset that you may have left Earth too soon?"

Moore: "Oh no, it was the perfect time to leave. I managed to miss the Trump presidency!"

Unlike Moore, most celebrities are alive when their deaths are announced prematurely. This happens partly because many news organizations prepare obituaries for public figures as soon as they reach a certain age or contract a life-threatening illness. These obituaries are almost ready for publication, with only a few additional details needed, such as the exact time and cause of death. Every now and then, an obituary will be inadvertently released into public view while its subject still has a pulse. That's how actor Kirk Douglas learned of his demise. He was 97 when People magazine published his obituary on its website in 2014.

I can't help wondering if the magazine's editor received a phone call about the obituary.

Douglas: "I'm calling about the wonderful Kirk Douglas obituary on your website."

Editor: "You like it?"

Douglas: "Yes, it's very good. Just one clarification though. You've written that Mr. Douglas became a

superstar even before the term was coined. Actually, the term was coined to describe Mr. Douglas."

Editor: "Thank you for the clarification. Is there anything else we need to clarify?"

Douglas: "Well, if it's no bother, can you mention that Mr. Douglas enjoyed reading his obituary? He appreciates all the nice things people said about him. He hopes he can reciprocate one day."

It would be six more years before the magazine published Douglas' obituary again. This time he couldn't make any calls.

While obituaries are sometimes published prematurely, celebrities also fall victim to mistaken identities and other mix-ups. When actor and producer Shashi Kapoor died in December 2017, Times Now sent out a tweet misspelling his last name as "Tharoor."

That prompted Shashi Tharoor, the author and politician, to borrow from Mark Twain humorously and tweet: "We're getting condolence calls in the office! Reports of my demise are, if not exaggerated, at least premature."

Tharoor will hopefully live long enough to refute his death several more times.

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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

### Another attack on nature

Sir, Madhya Pradesh's Chhatrapur district's Bakswaha forest has the largest diamond reserves in the country. It is estimated that 3.92 crore carats of diamonds have been deposited in the soil of the region. It is estimated that 382,131 hectares of forest will be cut down and 2.15 lakh trees will be destroyed. The forest has about 40,000 shaguan trees in addition to very expensive and medicinal plants like pipal, kendu, jamukoli, bahada and arjun. According to daily Bhaskar, the state government conducted a survey of diamonds in the Bundelkhand area between 2000 and 2005. The survey was conducted by the Australian company Riotinto, an expert in the region. The team was shown a layer of kimberlite stone on the edge of a canal in the Bakswaha forest. The government is handing over to Birla group the entire forest for 50 years to do the work. The company will spend ₹2,500 crore for this work. The Australian company also applied for the forest, but as the government amended the law, it decided not to do the work. Here a lot of questions about the environment need be raised. It is difficult to calculate how devastating the impact will be and not only on Madhya Pradesh but on the whole world. There is no doubt that the massive deforestation that will result in the digging of the diamond will cause severe damage to the environment. In addition, a number of wildlife, birds and insects will be extinct, disrupting the balance of nature in one fell swoop. A 2016, report by the Geology and Mining (MP) and Riotinto Company said the forest has tendua, bear, vulture barasingha and deer. But the new report does not say anything about this wildlife. This means that the data is slowly being suppressed.

**Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR**

### No laxity

Sir, The second wave of COVID-19 infections sweeping the country at a frightening pace is of grave concern. The number of daily new infections is hitting new highs, and casualties are climbing. On Sunday, India registered 1,03,558 cases and 478 deaths, earning the dubious distinction of becoming a chart-topper on the daily infections list. The current wave surge is alarming, considering that it has taken just 25 days to cross the grim milestone of one-lakh infections. The Prime Minister sought people's participation to fight the pandemic, and citizens would do well not to display any laxity at this stage.

**NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE**



## Will build 'new India' by 2047: Naidu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dandi, April 6:** Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu Tuesday said he is confident that the country would prepare a detailed outline to build a new India by 2047, the 100th year of India's independence.

Naidu was speaking here at the conclusion of the 25-day-long Dandi yatra, taken up by 81 participants from the Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat's Ahmedabad city as part of the 'Aazadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav' to mark 75 years of India's independence.

From 1947 till now, we have walked on the footsteps shown by our freedom fighters, 'sabka saath sabka vikas' is our motto. We have achieved many things, Naidu said.

Ideas at 75, achievements at 75, actions at 75 and resolve at 75 should be our aim, he added.

Naidu said the entire world today respects and recognises the strengths of India, thanks to the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and all the states, irrespective of political parties (ruling the states).

I am confident that on this occasion, taking into account India



Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu visits the Saifee Villa in Dandi, Tuesday

It is an India that cherishes its constitutional values and democratic routes, and is committed to development, he said.

Naidu interacted with the 81 participants of the Dandi yatra and also visited the Dandi memorial and museum. Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat, state Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, his Sikkim counterpart Prem Singh Tamang, Union Minister of State for Culture Prahlad Singh Patel and Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel also attended the function.

Prahlad Singh Patel in his address said the real heroes of the 25-day Dandi yatra are the participants who walked from the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to Dandi. March 12 this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the Dandi yatra from the Sabarmati Ashram as part of celebrations over the completion of 75 years of India's independence.

After travelling a distance of 268 km on foot, the 81 participants reached Dandi in Gujarat's Navsari district on Tuesday morning.

March 12, 1930, Mahatma Gandhi along with 78 other people undertook the Dandi March to challenge the salt tax imposed by the British.

Gandhi reached Dandi April 5, 1930 and broke the law April 6, 1930. The Dandi March is considered a defining moment in the Indian independence movement after which the entire nation stood behind Mahatma Gandhi against the British rule.

said gaining freedom from foreign powers by non-violent means was a great achievement for the country.

In the last 75 years, we have been able to build a country that freedom fighters and Constitution makers had dreamt of, an India which has been built by successive governments, it is a healthy, literate, educated and self-reliant India, Naidu said. It is Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, strong but a non-violent India that shares its prosperity with other nations, Naidu said.

He gave the example of the Indian government sending doses of vaccine against COVID-19 to many countries, including its neighbours, amid the coronavirus pandemic.

at 2047, the completion of 100 years of our independence, we will prepare a detailed outline to make a new India in the next 25 years. We will work to achieve it also in the next 25 years, he said.

He said one often comes across watershed moments in history and Mahatma Gandhi's 'Salt March' was one such defining milestone, which stands out as an iconic movement of non-violence and civil disobedience against the British Empire. Naidu

'Salt March' was one such defining milestone, which stands out as an iconic movement of non-violence and civil disobedience against the British Empire. Naidu

**One often comes across watershed moments in history and Mahatma Gandhi's 'Salt March' was one such defining milestone, which stands out as an iconic movement of non-violence and civil disobedience against the British Empire**

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT OF INDIA

## Sabarimala continues to be an election issue



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, April 6:** The Sabarimala women's entry issue, one of the major poll planks of the opposition UDF and the NDA against the ruling LDF during the campaign, took centre stage of debate even Tuesday, the day of assembly election, in Kerala as major leaders locked horns over the matter.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said Lord Ayyappa, the presiding deity at the Sabarimala, and all other gods are with the LDF government which has worked for the welfare of people.

Leader of Opposition Ramesh Chennithala in his reaction said the Left government would surely face the wrath of the Lord Ayyappa and his devotees in this election.

Lashing out at Vijayan, BJP state president K Surendran said what the CM had done in Sabarimala three years ago was the 'act of demon' and people of the state would never forget his wicked deeds.

Kerala had witnessed violent protests by right wing activists after the LDF government decided to implement the 2018 Supreme Court verdict allowing women of all age groups to offer prayers at the hill shrine of Lord Ayyappa at Sabarimala, where traditionally women in the menstrual age group of 10-50 are barred from offering worship. The war of words became intense as the polling continued with the several prominent leaders in both fronts coming up with sharp reactions supporting and opposing the statements of the CM.

All began when Sukumaran Nair, the general secretary of the Nair Service Society, an outfit of influential Hindu Nair community, Tuesday said the people of Kerala wanted a change of rule in the state. In a veiled attack against the LDF government, which had faced severe criticism from the majority community against its alleged hastiness in implementing the Supreme Court verdict allowing women of all age group at Sabarimala, Nair said the protest of Ayyappa devotees still persist.

When reporters sought his reaction, the Chief Minister said he does not think that Sukumaran Nair would tell anything against the state government.

He is an Ayyappa devotee. Ayyappa and all other gods are with this government which has protected the interest of people belonging to all religions.

Gods are always with those who do good for people, Vijayan told reporters in Kannur after casting his vote at a school there.

Responding to the CM's statement, Chennithala sought to know whether atheist Vijayan was seeking the blessings of the Lord Ayyappa to win the elections.

Neither Lord Ayyappa nor his devotees would forgive the Left government for hurting their sentiments, the Congress leader said.

## 'Kerala Castro' fails to vote

In the 2016 Assembly polls, VS Achuthanandan, as the Leader of Opposition, was the one who led the Left's campaign but after their victory, Pinarayi Vijayan became Chief Minister

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, April 6:** Former Kerala Chief Minister and one of India's tallest Communist leaders, V S Achuthanandan, failed to cast his vote Tuesday for the first time in state Assembly elections.

The 97-year-old, who is a sitting legislator from Malappuzha in Palakkad district, is now staying at his son's residence in the state capital, while his vote is at his home at the Amalappuzha Assembly constituency in Alappuzha district. Following some technical issues, he and his wife were unable to register for postal voting and Tuesday, his health condition was not suitable for the three-

hour journey to his home and hence, he could not cast his vote. However, his son and other family members went and cast their votes at Amabalapuzha.

After the Covid pandemic struck, Achuthanandan has been rarely seen in public domain, with visitors kept at bay. In the 2016 Assembly polls, he, as the Leader of Opposition, was the one who led the Left's campaign but after their victory, Pinarayi Vijayan became Chief Minister. Achuthanandan was given the title of 'Kerala Castro' and was made Chairman of the Administrative Reforms Commission - a post which was created for him and came with cabinet status.



## POLL IN THE TIME OF CORONA



COVID-19 positive patients show their voters ID card after casting their votes during Kerala Assembly Polls, in Thiruvananthapuram, Tuesday

## Guj govt orders 3 lakh Remdesivir injections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Surat, April 6:** The Gujarat government has placed an order to procure 3 lakh Remdesivir injections for the treatment of critical COVID-19 patients in the state, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said Tuesday.

