



## SCARY THOUGHTS

Actor Shefali Shah says she has this fear that some day she will stand dumbfounded when the director says 'action'

LEISURE P2



## TOUGH STAND

Pakistan bans a radical Islamic party under the Terrorism Act after its supporters clash with security forces

INTERNATIONAL P10



## PSG, CHELSEA THROUGH

PSG, Chelsea overcome Bayern Munich and Porto tests respectively to enter Champions League semis

SPORTS P12

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Oh no! Does that mean Hon'ble PM will have to prepare for one more Pariksha pe Charcha?

## SHORT TAKES

### Yogi, Akhilesh test COVID-19 positive

**Lucknow:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said Wednesday he has tested positive for COVID-19. Along with him, Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Akhilesh Yadav also informed in a tweet that he has tested positive for the virus. Even though Adityanath had isolated himself from Tuesday some officials of his entourage have tested positive. The UP CM had taken the first dose of Covaxin a few days back, but it save him from the disease.

### 7 drown while celebrating Bihu

**Guwahati:** At least seven persons, including a woman, drowned Wednesday while taking bath in rivers on the occasion of the 'Rongali Bihu' festival in Biswanath and Dibrugarh districts, officials said. At Sootea in Biswanath district, five persons drowned in Ghiladhari river, while two others lost their lives in Burhidihing river in Dibrugarh district, officials said. Among the seven, three were from the same family.

### 3 tiger cubs born in Nandankanan

**Bhubaneswar:** The number of tigers increased at the Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) as Royal Bengal tigress Megha gave birth to three cubs late Tuesday night. With the addition of the three new members, the number of tigers in the zoo has gone up to 30. Among them seven are white tigers, four Melanistic and 13 Royal Bengal tigers, an NZP official stated.

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
TEMP MAX	38.6°C 37.2°C
TEMP MIN	25.9°C 25.0°C
Humidity	71% 76%
Rainfall	Nil Nil
Forecast	Partly cloudy sky

# Firm flourishes with OSMCL aid

### SANITARY NAPKINS FOR 'KHUSHI' PROCURED AT HIGHER PRICES BY OFFICIALS

MANISH KUMAR, OP

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** Several private agencies now seem to have made Odisha one of their favourite destinations for making hay while the sun shines at the taxpayers' expense, thanks to the officials of the Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd (OSMCL) who connived with these firms to make it possible.

The indulgence of the erring officials of OSMCL came to the fore recently in the light of audit reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) relating to the procurement of sanitary pads by private agencies under the KHUSHI scheme. The scheme was launched by Odisha government in 2018 to supply sanitary napkins to adolescent girls in schools.

Interestingly, the supplier of these napkins who sold the same item at lower rates to other states got far better prices from OSMCL. The important arm of the state Health department in its final tender process in 2018 selected one M/s Shree Radhe Hygiene Products Pvt Ltd, Pune to procure the pads at a rate of ₹2.30 per piece.

This firm had given the product at ₹1.57 per piece to Tamil Nadu in 2017-18 and at ₹1.78 per piece to the same state in 2018-19. The firm however received a very attractive rate from Odisha government which procured it at ₹2.30 per piece in 2018-19, leading to an additional payment of ₹19.39 crore in total by the Odisha government. In January 2018, the government had decided to distribute



17.26 lakh pads to adolescent girls under the scheme.

The CAG audit claimed that the failure of the price negotiation mechanism by the OSMCL officials and acceptance of the quoted price of this firm led to loss of government money. As reported, in a similar scheme named Rastriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK), the supplier had given the pads at lower prices.

"The selected firm had agreed to supply the same sanitary napkins at ₹1.74 per piece under the RKSK in May 2018 and quoted (November 2018) ₹2.30 for same napkin in a re-tender for KHUSHI scheme. Therefore the committee should have called for price justification and carried out price negotiation accordingly," the CAG report said.

The CAG audit report also said that OSMCL ignored the prices offered by these firms to other states, giving

extra profit to the private agency hired by them. The CAG in its report said that the estimated price submitted by the Expenditure Finance Committee to the Odisha government for budget provision stood at ₹2.08 per piece. The audit report said this was also ignored by the OSMCL officials while awarding the contract to the Pune-based firm.

"The financial cost for supply of sanitary napkins cost under KHUSHI is estimated to be ₹85.789 crore (approx) per year. This would involve an extra expenditure of ₹15.29 crore annually compared to the price under RKSK. This aspect was not taken into cognizance while evaluating the price bids," the CAG report said.

The report claimed that interventions by OSMCL officials to get the best rates (lowest) for government were not used and it offered higher prices compared to other states. "Extra ex-

penditure incurred on this account is a loss to the state exchequer and an undue favour to the supplier," said the CAG report.

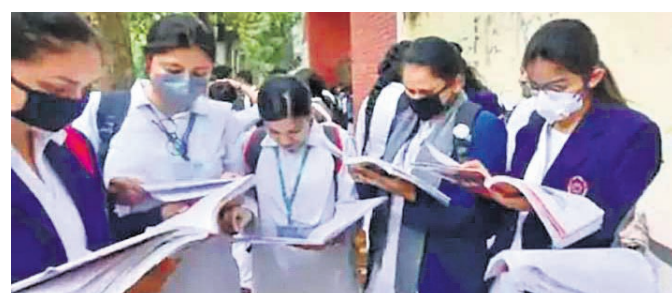
The Health department in its reply to the CAG justified their decision citing inadmissible input tax credit, additional transport cost and extra packaging cost.

The CAG however dismissed the argument and said that it procured the item at unreasonably high rate and did not go for negotiation to reduce the offered price to save taxpayer's money. The OSMCL also continued to place more orders from the firm, despite the issues raised during the audit.

This clearly demonstrates a well-orchestrated plan to siphon off funds from the state exchequer by involved officials. Interestingly, even after the CAG's report, the government has not thought fit to take action against any official involved in the process yet.

## CLASS XII FINALS POSTPONED DUE TO SURGE IN INFECTIONS

# CBSE cancels Class X exams



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 14:** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) cancelled Wednesday Class X exams and postponed that of Class XII in view of the surge in COVID-19 cases across India. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The board exams for Class XII to be held from May 4 to June 14 are hereby postponed. These exams will be held hereafter. The situation will be reviewed June 1 by the board and details will be shared subsequently. A notice of at least 15 days will be given before the start of the examinations," an official of the

Ministry of Education (MoE) said.

"The board exams for Class X are hereby cancelled. The results of Class X board exams will be prepared on the basis of an objective criterion to be developed by the board. Any candidate who is not satisfied with the marks allocated to him or her on this basis will be given an opportunity to sit in an exam as and when the conditions are conducive," the official added.

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Cabinet Secretary, School and Higher Education Secretaries and other top officials attended the meeting.

"Unlike state boards, CBSE has

an all-India character; and therefore, it is essential to hold exams simultaneously throughout India. Looking to the present situation of the pandemic and school closures, and also taking into account the safety and well-being of the students, the crucial decisions have been taken," the MoE official said.

The demands for cancellation of board exams were being raised from various quarters. Over two lakh students had signed an online petition demanding cancellation of board exams and the hashtag 'cancelboardexams' has also been trending on Twitter for a week.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi while thanking the government for cancelling the CBSE Class X exams said it would have been better if the Class XII exams would have been cancelled also.

"Glad the government has finally cancelled the 10th standard exams. However, a final decision MUST be taken for the 12th grade too. Keeping students under undue pressure until June makes no sense. It's unfair. I urge the government to decide now," the Congress general secretary tweeted.

## PRAYING FOR A BETTER FUTURE



Devotees offer prayers and light diyas Wednesday at a temple in Cuttack on the occasion of Maha Vishuva Sankranti, and Odia New Year

OP PHOTO

# CM launches life support ambulances to fight Covid

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** Like other states, Odisha is also witnessing a surge in COVID-19 cases. Keeping this in mind, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik dedicated Wednesday 47 new advanced life support ambulances to the people of Odisha on virtual mode.

Patnaik expressed hope that these ambulances will meet the increasing demand for transportation of critical patients with advanced life support system. Wishing the people on the occasion of Odia New Year and Maha Vishuva Sankranti, the chief minister expressed confidence that with cooperation from all, the state can beat the second COVID-19 wave.

Out of these 47 ambulances, 28

will be managed under 108 emergency services while 19 will be deployed at medical colleges and hospitals to facilitate patient transportations.

These ambulances have been funded from various sources including MPLAD, CSR, District Mineral Foundation (DMF) and Odisha Mineral Bearing Area Development Corporation (OM-BADC).

Odisha has been running emergency medical ambulance services since March 5, 2013. The current fleet comprises of 536 vehicles, out of which 540 have basic life support system and 56 have advanced life support system.

With the addition of these new ambulances, the total number of advanced life support vehicles has increased to 103.

AGENCIES

**Haridwar, April 14:** More than a 1,000 people have already tested positive in the ongoing Kumbh Mela, officials said Wednesday. This number may rise drastically in the coming days as the present figure has been achieved through random testing. Lakhs of devotees in the past few days and Wednesday flouted COVID-19 guidelines with impunity to take a dip in the Ganga during the third 'shahi snan' of the Kumbh mela festival.

Uttarakhand government officials said that some 50,000 random samples have so far been tested. Among them 406 reports were found positive Monday and 594 Tuesday taking the total number of infected people to 1,002. It is not yet known, how many persons the infected per-

sons have come in contact with. So there is every chance of the numbers increasing manifold in future.

In spite of such a large number of positive cases, the devotees remain impassive and unaffected. "Our faith is the biggest thing for us. It is because of that strong belief that so many people have come here to take a dip in Ganga," Siddharth Chakrapani, a member of one of the Kumbh Mela organising committees said Wednesday. "They believe that Maa (mother) Ganga will save them from this pandemic," he added.

The 'royal bath' marked 'Mesh Sankranti' and 'Baisakhi', and fell two days after a similar convergence of 'sadhus' and other devotees for the second shahi snan - events where following social distancing norms appeared impossible.

By noon Wednesday between



RELIGIOUS RITUALS RULE: Seers and devotees openly flout Covid protocols as they take a dip Wednesday in the Ganges in Haridwar

PTI PHOTO

eight and 10 lakh people had taken a bath in the river, Uttarakhand DGP Ashok Kumar, who was supervising the arrangements here, said. Sadhus from four of the 13 akhadas were through with the 'snan' by this time.

Police personnel were seen distributing masks among people in the mela area. However, social distancing norms were violated openly by the seers when they and their followers descended the steps at 'Har ki Pauri' ghat to wade into the river.

Lakhs of seers and devotees have thronged to Haridwar on the occasion of Kumbh mela

Seers while taking the dip openly flout social distancing and mask wearing norms

Most of them were without masks. The seers from the akhadas took the dip along with their revered deities carried in ornate palanquins at 'Har Ki Pauri', which was reserved exclusively for them. Lakhs of common devotees bathed at the other ghats of the Ganges here and in Rishikesh.

Amid all this Uttarakhand recorded its highest single-day spike in Covid-19 cases Tuesday with 1,925 people testing positive. Dehradun with 775 cases and Haridwar with 594 were the biggest contributors to the day's tally.

# leisure

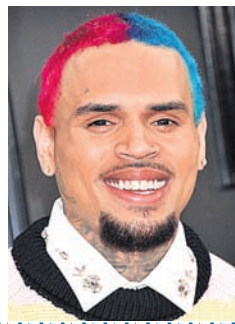


## OLLY SET TO RELEASE HIS 'BEST' SONGS

Singer Olly Alexander, who was part of the band *Years & Years*, with Mikey Goldsworthy and Emre Turkmen, will soon be sharing some unreleased songs. "Some of the songs I never want to throw them away because they still are my babies," he said.

## CHRIS BROWN SUED AFTER PET DOG ATTACK

Rapper Chris Brown's housekeeper has sued him after the rapper-singer's dog attacked his sister. According to a lawsuit, Brown's dog attacked Patricia Avila and her sister Maria when they were cleaning his house December 12 last year.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
Today, you will crave total freedom in whatever you are doing, says Ganesh. And sheer entertainment is on the cards for teenyboppers, like mall-hopping or going for a film. The kids will demand a Jumbo Berry ice cone. All in all, it will be a family day for you.

**TAURUS**  
You will wake up feeling determined and decisive today, says Ganesh. Be careful as your rigid views may make you seem stubborn. You may not be willing to come half way during a conflict and will make a habit of articulating your viewpoint.

**GEMINI**  
The day promises sensitivity and compassion for you, predicts Ganesh. You may plan a trip with your family members. You may also invest your money in various financial companies, as securing the future of your family will be foremost on your mind.

**CANCER**  
It is high time that you dedicated yourself to your work. If you are looking to try new things, today may not be a very good day to do so. Stick to doing things the way you have been doing them so far, advises Ganesh.

**LEO**  
You might be the man of the house, but to make that house a home, you need a family. So keep that in mind, says Ganesh, and remember that your family is the foundation of your success. Make every possible effort to make your family's roots stronger.

**VIRGO**  
Today might just bring those emotions to the fore that have been lying in the closet of your heart since long. You will even develop a bonding – a sentimental attachment – with your belongings. But, if and when you don't find the surroundings to your liking, you shall be like a fish out of the water.

**LIBRA**  
Unleash the artist in you today! Don't be surprised if you happen to discover a love for the fine arts. The stars bestow on you refined aesthetic sense. As a result, your penchant for interior decoration is sure to get a boost.

**SCORPIO**  
Family matters have been screaming for long for your attention now. Your estranged spouse may deal the final blow to sever all ties, foretells Ganesh. But keep calm, and hold that tongue, advises Ganesh. Your priority should be to secure your family's peace.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Expect a call to late-night revelry and a chance to binge. But you don't seem to be in the mood to let your hair loose and party, says Ganesh. However tempting it may be, your serious side will take over and you shall deny the offer.

**CAPRICORN**  
You will start the day with verve and vigour, and will appear a completely different person at work. There will be a discernible change in your way of working, especially in terms of the level of energy and concentration you will put in.

**AQUARIUS**  
A productive day, as you will receive unrestrained support from your bosses and colleagues. Your creativity will reach its zenith and the resulting work will augment your reputation. The day will seem complete when you spend quality time with your family in the evening, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
Happiness shared is double the joy; sorrows shared are half the burden. Your family is the foundation of your success, and it is to them you will turn in times of failure as well. With their support, getting back to the top of the game will take no time, says Ganesh.

## Shefali's candid confession on her self-doubt

New Delhi: Actress Shefali Shah, who took her acting to the next level with the International Emmy-winning series *Delhi Crime*, says she tackles self-doubt every day. "It's every single day I go to work. For me, it gets difficult to get out of the vanity van because I have this fear that I am going to stand there dumbfounded when the director says 'action'. Not one day has gone by where I am not terrified. There is a fear that I might just not know," said Shefali.

The actress will soon be seen in the anthology film *Ajeeb Daastaans*, a collection of four short stories for the OTT screen. She features in Kayoze Irani's story, *Ankahi*, co-starring Manav Kaul and Tota Roy Chowdhary. Irani's film revolves around love, want and sign language.



## Rahman presents 99 Songs special digital concert

Mumbai: Oscar-winning musician AR Rahman has released the 99 Songs Special Concert -- a digital show chronicling the music of his upcoming film *99 Songs*. He says the initial idea was to perform in every city and college. "My initial idea was that I should go to every city, every college and perform, for you, the songs of this movie. But given the times, the least we can do is present a show with the incredible singers and musicians who are part of the soundtrack," Rahman said.

*99 Songs* marks Rahman's debut as a screenwriter and producer. The film was

scheduled for a theatrical release but has currently been deferred owing to the pandemic.

The digital concert is streaming on JioSaavn's LIVE Anywhere platform. Streaming in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu, the 99 Songs Special Concert sees Rahman unite with the singers of the film's soundtrack. The voices featured include Benny Dayal, Shashwat Singh, Shashaa Tirupati, Vijay Yesudas, Sreekanth Hariharan, Poorvi Koutish, Haricharan, and the Sunshine Orchestra. Lead actor Ehan Bhat, who trained to be a musician for the film, and director Vishwesh Krishnamoorthy, will also join Rahman in the sound of the film.

## Katrina content in her own company



Mumbai: Actress Katrina Kaif, who tested Covid positive earlier this month, is currently enjoying her own company, going by her social media Wednesday.

Katrina posted a picture on Instagram, where she is seen posing for the camera lens dressed in an oversized black sweat-shirt.

"Just me for company," she wrote as the caption.

Katrina tested positive for Covid-19 a few days ago. The actress shared this news on Instagram saying she is currently under home quarantine.

Katrina's next release is *Sooryavanshi*, starring Akshay Kumar. She also has the horror-comedy *Phone Bhool* lined up. It has been directed by Gurmmeet Singh and also features Ishaan Khatter and Siddhant Chaturvedi. Her other upcoming film is *Tiger 3* with Salman Khan.

## Odia rapper Juggernaut releases Samruddha Odisha Sammartha Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Odisha's first hip-hop based music label The Urban Loafer released the Odia New Year anthem titled *Samruddha Odisha Sammartha Odisha* Tuesday, on the eve of Maha Vishubha Sankranti, also known as Odia New Year. Rapper Abhinav Singh aka Juggernaut, a techie from Bangalore and Tapas Raj, founder of Bangalore Odia Sahitya Samaj have written the lines reminding fans about the timeless melodies of 80's.

Ror Kohinoor who primarily works in Punjab music industry has composed the song while Juggernaut and Kohinoor along with Ashish Mishra conceptualised the project. *Indian Idol* fame Biswajit Mohapatra and Amisha Dalbehera have lent their



A screengrab from the song

voice for the song and Juggernaut covered the rap section. The song has been shot at Bangalore, Malaysia and various parts of Odisha.

It features celebrities like actor

Amar Chinchanni, RJ Guddi, RJ KP, Bidyashree, Tapas Raj, and Binapani Pradhan.

Juggernaut, who also represented India as the First Indian male at

World KRUMP Finals Dusseldorf, Germany in 2019, says he wants to introduce Odia hip-hop at international level by making state's culture and language a part of his compositions.

On *Samruddha Odisha Sammartha Odisha* being created in just 13 days, he adds, "It was challenging to do this in a short span of time but challenges help me grow."

