



No! Nothing in our records that show any politician dying of shame at any point of time!

SHORT TAKES

Narrow shave for passengers

Balasore: Bhubaneswar-Howrah Jan Shatabdi Express caught fire Thursday near Markona railway station in Balasore district. Luckily all passengers escaped unhurt. The fire broke out in coach D-6 leaving the passengers panicstricken. However, prompt intervention by the GRP and railway staff prevented the fire from spreading. The train then made a 30-minute halt at Soro station before resuming its journey towards Howarh

Ghosh will not stage dharna

Kolkata: The Election Commission has banned West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh from campaigning for 24 hours. The BJP leader said that unlike TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee he will not stage a 'dharna' against the EC's. Instead he will use the time to rest. Banerjee sat on a dharna in the city Tuesday to protest the EC's 24-hour ban on her. "I will abide by the EC's order and not stage any dharna," Ghosh said Thursday while taking a dig at Mamata.

NO INTER-STATE BUS SERVICES APRIL 19 ONWARDS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 15: Amid rising COVID-19 cases in Odisha, the state government Thursday announced imposition of night curfews in urban areas Saturday onwards. Chief Secretary Suresh Mohapatra in a media briefing said that night curfews will be imposed in 20 new districts. Earlier the government had imposed night curfews in 10 border districts of Odisha. The senior bureaucrat also said that curfew timings in the borders districts will also be changed.

"We have decided to change the timing of night curfews in the urban areas of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Nabarangpur and Koraput. The new timings will be from 6.00pm to 5.00am,' informed Mohapatra. He added that weekend shutdown would be implemented in these districts from Saturday. "We are hoping that these restrictions will prevent the spread of COVID-19,"

Mohapatra said. The official also said that for other districts in Odisha the daily curfew timings would be between 9.00pm to 5.00am. "It will be implemented strictly in cities like Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, Mohapatra informed.

The government however, said that



Chief Secretary Suresh Mohapatra addresses the media in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

essential services providers like power, food delivery, medicine shops, doctors, mediapersns will not come under the new restrictions.

"No special passes will be needed for people in these sectors. Goodscarrying vehicles will not be stopped during night curfews. However, everyone will have to carry their identity cards for verification," informed Mohapatra.

"We have decided that for social functions like marriages 50 persons will be allowed, while for funerals it will be limited to 20. Religious, social, political meetings, processions and gatherings will not be allowed. All political meetings stand suspended till further

orders," the chief secretary said. Vendors and shopkeepers have been asked to maintain social distancing

norms and follow COVID-19 protocols. "Vendor and shopkeepers will have to wear masks or they will be penalised. The second wave is affecting the younger generation. So proper distancing will have to be maintained in shops and

COVID OBSERVERS BHUBANESWAR: The state government Thursday appointed 21 senior IAS officers

21 IAS OFFICERS

as COVID observers of various districts. They are Anu Garg and N Thirumala Naik (Bhubaneswar), Madhusudan Padhi (Balasore and Bhadrak), Satyabrata Sahu and Benudhar Behera (Bolangir, Bargarh and Nuapada), Nikunja Bihari Dhal (Jharsuguda and Sundargarh), Surendra Kumar and Srikant Prusty (Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar), G Mathivathanan (Ganjam and Gajapati), Hemant Sharma and Suresh Dalai (Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapara), Bishnupada Sethi, Gopandhu Satpathy (Angul, Deogarh and Dhenkanal), Chitra Arumugam (Sambalpur and Sonepur) Saswat Mishra and Bishnu Prasad Mishra (Kalahandi, Kandhamal and Boudh), VV Yadav and Rashid Khan (Koraput, Malkangiri, Rayagada and Nabarangpur), Temjenwapang Ao (Gajapati), Anil Samal (Cuttack city and rural, Nayagarh, Puri and Khurda rural) and Susanta Mohapatra (Cuttack district).

other places where youngsters flock to," informed Mohapatra.

Inter-state bus services will stop from April 19 and only intra-state buses will ply, Mohapatra said, adding that no passengers will be allowed to stand.

Hyder nabbed from Telangana

Start Strong. Grow Stronger.