Remdesivir is considered a key antiviral drug in the fight against COVID-19, especially in adult patients with severe complications.

On the possibility of imposing a lockdown in the state as suggested by the Gujarat High Court Tuesday, Rupani said an appropriate decision will be taken soon after consulting the government's core group.

Rupani was in Surat to chair a

meeting of senior officials to review the preparedness of the local administration to deal with a sudden spike in coronavirus cases in the city, where over 600 new infections were reported Monday.

He urged people not to panic in view of an alarming rise in COVID-19 cases in parts of the state.

The COVID-19 infection has spread further. As much as 60 per cent

of the cases (in Gujarat) are from four major cities, including Surat.

And, it seems that cases will increase further. But, people should not panic. People should take necessary precautions to stay safe, Rupani told reporters after the meet. People are complaining about a shortage of Remdesivir.



## Ahmedabad University to lead India in global climate initiative

This event is a part of a global project called 'Solve Climate By 2030', in association with Bard College in New York. Ahmedabad University is the only institute to be selected from India to be part of this global initiative

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ahmedabad, April 6:** As the world is on the path to recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, Gujarat-based Ahmedabad University has been selected to lead India in a global climate education initiative that seeks to find out what can be done this year to meet the challenge of climate change while supporting struggling communities that have faced joblessness, sickness and loss.

As a part of this initiative, Ahmedabad University will host a public discourse on the topic 'Communicating climate urgency: How to get our messaging right in India?' April 7, 2021.

This will be one of 125 similar events to be held across the planet in early April focused on ambitious but feasible regional and local solutions to help meet the challenge of climate change.

This event is a part of a global project called 'Solve Climate By 2030', in association with Bard College in New York. Worldwide, from Australia to Kyrgyzstan, Colombia to Malaysia, and South Africa to Hungary, audiences will hear from local climate experts about steps that can really help the nation solve climate change, while creating much-needed jobs and income. Ahmedabad University is the only institute to be selected from India to be part of this global initiative.

We firmly believe that sustainability is central to human exist-

tence and no discipline, today, can shy away from integrating in its thinking. For Ahmedabad, Climate change is a serious area of academic-action endeavour and we engage with all of its manifestations, Professor Pankaj Chandra, Vice Chancellor of Ahmedabad University, said ahead of the event.

Located in the urban centre of Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Ahmedabad University is building itself into a research hub that is premised on liberal education. It is a university in the global academy that is being envisioned to promote subcontinental traditions of knowledge to act as a bridge between the arts, the sciences and the professions. Interdisciplinary curriculum, experiential learning environment, and research thinking define Ahmedabad University education.

At the April 7 webinar, Bhuvana Venkatesh, a Grade 10 student from Bengaluru, Bijal Vachhrajani, Author and Senior Editor at Pratham Books and Raj Shah, an MBA student of the Class of 2022



at Ahmedabad University, will participate in the interdisciplinary conversation on Communicating climate urgency How to get our messaging right.

Dr Eban Goodstein, economist and Director of the Solve Climate project at Bard College, has urged climate-concerned teachers at the college, university and high school level to assign the Ahmedabad University webinar as homework - either live or recorded - and then engage students in this critical dialogue.

Ahmedabad University is taking a leadership role among global universities on education for climate solutions, said Goodstein. The experts they have brought together for this event have an important message about what we can and must do now to stabilise the climate. Minal Pathak, Senior Scientist, Global Centre for Environment and Energy, Ahmedabad University, will moderate the April 7 event.

"The science around climate change is unanimous - solving the climate challenge needs unprecedented and rapid action," said Pathak. "How do we best communicate this urgency? How can we improve our messaging for the wider public - for young audiences in particular?"

## Probe begins into curbs on Easter meat sale

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Wayanad, April 6:** An investigation has been launched into a complaint by a man that he was not allowed to distribute meat among the Christian faithful in Meenangadi area, allegedly by an unidentified group of people on the eve of Easter, police sources said Tuesday.

A complaint in this regard was received at the Meenangadi police station Monday night but no FIR has been registered so far, they said.

"We will inquire into this petition. If there is a cognisable offence we

will register a case," a senior police officer said. Police said its Special Branch wing conducted an initial inquiry and it was found that some people tried to restrain the man from selling the meat in the area alleging that he was selling non-halal meat. The complainant, Shaji told reporters the unidentified group blocked his vehicle at an area near Meenangadi town and tried to destroy the meat, alleging that he was not distributing beef.

Shaji, who is a district coordinator of a farmer producer company, also alleged that the group of men

tried to force feed him the raw meat. He claimed he managed to escape from the spot in his vehicle.

The police officer, however, said the allegations of the bid to force feed him raw meat could not be confirmed. The plan was to distribute fresh meat among the Christian faithful who are members of the farmer producer company called Kisan Mitra for Easter celebrations. The incident allegedly occurred when Shaji had gone to the area with 150 kg of fresh meat (beef and pork) in a three-wheeler, some members claimed.

Manoj Cherian Kanjirathinkal, an office bearer of Kisan Mitra, who organised the meat distribution among the Christian faithful, said the incident occurred Saturday evening at Meenangadi Ambalappadi junction. He said Shaji was not willing to lodge the complaint and he went to the police only after they convinced him about the need of seeking legal action. Kanjirathinkal, who went along with Shaji to lodge the complaint, alleged police tried to harass the complainant, treating his complaint as fake information.

## KERALA POLLS

### 'Overslept': Poll officer turns up late for duty

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, April 6:** A polling officer in Kerala's Alappuzha failed to turn up on time at his post for Tuesday's Assembly elections, with the excuse that he had overslept.

This incident occurred at a booth at Thalavady in Alappuzha.

According to rules, all poll officials had to conduct a mock poll at 5.30 am and commence polling at 7 am. But at this polling booth, a key poll official was absent, and the authorities were unable to contact him. Proceedings eventually started after a reserve poll official took over the missing officer's duties. And when the poll official was finally located, he said that he had overslept and hence was not able to be present on time.

The Alappuzha District Collector has decided to initiate action against the erring poll official.

Polling for the 140-member Kerala Assembly is underway Tuesday.

## GUJ HC MOOTS SHORT LOCKDOWN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, April 6:** The Gujarat High Court Tuesday said the COVID-19 situation in the state was getting out of control, and suggested a curfew or lockdown could be imposed for three to four days to break the infection chain.

Hearing a petition taken up suo motu (on its own) regarding the COVID-19 situation, a division bench of Chief Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Bhargav Karia said such a lockdown or curfew is needed to curb the spread of the virus.

Chief Justice Nath said the COVID-19 situation is going from bad to worse and getting out of control in Gujarat, with over 3,000 cases emerging Monday.

He suggested that all kind of gatherings, including political functions, should be controlled or stopped.

Urgent and serious steps need to be taken to check this. Otherwise, the COVID-19 situation will go out of hand. May be three-four days of



curfew or lockdown could be imposed to check the situation at the moment, Chief Justice Nath said during an online hearing.

Advocate General Kamal Trivedi informed the bench that the state government was in a Catch-22 situation about the lockdown.

Chief Justice Nath noted that the night curfew, imposed from between 9 pm to 6 am in four major cities of Gujarat, was not proving to be effective.

You can always open it after three-four days of curfew. But, this curfew will help, I think. Like, initially in March 2020, there was a curfew for two days, three days, Chief Justice Nath said.

The night curfew, imposed from 9 pm to 6 am in four major cities of Gujarat, was not proving to be effective

To break the chain of the viral infection, Justice Karia also suggested that the government should limit the number of employees coming to offices or commercial establishments so that less people come in contact with each other.

Trivedi said he will take instructions from the state government and revert.

Day before yesterday, the government was seriously thinking about imposing a lockdown. But, there were views that a lockdown is likely to cause misery to the poor people, the advocate general said.

So, the government is in a 'Catch-22' situation. We are trying our level best, he informed the bench.

# national

## of the day quote

The Covid positivity rate yesterday was 5.54 %, and around 65,000 tests were conducted. Orders were issued to escalate the number of beds in both private and Delhi government hospitals. Almost 5,000 beds are being added for COVID positive cases



SATYENDAR JAIN | DELHI HEALTH MINISTER

The poor as well as the middle class have associated themselves with the BJP. We are in cities as well as in villages. The BJP today is a party of national interest as well as regional aspirations



NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

Today when the people need the government at this time of Covid crisis, as people are not getting treatment in hospitals, there is shortage of doctors, there are no beds available in many districts, even not enough testing is done, the CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan is sitting on Satyagraha to divert the attention of the people. I fail to understand how corona will go away by this 24-hour satyagraha?



KAMAL NATH | FORMER MADHYA PRADESH CM

## SHORT TAKES

### Covid strikes at IIT Patna

**Patna:** The second wave of Covid-19 is spreading at a rapid pace in Bihar with the state reporting 935 new cases across 38 districts in the last 24 hours. Of these, the state capital alone reported 432 cases, including 18 students testing positive at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Patna, located on the outskirts of the city in the Bihta sub-town.

### Two killed in tiger attack

**Chandrapur:** Two members of a family were killed in a tiger attack in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district Tuesday morning, a senior forest official said. The incident took place in the Sindewahi forest range under Brahmपुरi division when the two men, residents of Pawanpar village, had gone to collect Mahua flowers, he said. "The two were found dead in a wildlife (tiger) attack in Pawanpar beat of the Sindewahi range," the official said. The bodies of the victims, identified as Kamalakar Rishi Undirwade (60) and Durwas Dhanuji Undirwade (48), were found 200 metres apart in the forest, he said.

### Quake hits north Bengal

**Siliguri (WB):** A mild earthquake of 4.1 magnitude hit north Bengal Tuesday morning, as per the National Center for Seismology. The earthquake, the second to hit the region in less than 12 hours, occurred at 7.07 am and the location was 64 km east of Siliguri, it said. The depth was 10 km, it added. There was no immediate report of any damage or losses, officials said.

### Man beaten to death

**Unnao (Uttar Pradesh):** A man from Kakori area in Lucknow was beaten to death in a village in Unnao on the suspicion of being a thief. Circle Officer Bangarmau, Anjani Kumar Singh, said that the incident took place late on Sunday night and a case of culpable homicide, not amounting to murder, has been registered against five persons.



Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel inspire us to build a new India of our dreams

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

## 5 UP JAILS TO TURN INTO HIGH-SECURITY PRISONS

Five jails in Uttar Pradesh will be converted into high-security prisons. The jails selected for the upgradation are in Lucknow, Bareilly, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Azamgarh and Chitrakoot



# India, Russia discuss defence ties, Afghan peace process



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov before a meeting in New Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 6:** Russia Tuesday promised joint production of weapons systems in India as the two countries held extensive talks covering key areas of bilateral cooperation as well as pressing issues like the Afghan peace process and each other's outlook on the Indo-Pacific region.

In the talks between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov, the Indian side apprised the Russian delegation of its views on China in the backdrop of the border row in Ladakh, people familiar with the matter said.

At a press conference with Lavrov, Jaishankar, describing the talks as "very warm", "comprehensive" and "very productive", said much of the discussions covered the preparations for President Vladimir

Putin's visit to India for the annual India-Russia summit later this year. To a question, Lavrov dismissed the possibility of any future military alliance between Russia and China and asserted that the cooperation between the two countries was not directed against anyone.

Referring to bilateral defence ties, Lavrov said Russia was ready for transfer of cutting edge technologies and production of weapons systems in India. "I am sure deepening of military cooperation serves national interests of both the countries. At the same time, we respect the right of the Indian friends to diversify ties in this area," he said, while describing the outcome of the talks as "satisfactory".

Without elaborating, Jaishankar said, "Our defence sector requirements in the past year were expeditiously addressed." The Russian foreign minister arrived here on

Monday evening on a nearly 19-hour visit amid apparent unease in Moscow over the proactive approach of the Quad member nations, including India, in dealing with geopolitical developments in the Indo-Pacific region.

Lavrov is travelling to Islamabad from India Tuesday evening. "Of course none of you would be surprised to learn that the discussions were very warm, they were very productive," Jaishankar said in his media statement. He said both the countries understand the importance of the India-Russia relationship to global peace, security and stability and that the review of the bilateral ties was "really encouraging". "I shared our view-point on the Indo-Pacific. As our prime minister pointed out at the Shangri-La Dialogue some years ago, contemporary challenges require countries to work together in new and different ways," Jaishankar said.

"Such cooperation also reflects the multi-polar and rebalanced character of global politics. India is strongly committed to ASEAN centrality and this is underlined by the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPO) that it has been advocating at the East-Asia summit," he added. The 10-nation grouping of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a key stakeholder in the Indo-Pacific region. Russia has been critical of the Quad grouping that has been aimed at ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific against the backdrop of China's growing assertiveness in the region. Quad comprises India, the US, Japan and Australia.

The Russian foreign minister referred to the Indo-Pacific as Asia-Pacific and said both sides highlighted the need to preserve the central role of ASEAN in the region.

## NATURE'S BOUNTY



A woman collects Calendula flowers in a field on the outskirts of Amritsar

PTI PHOTO

# India facing renewed challenges along its borders: Army Chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 6:** India is facing renewed challenges along its borders and armed forces officers, who are under training, must remain abreast of all such developments, said Army Chief General M M Naravane Tuesday.

He was delivering a lecture on 'Developments along the Western and Northern Borders and their Impact on the Future Road Map of the Indian Army' at Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) in Wellington, Tamil Nadu.

"He (Army Chief) emphasised that the nation is facing renewed challenges along its borders and exhorted the students on the need to remain abreast of all developments," said the Indian Army's



"He (Army Chief) emphasised that the nation is facing renewed challenges along its borders and exhorted the students on the need to remain abreast of all developments," said the Indian Army's statement.

statement. General Naravane was on a two-day visit to the college. The lecture was delivered to the faculty and officers attending the 76th staff course at the college.

DSSC Commandant Lt Gen M J S Kahlon gave an update to Naravane on the ongoing training activities and incorporation of new initiatives with specific reference to professional military training on "jointmanship" among the three

services, the Army's statement said. The Army chief was briefed on the changes being undertaken in the training curriculum and infrastructural development as a step towards enhancing the role of DSSC as a centre of excellence for professional military education, it noted. He complimented the college for maintaining a very high state of training in spite of COVID-19 pandemic constraints, the statement said.

## HIRAN MURDER CASE NIA takes Sachin Vaze to CSMT to recreate scene

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 6:** The NIA took suspended police officer Sachin Vaze to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) in south Mumbai from where he had boarded a train to neighbouring Thane on the day of businessman Mansukh Hiran's murder, a police official said Tuesday.

In a CCTV footage of March 4, Vaze was seen taking a train from the CSMT to Thane, hence a team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) took Vaze to the CSMT late Monday night to recreate the scene, he said. Later, the NIA also took Vaze to the Mumbra creek in Thane district where Hiran's body was found March 5.

The NIA is conducting a probe into the case of an explosives-laden SUV found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence in south Mumbai February 25 and the subsequent murder of Hiran. The probe agency arrested Vaze last month for his alleged role in plant-



ing the vehicle with explosives near Ambani's house.

During recreation of the scene at the CSMT Monday, the NIA sleuths asked Vaze to walk on its platform no. 4 to compare his movement with the man seen in the CCTV footage, the official said.

Later, they took Vaze to the Mumbra creek where Hiran's body was found last month.

The NIA team, which spent over an hour each at the CSMT and the Mumbra creek, was accompanied by some witnesses, forensic experts and the Railway Protection Force officials.

# URBAN FOREST TO BE DEVELOPED IN ARAVALI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Gurugram, April 6:** An urban forest is to be developed in the Aravali area of Sikanderpur and Chakarapur in the city, said the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) officials.

The project, proposed on 100 hectares (250 acres) of forest land, is to be fenced off for which the GMDA has started preparations. The authority officials said the work of developing the urban forest will be done by an NGO or organization.

Sikanderpur and Chakarapur have a large Aravali forest area. Last year, the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) removed about 2,000 illegal huts from the area. According to the officials, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has a plan to develop 200 urban forests across the country. The project was launched by the Ministry on June 5, 2020. And the



urban forest will be developed under this plan.

The officials said the features of the urban forest will be environment friendly like - having a variety of plants, including flowering, shady, vine, medicinal plants will be planted. Walk-ways and cycle track will be constructed, drinking water facilities will be provided.

"Pollution is expected to decrease with the development of the urban forest. This area of Sikanderpur and Chakarapur is adjoining the city. At present, there are only thorny bushes in this

region of Aravali. After the establishment of new plants and facilities, this 250-acre area will become a new hotspot for nature lovers and morning walkers," said Subhash Yadav, District Forest Officer and Chairman Urban Environment Board GMDA.

Also, the air quality around the surrounding colonies, including the DLF and Sushant Lok will also improve. The task of developing urban forest will be entrusted to any NGO or organization. Applications have been invited by the GMDA till April 12, Yadav said.

## 16 prisoners flee after throwing chilli powder on guards

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, April 6:** In what seemed like a scene out of a Hind film industry flick, 16 prisoners escaped from Phalodi jail in Rajasthan's Jodhpur district Monday night by putting chilli powder in the prison staff's eyes.

The prisoners then proceeded to make a daring escape in a Scorpio that had been parked strategically right outside prison premises.

DG Jail Rajeev Dasot reached Phalodi and told IANS said that four staff members have been suspended with immediate effect and the investigation handed over to deputy IG Surendra Singh Shekhawat.



Police officials, meanwhile, informed IANS that barricades had been put on roads leading to the surrounding districts - Barmer, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Nagaur - soon after the jail-break.

However, there was no clue of the prisoners till the time of filing this report. Police sources said that the prisoners who escaped were smugglers and were well-acquainted with the rural landscape and hence, might have taken routes in the countryside.

This seems to be the second biggest jail break of the state. In February 2010, 23 prisoners had escaped from the District Jail in Chittorgarh. Officials scrutinising CCTV footage at Phalodi jail said it appeared that this jail break had been meticulously planned.

The police are interrogating the guards posted in the prison. CCTV footage from the road leading to the jail is also being examined. The footage indicates that the prisoners were often roaming in the open space next to the barracks during the day hours. Later in the evening, they were being put in the barracks.

# Vaccine for the most 'vulnerable': Govt

THE IMA WROTE TO PM SUGGESTING THAT VACCINATION BE ALLOWED FOR ALL PEOPLE ABOVE THE AGE OF 18 YEARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 6:** The government today rejected calls for vaccines for all, stressing on the need to cover the most vulnerable first as India tackles a surge in Covid cases. Uddhav Thackeray and Arvind Kejriwal, besides IMA, have demanded vaccination for more ages.

During a weekly press conference, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said that many people are asking why isn't the government opening up vaccination for all those above 18 years. Bhushan said that even Western countries have conducted the vaccination drive in phases. "The basic aim is to reduce death through vaccination. The other aim is to protect your healthcare system. If healthcare workers, doctors, nurses, paramedics



and others fall sick, who will work in hospitals? So the aim, for any country, is to protect those who are the most vulnerable. The aim is never to administer the vaccine to those who want it but to those who need it," Bhushan said.

NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr V K Paul said the narrative has to be seen in a scientific way. So far, nobody doing vaccine research has shown that if given on this scale, it leads to herd immunity, he said, adding that it is not yet scientifically

proven. "What we know so far is that all vaccines that are being used, including the two being used in India reduce mortality, severity of the disease, protect lives and keeping that in mind priority groups have been decided," Dr Paul said.

"Because history will only remember how many deaths have taken place. Globally, vaccine is finite," Dr Paul underlined.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi suggesting that vaccination be allowed for all people above the age of 18 years. The doctors' body said that "we request following suggestions in the COVID-19 vaccination drive - all citizens above 18 years of age shall be permitted to receive COVID vaccination and walk-in COVID vaccination should be available for all, free of cost

at their nearest possible place".

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thackeray on Monday also requested Modi to relax the age limit for the vaccination. Kejriwal urged him to relax the norms for opening vaccination centres and lift the age criterion for getting inoculated, reiterating that the Delhi government can vaccinate all the residents of the city within three months if the necessary permissions are granted by the Centre.

Thackeray requested the prime minister to allow people above 25 years of age to receive COVID-19 shots, which he said will protect the young people from the rapid spread of coronavirus at a time when they are stepping outside their homes to earn a livelihood.