A quintessential Odia, Juggernaut aims to create new genre music with authentic local lyrics that reflects the culture and traditions of the state. Rap is one of his attempts to give Odia culture mainstream recognition.

"Many budding artistes in the state want to showcase their skill and there is no dearth of talents too. All they need is proper guidance and a suitable platform which our team is working on" says Juggernaut.

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

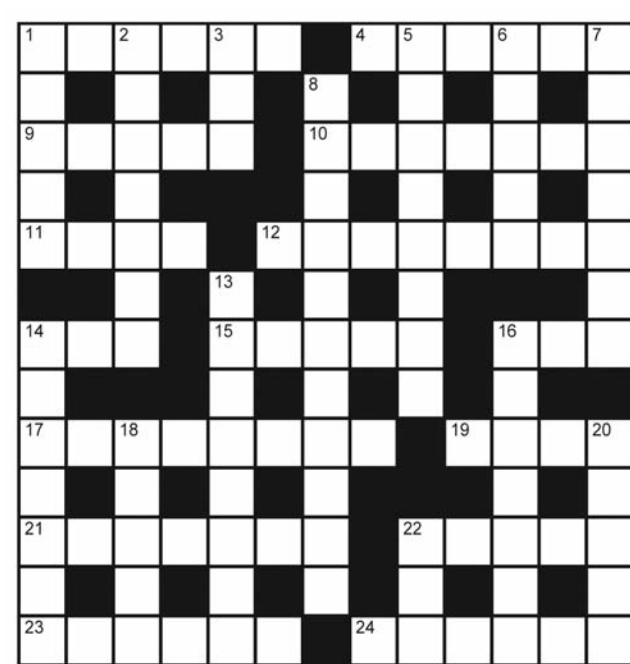


### BREVITY



### FUN post

### CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2021 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**  
1 Skink, for one  
4 Dense  
9 Weather forecast  
10 Imaginary line  
11 Lingerie item  
12 Go-between  
14 Neon, e.g.  
15 Horrible  
16 Wordplay  
17 Antiquated  
19 On the briny  
21 Pheasant
- Down**  
22 Torment  
23 Means of escape  
24 Prestige  
1 Leans to one side  
2 Butterfly attractors  
3 Manta  
5 Type of sprout  
6 Extreme
- 7 Near the beginning (5,2)  
8 Enchantment (5,6)  
13 Party items  
14 Rock group follower  
16 Faint (4,3)  
18 Fab Four drummer  
20 Chasm  
22 Aardvark's morsel

### 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.

2	6	1						3
								7
		9					4	
7	2							5
		5	4					2
		8						6
			6					1
8	9	1		2				7
		7	3					

### SOLUTIONS

**CROSSWORD**

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

**SUDOKU**

4	2	3	1	5	8	6	7	9
6	8	9	7	2	4	5	1	3
7	1	5	6	9	3	8	4	2
9	5	1	2	4	6	7	3	8
8	7	4	9	3	5	2	6	1
2	3	6	8	1	7	9	5	4
5	9	2	3	6	1	4	8	7
3	6	8	4	7	2	1	9	5
1	4	7	5	8	9	3	2	6

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## Ensure food security to all BPL families: HC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** In a significant ruling, the Orissa High Court has asked the Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare (FS&CW) department to ensure that no Below Poverty Line (BPL) families are left out from the ambit of food security schemes.

Hearing a public interest litigation (PIL), a two-judge bench of the court comprising Chief Justice S Muralidhar and Justice BP Routray asked the government to look into the issue and develop a mechanism to ensure that BPL families are covered under food security schemes. The PIL filed by social activist Prafulla Samantaray before the HC had questioned the approach of the government on the left-out beneficiaries of food security schemes.

The HC bench in its order brought to notice an earlier order of the Supreme Court wherein it was said that no BPL families should be left out of the state sponsored food security schemes. The written HC order asked the state government to develop a mechanism to address the issue.

In Odisha, food security is ensured to the needy under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and the State Food Security Scheme (SFSS). The HC in its order said, "It

is therefore essential for the State of Odisha to ensure that there are mechanisms put in place even under the SFSS which is supposed to cover the gap under the NFSA, so that no BPL or vulnerable group person is left out."

It also added, "It is not sufficient to state that the government has already covered 80 per cent of the state population under Public Distribution System (PDS). There cannot be any person belonging to vulnerable categories in Odisha who is left out of either the NFSA or the SFSS. A constant endeavour must be made to increase the coverage with every passing month."

The court has asked the Commissioner-Secretary of FS&CW department to submit a reply in this regard. "The court would require the Commissioner-Secretary to inform the court by an affidavit whether those belonging to BPL and other vulnerable groups have been specifically targeted and included under the SFSS irrespective of whether they are located in an urban or a rural area and whether each such person has a ration card or other document which enables such person to approach a fair price shop or any other distribution centre to avail the rations," the court order said.



**It is not sufficient to state that the govt has already covered 80% of the state population under PDS, the HC observed**



**TRIBUTE TO JURIST**  
Collector Bhawani Shankar Chayani and others pay floral tributes to BR Ambedkar, the architect of Indian Constitution, on his birth anniversary near Orissa High Court in Cuttack, Wednesday

COVID-19 TRACKER			
	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	13,81,68,397	11,11,60,639	29,75,435
India	1,38,73,825	1,23,36,036	1,72,085
Odisha	3,55,353	3,41,733	1,933

## Pacts inked for cancer care units in City

Our government will extend all support to make these centres operational by January 2024: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** The state government Wednesday signed MoUs for establishment of a 500-bed cancer hospital and a 100-bed palliative care unit in Bhubaneswar.

The state government and Susmita Bagchi have signed two tripartite agreements with Shankara Cancer Care Foundation and Karunashraya Hospice Trust in presence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. Both the units will be set up in Info Valley area here.

He congratulated Subroto Bagchi and his wife Susmita for their generous contribution of Rs 340 crore towards the establishment of one of the largest oncology centres in the country.



The Bagchi couple and additional chief secretary, Health, at the event

The couple has pledged to donate Rs 210 crore for the cancer hospital and Rs 130 crore for palliative care centre. The state government will provide 20-acre land for each of the projects.

"I thank Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital and Research Institute for partnering the establishment of a 500-bed cancer care and research centre and Bangalore Hospice Trust for the palliative care centre,"

Naveen said. He assured that the state government will extend all support to make these centres operational by January 2024. "We are grateful that Mrs & Mr Bagchi have been volunteering for the transformation of our state through Mo School and the Skill Mission," Patnaik said. He hoped that the move of the Bagchis will inspire many more to experience the joy of giving. Thousands of cancer patients and their families will be benefited every year through these two health institutions, he said.

Quoting Rabindranath Tagore, the CM said, "I slept and dreamt that life was joy; I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."

## PHC opens near Srimandir

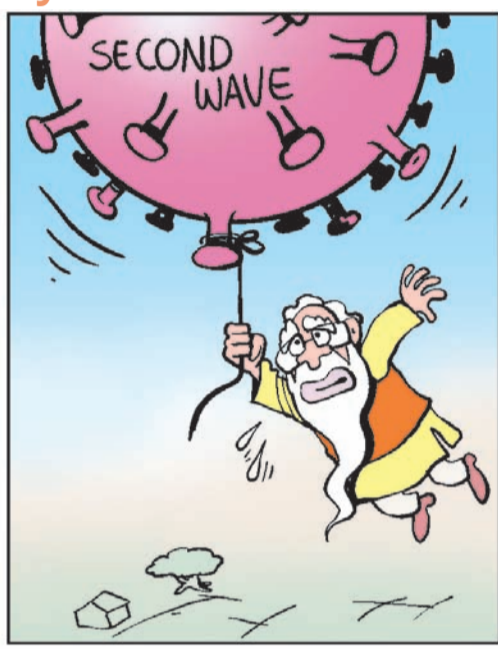
POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, April 14:** A primary health centre (PHC) was inaugurated near Srimandir here Wednesday to provide healthcare to devotees and servitors during emergencies. The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration set up the PHC, sources said.

The PHC will function from 6am to 10pm every day. Health workers will work in two shifts at the PHC.

"The PHC will have facilities, equipment and drugs to meet emergencies. The district headquarters hospital will arrange the required infrastructure for the PHC. Two ambulances would be deployed to carry patients from the PHC to other hospitals," said a temple official.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## BJD-BJP Twitter war over Balasore package

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** A war of words ensued between BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra and BJD spokesperson Sasmit Patra Wednesday over the issue of some bureaucrats visiting Balasore to review development works.

Sambit in his tirade against Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mohapatra accused him of ignoring other areas and not following the principle of impartiality.

He said, "Suresh Ji, you are a senior Odia administrative officer. You visited Balasore with acting CM of Odisha. When the Chief Minister announced to take responsibility of poll bound Pipli constituency, coinciding with that you came out with a package for Balasore where bypoll was held in recent past."

BJP president's allegation, you came in a very political colour to politically influence the byelection. It's a matter of grave concern. Suresh Babu this is not expected from you. You are tied with Constitution of India and not with ruling party."

The BJD spokesperson also questioned the development works in other areas. In his follow-up tweets, he said, "You went to Balasore. What about Bijepur, Patkura and Tirtol where CM had made similar announcements of taking personal care. Whether CM remembers these too?"

In response to Sambit's statement, Sasmit said, "Why are you against the development of Balasore? Are you anti-Balasore? Have you consulted Minister and Balasore MP Pratap Sarangi before making such Tweets?" BJD's Sasmit Patra said.

## More fun & frolic in Mahanadi as boat club revamped

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, April 14:** In what would bring cheers to water sports lovers, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday inaugurated the much-awaited Silver City Boat Club near Mata Mutt here through video-conference.

Inaugurating the facility, Naveen said, "To tap the state's tourism potential, we're rapidly developing tourism and hospitality infrastructure in identified areas. This recreational offering in the mighty Mahanadi river will help establish Odisha as a most sought after tourism hub."

Revamped by Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) at an expenditure of around Rs 2 crore, the club offers a host of water sports facilities including jet ski, speed boat, day cruise, banana boat, inflatable boat, water scooter, floating cafe, kayaking, canoeing, pedal boat and scuba diving.



structure at the club was damaged by cyclonic storm Fani in 2019. "The upgraded infrastructure include a floating jetty, booking counter, complex for lifeguards, toilet, a restaurant, adequate parking space and a park with children's play area," an official said, adding that it will be further augmented in phases. While tourists can enjoy the scenic beauty of the Mahanadi at a

dedicated 'view point', a 'selfie zone' has also been set aside for the visitors to capture the cosy moments.

Addressing the gathering at the club, Tourism Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi said that the project adds basic infrastructure to the facilities so as to support multiple water sports operators and promote water-based tourism in Cuttack and nearby districts. As of now, two operators have

been roped in for the club. Steps were being taken for engagement of additional operators soon.

MP Bhartruhari Mahatab who was also present at the event requested the Tourism department to include the Maritime Museum in the tourism map of Odisha and to explore the potential of other nearby tourist locations.

Addressing the public Rajya Sabha MP Subhas Singh emphasized on creation of additional cottages for night stay in the Silver City Club. He also requested to extend the Cuttack city in the Golden Triangle of the State.

Singh, on the other hand, emphasized on creation of additional cottages for night stay in the club.

MLA Souvik Biswal, former MLA Debashish Samantaray, Tourism Principal Secretary Vishal Kumar Dev, OTDC chairperson Shreemayee Mishra and Cuttack Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayani among others were present on the occasion.

## BJP sees plot behind Hyder escape

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** Taking a dig at the state government and police administration, senior BJP leader and former police DG Prakash Mishra Wednesday alleged that there was a big conspiracy behind the escape of dreaded gangster Sheikh Hyder from SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack.

Addressing a presser here, Mishra alleged that Hyder could not have been escaped without the involvement of police, jail and hospital authorities. He questioned his frequent visit to SCB despite being lodged in Sambalpur jail.



"When a common man runs from pillar to post for a cabin at SCB, I fail to understand the urgency of the hospital authorities to reserve a cabin for the gangster even before his arrival. Who had recommended the hospital authorities to reserve the cabin for him?" he said. Mishra also alleged that some influential people are behind the conspiracy.

Raising question over SCB authorities' statement that Hyder had a kidney ailment, Mishra said, "If

that is true, then how come they allowed him to have biryani?"

Mishra said the gangster's escape could have been planned in a manner so as to allow him enough time to cross the check gate at Manguli before the lookout order was issued.

"It is most surprising that the Chief Minister, who is in charge of the Home department, has remained silent on this matter," he further said.

The police have shamefully remained silent after suspending six constables, he mentioned.

BJD spokesperson Sulata Deo said the BJP is putting pressure on Mishra to give such unprofessional statements.

## OHRC reels under staff crunch, pendency of cases: RTI reply

The rights panel rejects over 20% of complaints lodged by the distressed people

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** A person in distress approaches the Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) as a last resort after failing to get justice from any government department. The commission usually receives around 5,000 complaints every year. However, staff crunch and huge pendency of cases have stood as obstacles to justice delivery for the complainants.

The commission rejects more than 20 per cent of the complaints lodged by the distressed people. Most of the cases dismissed by the commission are related to property dispute matters that can be heard in a regular court only. During 2003-04, the commission had received 920 cases out of which 433 cases were dismissed. Similarly out of the 4,475 cases lodged at the OHRC in 2020, as many as 1,182 cases were rejected as 'dismissal in limine'.

Meanwhile, the pending cases are piling up with the rights body every year. The pendency of cases was 459 during 2003-04 that shot up to 16,108 till end of December 2020.



### STARTLING FACTS

- Pending cases are piling up with the rights body every year
- The pendency of cases was 459 during 2003-04 that shot up to 16,108 till end of Dec 2020
- No suo motu cases were registered at the commission during 2017-18 and 2018-19
- The OHRC has 44 employees as against sanctioned 69 posts

Answering to a query sought through Right to Information (RTI), the commission recently revealed that it has not taken up a single case suo motu during the last couple of years.

The Public Information Officer (PIO) of OHRC revealed that the commission has taken up 76 cases suo motu during the financial year 2015-16. The number of suo motu cases registered at the OHRC dipped to 49 during 2016-17.

However, the PIO informed the applicant that there were no suo motu cases registered at the commission during 2017-18 and 2018-19. Meanwhile, no information is available with the

commission regarding the suo motu cases during 2019-20. The commission has the power to register a case suo motu in any incident that it deems as a matter of grave public importance.

The RTI reply further revealed staff crunch in the commission. The OHRC has 44 employees as against sanctioned 69 posts. The commission in its reply also claimed that out of the 44 incumbents, most are either outsourced or employed on contractual basis. The state government has also appointed a good number of retired staff at the OHRC.

## Minor girl rescued, handed over to CWC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** Following a hue and cry, the Commissionerate Police Wednesday handed over the minor girl, who was allegedly forced into a flesh trade by some miscreants in a slum here, to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC).

Earlier, the police had handed over the girl to the very same persons who had reportedly engaged her in prostitution.

Some locals claimed that the lady who claims to be the girl's mother is actually her stepmother. However, police reiterated its earlier stand that the lady is her real mother. The CWC will record the girl's statement after she gets normal in the coming few days.

The victim girl in a video had earlier claimed that she along with several others is being forced into prostitution by the locals of a slum under Bharatpur police station. The girl also revealed that the miscreants lured her of a job at a paper mill in Bhubaneswar with a monthly salary of Rs 20,000 and later forced her into prostitution.

The girl, Monday evening, managed to escape from a house at the slum where she was held captive when the miscreants had gone outside.

**Government of India**  
**Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**  
**(Medini Puraskar Yojana)**

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change under its Medini Puraskar Yojana, starting from 1st April, 2018 for promoting writing of books originally in Hindi on Environment and related subjects such as (i) Environment Protection; (ii) Pollution Control; (iii) Environmental Impact Assessment; (iv) Ecological Restoration and Development; (v) Forest Conservation; (vi) Forest Resources and Development; (vii) Protection of Wildlife; (viii) Bio-diversity; (ix) Climate Change; (x) Conservation of Nature and Biosphere Reserve; (xi) Environment Education; and (xii) Nature & Environment related topics/subjects etc. invites entries from Indian Authors. Cash awards to be given under the scheme are:-

First prize	Rs.1,00,000/-	(One)
Second prize	Rs.75,000/-	(One)
Third prize	Rs.50,000/-	(One)
Consolation prize	Rs.25,000/-	(One)

Under the said scheme, original books published after 1st April, 2018 to 31 March, 2021 for the last three (03) consecutive years and atleast 100 printed pages of dimai size would be accepted for consideration for awards. Any book which has received any award, subsidy or any financial assistance under any similar scheme, being operated by Government of India or any State Government or any organization would not be eligible for consideration for the said award. Authors, whose books have already been awarded by the Ministry, would not be eligible for participating under the scheme for the next three years.

Any Indian author may send his entries, duly filled in the prescribed proforma, along with seven copies of his/her book, latest by **15th May, 2021** at the following address:-

**Director (OL)**  
**Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**  
**Room No. P227,**  
**Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,**  
**Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj,**  
**New Delhi-110003**

Entries received after 15th May, 2021 would not be considered. Detailed proforma can be had from website [moef.gov.in](http://moef.gov.in)

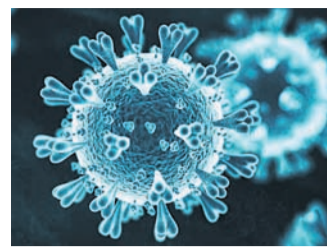
**Satya Prakash**  
**Director (OL)**  
**011-24695446**

davp 13101/11/0003/2122

# Beds added to Covid care facilities as cases skyrocket

## Two-headed baby girl faces 'neglect' at Sishu Bhawan

## Record 2,267 fresh cases in state



where the number of coronavirus infections is rising sharply, the official said. Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra along with Health and Family Welfare Additional Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Mohapatra and other senior officers on Wednesday visited Sambalpur district to monitor the situation there. The chief secretary reviewed the preparedness of Bargarh, Sambalpur and Jharsuguda administrations for containing the spread of the disease, the official said.

The Nupada district administration has declared Sinapali Gram Panchayat as a micro containment zone for four days starting from Wednesday after several Covid cases were reported from the area, he added.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** Odisha's Covid-19 tally mounted to 3,55,353 as the state registered this year's highest single-day spike of 2,267 new cases Wednesday, a health department official said.