1800 266 266 1 (tollfree)

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 15: Dreaded gangster Sk Hyder who had hoodwinked the police and escaped April 10 while undergoing treatment at the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, was nabbed Thursday evening from Sangareddy district of Telangana.

Commissioner of Police, Saumendra Priyadarshi gave this information at a press conference at the Police Seva Bhawan here. He revealed that special teams of Cuttack police had been conducting a manhunt for Hyder since his disappearance. They finally succeeded in zeroing in on the gangster and nabbed him while he



was en route to a place on a two-wheeler. Two teams of Cuttack police had been camping in Telangana for the past few days.

Priyadarshi informed that Hyder will soon be brought back to Cuttack and will be produced in court. He said that once Hyder is taken on remand he will be interrogated to find out about those who helped him escape. DGP Abhay praised the entire police team for nabbing Hyder.

State repeats Govt puts on hold all board exams Quick approval for foreign-made vax

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 15: India's drug regulator will take a decision on applications seeking approval for restricted emergency use of foreign produced COVID-19 vaccines within three working days from the CDSCO to take 3 days to process applications

> vaccine to be assessed for safety concerns

First 100 beneficiaries of the



its demand

CDSCO. The application can be



PROMOTION FOR CLASS IX, XI STUDENTS WITHOUT TESTS POST NEWS NETWORK

_	IARKE	T WAT	7	
	SENSEX	48803.68		259.62
CURRENCY BOURSES	NIFTY	14581.50		76.70
ENCY	DOLLAR	75.47		₹0.01
CURR	EURO	89.97		₹0.41
ION	GOLD	₹47,210		₹602
BULLION	SILVER	₹68,600	1	₹962

WEATI	IER		
	BHUB	СТК	
d MAX	39.7℃	37.6°	Ċ
[₽] MIN	24.2°C	24.2°	C Forecast
Humidity	52%	56%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	Partly cloudy sky

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik made the announcement after reviewing the coronavirus situation in Odisha, where active cases have surpassed the 14,000-mark.

also taken.

"The Plus II examinations scheduled to be conducted by Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE), Odisha from May 18 have been postponed. A decision on holding the examinations will be taken after improvement in the pandemic situation," Patnaik said

in a statement. The CM said the CHSE would review the situation in the first week of June and take a decision on conducting the examination by giving sufficient time to the students. Similarly, the matriculation examination scheduled to be conducted by Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha from May 3 has been postponed. Decision of holding the tests will be taken after improvement in the pandemic con-

ditions, the chief minister said. Class IX and XI students of academic year 2020-21 will be promoted to the subsequent standard without appearing for any test, informed Patnaik

The CM also issued instruc-

National Eligibility-Cum-Entrance Test postponed

Sangathan.

NEW DELHI: In view of a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases, the National Eligibility-Cum-Entrance test (NEET), which was scheduled to be conducted April 18, has been postponed, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said Thursday. "In light of the surge in #COVID19 cases, GoI has decided to postpone #NEETPG2021 exam which was earlier scheduled to be held April 18. Next date to be decided later. Decision has been taken keeping wellbeing of our young medical students in mind," Vardhan said in a tweet. It should be stated here that India registered more than 2 lakh cases Thursday, the highest spike reported in the country since the outbreak of the pandemic.

date of submission, the government said Thursday. The move comes at a time when India is battling a surge in COVID-19 cases with over two lakh cases reported in a single day Thursday. The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), which is headed by the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI), will process applications quickly and give the necessary approval to speed up vaccination in India.

The CDSCO has issued detailed guidelines specifying regulatory pathway for approval of foreign approved COVID-19 vaccines after the central government Tuesday decided to fast-track emergency approvals for all coronavirus jabs that have been given a similar nod by the WHO or regulators in the United States, Europe, Britain or Japan.

Applicants for grant of approval for restricted use in emergency situation may be submitted to the

ARREST AND 'HUMILIATION' OF FORMER ISRO SCIENTIST NARAYANANAN

Police officials' role under SC scanner

made by the foreign manufacturer through its Indian subsidiary or through its authorised agent in India, the Health Ministry said.

"The CDSCO will process such applications for restricted use in emergency situation and the DCGI will consider and take a decision within three working days from date of submission of complete application by the applicant," the ministry informed.