# national

## of the day quote

Wearing masks and maintaining social distance are not in our habit. Besides these, we have to take other measures also to control the pandemic



The state will not go for a lockdown or night curfew, but would instead impose stricter guidelines to control spread of the virus



Those who dream of continuing in power will be shocked to see the results this time. The term of the Pinarayi Vijayan-led government will come to an end on May 2. This is now just a caretaker government. Their days are numbered. Their traditional strongholds are going to be destroyed



## SHORT TAKES

### UP takes Ansari's custody

**Chandigarh/Banda (UP):** The Uttar Pradesh police Tuesday took custody of Mukhtar Ansari, leaving with him from Punjab's Rupnagar jail in a convoy headed 900 km away for a prison in Banda where security has been tightened to hold the gangster-turned-politician. The transfer of the Bahujan Samaj Party MLA takes place after an order by the Supreme Court, approached by the Uttar Pradesh government which cited the series of criminal cases Ansari faces in his home state.

### Migratory birds found dead in HP

**Shimla:** Around 100 migratory birds have been found dead in Pong Dam Lake in the last two weeks after the outbreak of a second wave of bird flu in Himachal Pradesh, wildlife officials said Tuesday. Bird flu had first been confirmed among migratory water-birds at Pong Dam Lake Wildlife Sanctuary in early January that left around 5,000 birds dead in a month. It was contained in early February but has now resurfaced since late March beginning with the discovery of a dozen bird carcasses in the sanctuary on March 25, they added.

### Night curfew in Chandigarh

**Chandigarh:** The Chandigarh administration decided Tuesday to impose curfew from 10 pm to 5 am in the wake of the soaring coronavirus cases in the city. The night curfew will be implemented from Wednesday, according to a spokesperson. Chandigarh Administrator V P Singh Badnore directed police to ensure strict implementation of the night curfew and told hospital authorities to ensure all health workers get themselves vaccinated at the earliest.

### Strict Covid norms

**Indore:** In a bid to inculcate the pandemic appropriate behaviour among people, more than 250 citizens who were found roaming in public places without wearing masks here in Madhya Pradesh have been sent to a temporary jail in the last five days, an official said Tuesday. On the directives of the local administration, a community guesthouse in Snehlataganj area of Indore with the capacity to accommodate 300 people at a time, was designated as a temporary jail, Rakesh Kumar Bhangre, superintendent of the Central Jail told PTI.

## Maha govt, Deshmukh move Apex Court against HC order for CBI probe



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 6:** The Maharashtra government and former state Home Minister Anil Deshmukh have moved the Supreme Court, challenging the Bombay High Court order directing a CBI preliminary enquiry into corruption allegations levelled by former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh.

A division bench of Bombay High Court comprising Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni Monday had asked the CBI to complete its "preliminary probe" within 15 days on the issues raised by Singh in his "letter-bomb" last month. However, the court said that the CBI need not register a First Information Report (FIR) immediately as the Maharashtra government has already set up a 'high-level committee' to probe the matter. "The Government Resolution by the state government for a high-level committee leads us to believe that there is no interference required," said Chief Justice Datta.

Hours after the verdict, Deshmukh quit his post. According to the Supreme Court website, pe-

titions filed by Maharashtra and Deshmukh have been filed in the top court. However, no date on the hearing has been finalised so far. The status on the top court website shows pending for both petitions.

Earlier on Tuesday, newly-appointed Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil, who took charge, had said: "The state government will challenge the Bombay HC order before the Supreme Court."

Besides Singh's PIL, the court heard three other pleas - one filed by Ghanshyam Upadhyay seeking a court-monitored SIT, another by Mohan Bhide wanting a retired HC or SC judge to probe and a third by Jayshri Patil for a CBI, or any other independent agency, probe. In his plea, Singh had sought a thorough probe by the CBI into his allegations that Deshmukh had asked arrested Mumbai policeman Sachin Vaze "to collect Rs 100 crore per month" and also challenged his own transfer to Commandant General, Home Guards.

The state had strongly objected to the plea on grounds that Singh made the allegations only because he was shunted out of his post as Mumbai police chief.

## Voting ends amid sporadic violence

AGENCIES

**Kolkata, April 6:** Five candidates, including two women, were assaulted, while clashes between rival political groups erupted during the third phase of polling in West Bengal Tuesday. However, despite the violence, voter enthusiasm was high with 77.68 per cent of voters casting their ballots till 5 pm, two hours before polling ended.

Polls were conducted with strict adherence to COVID-19 protocols, officials said. Voting in 16 seats in South 24 Parganas district (part II), saw 76.68 per cent votes being cast by 5 pm. While 77.93 per cent votes were cast in seven seats in Howrah (part I) and 79.36 per cent in eight in Hooghly (part I), they added. "Voter turnout of 77.68 per cent was recorded till 5 pm in 31 seats," an EC official said. Chief Minister and TMC supreme Mamata Banerjee, however, alleged "blatant misuse" of central forces to "influence voters". "The blatant misuse of Central forces continues unabated. Despite



THIRD PHASE OF BENGAL POLLS

us repeatedly raising this issue, @ECISVEEP continues to be a mute spectator, while men in uniform are being misused at several places to openly intimidate TMC voters and influence many to vote in favour of one party," she tweeted. Police arrested five persons - three members of the TMC and two of the BJP - for their alleged involvement in assaulting TMC candidate Sujata

Mondal in Arambagh earlier on Tuesday, an officer said. Chief Electoral Officer Ariz Aftab has sought reports from poll personnel on all poll related violence which occurred on Tuesday, officials said. Banerjee later, while addressing a rally, claimed BJP activists were forcibly occupying polling booths and attacking TMC members, including party candidates,

while asserting that she would not be bogged down by "intimidatory tactics". BJP state president Dilip Ghosh dubbed the allegations as baseless and instead claimed that people had resisted TMC's efforts to unleash a reign of terror. The violence occurred despite the Election Commission imposing prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC in all constituencies, after declaring them as 'sensitive'.

## FOR A BETTER FUTURE



An elderly farmer showing his inked finger after casting vote for the Assam Assembly Election at Dadara village, Jalukbari, in Kamrup

## TN, Pondicherry Assembly polls end peacefully

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai/Pondicherry, April 6:** Curtains came down on the single-phase Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry at 7 p.m. Tuesday. Polling was peaceful across the state and the Union Territory.

While computing the final turnout will take time, in Tamil Nadu, the voter turnout as of 5 p.m., was 63.65 per cent and in Puducherry, it was about 78 per cent, officials said. Voting for the lone Kanniyakumari Lok Sabha seat where the bypoll was simultaneously held came to an end. In Tamil Nadu, a total of 3,998 candidates were in the fray seeking support from the 6.28 crore electorate.

Brisk polling was witnessed in a majority of the 88,937 polling booths in all the 234 Assembly constituencies in Tamil Nadu since the start.

Over 1.59 lakh electronic voting machines were in use and about 1.58 lakh security personnel were deployed to prevent any untoward incident.

Leaders of various political parties, several movie actors and the general public were seen voting early. Chief Minister K. Palaniswami, Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam, DMK President MK. Stalin, PMK founder SRamadoss, Congress leader PChidambaram, DMDK Treasurer Premalatha Vijayakant, NTK leader Seeman, MNM leader Kamal Haasan and others cast their votes. From the movie field Rajinikanth, star couple Ajit Kumar and Shalini, Surya, Karthi, Sivakumar too cast their votes. VKSasikala, the close aide of late Chief Minister J.Jayalithaa, could not vote as her name was removed from the electoral rolls, said her counsel Raja Senthoo Pandian. Sasikala, who was jailed for four years on corruption charges, was released recently. Meanwhile, charges and counter-charges were laid by political parties for violation of electoral rules.

## Bijapur ambush: Maoist letter seeks mediator for release of hostage

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 6:** A purported statement by Maoists Tuesday claimed that they abducted a jawan during a recent gun battle with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district and sought nomination of some mediators for his release.

A two-page statement reportedly issued by Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DSZC) of the CPI (Maoists) said the abducted jawan "will be safe in their custody" and would be handed over to the police after mediation.

The statement is being looked into, a senior security officer and a CRPF commander said. Twenty-two personnel from various security forces like the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) of the Central Reserve Police Force, its Bastariya battalion

## HIDMA IN SPOTLIGHT

**Raipur:** Dreaded Maoist leader Madvi Hidma has emerged as the mastermind of the last weekend's massacre of 22 security personnel by Naxals in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region and the audacious attack has brought him into the limelight once again. His age and looks are still a matter of speculation with security agencies suggesting he is around 45 years old. They just have a bundle of old photos of a young man who they believe is Hidma, who carries a cash reward of Rs 40 lakh for capture in Chhattisgarh.

and those from the District Reserve Guard and STF of the Chattisgarh Police were killed in the ambush that took place along the Bijapur-Sukma border Saturday. Thirty-one jawans were injured while CoBRA commando Rakeshwar Singh Minhas, belonging to its 210th battalion, went missing after the gunfight and was stated to be taken hostage by the Naxalites. The security forces had claimed that they recovered the body of a female Maoist from the

spot. Signed by the spokesperson of the DSZC, Vikalp, the statement said the government should declare the name of some "mediators for the release of the captured jawan".

The statement claimed that the ultras looted 14 weapons, over 2,000 bullets and some other communication gadgets of the troops who were killed. The statement added that four Naxals were killed in this ambush and added that they could not pick one body.

## IAF battles forest blazes in U'khand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dehradun, April 6:** IAF helicopters doused forest fires at three places in Uttarakhand Tuesday, even as more broke out at 75 new spots, destroying 105.85 hectares of green cover in the state, officials said.

The Indian Air Force's (IAF) MI-17 helicopters moved to the Kirti Nagar forest division of Tehri district to control the fires by spraying water collected from Shri Kot dam in buckets with a capacity of 5,000 litres, they said.

Forest fires were doused in Bariargadh and Sarkyana in Kirti Nagar range and Khirsu in Pauri district Tuesday, Chief Conservator of Forest Garhwal S K Patnaik, under whose supervision the exercise was carried out, said. The firefighting operation lasted three-



and-a-half hours, he said. However, in the Kumaon region, IAF helicopters could not be utilised as bad weather prevented them from taking off, the officials said. Seventy-five new forest fires were reported from across the state in which 105.85 hectares of green cover was gutted, they said.

## Night curfew casts a shadow on wedding season in Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

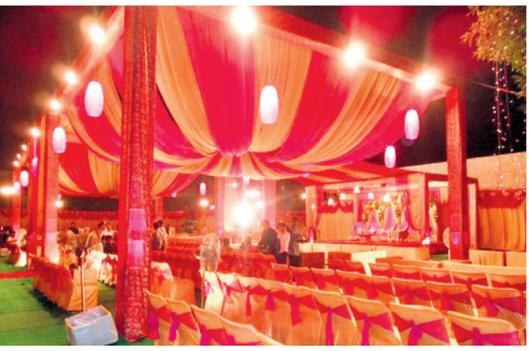
**New Delhi, April 6:** Till Monday many soon-to-be-wed couples were excitedly giving final touches to the day they would take their marriage vows but hit by the latest COVID-19 woe, the re-imposition of night curfew in the capital, they found themselves discussing arrangements from scratch yet again - wedding date, venue and the most important, 'timing'.