The daily count crossed the 2,000 mark for the first time in 2021, he said. Of the fresh cases, 1,314 were reported from quarantine centres and 953 were detected during contact tracing. Sundargarh district registered the highest number of new cases at 458, followed by Khurda (348), Sambalpur and Bargarh (120 each), Cuttack (117), Nupada and Nabarangpur (104 each). "The daily count breached the 2,000 mark almost six months after 2,019 fresh infections were recorded

October 19, 2020," the official said. Odisha now has 12,244 active cases, while 3,41,123 patients have so far recovered from the disease.

The state has tested over 94.61 lakh samples for Covid-19, including 33,251 Tuesday, and the positivity rate stands at 3.74 per cent. The government has started imposing night curfew from 10 pm to 5 am in 10 districts bordering Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh



### CITY SCENARIO

The civic authorities here have operationalised Aditya Ashwini DCH with a capacity of around 150 beds

The number of beds at SUM Covid-19 Hospital has been raised from existing 250 to 500

**Cuttack, April 14:** The authorities of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Postgraduate Institute of Paediatrics here are allegedly neglecting a girl child that was born with two heads and three hands in Kendrapara district Sunday.

The baby was admitted to the newborn ward of the premium state-run childcare hospital, popularly known as Sishu Bhawan, Sunday. "The hospital authorities are yet to provide any advanced treatment to our baby. Her condition is deteriorating by the day. The doctors are only asking me to do one test or the other and submit the reports at various departments of SCB Medical College and Hospital," alleged the newborn's father Umakanta Parida.

Parida claimed that Sishu Bhawan superintendent Gyanendra Behera had told them that a special team would examine the newborn's condition Monday. "We have been awaiting the team since Monday. Only a doctor is visiting the baby. They are neglecting our baby," Parida rued.

Sishu Bhawan superintendent Gyanendra Behera said they have constituted a special team comprising four senior doctors. "A paediatric surgeon and a neurosurgeon are monitoring the baby's condition. The girl will undergo several tests. We will take further steps after receiving a report from the expert committee," Behera added.

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** In the wake of spike in Covid cases in the Capital city, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Wednesday took steps to reopen Aditya Ashwini Dedicated Covid Hospital (DCH) at Chandrasekharpur and raise the number of beds at SUM Hospital.

Following permissions from the state government, the civic authorities here have operationalised Aditya Ashwini DCH with a capacity of around 150 beds. The 150-bed hospital has been equipped with Intensive Care Units (ICUs), sources said.

Similarly, the number of beds at the SUM Covid-19 Hospital has been raised from existing 250 to 500. The hospital is now operating with 775 beds.

This includes 526 general and special beds, 125 ICUs, 100 High Dependency Units (HDUs), 12 Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) and 12 dialysis beds.

Moreover, a 60-bed Covid Care Centre (CCC) at Patia and another 45-bed at Dumduma have also been set up to deal with the rising cases

**We are administering about 10,000 doses of vaccines every day. We have also ramped up the contact tracing of Covid patients**

PREM CHANDRA CHAUDHARY | BMC COMMISSIONER

of novel coronavirus. Besides, the civic authorities have also asked all the health facilities, including the private ones, to be on standby and make provision for Covid beds. These health facilities have been told to get ready for admission of Covid patients if there is any requirement. It is worth mentioning here that the BMC has resumed paid quarantine facilities for those coming from outside without RT-PCR negative reports or vaccination certificates. It has also resumed iso-

lation facility for asymptomatic cases.

Quarantine facilities have been started at Maa Guest House near KIIT and Maa SUM Palace near SUM Hospital. Isolation facility has been started at Maa Guest House near Kalinga Hospital at Gajapati Nagar.

BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary, meanwhile, said there is no dearth of vaccines in the city. "We are administering about 10,000 doses of vaccines every day. We have also ramped up the contact tracing of Covid patients. About 24 Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) have been deployed for the same," he added.

## VAX SHORTAGE

# Health secy speaks like Rahul Gandhi: Pradhan

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan Wednesday lambasted the State Health Additional Secretary PK Mohapatra for allegedly creating unnecessary fear of shortage of vaccine supply to the state from Centre.

Pradhan accused the Odisha government official of speaking on the line of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and urged him to stop making statements on shortage of vaccine supply to the state. The minister said that Odisha government had been receiving vaccine doses on alternative days.

The statement of the Union minister comes at a time when there are instances of vaccine drive coming to a complete halt in 11 districts and closure of more than 66 per cent of the vaccination centres in the state. However, the Union minister said that all is well with Centre's supply of vaccines. "This allegation game has been triggered by one or two people in the state. The State Health Additional Chief Secretary has started this controversy. I don't think the Chief Minister is think-

**The statement comes at a time when vaccine drives have completely halted in 11 districts and more than 66 per cent of vaccination centres have closed**

ing at this on a political line. In an attempt to be outspoken he has spoken such things. I would like to request him not to create unnecessary fear among the people on such issues," Pradhan said to media persons. He also added, "Out of 12 crore vaccine doses distributed in the country, 45 lakh doses have reached Odisha. Just compare the data. On each alternative day the state is getting around 2.5 lakh doses. Is it less? What can I say if the health secretary can speak the language of Rahul Gandhi?"

Pradhan also said that the Union government was going to give approval for more vaccines soon. "This will ensure more vaccine doses. Earlier also we were checking Covid-19 with other means like wearing masks and maintaining social distancing," he said.

# Fire Services Martyr's Day observed at OFDRA

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** The state Fire Services Directorate Wednesday observed Fire Services Martyr's Day at Odisha Fire and Disaster Response Academy (OFDRA), Bhubaneswar. The fire services personnel throughout India observe April 14 as Martyr's Day and the corresponding week i.e. April 14 to 20 as the Fire Services Week every year.

While addressing the firemen on the occasion, the D.G for fire services M. Akhaya expressed condolences to the families of firefighters who sacrificed their lives on the line of service last year. He informed the gathering that the state fire service department saved 9,395 precious human lives and 9,572 cattle while attending 11,726 fire calls during 2020. The fire personnel had also attended 19,392 special service calls in the state last year. The department organized 834 demonstration programmes in different schools, colleges and hospitals for public awareness. A fire park has been started at the OFDRA to sensitize general public, especially school children about the fire hazards and the work of firemen.



Akhay also urged all state governments to have a proper fire safety plan to avert maximum damage during fire eventualities. He claimed that the department has adopted many software based projects like developing online portal "Agnishamaseva", integrating all fire stations to ERSS, inclusion of fire service in M-Sarkar Scheme, dynamic website,

disposal of files through OSWAS' to provide more citizen-centric services.

Senior officers of the department including the A.D.G of Police, Fire Services Soumya Mishra attended and paid homage to the brave fire fighters. Many incumbent and retired fire services officers were awarded for their exemplary services during 2020.

# Odia migrant kids among 847 residing in Tamil Nadu

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, April 14:** As many as 847 migrant children belonging to Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Maharashtra are currently residing in Tamil Nadu with their families, who work at the construction sites.

Tamil Nadu government, through an affidavit, informed the Supreme Court that construction workers from Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, UP and other states migrate to Tamil Nadu along with their children to work at various construction sites, brick kilns, rice mills, farmlands and other industrial sites.

The Tamil Nadu government also apprised the SC that it has been providing education to migrant children in their respective mother tongue/regional language through non-residential special training centres. The government also submitted that Odia books, received from Odisha government, have been distributed among the migrant Odia children. The migrant workers returned to their states after working for a few months,

**These children belong to Odisha, AP, West Bengal, Bihar, UP, Jharkhand and Maharashtra who are living with their families in Tamil Nadu**

says the submission. "In such cases, proper bilingual transfer certificates are issued to the students, so that wherever they go they can continue their studies without any hindrance," TN government submitted to the SC.

Though the state hasn't provided the state-wise exact number of migrant children, it has given district-wise details of children living in the state. According to the affidavit, as many as 310 migrant children of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal are residing in Chengalpattu and Coimbatore districts. 156 migrant children of Odisha, UP and Bihar are in Krishnagiri district. As many as 190 children of Odisha and West Bengal are in Tirunelveli and 191 are in Tiruppur district.

## WASSUP TODAY

- BHUBANESWAR**
- Meet by Congress on demise of Ajit Mangaraj, Congress Bhawan, 8am
  - BJB students' body to protest offline examination, near college, 11am
- BALIANTA**
- Badipala, Maa Gelhadevi Puja Mandap, Sundarpatna-Rudrapur, 8pm
- JATNI**
- Basanti Durga Puja of Maa Jagulai, Kudiari, 6pm

Programmes/announcements for wassup today may be sent to [opwassup@gmail.com](mailto:opwassup@gmail.com) for record, it must also carry the sender's mobile number for our verification, but not for publication.

## PANDEMIC SHADOW ON FESTIVAL



Devotees offer prayers at the entrance of Ram Mandir in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of Maha Vishuva Sankranti, Wednesday. The shrine was closed for devotees as part of the Covid-19 norms

# Parents, students bat for online exams

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** After Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Wednesday cancelled the Class X exams and postponed Class XII exams in view of surge in Covid-19 cases across India, Orissa POST interacted with the parents, students and school authorities regarding the decision and took their reaction.

Odisha Parents' Federation has reportedly asked Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to write to Union government proposing online examination. Basudev Bhatt, chairman of the federation, said, "We need the students to get their exam results as per their study."

Priyashi Kanungo, a Class X student, said, "I am disappointed with the cancellation as we are preparing very hard for the exam and now this cancellation is putting us

in more pressure. The government could have taken the exam online."

Pallavi Jain, a parent of Class X student, said, "The government could have conducted this exam two months ago when the situation was under control. Now the situation is not good and we don't know when it will be normal. It's too risky for the students to give exam. Even online is not so safe option. I think at this juncture, the average marks will be the solution because most of the students have given pre-board exam."

Adarsh Jain, another Class X student, said that more wait for the exams will not be good for as they have already been waiting for several months. Mona Lisa Bal, Chairperson of KIIT International School, said, "The cancellation of 10th and postponement of 12th board exams is a positive move from the health

perspective. With the alarming rise in the number of daily cases in the country, it was but an imperative step. However, we must make sure that the pandemic does not have any more negative impact on children's education and career."

Founder of SAI International School Bijaya Kumar Sahoo said that it is a good decision by the government to cancel the CBSE Class X Board Examinations this year. "We will be waiting for the objective criterion to be developed by the Board for preparing the results of Class X. But yes, for Class XII, June will not be a conducive month for holding exams as students would be looking forward to their other competitive and career examinations." Chairperson of Confederation of Odisha Public School BN Patnaik said that the decision was taken for the interest of the students. Now, the government must ensure their academic years are not harmed.

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# Nuapada: Migrants return, Covid spiralling

## VIMSAR to have 2nd Covid hosp with 300 beds

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nuapada, April 14:** As Covid-19 plays havoc in neighbouring Chhatisgarh, adjoining Nuapada district has been witnessing a spike in Covid cases. Migrant workers who have started coming back home are being subjected to antigen tests before allowing entry.

The district administration has stepped up alertness on fringe areas. Some border points have been sealed.

The entry point from Chhatisgarh is the Jonk river railway gate on the Khariar Road. Police personnel and medical staff have been deployed there.

Meanwhile, SP Rahul Jain has taken stock of the situation in Khariar Road and hinted that more police deployment will be done in the area to tighten the Covid-19 curbs on borders.

People coming from outside are told to produce Covid-19 negative certificates while they are put to antigen tests before being allowed entry into the district.

As Covid situation is worsening due to influence of the neighbouring state, the administration has taken up various measures to curb it.

The administration has sealed seven routes linked to Chhatisgarh.

On the other hand, migrant workers from other states have started coming home. The migrants are put to antigen tests and then are put in home quarantine, the SP said.

**SAMBALPUR:** Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) in Burla will have the second Covid Care facility with 300 beds, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra said Wednesday.

The Chief Secretary sounded this during his official visit to take stock of the surging Covid cases here. He was accompanied by Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra, Director of Medical Education and Training (DMET), Director of Health Services including a number of other senior officials.

Mahapatra and the senior officials are on tour to review the Covid-19 situation in Western Odisha districts as per the instruction of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, a district administrative official said.

Senior officials inspected available infrastructure facilities at VIMSAR including the existing Covid facility. Prior to reaching Burla, they also reviewed the Covid-19 situations in Jharsuguda and Bargarh districts.

Later, the team of officials

Nuapada, one of the hotspot districts in the second wave of pandemic, registered 104 single-day Covid cases over last 24 hours.

**College shut**  
Two Covid-19 cases were detected



plumbed for the second Covid hospital on VIMSAR premises. The proposed facility will be set up at the newly constructed medicine ward of VIMSAR, the official source added.

Notably, the second facility will

in National College in Nuapada district. The administration has shut it after this development.

A notice to this effect was issued by the principal of National College. It said two employees of the college have tested positive for Covid-

have 250 general beds with oxygen facilities and 50 intensive-care units (ICUs) as well. The new facility will be ready maximum within 10 days. Apart from this, 30 new ICUs will be added to the existing facility.

19 following which it was decided to close the college for three days with effect from April 15 to 17.

The college was shut as part of precautionary measures to prevent further spread of deadly virus on the campus.

# RISE IN INVOLVEMENT OF MINORS IN CRIMES

## AT LEAST 102 MINORS HAVE BEEN HELD OVER LAST THREE YEARS FOR COMPLICITY IN CRIMES IN THE SILK CITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, April 14:** Minor children are increasingly taking to crime in the Silk City. This came to light as names of over 102 children figured in various criminal cases over last three years, a report said.

Reports said that crimes committed by children under statutory age are described as juvenile delinquency. As per data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), juvenile criminals between ages 16 and 18 accounted for more than 60 per cent of the crimes registered against minors in India in 2013.

The city has produced various dreaded criminals in the past. Many of these criminals form their own gangs to establish their supremacy and hegemony in the town. As the number of minors stepping into the field of crime has increased alarmingly, it has become a headache for the law-enforcement agencies as well as the denizens.

According to reports, these minors do not hesitate to commit any type of crime including serious and heinous crimes. They have reportedly taken to this field to lead a lavish and luxurious lifestyle, experts said.



According to available records, over 102 minors have been arrested on charge of committing various crimes during last three years – from 2018 to 2020. As many as 22 minors were arrested in 19 cases in 2018, while it was 41 minors in 38 cases in 2019. In 2020, 39 were arrested in connection with 31 cases.

A review of some of the crimes in the city over last few years indicates that there is an increase in involvement of minors in crimes. The gruesome murder of a professor couple or the killing of dreaded anti-social Chicken Ravi took place with the involvement of minors. Minors have been found involved in many robberies, snatchings, attempts to murder and rape cases in the city. The murder of a woman at Ramnagar in Kamapali area in 2014 led to the arrest of a minor, who killed the woman after she resisted his attempt to rob. The

minor decided to loot the woman after he lost all his money in IPL betting, police said.

Similarly, police arrested a rickshaw-puller and his five minor accomplices in a case involving cash loot from Jagannath temple at Courtmeta under Baidyanathpur police limits in 2016. Three minors on a bike assaulted a truck driver and robbed him of cash at Bhabanagar Square on New Bus-stand Road the same year.

Two minors were arrested on charge of theft of ₹3 lakh from a bike showroom at Khodasingi under Baidyanathpur police limits, December 20, 2020. Similarly, two minors were arrested for the murder of a youth at Masihakhali village under Sadar police limits during New Year celebration, December 31, 2020.

Later, five minors were arrested in connection with the murder of Rabi Pradhan, January 18, at Mahurikalua Square under Sadar police limits in the city. A close analysis of the cases suggests that the major contributing factors to juvenile crimes include peer pressure, bad company, poor education, poor socioeconomic status, substance abuse, parents' neglect and an urge to earn big to lead a lavish lifestyle.

# Seaweed opens new source of livelihood for fishermen

## SEAWEED FARMING PICKING UP AT JATADHAR RIVER MOUTH



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Paradip, April 14:** Seaweed cultivation has opened a new source of livelihood for fishermen in Erasama block of Jagatsinghpur district with its cultivation achieving success at Jatadhar sea mouth near Noliassahi.

According to reports, the success in seaweed cultivation has spread cheers as about 10-15 grams of seaweeds which was tied in a bundle and put into the sea have grown to the size of 1 to 1.5 kg each within a period of 45 days at Jatadhar mouth.

The success has opened a floodgate of opportunities for pharmaceutical, cosmetic, food processing industries and various start-ups.

Seaweed is also used in preparation of certain medicines. This was stated here by Dr Reeta Jayshankar, the nodal officer of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) overseeing its cultivation.

Seaweed is harvested after 45 days. Later, it is soaked in salt water and subsequently dried under sun. The algae is then soaked in fresh water and packed for sale once its

Seaweed cultivation was first started in the coastal part of the state at eight places in Ganjam, Puri, Balasore and Jagatsinghpur districts.

Success in seaweed cultivation has spread cheers as about 10-15 grams of seaweeds which was tied in a bundle and put into the sea have grown to the size of 1 to 1.5 kg each within a period of 45 days at Jatadhar mouth.

It has opened a floodgate of opportunities for pharmaceutical, cosmetic, food processing industries and various start-ups

moisture content reduces to 35 per cent. The current market price of 1 kg of seaweed is ₹50,000.

Seaweed cultivation was first started in the coastal part of the state at eight places in Ganjam, Puri, Balasore and Jagatsinghpur districts. The cultivation taken up in Balasore is as good as Jatadhar sea mouth in Jagatsinghpur, she said. The success achieved in seaweed

cultivation in the above areas has opened opportunities for the lower income group, particularly the fishermen in the state. The cultivation of seaweeds will help them earn additional income.

Reports said the demand for seaweed is increasing worldwide as its extracts are widely used in toothpaste, ice-cream, textile printing, tooth filling, cosmetics, tissue culture, plywood, packaging and several other industries. Bio fuel can be made from it for which the government imports seaweeds from abroad.

While investment in seaweed cultivation is less, profits are high, Dr Reeta Jayshankar said. Seaweed cultivation also helps in combating global warming, she added. Notably, seaweed farming was taken up at Mandapam near Rameswar in Tamil Nadu 10 years back. Following its success, a huge quantity of the algae is harvested there. Fishermen earn ₹15,000 to ₹25,000 per month by selling seaweed.