DCGI will issue permission with the condition that the vaccine shall be used as per guidelines prescribed under the National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. The first 100 beneficiaries of such vaccines shall be assessed for seven days for safety outcomes before it is rolled out for further vaccination programme.

Sources meanwhile informed Thursday that the Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine is likely to be imported to India by next month.

Petrol, diesel prices slashed after 15 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 15: Fuel prices in India finally fell Thursday after 15 days with oil marketing companies deciding to pass the benefit of softer global oil prices earlier this month to the consumers. Accordingly, pump prices of petrol and diesel fell by 16 paisa and 14 paisa per litre respectively.

Before the long drawn reduction pause, petrol and diesel fell by 22 paisa and 23 paisa per litre respectively last on March 30.

Petrol prices in the Odisha capital came down to ₹91.11, a reduction of 16 paise on the cost for which it was available Wednesday. Similarly the price of diesel fell to ₹87.96, a reduction of 16 paise also.

With crude remaining below \$65 a barrel, for most part of the last

fortnight along with softer product prices, the oil companies decided to break their pause and passed on the benefit to the consumers. The OMCs benchmark retail fuel prices to a 15-day rolling average of global refined products' prices and dollar exchange rate. However, the global crude has again gained and crossed \$66 a barrel mark. If this holds for a few days, fuel prices

may have to be revised upwards. Premium petrol, however, continues to remain over ₹100 a litre in Mumbai and several other cities across India. The OMCs went on price cut for the first time this year on two consecutive days - March 24 and March 25 after keeping oil prices steady for 24 days. It again reduced the price March 30.

Thereafter, fuel prices remained unchanged for the past 15 days.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 15: The Supreme Court ordered Thursday that the report of a high-level committee on the role of erring police officials in 1994 espionage case relating to Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) scientist Nambi Naravanan be given to the CBI. The apex court directed the agency to conduct further investigation on the issue.

A bench headed by Justice AM Khanwilkar said the report of the three-member panel, headed by former top court judge Justice (retd) DK Jain, be kept in a sealed cover and it should not be published.

The bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Krishna Murari, said the committee was not to adjudicate the matter but it had to go through circum-

stantial evidence and form a prima facie view on the acts of omission and commission of erring officials.

tions to stop physical classes for

students of Classes X and XII

from Monday in all government.

government-aided and private

schools affiliated to the BSE and

Odisha Adarsha Vidyalay

The apex court was hearing the Centre's plea seeking consideration of the report filed by the committee regarding the role of erring police officials in espionage case relating to Narayanan, who had been acquitted and was eventually awarded ₹50 lakh compensation by the top court.

Terming the police action against the ex-scientist of ISRO as a 'psycho-pathological treatment', the apex court had in September 2018 said that his 'liberty and dignity', basic to his human rights, were jeopardised as he was taken into custody and, eventually, despite all the glory of the past, was compelled to face "cynical abhorrence'.



The espionage case, which had hit the headlines in 1994, pertained to allegations of transfer of certain confidential documents on India's space programme to foreign countries by two scientists and four others, including two Maldivian women. Narayanan was arrested when the K Karunakaran-led Congress was

heading the government in Kerala. The 79-year-old former scientist, was given a clean chit by the CBI. He earlier said that the Kerala police had 'fabricated' the case. He alleged that the technology he was accused to have stolen and sold in the 1994 case did not even exist at that time.

Bhubaneswar, April 15: The Odisha government has once again urged the Centre to provide at least 10 days' stock of Covishield to continue the vaccination programme in the state.

In a letter to his central counterpart Harsh Vardhan, state Health Minister Naba Kishore Das Thurday said, "Odisha is facing a crisis due to extremely low and intermittent supply of Covid-19 vaccines to the state. Urgently supply at least 10 days stock of Covishield (25 lakh doses) in a single lot as an emergency measure to enable us to plan sessions in advance and undertake the vaccination programme effectively."

Till April 14, the state has received 50.79 lakh doses of vaccine (45.42 lakh doses of Covishield & 5.36 lakh doses of Covaxin). There is no stock of vaccine at state, regional and district vaccination stores. Moreover, only 1.74 lakh doses of Covishield and 2.49 lakh doses of Covaxin are in pipeline across the state. The balance stock will last for just one more day, Das said in the letter.