The Delhi government's decision Tuesday to impose a night curfew from 10 pm to 5 am till April 30 to stem the spread of the virus has thrown the couples and the already bleeding wedding industry into a tizzy.

So now couples are mulling a "day marriage", wedding planners are making a beeline for venues in the neighbouring Noida and Gurgaon, and many hotels-ban-

quets, reading the fine print of the order, are busy answering queries from frantic customers. Paras Chugh and Abhishek, who were set to tie the knot on April 28, are now contemplating a "day wedding" instead of a night gala.

"It is a total mess. There is a new restriction every week. We are discussing with our wedding planner what to do next. We are contemplating having a day wedding now," said Chugh, clearly not happy with the new restrictions throwing a spanner in the works of his dream wedding. The night curfew was imposed after the national capital witnessed a spike in the COVID-19 cases. Delhi Monday recorded 3,548 cases, pushing its caseload to 6,79,962. On Sunday, the city reported 4,033 coronavirus cases, the highest daily count this year. The decision comes as another blow for the wedding season which has already a cap of 100 and 200 people for any close and



open space events respectively in the capital, as per the order issued by the administration in the last week of March. While the "bride, groom, and close family members" are exempted from the night curfew restrictions, no such provisions are available for guests attending the

wedding. "The bride, groom and their close family members will require e-passes that will be issued by the district magistrates concerned. But, no guests will be allowed during stipulated curfew hours from 10 pm to 5 am," a senior Delhi government officer told PTI.

Couples are worried that the condition of getting e-passes for attending weddings will prove to be a deterrent for wedding guests.

"I understand the cap on the number of people attending the wedding, but getting an e-pass due to the night curfew has raised concerns. Apparently those attending weddings have to get an e-pass. A lot of people who were planning to attend the wedding will back out to avoid this hassle. This also adds to our monetary loss.

"And this news comes so close to the wedding date that making changes to the arrangements is not possible. All payments have been made in advance," said Bhavna Kaul, who is set to get married on April 25. Worried wedding planners have wasted no time in figuring out plan B for their clients like booking venues in Haryana's Gurgaon and Uttar Pradesh's Noida cities. "We have spent the whole day

calling different venues in Gurgaon and Noida to see their availability. However, the clients are worried that these two regions may also impose restrictions soon, because of the exponential rise (in COVID cases)," said Shakti Singh, head (weddings), Madam Planners.

"A plan of having a day wedding is being explored now depending upon availability of trustworthy venues compliant with safety measures and hygiene. It is also financially bad for clients as despite less people attending the wedding the venue managers still charge as per the number of guests quoted initially," she added. For those in the business of luxury wedding venues, like Hilton Garden Inn, and Amaara Farms, while it is too early to gauge the impact of the curfew on business, maintaining the highest standards of hygiene remains the top priority.



It is necessary to analyse and consider whether Japan should adopt a system that would unilaterally determine human rights violations and impose sanctions, taking into consideration various views including our ongoing human rights and foreign policies and trends in the international community

ONLY 'IMMUNISED' PILGRIMS ALLOWED IN MECCA : SAUDI

Only pilgrims and worshippers who have been vaccinated against the novel coronavirus or have recovered will be allowed into the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah announced



of the day quote

I wrote a letter to the special envoy to the Joe Biden administration and former Secretary of State of America, in which I have conveyed that Pakistan and America have the same policy on environment and both countries can work together on the issue

SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI | FOREIGN MINISTER, PAKISTAN

The bubble will give our economic recovery a boost and represents a world-leading arrangement of safely opening up international travel while continuing to pursue a strategy of elimination and keeping the virus out

JACINDA ARDERN | PRIME MINISTER, NZ

We don't anticipate at present that there will be direct talks with Iran. Though of course we remain open to them. And so we'll have to see how things go starting early this week.

NEED PRICE | US STATE DEPT SPOKESPERSON

Global COVID death toll surpasses 3 mn

REUTERS

Washington, April 6: Coronavirus-related deaths worldwide crossed 3 million Tuesday, according to a Reuters tally, as the latest global resurgence of COVID-19 infections is challenging vaccination efforts across the globe.

Worldwide COVID-19 deaths are rising once again, especially in Brazil and India. Health officials blame more infectious variants that were first detected in the United Kingdom and South Africa, along with public fatigue with lockdowns and other restrictions.

According to a Reuters tally, it took more than a year for the global coronavirus death toll to reach 2 million. The next 1 million deaths were added in about three months.

Brazil is leading the world in the daily average number of new deaths reported and accounts for one in every four deaths worldwide each day, according to a Reuters analysis.

The World Health Organization acknowledged the nation's dire condition due to coronavirus, say-



ing the country is in a very critical condition with an overwhelmed healthcare system.

"Indeed there is a very serious situation going on in Brazil right now, where we have a number of states in critical condition," WHO epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove told a briefing last Thursday, adding that many hospital intensive care units are more than 90% full. India reported a record rise in

total number of deaths at nearly 1.1 million.

Five European countries including the United Kingdom, Russia, France, Italy and Germany constitute about 60% of Europe's total coronavirus-related deaths.

The United States has the highest number of deaths of any country at the world at 555,000 and accounts for about 19% of all deaths due to COVID-19 in the world. Cases have risen for the last three weeks but health officials believe the nation's rapid vaccination campaign may prevent a rise in deaths. A third of the population has received at least one dose of a vaccine.

At least 370.3 million people or nearly 4.75% of the global population have received a single dose of COVID-19 vaccine by Sunday, according to latest figures from research and data provider firm Our World in Data.

However, the World Health Organization is urging countries to donate more doses of approved COVID-19 vaccines to help meet vaccination targets for the most vulnerable in poorer countries.

B'desh anti-lockdown protests turn violent



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Dhaka, April 6: At least three people were killed and several others were wounded after a protest against Covid-19 restrictions turned violent in Bangladesh, police said Tuesday.

The demonstration in the southwestern town of Saltha ensued Monday evening after rumours spread that a man was beaten by officials who were monitoring compliance with the coronavirus lockdown, local police chief Mohammad Alimuzzaman told dpa news agency. The protest turned violent within hours as several thousand stick-wielding demonstrators took to the streets vandalising a number of public offices and setting them on fire, he said.

Police fired bullets and tear gas to disperse the demonstrators who broke into a local police station at one point, an incident that left one

protester dead, Alimuzzaman said. "The bullets were fired in self-defence," the officer said, adding several other people including policemen were wounded during the clashes.

Additional police were deployed in the area as a precaution, he said. Bangladesh Monday began a seven-day lockdown to slow the spread of Covid-19 with many in the capital Dhaka defying the shutdown orders.

Small traders staged demonstrations in the centre of the capital on the first day of the lockdown, calling on the government to allow them to keep their businesses open as long as they followed health guidelines.

The government ordered the people to generally stay indoors and shut down means of transport and shopping malls.

Factories were allowed to operate provided the owners ensure proper health measures.

SHORT TAKES

1.8K prisoners escape after gunmen attack

Warri (Nigeria): Militants armed with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades launched a series of coordinated attacks overnight in southeastern Nigeria, targeting a prison with more than 1,800 inmates then managed to escape, authorities said Monday. The attacks began around 2 A.M. in the town of Owerri in Imo state and lasted for about two hours, according to local resident Uche Okafor. Gunmen also assaulted various other police and military buildings, authorities said.

Nobel laureate Robert Mundell dies

Rome: Robert Mundell, the Nobel Prize winning economist considered to be the "father of the euro", has died in Italy at the age of 88, according to media reports. Mundell, who was born in Canada, was at his vacation home near the Tuscan city of Siena when he died Sunday, though the news was not immediately reported, reports Xinhua news agency.

34 IS militants killed in months

Baghdad: At least 34 Islamic State (IS) militants were killed and 99 others arrested during a three-month security operation in the country against the terror group, the military said. Yahia Rasoul, spokesman of the commander-in-chief of the Iraqi forces, said in a statement Monday that the Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) conducted 109 security operations against IS positions in the past three months across the country.

State of emergency in West Darfur

Khartoum: Sudan's Security and Defence Council has declared a state of emergency in West Darfur state and authorised forces to adopt all necessary measures to end armed clashes which led to the killing of 18 people, while 54 others were injured. The declaration came after Chairman of the Sovereign Council Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan held an emergency meeting on the incidents late Monday, reports Xinhua news agency.

US court postpones extradition plea of Tahawwur Rana

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, April 6: A US court has postponed the in-person extradition hearing of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who is sought for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, from April 22 to June 24.

US District Court Judge in Los Angeles Jacqueline Chooljian in her order Monday moved the in-person extradition hearing of 59-year-old Rana to India to June 24.

The court's order came after a conference between Rana's lawyers and those representing the US Government. During the conference, the two sides agreed to hold the in-person hearing of Rana June 24 at 1.30 pm local Los Angeles time. Meanwhile, Rana's attorneys in additional motion opposed his extradition to India.

"The government has not identified a single case since the founding of this country in which a person acquitted by an American jury has been extradited to a foreign

country for trial on charges resting on the same conduct," it said in its 17-page new submission Monday.

The US Government has time till April 12 to submit its response, if any. The US Government so far has supported the extradition of Rana to India. Rana's attorney argued that the US government's position boils down to this: the term "offense" in the India-US Extradition Treaty means whatever the government needs it to mean.

"The Court should reject this 'heads the government wins, tails Rana loses' approach. Applying ordinary tools of interpretation, it should hold that the term "offense" in Article 6 refers to the underlying conduct, and it should deny extradition," it argued.

Rana, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headley, was re-arrested June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the Mumbai terror attack in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed. He has been declared a fugitive by India.



DOUSING THE FLAMES



A member of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) extinguishes a digger which has been set alight close to the Loyalist Nelson Drive Estate in the Waterside area of Londonderry in Northern Ireland

Russia tightens security at Navalny prison

REUTERS

Pokrov, April 6: Russian police stepped up security at the prison holding Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny Tuesday as his supporters prepared to stage a protest outside the facility to demand that authorities give him proper medical care.