Later, its cultivation was taken up in Odisha which has a vast coastline. Accordingly, the CMFRI and the state fisheries department have started cultivation in the coastal regions of the state.

Initially, the cultivation of seaweed was taken up on an experimental basis at Jatadhar sea mouth in Erasama and at Mahanadi sea mouth near the Paradip fishing jetty. However, the growth of the seaweeds was not that impressive in Paradip, while it was quite heartening in Jatadhar mouth.

The nodal officer said that the reason behind the failure in cultivation in Paradip is that the undercurrent is rather strong in the sea besides the fact that the movement of fishing trawlers in the area is quite high.

When contacted, marine fishery officer Manoranjan Mohapatra too said that fishermen can make handsome earnings by taking up seaweed cultivation.

## HONOURING THE TRADITION



People offer 'sradh' to their forefathers on the Talsari beach in Balasore on Maha Vishuba Sankranti, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

## 3-DAY LOCKDOWN IN BARGAON

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargaon, April 14:** The authorities in Bargaon panchayat in Sundargarh district Wednesday imposed a lockdown for three days after two persons in the area died of Covid-19. The decision was taken following an upsurge in Covid-19 cases in the district as well as in the panchayat. Covid positive people have been identified in every village under the panchayat. The two persons died of the disease during last two days. Apprehending that the disease might take an explosive turn, the panchayat authorities have imposed the lockdown for three days from April 15 to April 17.

All shops, except for those selling essential commodities, will remain closed during the period. The weekly market in the area scheduled for April 15 and 18 will also be closed. Bargaon block is on the fringes of Jharkhand and Chhatisgarh while local residents have strong cultural and commercial ties with the two neighbouring states. Several Sankirtan troupes in Bargaon often visit these two states and vice-versa, which might have led to the spread of the disease in the area.

## Student unrest in IGIT, hostels vacated

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Parjang, April 14:** The campus of Indira Gandhi Institute of Technology (IGIT) at Sarang under Parjang police limits in Dhenkanal district became turbulent Tuesday night, following which the authorities Wednesday ordered its students to vacate all hostels immediately.

According to sources, two

factions each from third year and final year B Tech students entered into altercations over a football match. The incident erupted into a severe scuffle between senior and junior students. Later, the student groups amicably resolved the issue.

However, a fresh brawl broke out between two factions late at night, the institute's director Satyabrata Mahanta expressed.

On being informed by IGIT authorities, police rushed to the institute. Keeping in mind the palpable tension among students, adequate police force has been deployed inside the campus. Police have been guarding the hostels round the clock. The situation is under control now, Parjang IIC Soubhagya Swain said. Later, the students were asked to vacate the hostels including Bhaskar, Brahma and Tejas to quell the unrest.

## Fake certificates: 25 PEIs, AIs sacked

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Junagarh, April 14:** At least 25 physical education instructors and arts instructors were caught with forged documents in Kalahandi district. Nine of the fake teachers were detected in Junagarh block. They were dismissed from their jobs, a report said.

The education department has appointed physical education instructors and art instructors in each school (from Class-I to Class-VIII). Data available from RTI queries about the appointment of teachers revealed the anomalies. District education officer Sushant Kumar Chopdar had got the allegations probed by officials. On the basis of the probe reports, the DEO has sacked 25 PEI and AIs appointed in various blocks.

## LOST

I, Mr. Managobinda Dhal currently reside at Pilgrim Road, College Square, Cuttack-753003 state that during shifting of my office building to another rented building due to demolition of my office, the original land document, (i.e Settlement Patta of Plot no.1315/1474 which has been lost/misplaced in transit. I wish to create charge viz., mortgage or otherwise, on the said properties for a loan/credit facility from STATE BANK OF INDIA, RASMEC, CUTTACK. An FIR has been filed with the Police in respect of the above subject at Malgondown Police Station, Cuttack on dt. 13/04/2021. DETAILS OF LAND DOCUMENT- Khatian Sl. No:297, Plot No. 1315/1474, Mouza:Unit 24, College Square, Area- A0.023 Decimal, Tahasil-Cuttack. If anybody misuse it, I shall not be held responsible. Sd/- MANAGOBINDA DHAL

# Farmers script success in guava farming

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chitrada, April 14:** Years ago, a patch of 50 acres of land lay fallow in Morada block of Mayurbhanj district. Not even a blade of grass would grow there.

Years later, one would be surprised to see the patch of land rich with greenery. Significantly, it provides livelihood to 40 local farmers.

A guava orchard has been raised on the land. The land produces a high yielding variety of guava and fetched good earnings for the growers. These 40 farmers have set an example in successful joint farming.

In 2015, farmers of Patapur got together at a meeting and brainstormed on making use of the land so that they can earn for the livelihood. They decided to grow high-yielding guava and sought help of the horticulture department.

The work of the orchard project was carried out under MGNREGS.



Over 5000 guava trees of VNR variety have been grown on 50 acres. Most of the saplings were brought from Chhattisgarh.

Pratap Mohant and many of his co-farmers nurtured the saplings for three years and their hard labour yielded results in the fourth year.

Tonnes of guava are being sent to various parts of the state and even outside the state.

"Every year, we produce 100 tonnes of guava from this orchard. Farmer Jayprakash Roul has taken upon himself the maintenance of the orchard. Every day, 20 local labourers are

Pratap Mohant and many of his co-farmers nurtured the saplings for three years and their hard labour yielded results in the fourth year

Tonnes of guava are being sent to various parts of the state and even outside the state

Every year, farmers produce 100 tonnes of guava from this orchard. Farmer Jayprakash Roul has taken upon himself the maintenance of the orchard

engaged at wages of ₹250 each. "I eke out my living from daily wages," said Pradipt Das, a daily wage.

In the local market, a kg of guava is sold for ₹80, but its price is more in urban markets. Beneficiary farmers observed that if the government came out with more support like marketing linkage and finance, guava production can be doubled.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, BALASORE**  
**e-procurement Notice for Road & Building Works**  
**Bid Identification No. Online tender / 01/RWD-II BLS/2021-22**  
No. O-41- 1. Name for the work: Road works. 2. Total No. of works : 1 No. 3. Estimated cost : Estimated cost Rs. 38.99 lakhs. 4. Class of contractor : 'B' and 'C'. 5. Time of completion: As per TCN.  
6. Other details:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender online for bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of opening of tender in O/o EE RW Divn-II, Balasore (Single cover)
		From	To		
1	2	3	4	5	6
Executive Engineer, R.W. Division-II, Balasore	01 of 2021-22	17.04.2021 at 5.00 P.M.	27.04.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.	26.04.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.	29.04.2021 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website: [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in).  
OIPR-250521/11/0001/2122 Sd/- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division-II, Balasore

FOCUS WORLD ECONOMY

# A MARITIME ECOSYSTEM



**It must be appreciated that even during the height of the pandemic when the world was under almost total lockdown, shipping continued to carry goods all around the world. This ensured food grain and oil reached its destination so that half the world did not go hungry, and the other half did not freeze**

Odisha Maritime Board Bill. The proposed board is expected to have 12 members from the state and central government with the Chief Secretary as the chairman along with a maritime expert. The board is expected to frame guidelines for non-nationalised inland waterways as well exercise licensing and regulatory functions relating to port infrastructure and services. Even though I have served both on ships as well as within the maritime sector of the United Nations, I cannot claim to be an expert in all fields of the Maritime Ecosystem. In fact, there is no one person who can claim to be an expert in all matters related to the maritime sector. The need of the hour is to take inputs from not only the stakeholders but all ancillary and associated sectors and then take a considered decision while finalising a maritime project. This will ensure that the infrastructure not only meets the commercial needs but also the environment and safety requirements. We can also take lessons from our history where the Cholas as well as the kingdoms of Odisha like the Sendha dynasty had a comprehensive maritime infrastructure which was sustained over generations. They had a thriving maritime trade with South and South East Asia due to this and were renowned for it.

Finally, not only as a nation but each maritime coastal state individually, we have world renowned experts in all fields related to the building of a sustainable Maritime Ecosystem. Hence, there is no need to employ expensive foreign consultants who, by and large, would propose ideas that have been used in developed countries without understanding the ground realities in India. Indian professionals would also be far more cost effective than foreign consultants. All that is required is that decision-makers take inputs from the entire range of the Maritime Ecosystem before making the final decision.

*The writer is Director (retired), Maritime Safety Division, International Maritime Organisation (United Nations).*

entire maritime sector is sustainable. This means involving all sectors as mentioned above to ensure that it is sustainable for the future. Sustainable development is the name of the game today. Maritime coastal states have recognised the importance of the maritime sector and have set up State Maritime Boards. Unfortunately, this has been restricted to building ports to facilitate the movement of export and import cargo. Building and sustaining a port is not restricted to setting up berths and cargo handling gear. We must understand the environmental and safety issues and address all aspects comprehensively. For example, when building and operating a port constant dredging is needed to ensure that the water depth is maintained for safe navigation. We can use the dredged material to enhance the river embankments for controlling floods. The nutrient rich silt can also be used to rejuvenate fallow agriculture land. The oceans can be harnessed to capture clean energy by using tides and ocean current. This is not only clean and cheap but also goes a long way towards mitigating threats posed by climate change. Apart from enhancing the economy of the region, it also has tremendous potential for job-creation. The opportunities are unlimited, we just have to recognise them and work to implement them. Recently, Odisha passed the

would be unimaginable for those ashore to live in such an isolated and confined environment as well to battle with the elements of nature. Under such circumstances normal people ashore would have created a riot. Even today, with a new wave of Covid variants and governments thinking twice before even considering enforcing a total lockdown, ships continue to carry and deliver cargo come hail, snow, or pandemic. Thus, it is essential to understand and nurture the entire Maritime Ecosystem to have a sustainable economy. The 11 major ports functioning under the restrictive ambit of the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963 (MPT) had difficulty in operating in a highly competitive environment and responding to market challenges. The business practices have changed drastically since the 1960s. Since, the major ports were falling short of providing the expected services several non-major ports and private ports stepped in and captured more than 40 per cent of the market share of the cargo handled in India. Hence, the government had to comprehensively revise the MPT to provide corporate governance of these ports. Nonetheless, it must be appreciated corporate governance does mean only monetising the existing assets i.e., the land banks available with the port trusts. We need to plan at least 50 years ahead and work towards ensuring that the

No country is entirely self-sufficient, and every country relies on maritime trade to sell what it has and buy what it needs. Shipping helps ensure that the benefits of trade and commerce are more evenly spread.

However, it is a pity that the world does not generally recognise this fact. It comes to the notice only when there is an accident like the grounding of "Ever Given" in the Suez Canal. This led to a large number of ships being blocked which according to Lloyds List was holding up an estimated \$9.6 billion each day - or \$400 million every hour. Yet somehow, economists and those responsible for the world economy fail to recognise that without shipping and its associated infrastructure the world economy would come to a grinding halt. All the algorithms of the world's capital markets would not be able to move goods to facilitate trade.

Shipping is fundamental to international trade as it provides a cost-effective, safe, and clean means to transport large volumes of cargo around the world. In layman's term it is the gear box that moves the world economy. Furthermore, shipping does not mean only ships and oceans - it has a lot of associated industries. It would be true to say that it is one of the most comprehensively integrated industries which in addition to ships includes ports, environment, bathymetry, ocean engineering, hydrodynamics, and human resources, to name a few. For the sake of clarity, I will call it the Maritime Ecosystem.

It must be appreciated that even during the height of the pandemic when the world was under almost total lockdown, shipping continued to carry goods all around the world. This ensured food grain and oil reached its destination so that half the world did not go hungry, and the other half did not freeze. These ships were manned by seafarers who were stuck on board for months together without being able to set foot ashore. In fact, due to trade dispute between Australia and China some seafarers were stuck on board their ships for more than 14 months. It

**SHIPPING IS FUNDAMENTAL TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE AS IT PROVIDES A COST-EFFECTIVE, SAFE, AND CLEAN MEANS TO TRANSPORT LARGE VOLUMES OF CARGO AROUND THE WORLD**



Ashok Mahapatra

Take Truth for your force; take Truth for your refuge.  
THE MOTHER



## Silent Killer

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that is found in all the cells in your body. Your body needs cholesterol to make hormones, vitamin D, and substances that help you digest foods. Cholesterol comes from two sources: Your liver which makes all the cholesterol you need; the cholesterol in your body that you do not need comes from animal bodies.

If you have more cholesterol in your body than you need, then you are heading for heart disease and heart attacks. A build-up of cholesterol narrows arteries, causing a restriction of blood flow to the heart. Very often a person with high cholesterol levels has no symptoms until he has his first heart attack. This is even more problematic if you are overweight - which you will be, because the food that causes an increase in cholesterol also increases your weight. Though some cholesterol components are stored in the liver and gallbladder, the main storage area is in fat cells called adipocytes. When you have too much cholesterol, these cells swell up and you gain weight. Too much cholesterol can be caused by eating too much fat or carbohydrates.

There are two types of cholesterol: HDL and LDL. High density lipoprotein (HDL) is good cholesterol which protects you from heart attacks, and strokes, by mopping up excess bad cholesterol. It takes the cholesterol that you don't need back to the liver. The liver breaks it down so it can be passed out of your body. LDL is bad cholesterol. This blocks the blood supply and causes strokes and heart attacks. Non-HDL takes cholesterol from the liver to the cells around your body. Too much bad cholesterol (non-HDL) can be harmful because it sticks to the inside walls of your arteries. This can lead to fatty material (atheroma) building up - this process is known as atherosclerosis.

Cholesterol is found in animal foods, meat, milk, butter and cheese. There are only two things that raise cholesterol in the blood: saturated and trans fats. Saturated fats are found in meats, dairy products, chocolate, baked goods like biscuits and popcorn, margarine, deep-fried, and processed foods. Basically junk food. Trans fats occur in some fried and processed foods. Also in junk food. In adults, total cholesterol levels less than 200 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) are considered healthy; 200-239 mg/dL is borderline high; 240 mg/dL and above is high. LDL cholesterol levels should be less than 100 mg/dL.

How do you know that your cholesterol levels are high? You usually don't. There are no typical signs if you have high cholesterol, which is why it's so important to get it checked. It's a hidden risk factor, which means it happens without us knowing until it's too late. Some people get soft, yellowish, growths or lesions on the skin, especially around the eyes, called xanthomas. If you are lucky you develop left-sided chest pain, pressure, or fullness; dizziness; unsteady gait; slurred speech; or pain in the lower legs. Any of these conditions may be associated with high cholesterol. How do you flush cholesterol out of your body? Stop eating meat or drinking milk. Avoid ghee, butter and paneer, and seafood like crabs, shrimps and lobsters. Don't smoke. Exercise.

Eat fewer refined grains such as maida. Foods to avoid if you have high cholesterol levels include white bread, white potatoes, and white rice, highly processed sugars. Fried foods should be avoided, as well as foods high in saturated fats. Eat fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains, every day.

A report from Harvard Health has identified foods that actively decrease cholesterol levels: Oats, barley and whole grains, beans, eggplant and okra, nuts, vegetable oil (canola, sunflower), fruits (mainly apples, grapes, strawberries, and citrus), soy and soy-based foods. Eating just one and one-half cups of cooked oatmeal a day can lower your cholesterol by 5 to 8 per cent. Oatmeal contains soluble and insoluble fibre - two types that your body needs.

In June 2020, a report, led by Imperial College London Majid Ezzati, et al. and involving dozens of universities, "Repositioning of the global epicentre of non-optimal cholesterol" was published in Nature. It said that while cholesterol levels have declined in high income countries, particularly Europe, since 1980, they have increased vastly in lower and middle income countries, with Asia, especially Southeast Asia, now being the centre.

The reason for this is the consumption of animal based foods, refined carbohydrates (maida) and palm oil. In short, the heart attack and stroke risks have been globally repositioned with the shifting of a high cholesterol diet.

A group of nearly 1,000 researchers, from around the world, analysed data from 1,127 studies comprising 102.6 million adults, to assess global trends in cholesterol levels from 1980 to 2018. This is the largest ever study of global cholesterol levels. Previously cholesterol was considered a problem in high-income Western countries. The report said that Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland (the centre of the milk/meat diet) and Iceland (meat) had shown the steepest declines in cholesterol, going from the highest to the lowest. There has been a sharp drop in LDL cholesterol in the UK, according to the British Heart Foundation. China, which had the lowest levels of cholesterol in 1980, was among the highest in 2018. India, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand have not covered themselves in glory either. In 1980, Australian women ranked 32nd highest in the world in cholesterol levels. Today they are 146th. Australian men have fallen from 31st highest to 116th.

Dr Avula Laxmaiah, National Institute of Nutrition, one of the authors of the research paper, said LDL cholesterol among Indian men ranked 128th in 1980 and remained the same in 2018. Women are 139th in the global line-up.

Other conditions that can lead to high cholesterol levels include diabetes drugs that increase LDL cholesterol and decrease HDL cholesterol, such as progestins, anabolic steroids, and corticosteroids. India is one of the highest users of steroids - not directly, but through these being fed to chicken.

The authors have suggested that each country in Asia set into place prices, and regulatory policies, that shift diets to non-saturated fats. But, at the end of the day it is not prices that will decide - meat/chicken and milk are already expensive but it doesn't stop you from eating them. You will have to take a personal decision, depending on how much you value your life or the lives of your family.

To join the animal welfare movement contact [gandhim@nic.in](mailto:gandhim@nic.in), [www.peopleforanimalsindia.org](http://www.peopleforanimalsindia.org)



Maneka Gandhi

**Very often a person with high cholesterol levels has no symptoms until he has his first heart attack**

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

## Valuing resilience after the pandemic



Carl Folke

**WE CANNOT CALCULATE THE VALUE OF THE AMAZON RAINFOREST IN THE SAME WAY WE VALUE THE COMPANY OF THE SAME NAME**

If the Covid-19 pandemic has taught the world one thing, it is the high price we pay - in lost lives, damaged economies, and wasted human potential - when we undervalue resilience. By applying this lesson, we can bolster our ability to weather future shocks.

Over the last few centuries, societies have found a simple formula for progress and prosperity: economic growth. A steady increase in output and productivity is seemingly the panacea for all troubles, including food insecurity, poverty, and disease. But we have now reached a point where the strategy of growth is becoming a trap, generating new problems on an ever-larger scale?