"We are prepared to undertake 3,00,000 vaccinations every day. However, of late, Odisha is being allocated only about 2-3 lakh vaccine doses at a time. In our state, it takes about three days to transfer it from the state vaccine store to cold chain points through the regional and district stores, for the faroff districts," Das mentioned. The minister further said vaccination sessions cannot be conducted with proper planning due to intermittent supply of the jabs. So far, over 48.10 lakh people have been vaccinated in Odisha.

Earlier Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had blamed Health deaprtment bureaucrats for creating a panic regarding the shortage of vaccines. However, the department stuck to its guns by reiterating once more that there is a shortage for which vac-cination is not happening in a full-fledged manner.



CAREY 'LUCKY' TO BE PART OF PROMISING YOUNG WOMAN

Actress Carey Mulligan, who plays the protagonist Cassie Thomas in Promising Young Woman, says she is fortunate to have landed the Oscar-nominated role. "I felt very lucky to work on this as an actor. This is the kind of story I wish had come out when I was 18," said Mulligan.

LOPEZ, RODRIGUEZ CALL IT QUITS

Singer Jennifer Lopez and baseball star Alex Rodriguez have officially ended their relationship. "We have realized we are better as friends and look forward to remaining so. We will continue to work together and support each other on our shared businesses and projects," they jointly said in a statement.



FORTUNE FORECAST



Today, you will crave total freedom in whatever you are doing, says Ganesha. And sheer entertainment is on the cards for teenyboppers, like mallhopping 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 Ganesha. Be careful as your rigid views may make you seem stubborn. You may not be willing to come half way dur ing a conflict and will make a habit of articulating your viewpoint.

GEMINI

The day promises sensitivity and compassion for you, predicts Ganesha. You may plan a trip with your family mem bers. 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



way you have been doing them so far. advises Ganesha

LEO



ly. So keep that in mind, says Ganesha, 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 lving 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 surround ings to your liking, you shall be like a fish out of the water.



Fatima constantly doubts herself

New Delhi: Fatima Sana Shaikh became popular even before the audience knew her name. Way back in 1997, she endeared herself to viewers playing Kamal Hassan and Tabu's daughter in Chachi 420. Years later, she scored her first blockbuster with the 2016 Aamir Khan-starrer Dangal.

She has lately been seen in films such as Ludo and Suraj Pe Mangal Bhari, and is now gearing up for her next film, the OTT anthology Ajeeb Daastaans. The actress says she constantly doubts herself, adding that she wants to better herself.

"Every day you go through your own journey of asking questions to vourself. There are your own challenges and weaknesses. You have to overpower them and overcome. You would cross those and then you have more challenges and insecurities. there is a new mindset,' said Fatima

Ajeeb Daastaans brings together four stories that analyse the complexity of human emotions including jealousy, entitlement, prejudices and toxicity, and their after-effects.

That is a constant journey. Every day,

Finding soulmates on video calls to become norm soon PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED THE WAY PEOPLE SEARCH FOR A LIFE PARTNER, SAYS ROHAN MATHUR, BUSINESS HEAD OF A POPULAR MATRIMONY PLATFORM

T irtual ways to find a life partner is now a reality, or better yet, the new normal, suggests a new survey.

With the second wave of Covid-19 hitting India, a popular matrimony platform, rolled out a survey to understand how this impacts the search for a life partner.

Results show that half of the respondents feel that virtual meetings will become the norm very soon; completely replacing physical meetings during one's search for a life partner.

Rohan Mathur, the business head of the company said, "Pandemic

has changed the way people search

for a life partner. We have witnessed

the increasing affinity among our

PEANUTS

THERE'S ONE THING I STILL

DON'T UNDERSTANI

users towards virtual ways of connecting with prospective matches. While we saw a spike in usage of voice and video-calling on our platform as soon as Covid hit, the trend has continued even after relaxations in government restrictions

As many as 38 per cent of the respondents are comfortable taking Sonam for preservation 'Edilsy Vargas of timeless classics perfect as lead perfect as lead in 99 songs'

Mumbai: Actress Sonam Kapoor Ahuja uploaded a video Thursday where she expressed her support to the Film Heritage Foundation, and the work the organisation has been doing to preserve timeless classics.