Navalny, 44, a prominent opponent of President Vladimir Putin, announced a hunger strike last week in protest at what he said was the refusal of prison authorities to treat him properly for acute back and leg pain.

A group of his allies said they would protest at the prison in the town of Pokrov 100 km (60 miles) east of Moscow from Tuesday unless he saw a doctor of his choice



and was given what they regarded as proper medicine.

Prison authorities say his condition is satisfactory and he has been provided with all necessary medical care.

Late Monday, his allies said the protest would go ahead after Navalny said he was continuing his hunger strike, although he had

a high temperature and bad cough and three inmates in his ward had been hospitalised with tuberculosis. The pro-Kremlin Izvestia newspaper later cited the state prison service saying that Navalny had been moved to a sick bay and tested for the coronavirus.

Tuesday morning, police officers, one with a police dog, set up a makeshift checkpoint in front of the prison gate and used a metal barrier to block the road 100 metres from it. Russia says Navalny will receive treatment in prison if ill. They closed the parking lot to all but prison staff, and checked the IDs of reporters and prison workers.

"It is now under a special (security) regime," a police woman told Reuters.

China cautions Japan before US-Japan summit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, April 6: China's foreign minister has cautioned Japan against teaming up with the US to counter China, ahead of a US-Japan summit next week.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Japanese counterpart in a phone call Monday evening that their two countries should ensure that bilateral relations "do not get involved in the so-called confrontation between major countries," a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement said.

It quoted Wang as saying that "China hopes that Japan, as an independent country, will look at China's development in an objective and rational way, instead of being misled by some countries holding biased view against China."

Japan, a close US ally that hosts major American naval and air force bases, shares US concerns about China's military buildup and claims to territory in the South and East China Seas. However its major trade and investment interests in China have at times reined in its criticism of its larger neighbour.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga travels to Washington to meet President Joe Biden April 16 in what will be the US leader's first in-person summit since taking office in January.

Biden, in contrast to his predecessor Donald Trump, has stressed rebuilding ties with European and Asian allies as the US prepares for competition with a rising China.



Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi raised human rights in China's Xinjiang region and Hong Kong, both important issues for Biden. He also reiterated Japan's protest against China's presence in waters around a group of uninhabited, Japan-controlled islands that China claims in the East China Sea.

Wang opposed Japan's interference in China's internal affairs in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, the Chinese statement said.

Taiwan is another potential flashpoint, with Suga saying earlier this week that Japan would cooperate with the US on the issue. China regards the self-governing island as a runaway province that should be under Chinese rule.

China, in a signal to the US and its allies, recently sent an aircraft carrier group to waters near Taiwan for training exercises.

NASA's Ingenuity survives first night on Mars

THE ULTRA-LIGHT AIRCRAFT WAS DROPPED ON THE SURFACE SATURDAY AFTER DETACHING FROM THE BELLY OF THE PERSEVERANCE ROVER, WHICH TOUCHED DOWN ON THE RED PLANET FEBRUARY 18

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, April 6: NASA's Ingenuity mini-helicopter has survived its first night alone on the frigid surface of Mars, the US space agency said, hailing it as "a major milestone" for the tiny craft as it prepares for its first flight.

The ultra-light aircraft was dropped on the surface on Saturday after detaching from the belly of the Perseverance rover, which touched down on the Red Planet February 18.

Detached from the Perseverance, Ingenuity had to rely on its own solar-powered battery to run a vital heater to protect its unshielded



electrical components from freezing and cracking during the bitter Martian night, where temperatures can plunge as low as minus 130 de-

grees Fahrenheit (minus 90 degrees Celsius).

Making it through the frigid Martian night was "a major mile-

stone for the small rotorcraft," NASA said in a statement Monday. "This is the first time that Ingenuity has been on its own on the surface of Mars," said MiMi Aung, Ingenuity project manager at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

"But we now have confirmation that we have the right insulation, the right heaters, and enough energy in its battery to survive the cold night, which is a big win for the team. We're excited to continue to prepare Ingenuity for its first flight test."

Over the coming days, Ingenuity will undergo tests of its rotor blades and motors.

If all goes well, Ingenuity is expected to make its first flight attempt no earlier than the evening of April 11, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory said.

It will be the first aircraft to attempt powered, controlled flight on another planet.

# business



**We are working with G20 nations to agree to a global minimum corporate tax rate that can stop the race to the bottom**  
**JANET YELLEN**  
 US TREASURY SECRETARY

## CREDIT SUISSE OVERHAULS MANAGEMENT

Credit Suisse said Tuesday it will take a \$4.7 billion hit from dealings with Archegos Capital Management, prompting it to overhaul the leadership of its investment bank and risk divisions



## of the day quote

I think that the amplification of social media is something that I deeply worry about



TIM COOK | APPLE CEO

We see some pockets of opportunities in certain sectors like financials, healthcare, FMCG, etc. which may outperform broader markets and can be captured through specific products like mutual funds or PMS



NITIN RAO | CEO, INCRED WEALTH

I think in India, frankly, we should have done more to protect employment in some way, shape or form



ALOK KSHIRSAGAR | SENIOR PARTNER AT MCKINSEY & COMPANY

# IMF scales up India's FY22 GDP growth forecast to 12.5%

THE FUND'S PROJECTION SUGGESTS INDIA WOULD AGAIN BECOME THE WORLD'S FASTEST-GROWING LARGE ECONOMY

AGENCIES

Washington, April 6: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has raised its projection for India's economic growth in the current financial year by one percentage point to 12.5 per cent. Experts, however, say the estimate is highly ambitious, given the recent rise in COVID-19 cases in the country and the resultant partial lockdowns in some states.

The forecast, published in the IMF's World Economic Outlook, suggests India would again become the fastest-growing large economy in the world. In fact, India is the only country among major world economies that is projected to grow at a double-digit rate during FY22. China comes closest, with a forecast of 8.4 per cent economic expansion.

The IMF also sees India's gross domestic product (GDP) growing by 6.9 per cent, a rate 10 basis points higher than its earlier projection, in the next financial year. Should that happen, India would become the most rapidly expanding large economy in the world; the closest competitor, China, is projected to grow by 5.6 per cent.

The IMF's projection for India in the current financial year is the upper end of a range that the World Bank's forecast recently. Considering the uncertainty caused by Covid-19 cases, the World Bank gave a range for India's economic growth—from 7.5 per cent to 12.5 per cent—in FY22. However, it also said India was



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Experts, however, say the estimate is highly ambitious, given the recent rise in COVID-19 cases in the country

the movement of people is restricted, consumption will come down and that would affect even manufacturing," he said. CARE Ratings had on Monday said that even lockdown in Maharashtra would dent India's gross value added (GVA) during the 2021-22 financial year by 0.32 per cent.

Despite such an optimistic picture of growth for India, however, the country is not expected to reach its pre-COVID-19 GDP level. Indications of this were given by the IMF's economic counsellor and director of research, Gita Gopinath. In a blog, she said the US would grow by 6.4 per cent in 2021. "This makes the United States the only large economy projected to surpass the level of GDP it was estimated to have in 2022 in the absence of this pandemic," she said.

likely to grow by 10.1 per cent during the year.

CARE Ratings Chief Economist Madan Sabnavis said 12.5 per cent economic growth for India in the current financial year was "very unlikely", as rising Covid-19 cases were resulting in regional lockdowns. He added that even his projection of 11-11.2 per cent GDP growth now looked unlikely, as services were largely affected. India is a service-driven economy. "As

## Bezos tops Forbes' billionaire list; Musk takes second spot

THIS YEAR'S BILLIONAIRES ARE WORTH A COMBINED \$13.1 TRILLION, UP FROM \$8 TRILLION LAST YEAR, FORBES SAID

REUTERS

New York, April 6: Forbes' annual world's billionaires list includes a record-breaking 2,755 billionaires, with Amazon.com Inc founder Jeff Bezos topping it for the fourth consecutive year, the media company said Tuesday.

The ranks of the ultra-wealthy are expanding after a year in which the coronavirus pandemic upended world economies and threatened the livelihoods of people across the globe. This year's billionaires are worth a combined \$13.1 trillion, up from \$8 trillion last year, Forbes said. "The very, very rich got very, very richer," said Forbes' Chief Content Officer Randall Lane, in an interview with Reuters Video News.

Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk jumped into second spot on the list, up from 31st last year. Bernard Arnault, chief executive of luxury goods firm LVMH, Microsoft founder Bill Gates and Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg round out the top five of the world's richest billionaires.

Investor and business tycoon Warren Buffett fell out of the top five for the first time in over two decades, as tech executives dominate the Forbes rankings.

This year's list has 493 newcomers, including Whitney Wolfe Herd, chief executive of dating app Bumble, which went public this year.



Investor and business tycoon Warren Buffett fell out of the top five for the first time in over two decades, as tech executives dominate the Forbes rankings.

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## Airtel, Jio announce spectrum trading agreement

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 6: Bharti Airtel Tuesday announced an agreement with Reliance Jio Infocomm to transfer the 'Right to Use' of Airtel's 800 MHz spectrum in Andhra Pradesh (3.75 MHz), Delhi (1.25 MHz) and Mumbai (2.50 MHz) to Jio.

The agreement is subject to statutory approvals, Airtel said in a statement. Through this agreement, Airtel will receive a consideration of ₹1,037.6 crore from Jio for the proposed transfer. In addition, Jio will assume future liabilities of ₹459 crore relating to the spectrum.

Gopal Vittal, MD & CEO (India and South Asia), Bharti Airtel said: "The sale of the 800 MHz blocks in these three circles has enabled us to unlock value from spectrum that was unutilised. This is aligned to our overall network strategy." In a statement, Jio said that the trading agreement is in accordance with the spectrum trading guidelines issued by the Department of Telecommunications.

It said that with this development, Reliance Jio will have '2X15MHz' of spectrum.

## PPT to handle 150 MMT cargo by 2025

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Paradip Port Trust (PPT) will clock 150 MMT cargo handling by 2025, said Rinkesh Roy, COM (Marketing)/ECoR and PPT ex-Chairman.

During the celebration of 58th National Maritime Day, Roy said, "With the completion of Paradip Haridaspur Line, the dream of 150 MMT is quite achievable." He hoped that the benchmarking, PPT has set in the recent years will definitely boost its prospects to be a global port. Addressing the gathering, PPT deputy Chairman AK Bose said, "Each country needs EXIM trade for its growth, where robust waterways provide the safest mode of transport. It is also the cheapest mode of transportation as well as environment friendly."