It appears so. In a recent report published in advance of this month's first-ever Nobel Prize Summit, "Our Planet, Our Future," my colleagues and I argue that the world's failure to value social and ecological resilience means that shocks this century will hit harder, be more disruptive, and have longer-lasting effects over centuries and even millennia. But we can build social resilience by promoting equality, trust, and collaboration, and ecological resilience by valu-

ing diversity and complexity over efficiency and simplicity.

Our economies have become so mutually dependent that the fate of one rests on the performance of others half a world away. Our cities, usually hives of industry and innovation, have become disease hotspots. Our transport systems are perfectly designed for shuttling pathogens around the planet.

Extreme levels of inequality reduce societal resilience, often in obvious ways. Poorer countries, with fewer hospitals, less research power, and weaker governance, have less capacity to manage the pandemic. In wealthy societies, poorer people are often the most vulnerable, because their risk factors are greater. They are exposed to higher air pollution, are more likely to suffer from obesity, and live in more crowded conditions than the wealthy. The pandemic has thus hit them harder and spread among them faster. But economic inequality can also erode resilience in other ways. Trust in governments tends to be lower in more unequal societies, partly because poorer citizens think politicians mainly serve the interests of elites. This can encourage the rise of populist lead-

ers, and make it difficult to pursue long-term policies affecting all citizens within and across societies.

All of this is challenging enough. But, in our report, we conclude that by far the biggest likely shocks this century stem from our toxic relationship with nature. The biosphere - the zone close to the Earth's surface where life thrives - is at least 3.5 billion years old. But in a single lifetime, largely since the 1950s, humanity has systematically reduced the resilience of its own home, resulting in climate change and biodiversity loss.

Humans are slicing, dicing, and simplifying the biosphere. We manage 75 per cent of habitable land on Earth, largely for agriculture. As we hack our way through forests, wetlands, and grasslands, the most resilient species - the ones that can adapt fastest and even thrive in a human environment - are often those like bats and rats, which readily host deadly pathogens.

The biosphere's resilience - its ability to persist, absorb shocks, and develop under ever-changing conditions - depends on variety, and on the ability of life to regenerate materials and evolve in novel ways in the face of uncertainty and the un-

known. Boosting this resilience requires us to respect planetary boundaries and support ecological diversity.

We are facing a perfect storm. Our survival on Earth will require us to rethink our approach to valuing the resilience of our global civilization, starting with acknowledging that it is embedded within and dependent on the biosphere. Simply put, we must start collaborating with the planet on which we live. We cannot calculate the value of the Amazon rainforest in the same way we value the company of the same name.

We must now transform our economies to prioritise diversity and resilience over simplicity and efficiency. This means, first and foremost, moving beyond facile and destructive growth strategies that are disconnected from the planet we call home. Instead, governments must redirect economic dynamism toward ensuring resilience for both humans and their natural environment. Ultimately, valuing resilience means valuing our future.

*The writer is Director of the Beijer Institute of Ecological Economics at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.*

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WORDSWORTH

Monkey's uncle

What it means is nothing very profound. It's just an exclamation of surprise: "Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle!" It has been assumed to be a reference to Darwin's Origin of Species of 1859, in which he argued the close evolutionary relationship between humans, apes and monkeys. You may recall the famous debate between "Soapy Sam" Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford, and Thomas Huxley, in which the bishop is said to have asked sarcastically whether "it was through Huxley's grandfather or grandmother that Huxley claimed his descent from a monkey." A direct link with Darwin's book would place the expression's genesis later than 1859 and indeed most reference books suggest it dates from the 1920s, most probably accepting the first example in the Oxford English Dictionary, which is from an Ohio newspaper of 1925. It had become a catchphrase in the US earlier than that: an advertisement in the El Paso Herald on 31 July 1917 for the comedy play Brass Monkey at the Unique Theatre is headlined "Well, I'm a monkey's uncle!" This parody of Longfellow's Song of Hiawatha appeared in James Parton's compendium The Humorous Poetry of the English Language in 1856. It's said to be from Punch: Out came sundry comic Indians Of the tribe of Kut-an-hack-um. With the growling Downy Beaver, With the valiant Monkey's Uncle. This may be just an accident of invention, but two British newspapers a decade earlier included reviews of a comic play, The Wigwam. Mr. Frank Matthews was all that a runaway "governor" could hope to be in savage life, with a plurality of wives; while Mr Oxberry was a veritable monkey's uncle in his rage and jealousy (The Morning Post, 26 Jan. 1847).

Vaccine crunch

Sir, Covid-19 has made a swift comeback with the number of cases rising increasingly across the nation, while the shortage of vaccine production and distribution has led to fear among the citizens. Some of the states are complaining about insufficient stock of vaccines and others are criticising the Central government for 'uneven' supply of vaccines. Amid the vaccine crunch, the Odisha government had to stop the vaccination programme in 11 districts. Around 77 per cent of the vaccination centers have been closed down so far. Rising coronavirus cases in the adjoining states of Odisha and the suspension of vaccination programme thereupon are adding to the fear among the people living in the bordering districts. The state government has demanded at least 25 lakh vaccine doses for the ongoing vaccination programme in the state. However, it has received only 2.7 lakh doses so far. This is very less to plan for a 10-day vaccine programme. Of course people are cautious enough to avoid infection and are wearing masks, using sanitizers, maintaining social distance and staying home until any emergency to go out but taking a job still ensures a better hope.

Santosh Kumar Satapathy, PARALAKHEMUNDI

Cricket and capitalism

Sir, Every social system has an impact on its economy, culture, politics and ethics and if the foundation of that system is scientific, there is no doubt that its impact will be positive in all areas. If we look at the history of any sport, we find that it was started to keep the physical and mental state of man fresh, and in some respects it was also recognised as a means of entertainment. Capitalism brought the message of development in the first phase, but later on it took on a reactive role according to its own law and added the word profit to everything so that the value of everything began to be determined and its impact on sports today is remarkable. Take the example of the Indian Premier League (IPL). Team owners buy cricketers by setting their prices, using them to earn money. Players are also attracted to the IPL due to the money, because not all players can get the opportunity in international cricket. Betting is also being played in this game. Rackets in big cities run this betting game and convert black money into white. Several racketeers had been caught in Odisha and other parts of the country earlier. If the IPL is not stopped immediately, it will ultimately destroy cricket.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST  
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# Is MP hiding Covid casualties?

QUESTIONS ARE BEING RAISED ON THE OFFICIAL FIGURE OF DEATHS DUE TO CORONAVIRUS INFECTIONS EVEN AS CREMATORIUMS IN BHOPAL STRUGGLE FOR SPACE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal, April 14:** The apparent spike in deaths caused due to Covid-19 has resulted in crematoriums and burial grounds in Bhopal struggling to dispose of bodies as these facilities have started facing several issues, including that of space crunch.

The number of bodies being brought to the crematoriums or burial grounds has been witnessing a surge over the last few days, say the operators of these establishments.

"In the last four days, we have cremated 200 bodies, including those that needed to be disposed of as per COVID-19 protocols. Now, we have created a new such facility on two acres of land," said Mamtesh Sharma, secretary of the management committee of Bhadbhada Vishram Ghat, one of the biggest Hindu crematoriums in the state capital.

"The situation is explosive. As many as 58 bodies, including 47 that needed to be disposed of as per COVID-19 guidelines, were cremated Tuesday, while Wednesday, more than 50 bodies were cremated so far and more are coming," he told PTI.

The Bhadbhada Vishram Ghat management committee has created an additional space on two acres of land space for cremation of bodies as per COVID-19 protocols.

"We have created an additional space for 30 pyres in the adjoining open plot... There is no other crematorium in the country to have such a dedicated space (for cremation of COVID-19 victims)," Sharma said, adding that another additional space for 20 pyres will be created in the next two-three days.

Sharma said that earlier there was space for cremation of 20-22 bodies



at this Vishram Ghat.

"But due to the spike in the number of bodies coming to the Vishram Ghat, the management committee is telling the family members of the deceased to collect the ashes the next day," he said.

Talking to PTI, Shobhraj Sukhwani, manager of Subhash Nagar Vishram Ghat, said that more than 40 bodies are being brought there everyday for cremation since the past one week.

"We are using the land of a park for the cremation as we have run out of space," he said, adding that a total of 34 bodies were cremated by Wednesday afternoon. Of these, 16 to 17 were cremated as per the COVID-19 protocols, he said.

Similar situation is prevailing in Jhada Kabristan, a Muslim graveyard, in the state capital.

"The situation is deteriorat-

**In the last four days, we have cremated 200 bodies, including those that needed to be disposed of as per COVID-19 protocols. Now, we have created a new such facility on two acres of land**

MAMTESH SHARMA

ing. An average of seven to eight bodies are coming for cremation, including those needed to be buried as per COVID-19 protocols, in addition to those with normal death," said Rahan Golden, chairman of the cemetery's management committee.

Meanwhile, questions are being raised on the official figure of COVID-19 deaths. According to the government figures, ten persons died in Bhopal due to coronavirus in-

fection between April 9 to April 13.

However, replying to a query by a TV channel on the apparent gap between the official figures and the bodies coming for funeral at the crematoriums, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said this difference is because funeral of suspected coronavirus patients is also being done as per COVID-19 protocols.

"People are dying due to other causes also," he said.

When asked about it, Minister for Medical Education Vishvas Sarang told reporters that patients from several other districts are coming to Bhopal for treatment of coronavirus, among other things. "This is getting reflected in the situation at the crematoriums," he said.

Bhopal's COVID-19 death toll till Monday night was 649, while the case count was 58,951.

# Will spare none: Didi after meet with Cooch Behar victims' kin

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, April 14:** With the end of the deadline set by the Election Commission for not entering the boundaries of Cooch Behar district, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Wednesday met the families of the victims who were killed at Sitalkuchi during the fourth phase of polling. Four people were killed in the firing by the central forces in Sitalkuchi in Bengal April 10.

After the meeting, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said, "I have met the family members of the five killed in Sitalkuchi. They have died at such a tender age. I think the incident should be investigated. Those who are guilty should be punished. Let the elections be over. The State Government will investigate the incident. The family of the deceased will get justice. Don't fall into the trap of any kind of instigation. We will not spare anybody, however, influential the person might be, they will be tried."

The Chief Minister was referring to the five persons including the four villagers of Jor Patki village who were killed in the firing by the central forces and one person was killed by some unknown miscreants while coming out after casting vote. The four persons who were killed in the firing on Saturday last are identified as Amjad Hossain (28), Chalmu Mian (23), Jobed Ali (20) and Nameed Mia (20).

The chief minister also met Jagadish Barman - the father of Ananda Baraman (18), the first time voter of Pathantuli, Golenawhati GP, Sitalkuchi, Cooch Behar who died when he was shot from a firearm by unknown miscreants.

"Four of the minority brothers died and one of my Rajbanshi brothers died. All the deaths are the



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with families of the deceased and injured in the Sitalkuchi clash during the fourth phase of State Assembly polls, at Mathabhanga in Cooch Behar district, Wednesday.

same to time. Death of anybody is unfortunate and the government is always beside them. I cannot give back their life but shall do everything possible to help the families come out of this painful situation," the Chief Minister said.

BJP president JP Nadda, however, criticized Mamata Banerjee for doing politics on religious lines in Sitalkuchi. Speaking at a rally in Kolkata Wednesday, the BJP President said, "Mamata Banerjee didn't say a single word about the Rajbanshi, the first time voter, who was killed by the TMC goons when

he was coming out after casting his vote. Is this because he is Rajbanshi? Is this because he is Dali? This is very unfortunate."

Senior TMC leader Sougata Roy was quick to respond. "The chief minister expressed her solidarity to all the people who were killed on that day. She made it clear that the government will provide assistance to all the families of the deceased. The BJP leaders are trying to politicise the whole incident. They should stop doing politics and think about the common people - the people who lost their lives in the incident."

# Urged railways to help transport oxygen to MP: CM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal, April 14:** Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Wednesday said he has urged the Railways to facilitate the transportation of medical oxygen to the state for its speedy delivery amid the COVID-19 surge.

Talking to reporters here, Chouhan also said there is no shortage of Remdesivir injections in the state-run hospitals, and the government will also provide the key anti-viral drug to private hospitals.

Chouhan said he has also directed officials to transport Remdesivir injections by using planes, if needed.

Medical-grade oxygen is used for the treatment of critical COVID-19 patients and in other cases of respiratory diseases.

"I accept that the availability of oxygen is a challenge. I have made a suggestion and requested Railway Minister Piyush Goyal to see if oxygen tankers can be loaded on goods trains. I don't know if it is possible practically or not," Chouhan told reporters here.

This will save the time taken for the transportation of oxygen tankers from places like Rourkela (Odisha) and Bhilai (Chhattisgarh), located far from MP, he said.

"We are tracking oxygen tankers. It is taking a lot of time. The oxygen tankers are being escorted by police to ensure they reach on time without any hindrance. I feel uneasy even if a tanker gets late by

an hour," he said.

Tuesday, 272 MT oxygen was available in the state. It was increased to 280 MT Wednesday, the chief minister said.

"I am talking to people concerned at every level to increase the availability of oxygen. The Centre is also helping. I have appealed to increase the supply from Bhilai. We are also making efforts to check the unnecessary use of oxygen," Chouhan said.

He also said that oxygen concentrator units (a device that filters air and produces purified medical-grade oxygen) were being installed in medical facilities for adequate supply of the oxygen to COVID-19 patients.

"Oxygen concentrators are being installed at eight places. We have ordered for 2,000 such devices," he said.

Chouhan further said the state had received 31,000 Remdesivir injections and 12,000 more will arrive by Thursday morning.

"I have also directed officials to use a helicopter or plane for the transportation of injections, if needed," he told reporters after planting a sapling at the Smart City Park here.

Earlier, Chouhan cancelled his visit to Damoh for campaigning for the Assembly bypoll scheduled there April 17, citing his engagements to ensure the availability of resources to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Low-key Ambedkar birth anniversary at his birthplace in MP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mhow (MP), April 14:** The 130th birth anniversary of BR Ambedkar remained a low-key affair for the second consecutive year at his birthplace here in Madhya Pradesh due to the rise in coronavirus positive cases in the state.

During normal days, Ambedkar's birth anniversary is celebrated as 'Ambedkar Mahakumbh' wherein thousands of his followers and political leaders visit his memorial located in the Kalipaltan area of the Mhow Cantonment. However, Wednesday, two ministers namely Usha Thakur and Tulsi Silawat, accompanied by a small group of local BJP leaders, paid tributes to Ambedkar at the memorial. Some Congress leaders also paid tribute.

"Due to a steep rise in COVID-19 cases, section 144 is in force as per the orders issued by Indore collector," Tehsildar Dharendra Parashar said. Mhow is part of Indore district, which is the worst hit in terms of the number of coronavirus positive cases and fatalities in Madhya Pradesh.

Parashar said the local administration has put restrictions on the movement as well as the gathering of people because of the pandemic.

# Gorkhaland demand takes a back seat in Bengal polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Darjeeling, April 14:** With the two factions of the GJM one led by Bimal Gurung and the other by his former deputy Binay Tamang fighting for supremacy in the Darjeeling Hills, the imbroglia over Gorkhaland has taken a back seat this election, as key stakeholders pitch for development amid the COVID-19 crisis.

Over the past three decades or more, the demand for a separate state of the Gorkhas and the implementation of the Constitution's sixth schedule which provides for the creation of autonomous councils in certain tribal areas had been the two major poll planks of Hill parties. Gurung's return from hiding after a span of three years and his fight with Tamang for control over the region, however, have changed political equations.

Add to that, the pandemic has crippled the tea and tourism sectors - the financial backbone of the Hills - and left many jobless, with voters in Darjeeling realising well that they need infrastructural development and employment opportunities more than anything else to stay afloat.



The three assembly seats in the picturesque hills - Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong are up for a four-cornered contest this time, with the BJP and the Congress-Left-ISF alliance in the fray along with the TMC's two friends from the Hills' GJM factions led by Gurung and Tamang.

The sparring entities have fielded candidates, who would be contesting as Independents from the seats. Sources in the TMC said senior leaders of the party are in a quandary over who should they support during campaigns or on the day of polling, as most of the activists seemed to have sided with Gurung. "Statehood is not an issue for us

this assembly polls. We are more concerned about the development of the Hills, jobs, administrative overhaul. We have come up with a 52-point manifesto," Tamang told PTI.

Gurung, who returned to the hills last year and crossed over to the TMC from the BJP, maintained that Gorkhaland will always be the "most pertinent" issue for his outfit, while also clarifying that the overall development of the region is dominating the poll narrative this time. "The tea, timber and tourism industries have faced a major setback due to the COVID-19 pandemic. People now want jobs, development and a better standard of living," he said.

# Record poll seizures include hilsa, sarees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, April 14:** The seizures made in West Bengal in this election season so far has surpassed the captures made in the recent polls in the state, making it obvious that money power has started making its footprints in the state.

The different agencies working under the Election Commission of India have made seizures worth more than ₹290 crore, which is far more than the seizures made in the past elections.

The data released by the Commission show that the different agencies cumulatively made seizures worth ₹290.4 crore till date from the date of announcement of the polls.

This seizures include cash recoveries of ₹47.8 crore, liquor worth ₹28.3 crore, narcotics worth ₹118.2 crore, gold and silver worth ₹11.8 crore and freebies worth ₹84.3 crore.

"Polling has not yet been con-

cluded in the state, but the huge amount of seizures made by the agencies show that large amounts are involvement in these elections, which are mainly used to influence the voters," a senior Election Commission official said.

The list of seizures also includes certain surprising items such as Hilsa fish, sarees, readymade garments, tobacco and pan masala, and mobile phones, among others.

"These items were mainly seized along the Bangladesh border, which shows that these items were brought into the country to appease the voters. Though no one has been arrested, the recovery itself is a significant development in the polling history of the state," the official said.

According to the EC officials, this is highest seizure made in any election season in the state so far. During the Lok Sabha elections in 2019, there was a cumulative seizure of ₹177.5 crore, including ₹65.9 crore in cash and liquor worth ₹111.6



There was negligible recovery in the last Assembly polls in 2016 when there was a seizure of only ₹8.2 crore during the entire elections, including cash recovery of ₹7.8 crore and liquor worth ₹40.5 lakh.