In the Instagram caption, she wrote: "Being a second generation actor in a

family that celebrates cinema. I've grown up watching my peers and relatives give their all to each film they've been in. would

want the

future generation to not just be able to see their passion, but also witness what it is like to pour their heart out in films. My decision to associate with Film Heritage Foundation is a testament to how strongly I feel about preserving our heritage for the future to see, appreciate and love.

Sonam will soon be seen in the film *Blind*. For the role, she has been learning the body language of the visually impaired.

Mumbai: Latina actress Edilsy Vargas will be seen in AR Rahman's 99 Songs. He says close to 600 auditions took place for the role of Sophie, before Edilsy bagged it.

She is the first Latina to play the lead in a multilingual Indian film "Out of the 600 odd auditions.

Edilsy looked just like we had imagined Sophie to be in 99 Songs. She displayed the talent needed to bring all the shades of 99 Songs to life," Rahman says.

She will be seen alongside actor Ehan Bhat who plays the role of Jay, a musician. Sophie represents the world of art while Jay will be showcasing the world of music. Their bond is put to test in the film.

99 Songs will be released in Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu 16 April 2021. Presented by Jio Studios, the film is produced by AR Rahman's production company YM Movies and co-produced by Ideal Entertainment

and a drop in cases.

a decision based on virtual meetings alone! While digital has its own ease, it has not completely banished the importance of in-person meetings. Forty four per cent respondents are happy to connect

over video calls to know each other

but meeting in-person is still re-

It is interesting to see the new-

WHO DID

HE BET

WITH?

WHO BET

AGAINST US

quired for the final decision.

found appreciation for small weddings with limited guest lists. Even after the vaccine rollout, 55 per cent



of respondents have expressed their preference for smaller weddings. The second wave of Covid-19 could

be one of the reasons for the same. Twenty seven per cent respondents said they would readily have a regular wedding now, albeit with safety precautions. That said, safety and sanitisation have become the top priority in Indian weddings since the pandemic hit. Over 50 per cent respondents chose a Covid-safe wedding over the perfect outfits, pictures and food. Sixty nine per cent respondents said they are now comfortable attending a pandemic wedding with the requisite precautions. Agencies





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 Ganesha. But keep calm. and hold that tongue, advises Ganesha. Your priority should be to secure your family's peace.

SAGITTARIUS

Expect a call to latenight revelry and a chance to binge. But you don't seem to be in the mood to let your hair loose and party, says Ganesha. However tempting it may be, your serious side will take over and you shall deny the offer. No wonder they like that sensible head on your shoulders.

CAPRICORN

You will start the day with verve and vigour, and will appear a com-pletely 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.

7 A productive day, as you will receive unrestrained support from your bosses and colleagues. Your cre ativity 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 Ganesha.

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 to in times of failure as well. With their support. getting back to the top of the game will take no time, says Ganesha.



RERUN BET A

NICKEL THAT OUR

TEAM WOULD

WIN.

CALVIN AND HOBBES







CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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.

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

SOLUTIO	NS	5											
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downtown



EVICTION DRIVE

Civic authorities remove illegal shops from Unit-IV area of Bhubaneswar, Thursday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
orld	13,92,32,899	11,83,86,394	29,90,512
dia	1,40,74,564	1,24,29,564	1,73,123
lisha	3,58,342	3,42,570	1,935

Govt offices to function at 50% staff

OFFICES OF THE STATE GOVT'S EMERGENCY SERVICES WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH FULL STRENGTH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 15: In view of the sudden upsurge of Covid cases, the state government Thursday asked all of its offices to function with 50 per cent strength of employees with effect from April 19.

In an order, the General Administration and Public Grievance department said, "All departments of the government shall function with 50 per cent strength of employees (except officers of the rank of deputy secretary and above who shall attend office daily) with effect from 19th April, 2021 onwards.'

The departments were asked to make appropriate arrangement to ensure that the office work does not suffer.

The departments and heads of offices located in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack have been given the liberty to decide which employee will attend office. Accordingly, the head of offices have been asked to prepare roster of duty quickly.

However, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) and Odisha State Disaster Management



Bhubaneswar and Cuttack Authority (OSDMA) offices, police, have been given the liberty to fire services, health services, mudecide which employee will nicipal services etc will continue to attend office function in full strength.