With the completion of Paradip Haridaspur Line, the dream of 150 MMT is quite achievable

Outlining the highest ever cargo handling of 114.55 MMT achieved during the last fiscal, Bose praised the dedication shown by the PPT employees and also mentioned that, despite COVID-19 pandemic and the cyclone Amphan, the port posted positive growth. He appealed to everybody to contribute wholeheartedly to realise the dream of the No.1 port in India.

Ashok Mahapatra, ex-Director of IMO Safety Division, was felicitated on the occasion for his tireless service and stellar contribution to the Indian Maritime Industry. Winners of the different competitions were also awarded on the occasion.

## MONETARY POLICY APRIL 2021

# RBI expected to keep key interest steady

IN A REUTERS POLL, 65 OF 66 ECONOMISTS SURVEYED SAID THE RBI'S MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE (MPC) WILL LEAVE RATES UNCHANGED

REUTERS

Mumbai, April 6: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is widely expected to keep key interest steady Wednesday amid a surge in COVID-19 cases in the country, but may revise its inflation projections higher.

In a Reuters poll, 65 of 66 economists surveyed said the RBI's monetary policy committee (MPC) will leave rates unchanged.

"We expect the MPC to come up with another dovish pause on Wednesday, especially with Covid-19 cases rising," said Indranil Sengupta, an economist at Bank of America Securities. "The RBI's focus will remain on funding the rising fiscal deficit without pushing up yields to the point it hurts the (economic) recovery," he added.

India reported a record rise in coronavirus infections Monday, becoming only the second country after the United States to register more than 100,000 new cases in a day.

However, several economists said they expect the central bank to raise its inflation forecasts amid a rise in global commodity prices particularly crude oil.



The annual retail inflation rate rose to 5.03% in February, a three-month high due to the rise in fuel prices. "The April policy review is unlikely to see a significant shift in the RBI's guidance, while risks will be flagged but (may) not sound alarmist," said Radhika Rao, economist with DBS Bank.

"While the initial impact (of rising commodity and input prices) will be more visible in wholesale price inflation, which has a heavier weight of commodities, this could carry pass-through risks for retail inflation down the line," she added.

Economists had been expecting the RBI to start normalising policy or unwinding the large scale rupee liquidity in the banking system in the June or latest by September quarter but that is now expected to be delayed, many analysts said.

The rise in virus cases could impact the economy if the country imposes nationwide lockdowns that impact industries and consumption, but so far that hasn't been the case. A recent poll showed economists now expect the economy to grow a record 27.0% this quarter after expanding only 1.5% in the January-March period.

## Factory activity slows to 7-month low

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 6: India's factory activity grew at its weakest pace in seven months in March as renewed lockdowns to curtail resurgence in COVID-19 cases dampened domestic demand and output, a private survey showed, forcing firms to cut headcount again.

Last week, the government advised states to try and control the rapid spread of the virus. Tighter restrictions on activity suggest factories could be in for a tough April.

The Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index, compiled by IHS Markit, declined to a seven-month low of 55.4 last month from February's 57.5, but remained above the 50-level separating growth from contraction for an eighth straight month.

Despite foreign orders growing at a faster pace in March, a sub-index tracking overall demand declined to its lowest since August 2020. Output also grew at its weakest pace in seven months.

"Survey participants indicated that demand growth was constrained by the escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic, while the rise



The Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index, compiled by IHS Markit, declined to a seven-month low of 55.4 last month from February's 57.5

input buying was curtailed by an intensification of cost pressures," said Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit.

"With COVID-19 restrictions expanded and lockdown measures re-introduced in many states, Indian manufacturers look set to experience a challenging month in April."

Although Asia's third-largest economy was predicted to grow at a faster pace this fiscal year than previously thought, according to a Reuters poll published last week, a significant majority of economists said a surge in coronavirus cases was the biggest risk to the outlook.

After a year-long spree of job cuts, factories intensified the rate of layoffs to its strongest in six months in March.

Both input and output prices increased at a slower pace last month, signalling overall inflation that accelerated to a three-month high in February might ease and stay within the Reserve Bank of India's inflation target of 2-6 per cent. That would help the central bank maintain its accommodative policy stance to support economic growth but optimism about the year ahead waned.

"While predictions that the vaccination programme will curb the disease and underpin output growth in the year ahead meant that business confidence remained positive, growing uncertainty over the near-term outlook due to a rise in COVID-19 cases dragged sentiment to a seven-month low," De Lima said.

## India to buy one-third less oil from Saudi

GOVT HAS ASKED STATE REFINERS TO REVIEW CONTRACTS THEY ENTER INTO FOR BUYING CRUDE OIL FROM THE MIDDLE EAST NATION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: Indian refiners will buy less oil from Saudi Arabia next month as they snap up supplies outside of the Middle East as part of diversification drive amid weakening domestic fuel demand on the resurgence of COVID-19.

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and three other refiners have sought just 65 per cent of the monthly average of about 15 million barrels from Saudi Arabia in May, three sources with knowledge of the matter said.

The move follows tensions between



tween India and Saudi Arabia over the Kingdom's hawkish stance on boosting production to cool prices.

With Saudi Arabia ignoring its pleas to lift output curbs, the Indian government last month asked state refiners to look for sources outside of the Middle East.

Sources said IOC and other state refiners are looking to buy more oil from the spot or current market rather than rely on term or fixed quantity contracts with Saudi and other oil cartel OPEC nations.

They have in recent weeks bought

newer crudes from geographies ranging from Guyana to Norway as part of that effort. Besides the US is also being tapped for increased buying, they said adding IOC has floated a spot tender seeking crude from West Africa, the US and Canada.

Crude oil imports from OPEC countries decreased to 74.4 per cent of total imports during April 2020 to February 2021 as compared to 79.6 per cent in the same period of the previous year. India, which imports 85 per cent of its oil needs, in February, saw record petrol and

diesel prices, putting an extra burden on the pandemic-hit economy.

Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan repeatedly called for OPEC and its allies, known as OPEC+, to pump more crude to stop prices from rising too high. But Saudi Arabia did not yield to his demands and instead asked New Delhi to use cheaper oil it had bought and stored when oil prices had plummeted a year back. Oil purchases from Saudi dropped in January and February this year while US imports more than doubled, they said adding the US overtook Saudi as India's second-largest supplier in February.

Iraq continues to be the top supplier. Sources said lower supplies sought in May are also linked to economic recovery weakening due to localised lockdowns being imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus. India, the world's third-largest consumer of oil, hopes to use the might of its market to change the terms of engagement with big suppliers. The government has asked state refiners to review contracts they enter into for buying crude oil from the Middle East nation.

## SEFI passes resolution to merge SAIL steel plants

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 6: In the council meeting of Steel Executives Federation of India (SEFI), PSU steel associations passed a resolution for merger of all steel units of SAIL to create a single mega unit. The Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited (NINL), Odisha will also be part of this mega merger.

The representatives of Officers' association of SAIL (Bokaro, Bhilai, Rourkela, Durgapur, Burnpur, Salem, Bhadravati, Chandrapur, CMO, RMD, Ranchi), Steel Executives' Association, RINL Visakhapatnam, Officers' Association/Neelachal Executives' Association (NEA) of NINL-Duburi and NSOA unanimously passed this resolution.

"A single mega steel unit to be formed by merging, all steel plants of Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) and its subsidiary units with Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd and its subsidiary company Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd, NMDC (both steel

plant and mining sector) and MECON under the Ministry of Steel," the statement said.

Ajit Kumar Pradhan, general secretary of NEA, said that the associations have decided to merge PSU steel units of SAIL to create a mega unit.

The statement also claimed that the mega steel merger also in line with the recommendations of Parliament Committee for PSUs submitted in the month of March 2013 shall be able to expand their capacities further.

"This shall greatly help to realise the targets of National Steel Policy of 300 MTPA steel capacity by 2030-31. Each of these steel units has its strengths and weaknesses, but merging them into a single unit would help them to synergize their strengths and turn their weaknesses into opportunities and it will offer overall benefits to the nation. Steel is an essential component in the growth rate and contributes heavily to the GDP of our country."



# DEMBELE STRIKES LATE TO LIFT BARCA

## PRICELESS STRIKE

Ousmane Dembele (R) and Lionel Messi celebrate after the former's winning goal against Valladolid at Camp Nou, Monday

# Bayern host PSG in CL last 8 1st leg

AGENCIES

**Munich, April 6:** Reigning champions Bayern Munich will take on old foes and last season's beaten finalists Paris Saint-Germain in the first leg of their Champions League quarterfinal at the Allianz Arena, Wednesday.

Nearly eight months have passed since Kingsley Coman propelled Bayern to European glory with a 1-0 win over PSG in the 2019-20 final, and the two giants head into this game following contrasting fortunes in their domestic ventures.

Bayern's sheer dominance of the European football scene culminated in former PSG protegee Coman scoring the vital goal in the 2019-20 Champions League final – becoming the first player in history to net against his former club in the showpiece event – and Hansi Flick's side are in no position to let their adversaries wrestle the crown off their hands now.

The Bavarian giants were handed a rather favourable tie against Lazio in the last 16 stage, and a 6-2 aggregate victory saw the holders brush aside their Italian counterparts on their way to another quarterfinal appearance, and they have only failed to advance past this stage twice in the past nine seasons.

With 18 victories from their last 19 outings in the Champions League under their belt – the outlier being a 1-1 draw with Atletico Madrid December 1 – Bayern could become only the second team in history to string together a 20-match unbeaten run in the tournament, following in the footsteps of Manchester United between 2007 and 2009.

During that run, the Bundesliga, European and World champions have come up trumps eight times in a row at the fortress that is the Allianz Arena, and since Flick took charge, the 56-year-old has witnessed his side notch up 54 goals and concede just 11 in the Champions League, although the loss of Robert Lewandowski could have a significant impact on their attacking prowess.

However, Bayern did not need their prolific Pole to get over the line in their most recent encounter, as midfield lynchpin Leon Goretzka propelled them to a narrow 1-0 success over title rivals RB Leipzig with a 38th-minute winner – a result which saw them open up a seven-point lead at the top of the Bundesliga table.

Aside from Cristiano

Ronaldo's Real Madrid, lifting the Champions League trophy aloft two years running is almost unheard of nowadays, but many will already be placing bets on Bayern marching to their seventh European title amid an inspirational run of form.