"There were no financially sen-

sitive constituencies in the state because of the low recovery in 2016, but after this election the Commission will have to think in a different manner. The recent trend shows that like Tamil Nadu and Assam, money power has started making its footprints in the state,"

the official added.

After the polls were notified on February 26, all constituencies in Bengal had formed special surveillance teams and flying squads. The police in Kolkata also played a crucial role working on the leads. The STF and the detective department also made several interventions. Many gun runners have been nabbed across the state," said a police officer.

"Since the announcement of the elections February 26, Bengal Police, Kolkata Police, state Excise Department, Income Tax Department, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Narcotics Control Bureau, flying squads, Static Surveillance Teams and other regulatory agencies have been working round the clock to detect any suspicious movement of cash, liquor, valuables, narcotics, among other contrabands, across the poll-bound state," another officer in the CEO's office said.



In the fifth phase, the silence period is 72 hours, and I could not campaign for 24 hours. So I cannot campaign for 96 hours. The BJP can campaign, and I am not allowed to campaign. I will not say anything, the people of Bengal will take a call on it. They are watching everything

3 SNOW LEOPARD CUBS BORN IN DARJEELING ZOO

A snow leopard gave birth to three cubs at Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park in West Bengal's Darjeeling district, raising the members of the big cat family in the zoo to 12



of the day quote

I would argue that in a way, the Indo-Pacific is a return to history. It reflects the more contemporary world. It is actually the overcoming of the Cold War and not reinforcing it



S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win. India is now proving that it is indeed possible to regress in time



RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

Between April 1 and 10, coronavirus spread rapidly across the nation. However, the Prime Minister is holding large rallies without wearing a mask. He is happily campaigning in West Bengal, but people who are suffering are ignored by his government



NANA PATOLE | MAHA CONGRESS CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

3 held for false molestation case

New Delhi: Three women have been arrested for allegedly trying to extort Rs 10 lakh from a 61-year-old man in west Delhi by falsely implicating him in a molestation case, police said Wednesday. Kiran (30) filed a complaint of molestation at the Rajouri Garden police station on April 7 against Dinesh Chand Mahajan, who lives in Tagore Garden Extension. Her medical examination was done the next day, according to police. During preliminary inquiry, it was found that the complainant was instigated by her sister -- Poonam (31) -- and Sonia (28) to make false allegations against Mahajan in order to extort Rs 10 lakh, an officer said.

10 held for using Bluetooth in exam

New Delhi: The Delhi Police have busted a gang allegedly involved in cheating during an entrance exam for a court job using Bluetooth devices and arrested 10 people including, two government employees, officials said Wednesday. The matter came to light after one of the examination centres informed February 28 that some candidates appearing for a job at Tiz Hazari Court were found using Bluetooth devices. Later, police caught them and seized three Bluetooth devices from accused candidates -- Rahul Jatain, Kunal Sharma and Rajesh Kumar, they said.

60 inmates under Covid treatment

New Delhi: Over 60 inmates and 11 staff members in the three prison complexes of Delhi are presently undergoing treatment for COVID-19, officials said Wednesday. "A total of 190 inmates have tested positive for COVID-19 so far," Director General (Prisons) Sandeep Goel said. According to the data shared by officials, the number of active COVID-19 cases in Delhi prisons till Wednesday stands at 78, including 11 jail staff members.

UP to procure 25K Remdesivir

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh health officials were Wednesday sent to Ahmedabad to procure 25,000 Remdesivir injections on Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's directions. Remdesivir is considered a key antiviral drug in fight against COVID-19, especially among adults with severe complications.

Nearly half a dozen states put off board exams

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT THE CBSE HAS COMPLETELY CANCELLED THE BOARD EXAMS AND IT WILL AFFECT OVER 21 LAKH STUDENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: As the CBSE cancelled its exams for class 10 and deferred those for class 12, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Maharashtra have also postponed their state board exams for these classes due to an alarming surge in coronavirus cases.

States like West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh said they were monitoring the situation and are yet to decide whether to go ahead with the board exams.

Karnataka said it will conduct the exams as scheduled. Meghalaya too said it is ready to hold the state board exams for class 12 but will take a decision on class 10 exams after a review of the situation is completed.

The developments came as the central government announced the cancellation of class 10 exams and the postponement of class 12 exams conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education, following a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This is the first time that the CBSE has completely cancelled the board exams and it will affect over



21 lakh students across the country.

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), the other prominent national board besides the CBSE, said it will soon decide on conducting class 10 and 12 board exams.

"We are reviewing the situation and will soon take a decision in this regard," CISCE Chief Executive and Secretary Gerry Arathoon said.

Its class 10 exams are scheduled to begin from May 5 while class 12 exams have already begun from April 8. The board exams last year had been cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic. Students were evaluated based on internal as-

essment.

The Himachal Pradesh government postponed the ongoing state board exams for classes 10 and 12 in the wake of the rising COVID-19 cases, state education secretary Rajeev Sharma said.

The situation will be reviewed at the government level May 1 and further directions will be issued accordingly, he said.

The Maharashtra government had Monday postponed the state board exams of Classes 10 and 12, which were scheduled to be held later this month.

The state government would study and discuss the CBSE's move

States like West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh said they were monitoring the situation and are yet to decide whether to go ahead with the board exams

of cancelling its Class 10 exam before taking any such decision for the state education board exams, minister Varsha Gaikwad said Wednesday.

The Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education announced the postponement of the examinations of classes 10 and 12. The exams of the high school, higher secondary and diploma in pre-school education (vocational course) were scheduled to begin from April 30 and May 1.

The exams are likely to be conducted from the first week of June and the board will soon issue a new amended schedule, a spokesperson of the state board said.

The Rajasthan government also decided to postpone the state education board examinations for

classes 10 and 12.

The decision was taken by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot after discussions with Education Minister Govind Singh Dotasra because of the second wave of coronavirus infection, the state government said in a statement.

Chhattisgarh government had earlier put off class 10 exams which were scheduled to begin April 15. Tamil Nadu too had in February cancelled class 10 exams.

Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong said the state board will hold class 12 examinations as per schedule with utmost precaution to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The state government has urged parents not to panic and to allow students to appear for the examinations scheduled to begin on April 16, he said.

He said the state government is waiting for an update of the review conducted by Additional Chief Secretary D P Wahlang, in charge of education, for holding class 10 examinations.

West Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee said an appropriate decision will be taken giving priority to the health of students.

Habeas corpus plea for 2 missing from farmer protest site

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 14: Human rights organisation United Sikhs Wednesday said it filed a habeas corpus petition in the Delhi High Court for two students who went missing from their home towns and were last reportedly seen at farmers' protest sites in the national capital.

The petitions were filed for Arjun Singh of Punjab's Zirakpur, and Purvesh Singh of Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad.

We can feel what the family goes through when loved one goes missing. With a painful heart and a heavy throat, we receive their calls almost every other day for updates. We hope we can be of help to such families through our writ petition, Harpreet Kaur, legal director, United Sikhs, said in a statement.

Habeas corpus is a prayer before the court to direct the state to produce somebody, who has been untraceable for long, with no clue of whereabouts, either with the family or anybody else.

BENGAL POLLS

EC deploys 853 cos of central forces

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, April 14: Taking a lesson from the fourth phase, the Election Commission of India has decided to deploy 853 companies of central forces for the fifth phase when 45 constituencies spread across six districts will go for the polls April 17. This will be the highest force concentration in this election, outnumbering the fourth phase when the Commission deployed 789 companies for 44 assembly constituencies.

Sources in the Commission said that of the 853 companies, 283 will be deployed only in North 24 Parganas district with 107 companies in Basirhat police district, 61 companies in Barrackpore police commissionerate, 46 companies in Bidhannagar police commissionerate and the rest 69 companies in Barasat police district.

In addition to this, the EC has decided to deploy 68 companies in Darjeeling, 112 companies in Jalpaiguri.

India is a trusted partner; limited cooperation with Pakistan: Russia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: Describing India as a trusted partner, Russia Wednesday said there were no divergences or misunderstandings between the two countries and that it has limited cooperation with Pakistan based on independent relations.

Deputy Chief of the Russian mission Roman Babushkin also welcomed the recent commitment by India and Pakistan to follow the 2003 ceasefire on the Line of Control and said these are very important steps for regional stability.

At a joint media briefing with Babushkin, Russian ambassador Nikolay Kudashev criticised the Indo-Pacific strategy by the western countries describing it as dangerous and an effort to revive the cold war mentality. Babushkin said India must be part of the process of shaping regional consensus on Afghanistan and that New Delhi and Moscow have similar approaches for the Afghan peace process.

Asked about reports of bad optics during Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov's recent visit to India as he travelled to Islamabad from Delhi, Babushkin said Russia has independent ties with Pakistan and that it does not target any relations against anyone.

We believe that there is absolutely no reason to see that there are divergences or any misunderstandings between us. It is not the case in Russia-India ties, he said.

Kudashev said India is a trusted

partner of Russia and ties between the two countries were equal, solid, comprehensive, coherent and forward-looking.

He also mentioned that the visit by Lavrov to India April 6 contributed a lot to the ties.

It was a very important and remarkable event, which contributed a lot to the special and privileged strategic partnership between our two friendly nations. Our ties remain equal, solid, comprehensive, coherent and forward-looking despite any global turbulence, he said. The ambassador said the visit was aimed at preparations for the India-Russia summit which is expected to take place in the second half of the year. Babushkin said Russia has independent relations with India, Pakistan and other countries and the relations are based on their own merits.

We are all members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and

develop cooperation in various fields including regional security, fight against terrorism and to deal with other threats, he said. Russia has limited cooperation with Pakistan as compared to India. However, the fight against terrorism is our common agenda. So we also help Pakistan in providing anti-terrorism equipment and holding dedicated exercise, he added.

After visiting India, Lavrov Tuesday travelled to Islamabad where he said Russia was ready to supply special military equipment to Pakistan to boost its counter-terror capabilities.

FESTIVE FERVOUR



Nihangs ride on horses on the concluding day of Baisakhi Mela in Bathinda district, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

Deshmukh grilled by CBI for 8 hours

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 14: Two senior CBI officers grilled Ex-Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh for over eight hours Wednesday. This was done in connection with the allegations of corruption leveled against him by former Mumbai Commissioner of Police Param Bir Singh, official sources said.

He was subjected to over three-dozen questions pertaining to Singh's accusations on alleged corruption in the home department which he had detailed in his 'letter-bomb' dated March 20.

The sources said that replying to most of the questions, Deshmukh reportedly contended that he was not involved in the matter and maintained that the allegations were leveled with political motives.



Deshmukh's grilling was part of the "preliminary enquiry" being conducted by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), as ordered by the Bombay High Court, which needs to be completed within 15 days.

The senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader had reached the DRDO Guest House in Kalina at around 10 am Wednesday morning.

Earlier Monday, the CBI had quizzed and recorded the state-

ments of two of Deshmukh's aides -- Kundan Shinde and Sanjeev Palande.

Besides, it has also questioned Singh, suspended Assistant Police Inspector Sachin Vaze, Assistant Commissioner of Police Sanjay Patil and one of the complainants, Jayshri Patil, and some other witnesses.

Sources said that Deshmukh was also questioned on the allegations levelled by Sachin Vaze, accusing the ex-Home Minister of demanding Rs 2 crore from him to reinstate Vaze into service.

Following his transfer as Commandant-General of Home Guard, Singh had sent a 'letter-bomb' to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray triggering a series of developments that ultimately led to the resignation of Deshmukh.

Global warming making Indian monsoon stronger, chaotic: Study

THE STUDY, PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL EARTH SYSTEM DYNAMICS, COMPARED MORE THAN 30 STATE-OF-THE-ART CLIMATE MODELS FROM ALL AROUND THE WORLD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: Climate change will make summer monsoon rainfall in India stronger and more erratic, according to a study that predicts extremely wet years in the future, with potentially grave consequences for over a billion people's well-being, economy, food systems and agriculture.

The study, published in the journal Earth System Dynamics, compared more than 30 state-of-the-art climate models from all around the world. We have found robust evidence for an exponential dependence for every degree Celsius of warm-

ing, monsoon rainfalls will likely increase by about 5 per cent, said study lead author Anja Katzenberger from the Potsdam-Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) in Germany.

Hereby we were also able to confirm previous studies but find that global warming is increasing monsoon rainfall in India even more than previously thought. It is dominating monsoon dynamics in the 21st century, Katzenberger said.

The researchers noted that more rainfall is not necessarily a good thing for the farming sector in India and its neighbouring countries.

Crops need water especially in the



initial growing period, but too much rainfall during other growing states can harm plants - including rice on which the majority of India's pop-

ulation is depending for sustenance, said study co-author Julia Pongratz from Ludwig-Maximilian University (LMU) in Germany.

This makes the Indian economy and food system highly sensitive to volatile monsoon patterns, said Pongratz. A look into the past underlines that human behaviour is behind the intensification of rainfall, according to the researchers.

Starting in the 1950s, human-made forcings have begun to overtake slow natural changes occurring over many millennia, they said. At first, high sun-light blocking aerosol loadings led to subdued warming and thus a decline in rainfall.

However, from 1980 onwards, greenhouse gas-induced warming has become the deciding driver for stronger and more erratic monsoon

seasons. We see more and more that climate change is about unpredictable weather extremes and their serious consequences, said group leader and co-author Anders Levermann from PIK and Columbia University in the US.

Because what is really on the line is the socio-economic well-being of the Indian subcontinent," Levermann said.

He explained that a more chaotic monsoon season poses a threat to the agriculture and economy in the region and should be a wakeup call for policy makers to drastically cut greenhouse gas emissions worldwide.



# national

of the **quote**

Some ask why the US has done to India what it hasn't done to Canada/UK/Australia etc by exercising FoNoPs through their EEZs. Since those are treaty allies, they have consultation agreements already in place with the US. India is not & is unlikely to ever be, an ally



**SHASHI THAROOR** | SENIOR CONG LEADER

I think there is a need for modern, light-touch regulation that allows government and consumers to seek some sort of accountability from these platforms of their conduct



**RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR** | BJP MP

We are following developments at the LAC. We are encouraged by India and China to consider disengagement efforts in order to promote constructive and forward looking dialogue which is a very important precondition for regional stability



**ROMAN BABUSHKIN** | DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE RUSSIAN MISSION

## Rahul attacks BJP, TMC in 1st campaign

**THOUGH FOUR ROUNDS OF VOTING ARE OVER IN BENGAL, THIS WAS THE FIRST OCCASION THAT A MEMBER OF THE GANDHI FAMILY CAMPAIGNED IN THE POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT STATE**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Goalpokhor/Siliguri, April 14:** In his maiden campaign in poll-bound West Bengal, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Wednesday termed BJP's claim to build "Sonar Bangla" (golden Bengal) as a "mirage" and said the saffron party has nothing to offer except for hatred, violence and dividing people on the basis of language, religion, caste and creed.



Assam, they are doing the same thing; in Tamil Nadu, they are trying to do the same thing with their alliance partner AIADMK.

"The BJP has nothing to offer except for hatred, violence and divisive politics," he said.

Gandhi also attacked ruling Trinamool Congress, saying his party would never align with the BJP and the RSS, unlike the TMC, which in the past had been an alliance partner of the saffron party-led NDA.

The former Congress president, who attended two rallies in North Bengal in Goalpokor in Uttar Dinajpur and Siliguri, blamed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for failing to control COVID-19 surge in Bengal. "BJP wants to destroy Bengal's culture, heritage and divide it. In

both the BJP and the TMC but he was more furious at the saffron party while attack on Mamata Banerjee's party was comparatively low-key.

Though four rounds of voting are over in Bengal, this was the first occasion that a member of the Gandhi family campaigned in the politically significant state.

Rahul Gandhi and Congress

**The prime minister is negligent, careless, cruel and callous in tackling COVID-19. The Modi government has jeopardised the lives of Indians by its negligent conduct**

**RANDEEP SURJEWALA** | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

### CONGRESS TV PLATFORM TO BE LAUNCHED APR 24

Marking the birth anniversary of BR Ambedkar, the Congress Wednesday released the vision document for its digital media platform 'Inc TV' that will formally be launched April 24 to help spread its message directly to people



## India's National Education Policy is futuristic: PM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, April 14:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday said the new National Education Policy is futuristic and as per world standards, and aimed at fulfilling Dr S Radhakrishnan's vision of education that empowers a student to participate in national development.

student to participate in national development.

Education management should be undertaken keeping the whole world as a unit, but also focusing on the Indian character of education, he said. Modi said the role of skilled youth is continuously increasing as India walks the path of 'aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance).

India is being looked upon as the future centre of Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, big data, 3D printing, virtual reality and robotics, mobile technology, geo-informatics, smart healthcare and defence sector, he said.

Every student has certain capabilities. These capabilities pose three questions before the student and the teacher, he said. First, what they can do. Second, what is their potential if they are properly taught, and third, what they want to do, Modi said.

To meet the requirement of various skills, Indian institutes of skills are being set up in three big cities of the country. In Mumbai, the first batch of the Indian Institute of Skills has already started, Modi said. He also asked universities to be multi-disciplinary. We want all universities to be multi-disciplinary and provide flexibility to students, like an easy entry and exit from courses and creation of an academic bank for easy completion of courses, he said.

The answer to the first question is the inner strength of students, he said. But, if institutional strength is added to that inner strength, their development will get expanded and they will be able to do what they want to do, the prime minister said. He said the NEP is aimed at fulfilling the vision of Dr S Radhakrishnan (India's second President and academician) of education that frees and empowers a

For this, every university will have to collaborate, he added.

Babasaheb Ambedkar has given a strong foundation for us to take forward all our democratic values after independence, Modi said, on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar.

He said Dr Ambedkar considered knowledge, self-respect and politeness as his three revered deities.

## JeM TERRORIST, 3 OGWs HELD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, April 14:** Security forces have arrested a militant and three over ground workers (OGWs) of Jaish-e-Mohammad in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said Wednesday.

"Police in Kulgam arrested an active terrorist of JeM and also three terrorist associates. Incriminating materials, including arms and ammunition, have been recovered," a police spokesman said. He said a checkpoint was established at Bogund village in Kulgam following information about the movement of militants in the area.