The 30-time national champions have not suffered defeat on their own patch in any competition since being beaten 1-2 by Bayer Leverkusen all the way back in November 2019 – when a full arena of fans was not just a pipe dream – and the Bayern faithful would dearly love to be in attendance for Wednesday's first leg, but there may be hope for spectators taking their seats for the final.

PSG have their own effervescent forward in Kylian Mbappe aiming to break more records in the Champions League, but the 22-year-old was powerless to stop his side falling to a 0-1 defeat to Lille as the Ligue 1 title race continues to throw up twists and turns in every game-week.

Mauricio Pochettino's side had only just regained top spot before being dethroned by Lille – who have opened up a three-point gap at the summit with their win in Paris – and while a fourth consecutive Ligue 1 title is of paramount importance to PSG, that elusive first Champions League crown is the real prize that Leonardo and co so crave.

PSG's 4-1 triumph in Barcelona sent shockwaves through the footballing world as Mbappe made Camp Nou his playground in front of a disconsolate Lionel Messi, and even though Pochettino's side could not replicate their performance in Catalonia on home soil, a 1-1 draw was enough to see the French giants advance to the last eight for just the second time in the past five seasons.

Les Parisiens had fallen at the last 16 stage three seasons in a row between 2016 and 2019 before their unsuccessful venture last year, but with a mere two wins to boast from their last five games across all competitions, Pochettino's side need an immediate injection of confidence before their short trip to Bavaria.

The visitors can certainly take inspiration from their away form, though, as they have won their last seven on the road across all competitions, scoring 19 goals and conceding a mere three in that time, and PSG have also marched to victory in five of their last six Champions League games on unfamiliar territory.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Madrid, April 6:** A late winner by Ousmane Dembele gave Barcelona control of their own fate in the race for the Spanish league title. Dembele scored in the 90th minute Monday as Barcelona defeated 10-man Valladolid 1-0 to move within a point of league leader Atletico Madrid.

Dembele scored with a left-footed shot from inside the area to make sure Barcelona can secure the title by winning all their remaining

games, as they host Atletico in one of the final rounds in May.

"This is the result of our work. We worked very hard in these last few months," Barcelona defender Clement Lenglet said. "Things are starting to go our way."

Barcelona had been struggling to break through the tight defensive scheme of Valladolid, which played a man down from the 80th after Oscar Plano was sent off for a foul from behind to stop a dangerous run by Dembele.

"It's proof that this is a very dif-

ficult league, you have to fight hard to win in every match," Lenglet said. "We created many chances and scored the winner in the end. We are happy but we have to keep working because this is far from over."

Atletico lost 0-1 at Sevilla Sunday to see their once-comfortable cushion vanish. Seeking their first league title since 2014, Diego Simeone's team have been gradually losing ground at the top of the standings. Their lead over Barcelona was more than 10 points a few weeks ago.

Atletico's gap to third-placed Real

Madrid, who defeated Eibar 2-0 Saturday, is three points with nine rounds left. Valladolid, which saw Kenan Kodro hit the crossbar with a header less than 10 minutes into the match at the Camp Nou Stadium, stayed three points from the relegation zone. They have won one of their last 12 league games.

The team owned by former Brazil striker Ronaldo loudly complained about the red card to Plano, and also about a handball by Barcelona defender Jordi Alba that could have given the team a penalty.

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# IWL postponed due to COVID-19 surge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 6:** The Indian Women's League (IWL), scheduled to be played in Odisha later this month, was Tuesday, postponed indefinitely in view of the rising COVID-19 cases in the state, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said.

The AIFF said it will take a decision on the fate of the tournament at a later date. Earlier, the AIFF had said that the tournament would have to be played in May at the latest.

"The Indian Women's League scheduled to be held in Odisha later this month has been postponed until further notice," the AIFF said in a release.

The AIFF said the decision was taken after discussion with Odisha Sports over the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the state while also keeping in mind the safety and se-



curity of the players and officials."

"The AIFF along with Odisha Sports and the participating teams will be taking a stock of the situation once the health parameters improve," it said.

The development came three days after the AIFF announced the postponement of the play-off matches of the same tournament. The play-off matches were earlier scheduled to start in the national capital from Wednesday.

COVID-19 cases in Odisha have been on the rise with more than 500 cases Monday and Tuesday. The state reported 588 new cases Tuesday after 573 infections Monday.

## TRAINING-CUM-COMPETITION TOUR AHEAD OF OLYMPICS

# Neeraj, Hima set for Turkey stint

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 6:** India's top track and field athletes, including javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra and sprinter Hima Das will embark on a training-cum-competition tour of Turkey later this month, the national federation said Tuesday.

Apart from Chopra and fellow Olympic bound javelin thrower Shivpal Singh, country's relay racers (both 4x100m and 4x400m men and women) will be part of the 40-odd contingent that also includes coaches.

They will be based at the Turkish city of Antalya and take part in some competitions, where some athletes can try and qualify for the Olympics.

Hima, who won a silver in individual 400m and a gold each in women's 4x400m and mixed 4x400m relays in the 2018 Asian Games, is set to train for the 4x100m relay.

The Indian relay teams are set to



take part in the World Athletics Relays at Silesia in Poland May 1 and 2. "We have got clearance from the SAI for this training-cum-competition tour of Turkey. It is a 40-odd contingent including the coaches. We are not getting a training base in Europe because of various reasons, so we have decided on Turkey," Athletics Federation of India President Adille Sumariwalla told this agency.



"The athletes will also take part in some competitions in Turkey and those who have not yet qualified for Olympics can qualify. The facilities are top class and weather is good there," he added.

Indian track and field athletes have earlier trained at Antalya, before the 2016 Rio Olympics and again in 2019. Sumariwalla said the AFI is working on arranging visas for the athletes.

# All eyes on skipper Pant as DC look to go one up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 6:** Thrust into the leadership role, a completely transformed Rishabh Pant carries a lot of hope and responsibility on his shoulders as Delhi Capitals aim to build on the success of the last edition in the UAE, where they ended runners-up.

A solid batting line-up coupled with a potent pace attack makes DC strong contenders this year too. Pant was handed captaincy a week back after Shreyas Iyer was forced out following a shoulder injury, sustained during the ODI series against England last month.

Delhi Capitals have grown from strength to strength as they finished second runners up in the 2019 before reaching summit clash last year.

Here is a look at the team which will begin its campaign against Chennai Super Kings in Mumbai April 10.

### STRENGTHS

They are one of the most balanced sides in the tournament with a formidable batting line-up and a potent pace attack.

In Shikhar Dhawan, Prithvi Shaw and Ajinkya Rahane, Delhi boast of a solid top order. Pant along with Marcus Stoinis and Shimron Hetmyer

or Sam Billings will look to fill the hole left by Iyer in the middle order. The addition of Steve Smith will further bolster their batting.

Dhawan (618) was the second highest run-scorer in 2020 and looked in good touch in the recent ODI series against England with scores of 98 and 67.

Shaw too will be itching to prove his worth after amassing 827 runs in the Vijay Hazare Trophy following his ouster from the Australia Test series and a dismal last season.

Pant has emerged as a match-winner for India in the recent series against Australia and England. He along with all-rounder Stoinis and Billings will have to ensure that DC finish with a flourish.

On the bowling front, South African pace duo of Kagiso Rabada (2020 purple cap winner) and Anrich Nortje has proved to be a dream pair, having scalped 52 wickets together in 2020.

With Chris Woakes also in the mix this time and Ishant Sharma and Umesh Yadav also in the ranks, Delhi have options in their pace battery.

### WEAKNESS

Delhi's primary weakness is not having enough quality players in their ranks both overseas

and home cricketers. Not having like-for-like replacements is one of the weak points.

It was precisely the reason they were not able to rest Kagiso Rabada and Anrich Nortje. Even in terms of wicket-keeping, in case Pant has a niggle they didn't have replacement. This year they have Vishnu Vinod



**THE SQUAD**  
Shikhar Dhawan, Prithvi Shaw, Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant, Shimron Hetmyer, Marcus Stoinis, Chris Woakes, R Ashwin, Axar Patel, Amit Mishra, Lalit Yadav, Pravin Dubey, Kagiso Rabada, Anrich Nortje, Ishant Sharma, Avesh Khan, Steve Smith, Umesh Yadav, Ripal Patel, Vishnu Vinod, Lukman Meriwala, M Siddarth, Tom Curran & Sam Billings.

of Kerala but he is a green horn. Also the Indian fast bowling is pretty weak as their two premier fast bowlers Ishant and Umesh don't play much white ball cricket for the national team now.

### OPPORTUNITIES

Although a big challenge, but it will also be a huge opportunity for young skipper Pant to step out of the shadows of the legendary MS Dhoni by guiding his team to its

**My first match (DC vs CSK) as captain will be against Mahi bhai (MS Dhoni). It will be a good experience for me as I have learned a lot from him. I have my own experience as a player as well. I'll apply my own experience and the learning from MS Dhoni, and try to do something different against CSK**

**RISHABH PANT**



Delhi Capitals' coach Ricky Ponting and assistant coach Mohammed Kaif have something to think about during the team's practice session ahead of IPL 2021

### THREAT

Pant has displayed resilience and understanding in his short career thus far but he will have to ensure that the added leadership responsibility doesn't affect his natural attacking instinct as a batsman.

Also DC's pace unit is too dependent on Rabada and Nortje with back-up pacers Ishant and Umesh not boasting of a great T20 record.

Last year, Delhi suffered four successive losses after seven wins in first nine games, jeopardising their play-off chances. They need to be wary of such a slump and avoid collapses like last year.

# Dutee in 4x100m team for World Athletics Relays

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 6:** National record holder Dutee Chand and star sprinter Hima das were Tuesday named in the Indian women's 4x100m team for the World Athletics Relays, an Olympic qualification event, to be held in Poland May 1 and 2.

S Dhanalakshmi, who had beaten Dutee in the final of women's 100m sprint in the Federation Cup last month, was also named in the team, along with Archana Suseendran, Himashree Roy and AT Daneshwari.

India will also field teams in the men's 4x400m and women's 4x400m relays in Chorzow, Silesia, in Poland. The top eight teams from the World Athletics Relays will automatically qualify for the Tokyo Olympics.

The Indian mixed 4x400m relay team has already qualified for the Tokyo Olympics after reaching the final during the 2019 World Championships in Doha.

The AFI named a total of 20 athletes for the World Relays. It will be the first major international event for the Indians sprinters since the Asian Athletics Championships in Doha in April 2019.