"During checking of vehicles, three persons aboard a Maruti Alto vehicle were signalled to stop, who on seeing the search party tried to escape from the spot but were apprehended tactfully by the alert joint party," the spokesman said. Another terror associate was separately apprehended from the checkpoint, he added.



Autorickshaw driver Manikandan sells face masks as an alternative way to earn money, after the government laid down fresh set of restrictions due to spike in COVID-19 cases, in Vellore, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

## APT ALTERNATIVE

## Hosp staff held for selling Remdesivir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pune, April 14:** An employee of a private hospital was arrested for allegedly trying to sell a vial of remdesivir injection at an exorbitant price in Maharashtra's Pune city, police said Wednesday.

Based on a tip-off, a decoy customer was sent to Bhavani Peth area Tuesday and the accused Shivaji Sawant was caught while attempting to sell a vial of remdesivir for ₹7,000, a senior crime branch official said.

Amid shortage of the anti-viral drug, cases of black marketing have been reported, in which the

Pimpri Chinchwad and Pune police have already arrested some people in separate cases. The accused works as an assistant in a private hospital and was in possession of two vials, the official said.

The family of a COVID-19 patient at the hospital had procured extra vials of the injection and had given it away to the hospital, and Sawant had somehow managed to get hold of two vials, which he tried to sell at an exorbitant price, he said. The accused has been arrested under relevant sections of the Essential Commodity Act and Drug and Cosmetic Act, the official said.

## 'Ambedkar wanted Sanskrit as official language'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Nagpur, April 14:** Chief Justice of India Sharad Bobde Wednesday said B R Ambedkar had proposed Sanskrit as the official national language of India as he understood the political and social issues well and knew what the people wanted.

The CJ also said the ancient Indian text Nyayshastra is not a bit inferior to Aristotle and the Persian system of logic, and there is no reason why we should forsake, overlook, and not benefit from the geniuses of our ancestors.

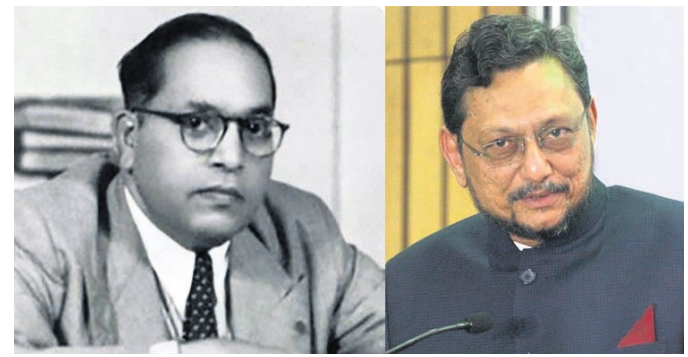
CJI Bobde was speaking at the inauguration of the academic building of the Maharashtra National Law University (MNLU) here in Maharashtra. Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Union

minister and Nagpur MP Nitin Gadkari and others participated in this event virtually.

Remembering BR Ambedkar on his 130th birth anniversary, the CJ said, Today morning, I was in a fix about which language should I deliver this speech. Today is the birth anniversary of Dr Ambedkar which reminds me that the conflict between the language to be used while speaking and the language to be used during work is very old.

He said the Supreme Court gets many representations on what should be the language of subordinate courts, but I feel this subject is not being looked into.

But Dr Ambedkar had anticipated this aspect and he had mooted a proposal saying that the official language of the Union of India



should be Sanskrit, the CJ said.

The CJ said he cannot recall whether that proposal, which had signatures of some Maulvis, pandits, priests and Ambedkar, was tabled (in the constituent Assembly).

It was Ambedkar's opinion that since Tamil is not acceptable in

north India it might be opposed there and likewise Hindi will be opposed in south India. But, there is less possibility of opposition to Sanskrit in north India or south India and hence he had mooted that proposal, but it did not succeed, CJI Bobde said.

## Physical inactivity linked to severe nCoV infection, death: Study

THE STUDY, PUBLISHED IN THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF SPORTS MEDICINE, SHOWED THAT PHYSICAL INACTIVITY WAS SURPASSED ONLY BY ADVANCED AGE AND A HISTORY OF ORGAN TRANSPLANT AS A RISK FACTOR FOR SEVERE DISEASE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 14:** A sedentary lifestyle is associated with more severe COVID-19 infection and an increased risk of dying from the viral disease, according to a large-scale study.

Researchers, including those from the University of California San Diego, found that COVID-19 patients in the US who were consistently inactive during the two years preceding the pandemic were more likely to be admitted to hospital. Inactive patients were also more likely to require intensive care, and die compared to those who had consistently met physical activity guidelines, they said.

The study, published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, showed that physical inactivity was surpassed only by advanced age and a

history of organ transplant as a risk factor for severe disease.

"It is notable that being consistently inactive was a stronger risk factor for severe COVID-19 outcomes than any of the underlying medical conditions and risk factors identified by (The Centers for Disease Control) except for age and a history of organ transplant," the researchers said.

"In fact, physical inactivity was the strongest risk factor across all outcomes, compared with the commonly cited modifiable risk factors, including smoking, obesity, diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), cardiovascular disease and cancer," they said.

Several risk factors for severe COVID-19 infection have been identified, including advanced age, male sex, and certain underlying medical conditions, such as diabetes, obesity,



and cardiovascular disease, the researchers said.

However, physical inactivity is not one of them, even though it is a

well-known contributory risk factor for several long term conditions, including those associated with severe COVID-19, they said.

To explore its potential impact on the severity of the infection, including hospital admission rates, need for intensive care, and death, the team compared these outcomes in 48,440 adults with confirmed COVID-19 infection between January and October 2020. The patients' average age was 47, with nearly two thirds of them being women (62 per cent). Their average weight (BMI) was 31, which is classified as obese.

Around half had no underlying conditions, including diabetes, COPD, cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, and cancer, nearly 1 in 5 (18 per cent) had only one, and almost a third (32 per cent) had two or more conditions.

The researchers took account of potentially influential factors, such as race, age, and underlying medical conditions.

They found that patients with

COVID-19 who were consistently physically inactive were more than twice as likely to be admitted to hospital as those who clocked up over 150 minutes of physical activity every week.

Such patients were also 73 per cent more likely to require intensive care, and 2.5 times more likely to die of the infection, according to the study.

Patients who were consistently inactive were also 20 per cent more likely to be admitted to hospital, 10 per cent more likely to require intensive care, and 32 per cent more likely to die of their infection than those doing some physical activity regularly.

The researchers, including those from Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in the US, noted that this is an observational study, and as such, can't establish cause.

# international

## of the day quote

The year 2021 is a very decisive year for our planet, with three COPs, particularly the COP26. There is a very big window of opportunity that we must seize together



Nearly 100 days ago, when you (Biden) took the oath of office, you pledged in a spirit of great hope that 'Help Is On The Way'. Now, because of your historic and transformative leadership, Help Is Here!



(First Lady) Jill (Biden) and I send our warmest wishes to the South Asian and Southeast Asian communities who are celebrating Vaisakhi, Navratri, Songkran and the incoming New Year this week. Happy Bengali, Cambodian, Lao, Myanmar, Nepali, Sinhalese, Tamil, Thai, and Vishu New Year!



## SHORT TAKES

### LHC grants bail to Shehbaz Sharif

**Lahore:** The Lahore High Court (LHC) Wednesday granted bail to PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif in an assets beyond means case, Geo News reported. The PML-N president had approached the High Court against his arrest by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in the corruption reference also involving his family members.

### Putin gets 2nd Covid vax shot

**Moscow:** Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday he got his second COVID-19 vaccine shot, three weeks after getting the first dose. The Russian leader announced getting the jab, which was kept out of the public eye, at a session of the Russian Geographical Society, in which he took part via video link. "Right now, before entering this hall, I have also gotten the second jab. I hope everything will be fine. I don't even hope as much as I'm sure of it," Putin said.

### 20 kids gutted

**Niamey:** A fire fuelled by high winds swept through an elementary school in Niger's capital, killing 20 children, hospital officials said. The pupils — between the ages of 7 and 13 — were attending class at the time the blaze erupted around 4:30 PM Tuesday. The cause of the fire was under investigation and it was not immediately known where it started. Some of the school's classrooms were inside buildings, though other classes were held outdoors in straw huts.

### Ex-US officials visit Taiwan

**Taipei:** A former US senator and two ex-State Department officials arrived in Taiwan Wednesday for talks with the island's leaders at a time of tense relations with China. Chris Dodd, a Democratic senator from Connecticut from 1981 to 2011, was accompanied by two former deputy secretaries of state, James Steinberg from the Democratic Obama administration and Richard Armitage, who served under Republican President George W Bush. The delegation will meet President Tsai Ing-wen Thursday and exchange views with other government departments during their three-day visit, the Foreign Ministry said.

## Pak bans Islamic party after violent protests



**Islamabad/Lahore, April 14:** The Pakistan government has decided to impose a ban on the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan under the anti-terrorism law. Pakistan Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed announced Wednesday that the file will be taken to the Federal Cabinet for approval, adding that the decision was taken on the request of the Punjab government. "They (the protesters) were well-prepared. TLP leaders used to come to all talks with the government but after issuing instructions to their workers regarding road closures," he said, reported *Samaa TV*.

Supporters of the religious party took to the streets Monday afternoon after TLP chief Saad Hussain Rizvi was arrested by the Lahore police. The report said that main roads in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and other cities were blocked following this, and people were stuck in traffic for hours. Sheikh Rasheed said all highways, motorways, and roads in Punjab have now been cleared. "The protesters created a lot of problems for the government and the public."

Before the TLP, Pakistan had two Barelvi political groups: the Sunni Tehreek and Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan. None of them was mainstream, explains Sabookh Syed, an Islamabad-based analyst who monitors such groups. "The JUP and Sunni Tehreek never fielded candidates all over the country but the TLP did in the last election." There is only one man who deserves credit for making TLP mainstream and that was Allama Rizvi, said Syed, as per *Samaa TV*. Of course, every religious group tried to erect Mumtaz Qadri, the executed assassin of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer, as their symbol but they all failed where Rizvi succeeded. "He had a charismatic personality and an aggressive unique style of delivering sermons that made him the centre of attraction." Syed said in his opinion it would be an uphill task for his son to mimic such style and aggression and the party could lose support in the next elections.

## Ponzi schemer Bernie Madoff dies in prison

AGENCIES

**New York, April 14:** Bernie Madoff, the financier who pleaded guilty to orchestrating a massive Ponzi scheme, died in a federal prison early Wednesday, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press. He was 82.

Madoff died at the Federal Medical Centre in Butner, North Carolina, apparently from natural causes, the person said. The person was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity. Last year, Madoff's lawyers filed court papers to try to get him released from prison in the coronavirus pandemic, saying he had suffered from end-stage renal disease and other chronic medical conditions.

The request was denied. Madoff admitted swindling thousands of clients out of billions of dollars in investments over decades. A court-appointed trustee has recovered more than \$13 billion of an estimated \$17.5 billion that investors put into Madoff's business.

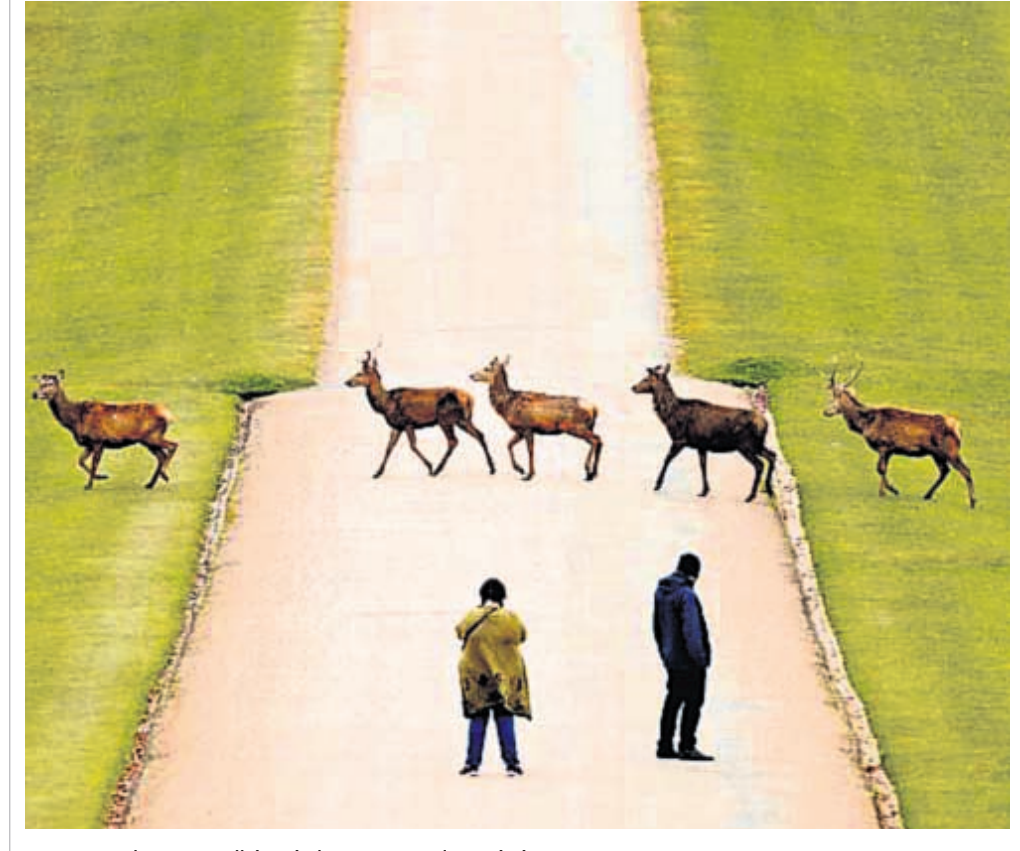
## 'Time to end America's longest war'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Washington, April 14:** President Joe Biden says the September 11 attacks "cannot explain" why US forces should remain in Afghanistan 20 years later and that "it is time for American troops to come home" from the country's longest war.

Biden, in excerpts of a speech to the nation he plans later Wednesday, says the US cannot continue to pour resources into an intractable war and expect different results. The White House released the excerpts before the afternoon address when he plans to detail his timeline for a US troop withdrawal.

## TOWARDS DESTINATION



Deer cross the Long Walk in Windsor, near London, Britain



BIDEN ON AFGHAN

"We cannot continue the cycle of extending or expanding our military presence in Afghanistan hoping to create the ideal conditions for our withdrawal, expecting a different result," Biden says. "I am now the fourth American president to preside over an American troop presence in Afghanistan. Two Republicans. Two Democrats."

I will not pass this responsibility to a fifth."

Biden says he consulted with allies, military leaders, lawmakers and Vice President Kamala Harris to help make his decision to withdraw all US troops by Sept. 11, two decades after the deadliest attack on American soil.

He is emphasizing that his administration will continue to support peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban and assist international efforts to train the Afghan military. "It is time to end America's longest war," Biden says. "It is time for American troops to come home."

## Iran Prez calls 60% enrichment an answer to 'evilness'

AGENCIES

**Dubai, April 14:** Iran's president Wednesday called Tehran's decision to enrich uranium up to 60 per cent after saboteurs attacked a nuclear site "an answer to your evilness," linking the incident to ongoing talks in Vienna over its tattered nuclear deal with world powers.

Israel, which hasn't comment on the attack, is suspected of carrying out this weekend's assault at the Natanz nuclear facility, part of an escalating shadow war between the two countries. The escalation in enrichment could see further retaliation as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed never to allow Tehran to obtain a nuclear weapon. His country has twice preemptively bombed Mideast nations to stop their atomic programs.

Speaking to his Cabinet, an impassioned President Hassan Rouhani said damaged first-generation IR-1 centrifuges at Natanz would be re-



placed by advanced IR-6 centrifuges that enrich uranium much faster. "You wanted to make our hands empty during the talks but our hands are full," Rouhani said. He added: "60 per cent enrichment is an answer to your evilness. ... We cut off both of your hands, one with IR-6 centrifuges and another one with 60 per cent." Iran announced Tuesday it would enrich uranium to its highest level ever in response to the weekend attack at Natanz. That also includes adding another 1,000 "more-advanced" centrifuges there as well.

Officials initially said the enrichment would begin Wednesday. However, an early Wednesday morning tweet from Iran's envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Kazem Gharibabadi, suggested it might come later. He wrote the enrichment would be handled by only two cascades of IR-4 and IR-6 centrifuges at Natanz. A cascade is a group of centrifuges working together to enrich uranium more quickly. "Modification of the process just started and we expect to accumulate the product next week," Gharibabadi wrote.

Iran insists its nuclear program is peaceful, though the West and the IAEA say Tehran had an organized military nuclear program up until the end of 2003. However, the nuclear deal prevented it from having enough of a uranium stockpile to be able to pursue a nuclear weapon.

## 'Millions of women face restrictions on their body'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**United Nations, United States, April 14:** Nearly half the women in 57 countries around the world face restrictions on what they can do with their bodies, such as have sex, use contraception or seek health care, the UN said in a report Wednesday.

The study entitled "My Body is My Own" lists attacks on women in 57 countries, ranging from rape to forced sterilisation to virginity tests and genital mutilation. The study looks at restrictions on women deciding what to do with their bodies without fear of violence or a decision from someone else on their physical integrity.

"This lack of bodily autonomy has massive implications beyond the profound harms to individual women and girls: potentially depressing economic productivity, undercutting skills,

and resulting in extra costs to health care and judicial systems," the UN population fund said in a statement.

The study said only 56 per cent of the countries examined in the report have laws or policies providing for thorough sex education.

"The fact that nearly half of women still cannot make their own decisions about whether or not to have sex, use contraception or seek health care should outrage us all," said UNFPA director Natalia Kanem.

The report lists 20 countries or territories in which it says there are laws that allow a rapist to marry the victim so as to escape criminal charges. It also listed 43 countries that do not have laws governing rape in married couples and says more than 30 countries impose restrictions on women's movements outside their home.

## FLOYD'S DEATH

### Judge refuses request to acquit Chauvin

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Minneapolis, April 14:** The judge at Derek Chauvin's murder trial Wednesday turned down a defense request to acquit the former officer in George Floyd's death.

Judge Peter Cahill pressed on with the case after Chauvin attorney Eric Nelson argued that prosecutors had failed to prove that Chauvin killed Floyd. Requests for an acquittal are routinely made midway through a trial and are usually denied.

Nelson said the prosecution's expert witnesses gave conflicting opinions about what caused Floyd's death after the 46-year-old Black man was pinned under the white officer's knee for what authorities say was 9 1/2 minutes last May.

The request came on Day Two of the defense case. The prosecution rested its own case Tuesday after 11 days of testimony and gripping video evidence.

The defense for a former police officer charged in George Floyd's death challenged the heart of the case against the officer, calling a use-of-force expert who testified that Derek Chauvin was justified in pinning Floyd and said it might have gone easier if the Black man had been "resting comfortably" on the pavement.

Taking the stand Tuesday at Chauvin's murder trial, Barry Brodd, a former Santa Rosa, California, officer, stoutly defended Chauvin's actions, even as a prosecutor pounded away at the witness, banging the lectern at one point during cross-examination and growing incredulous over Brodd's use of the "resting comfortably" phrase.

"It's easy to sit and judge ... An officer's conduct," Brodd testified. "It's more of a challenge to, again, put yourself in the officer's shoes to try to make an evaluation through what they're feeling, what they're sensing, the fear they have, and then make a determination."

## Why are some Covid survivors at risk of blood clot?

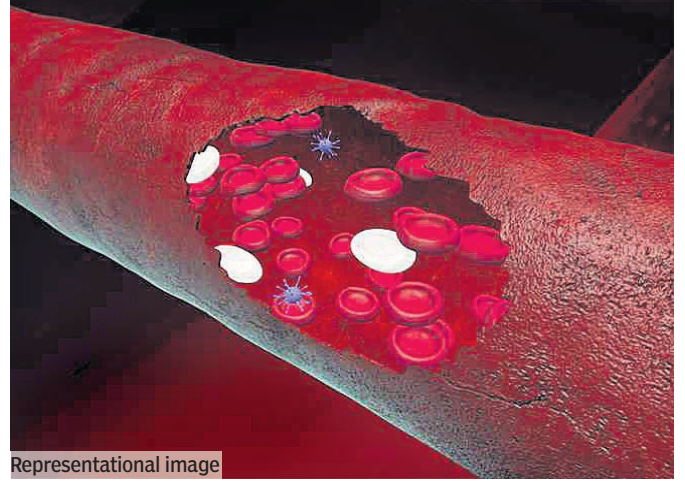
### NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY IN SINGAPORE FINDS RECOVERED PATIENTS HAVE TWICE THE NORMAL NUMBER OF CIRCULATING ENDOTHELIAL CELLS

AGENCIES

**Singapore, April 14:** People who have recovered from Covid-19, especially those with pre-existing cardiovascular conditions, may be at risk of developing blood clots due to a lingering and overactive immune response, according to a study.

The study, led by researchers from the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, found that recovered Covid-19 patients had twice the normal number of circulating endothelial cells (CECs) that had been shed from damaged blood vessel walls.

The elevated levels of CECs indicate that blood vessel injury is still apparent after recovering from viral infection. The recovered Covid-19 patients also continued to produce



Representational image

immune cells, known as T cells, that attack and destroy viruses were also present in the blood of recovered Covid-19 patients.

The presence of both cytokines and higher levels of immune cells suggest that the immune systems of recovered Covid-19 patients remained activated even once the virus was gone, revealed the findings published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal eLife.

The researchers hypothesise that these persistently activated immune responses may attack the blood vessels of recovered Covid-19 patients, causing even more damage and increasing the risk of blood clot formation further.

"While Covid-19 is mainly a respiratory infection, the virus may also attack the linings of blood vessels, causing inflammation and

damage. Leakage from these damaged vessels triggers the formation of blood clots that may result in the sort of complications seen in the patients during hospitalisation," said Florence Chioh, research assistant at NTU's Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine.

The study "makes a strong case for the close monitoring of recovered Covid-19 patients, especially those with pre-existing cardiovascular conditions like hypertension and diabetes who have weakened blood vessels," said Christine Cheung, Assistant Professor at NTU's Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine.

The team collected and analysed blood samples from 30 Covid-19 patients a month after they had recovered from the infection and were discharged from hospital.



# BOWLERS LIFT RCB

## Ahmed, Patel, Siraj shine with the ball after Maxwell's rescue act as Virat & co beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 6 runs



Virat Kohli congratulates Shahbaz Ahmed after the latter dismissed an SRH batsman in Chennai



CRUCIAL KNOCK: Glenn Maxwell hits one towards cover region during his innings against SRH, Wednesday

2x4, 2x6), Jonny Bairstow (12) and Abdul Samad (0) in one over, as SRH ended at 143/9 in the stipulated 20 overs.

Chasing a modest total, SRH lost opener Wriddhiman Saha (1) cheaply in the beginning of the third over. However, skipper David Warner (54, 37b, 7x4, 1x6) and Pandey looked to make short work of the chase, galloping towards the target with the Sunrisers needing the target with the Sunrisers needing 73 off the last 10 overs.

The duo looked in ominous touch until the 14th over when the Australian was dismissed off a Kyle Jamieson off-cutter. RCB gained confidence after Warner's dismissal, their bowlers limiting the boundaries.

With the pressure mounting, Bairstow, Pandey and Samad tried to target Shahbaz but mistimed their shots to return to the pavilion

in the 17th over. Vijay Shankar (3) and Jason Holder (4) too struggled. Rashid Khan injected some hope in the SRH camp smashing 18 off nine balls before he was run out.

Earlier, SRH bowlers, led by West Indian all-rounder Holder (3/30) and star spinner Rashid (2/18), put up superlative show and picked up wickets at regular intervals.

For RCB, Maxwell was the top scorer with skipper Virat Kohli (33), Shahbaz Ahmed (14) and Kyle Jamieson (12) providing valuable contributions.

Put in to bat, RCB were off to a decent start with Kohli and opener Devdutt Padikkal (11) hitting a few boundaries. However, Sunrisers didn't have to wait long for their first breakthrough as Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/30) spelled the end of Padikkal in the third over.

Shahbaz was the next to depart

after playing a quick cameo, leaving RCB at 47/2. At the halfway mark, Maxwell raised the tempo, and so did Kohli. The two stitched a 44-run partnership before Holder got rid of the RCB skipper as wickets continued to fall at regular intervals.

With AB de Villiers (1) in the middle, Warner introduced Rashid and the move immediately paid dividends as he got rid of the South African. The Afghan spinner also dismissed Washington Sundar (8). However, Maxwell was there to take the score close to 150.

**BRIEF SCORES**

**Royal Challengers Bangalore** 149/8 (Glenn Maxwell 59, Virat Kohli 33; Jason Holder 3/30, Rashid Khan 2/18) **beat Sunrisers Hyderabad** 143/9 (David Warner 54, Manish Pandey 38; Shahbaz Ahmed 3/7, Mohammed Siraj 2/25, Harshal Patel 2/25) by 6 runs.

# Beleaguered RR face DC



**RAJASTHAN ROYALS:** Sanju Samson (C & wk), Jos Buttler (wk), Ben Stokes, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Manan Vohra, Anuj Rawat, Riyan Parag, David Miller, Rahul Tewatia, Mahipal Lomror, Shreyas Gopal, Mayank Markande, Andrew Tye, Jaydev Unadkat, Kartik Tyagi, Shivam Dube, Chris Morris, Mustafizur Rahman, Chetan Sakariya, KC Cariappa, Liam Livingstone, Kuldeep Yadav & Akash Singh.

going for a maximum with RR needing five runs off the last delivery.

The loss completely shattered Samson, who single-handedly kept RR in the contest, playing some delightful strokes during his blistering knock, which included 12 boundaries and seven sixes.

As if the loss was not enough, RR were dealt a severe blow on Tuesday when Stokes was ruled out of the remainder of the tournament with a broken finger. He sustained that injury during the agonising defeat.

In his absence, the pressure would be on the likes of Jos Buttler, Shivam Dube and Riyan Parag to deliver the goods and provide ample support to their young skipper, who has been sensational in the first match.

The likes of Manan Vohra (12), Buttler (25) Dube (23), Parag (25) all got starts but failed to lend the much-needed support to Samson. The major worry for RR team management would be the performance of its bowling unit.

RR bowling unit looked rusty and completely out of sorts in their opener. Barring young Chetan Sakariya (3/31), who had a fantastic debut, all other RR bowlers went for runs and looked completely clueless against opposition batsmen.

Mustafizur Rahman, Chris Morris, Stokes, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia – all went for big runs and need to pull up their socks quickly.

Last edition's runner-up side DC, on the other hand, had a perfect start to their campaign as they defeated three-time champions CSK with consummate ease.

Opting to field, DC had allowed CSK to pile up a competitive 188 for 7 but Shikhar Dhawan and Prithvi Shaw made a short walk of the target with a 138-run opening partnership, that laid the foundation for the win.

Both Dhawan (85 off 54) and Shaw (72 off 38) played their strokes from the word go and looked in complete control during their knocks. Pant (15 not out) and Marcus Stoinis (14) did the rest as DC comfortably reached home with eight balls to spare.

On the bowling front, Chris Woakes (2/18) and Avesh Khan (2/23) had a good outing in the first game and would look to carry on their form but the likes of Ravichandran Ashwin, Tom Curran, Amit Mishra and Stoinis had a forgettable outing and would be desperate to make amends on Thursday.

The contest will also witness test of wits of two new captains in Pant and Samson.



**DELHI CAPITALS:** Rishabh Pant (C & wk), Shikhar Dhawan, Prithvi Shaw, Ajinkya Rahane, Shimron Hetmyer, Marcus Stoinis, Chris Woakes, R Ashwin, 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.

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**TODA'S MATCH**

RR vs DC

TIME 7.30 PM

Telecast: Star Sports channels

# PSG, Chelsea lose; but advance

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: FRENCH GIANTS OVERCOME BAYERN CHALLENGE TO REACH SEMIS, WHILE ENGLISH CLUB EDGE PAST PORTO TO SEAL LAST FOUR BERTH



A PSG defender stretches his leg to steal the ball from Bayern Munich's Thomas Muller during their match, Tuesday

Paris, April 14: After Neymar missed several chances to finish off defending champion Bayern Munich, Paris Saint-Germain was left clinging to a 0-1 home defeat that nevertheless sealed the French club's second straight Champions League semifinal. PSG now face either Manchester City or Borussia Dortmund in the semifinals.

Bayern had to score twice Tuesday after losing 2-3 in Germany in the first leg of their quarterfinal and survived several scares from livewire Neymar in the first half before largely taking control in the second.

But without the prolific Robert Lewandowski, the six-time champions lacked a cutting edge and could not add to Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting's first-half goal against his former club.

In Seville, the cross from the right was curling away from goal at shoulder height when Mehdi Taremi took off, connecting with a spectacular scissor kick that sent the ball into the top corner from 12 metres out.

A beautiful goal — arguably the best in the Champions League this season — to settle an ugly match. It wasn't enough for Porto.

Chelsea qualified for the semifinals for the first time since 2014 despite a 0-1 loss to the Portuguese

champions Tuesday, the English team going through 2-1 on aggregate to meet either Real Madrid or Liverpool for a place in the final.

Aside from Taremi's stunning, acrobatic effort in the fourth minute of second-half stoppage time, Chelsea successfully stifled Porto in what proved to be something of an arm-wrestle and was happy to rely on the away goals scored by Mason Mount and Ben Chilwell in the first leg, which was also played in Seville because of coronavirus restrictions.

After losing 1-0 to Bayern in last year's final, PSG stands one step away from the second final of its 51-year history and remains on course to win it for the first time.

Neymar had three shots saved by goalkeeper Manuel Neuer and hit the woodwork twice in an eventful first half that tilted Bayern's way when Choupo-Moting headed home in the 40 minute.

Bayern's wingers were a constant menace and PSG's defenders were relieved to see standout goalkeeper Keylor Navas stretch his right hand to keep out Leroy Sane's dangerous cross deep into injury time at Parc des Princes.

That was Bayern's last chance on a night when the usually so prolific German side paid the price for its wastefulness without Lewandowski. Injury-hit Bayern were also miss-

ing midfielder Leon Goretzka, as well as winger Serge Gnabry because of coronavirus. In fact, Flick couldn't even fill his substitute's bench.

Still, PSG was not at full strength, either. Defender Marquinhos had an adductor problem, while midfielder schemer Marco Verratti stayed on the bench after recovering from COVID-19.

Early into the game, Kylian Mbappe shot wide from the right and Neuer saved Neymar's close-range shot following a scramble.

Bayern's main threat came from Kingsley Coman's probing runs down the left flank and the silky Sane cutting inside from the right flank. After an even 30 minutes, a frantic 15-minute spell saw a flurry of chances.

The sucker punch came when Coman charged down the left and the ball broke to David Alaba, whose shot was saved by Navas. The ball looped up near the line and Choupo-Moting rose above Presnel Kimpembe to nod in from close range.

With seconds left, PSG's bench watched in agony as Sane got into space again. But this was a night where Bayern's danger didn't translate into goals. The damage was ultimately done two weeks ago when Bayern lost despite having 12 shots on target, and PSG showed Flick's side how to be clinical.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Kohli loses top spot to Babar in ODIs

**DUBAI:** India captain Virat Kohli's long reign at the top of the ICC rankings for batsmen was on Wednesday brought to an end by his Pakistani counterpart Babar Azam, who became only the fourth from his country to attain the position. The 26-year-old right-hander gained 13 rating points to reach 865 points. He now leads the Indian captain by eight points, the ICC said in a statement. He ended Kohli's 1,258 day-supremacy, which adds up to over three years.

### 21 at women's nat'l boxing camp test +ve

**NEW DELHI:** Indian women's boxing's High Performance Director Raffaele Bergamasco and head coach Mohammed Ali Qamar are among 21 campers who have tested positive for COVID-19 at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium here but none of the infected pugilists are bound for Olympics. The Sports Authority of India issued a statement to confirm the development at the national camp but did not give away names of those affected. All those who have tested positive are asymptomatic and have been moved to quarantine zone as per SAI protocol.

### Bengaluru FC enter AFC Cup play-offs

**BAMBOLIM:** A second half goal rush saw Bengaluru FC mark the start of new coach Marco Pezzaioli's reign at the club with a convincing 5-0 win over Nepalese side Tribhuvan Army FC in their AFC Cup Preliminary stage two clash here, Wednesday. Goals from Rahul Bheke (two goals), Cleiton Silva (two goals) and Sunil Chhetri put a seal on the tie and handed the Blues passage into the play-off stages. The Blues will face one of Abahani Dhaka Limited (Bangladesh) or Club Eagles (Maldives), in their playoff clash.

# It was an excellent fightback, says Rohit

Chennai, April 13: A pleased Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma lauded his team for an "excellent fightback" against Kolkata Knight Riders, saying that one doesn't get to see these kind of tantalisingly close games.

Mumbai Indians came back strongly in the last 10 overs of the match to defend a meagre total of 152 against KKR which managed only 20 runs in the last five overs.

"It was an excellent fightback by each one of them. You don't see a game like this often. We will take lots of confidence from this game as we move forward," Rohit said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

The MI skipper called the win a complete team effort on a difficult track. "KKR batted brilliantly in the Powerplay. Rahul (Chahar) came and got us crucial wickets in the

middle. Krunal (Pandya) bowling those overs at the end was vital as well.

"It was a complete team effort and credit to all the bowlers. As batters, you need to carry on. The trend in Chennai is you can't hit from ball one. You have to plan before you go into bat. We were 15-20 runs short," he said.

Losing captain Eoin Morgan was unhappy that his team didn't play "bold cricket" in the final 10 overs. "Yes, disappointing (to lose). We played some really good cricket for most parts of the game, we looked comfortable in the chase, but they are a strong team, came back well and said that it didn't work out for us," he said.

"We made a few mistakes and will need to sort that out. A perfect game needs to be bold, it came to cost us in the last 10 overs of the game," said Morgan.

# Tokyo Games marked by footnotes, asterisks

100 DAYS TO GO

TOKYO 2020

Olympics open July 23. The official cost is USD 15.4 billion. Olympic spending is tough to track, but several government audits suggest it might be twice that much, and all but USD 6.7 billion is public money.

What does Tokyo get out of the 17-day sports circus? Fans from abroad are banned, tourism is out, and there'll be no room for neighborhood partying. Athletes are being told to arrive late, leave early and maneuver around a moving maze of rules.

There are also reputational costs for Japan and the International Olympic Committee: a bribery scandal, botched planning, and repeated misogyny in the Tokyo Olympic leadership.

The IOC is betting Tokyo will be a distraction — "the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel" — as the closing ceremony comes just six months before the opening of the boycott-threatened Beijing Winter Olympics. Various polls suggest up to 80% of Japanese want the Olympics cancelled or postponed. And many scientists are opposed.

Japan's vaccine rollout has been almost nonexistent, few will get shots before the Olympics open, and Tokyo has raised its "alert level" with another wave predicted about the time of the opening ceremony. About 9,500 deaths in Japan have been attributed to COVID-19, good by global measures but poor by standards in Asia.

The heavily sponsored torch relay with 10,000 runners crisscrossing Japan also presents hazards. Legs scheduled for Osaka this week were pulled from the streets because of surging COVID-19 cases and relocated into a city park — with no fans allowed. Other legs across Japan are also sure to be disrupted.

The IOC and Japanese politicians decided a year ago to postpone but not cancel the Olympics, driven by inertia and the clout of Japanese ad giant Dentsu Inc., which has lined up a record of USD 3.5 billion in local sponsorship — probably three times more than any previous Olympics.

The Olympics may also determine the fate of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, who replaced Shinzo Abe several months ago. It was Abe who famously told IOC voters in 2013 that the Fukushima nuclear disaster of March 11, 2011, was "under control."

Despite being billed as the "Recovery Olympics," the northeastern area of Japan is still hurting a decade later. Many blame the Olympics for the slow recovery and siphoning off resources.

IOC President Thomas Bach has repeatedly called Tokyo the "best prepared Olympics in history" and he's restated it during the pandemic. Handsome venues went up quickly including the USD 1.4 billion National Stadium by Kengo Kuma and the Games were on track until the pandemic hit. But the "safe pair of hands" have often been shaky.