The departments have further

been asked to take all precaution-

arv measures to prevent the spread

of Covid infection among the em-

ployees. In case of detection of any

case, the concerned office will fol-

low the protocol issued by the gov-

The officers and staffers who

have been provided with VPN can

work from home, when not as-

ernment.

The departments have been asked to take all precautionary measures to prevent the spread of Covid infection among the employees

he officers and staffers who have been provided with VPN can work from home, when not assigned roster duty

COLLECTORS CAN CALL ANY GOVT STAFF FOR COVID DUTY

BHUBANESWAR: Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra Thursday interacted with the Collectors, Superintendents of Police (SPs), Chief District Medical Officers (CDMOs) and other top officials and briefed them about the latest government decisions on night curfews and weekend shutdowns.

The official asked the Collectors to rope in any government employee irrespective of his/her department for Covid-19 related duty. 'The Chief Secretary made it

clear that the district administration should now singularly focus on containment of the spread of the infection. Collector can engage any employee from any department in Covid duty as per the Disaster Management Act. All government employees will be under complete

signed roster duty. Such officials must be available to attend any office work of urgent nature, at short

control of Collectors of the respective districts," a statement from

the office of Chief Secretary said. The Chief Secretary has also asked the Collectors to ensure constitution of rapid response teams which can monitor self isolations.

ensure testing and contract tracing. The Collectors have also been asked to monitor the health institutions and ensure availability of oxygen and other essential facilities at Covid Care Centres.

The district administrations have been asked to enforce the Covid norms, monitor violation of Covid safety protocols and act accordingly. Mahapatra also asked the district Collectors to involve the Panchayati Raj Institutions and village communities in containment of the virus in their areas.

notice and be available on telephone at all times, the government said in the order.

State reports 2,989 fresh nCoV cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 15: Odisha's

Covid-19 caseload jumped to 3,58,342

Thursday after 2,989 people tested

positive, the biggest single-day

spike this year, while two more fa-

talities pushed the death toll to

1,935, a Health department official

(438), Kalahandi (260), Cuttack (208), Nuapada (151), Sambalpur (148), Bargarh (126), Puri (112) and Bolangir (110). The deaths were reported from

Kalahandi and Keonjhar districts. A total of 53 other Covid-19 patients have died due to comor**bidities**

The state has

including 34,571

Wednesday and

stands at 3.77%

The state now has 14,621 active

the positivity rate

tested over

94.96 lakh

samples,



said. Of the new infections detected in all the 30 districts, 1,733 were reported from quarantine centres and the remaining are localcontact cases.

Sundargarh district logged 631

new cases, followed by Khurda

POLITICKLE by MANJUL

thus far recovered from the disease. It has tested over 94.96 lakh samples, including 34,571 Wednesday and the positivity rate stands at 3.77 per cent.

cases, while 3,58,342 patients have

STUDENTS' STIR FOR ONLINE EXAMS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar; April 15: The students of BJB Autonomous College, College of Basic Science & Humanities and Centre for Post Graduate Studies, OUAT Thursday staged protests at their respective educational institutions demanding conduct of online exams in the wake of galloping Covid-19 cases in the state.

The students of BJB Autonomous College demonstrated in front of main entrance of the institution and also blocked the traffic as part of their protest.

The students, who displayed placards and raised slogans, urged the authorities not to expose them to the highly infectious virus

Ajit Behera, an agitating BJB student, said that recently multiple cases were reported from the college which puts the students at a higher risk. Despite this, the college authorities are not taking any step and decided to conduct the semes-



BJB College students hold a demonstration seeking online exams, Thursday

ter exams from April 19. will conduct semester exams on-He said that many students hailline," he added.

After protesting for a few hours, ing from bordering areas of Odisha the students held a meeting with the with Chhattisgarh will not be able Principal who assured them of takto attend the exams due to curfew imposed in those areas. "So, holding a decision on exams in a few days ing exams online will be the only opafter which they called off their tion in this situation. Biju Patnaik protest. Institute of Technology, Rourkela Similarly, the students of College

of Basic Science and Humanities and Centre for Post Graduate Studies, OUAT also protested on the OUAT premises demanding on-

Nitesh Kamal, one of the agitating students, alleged that despite requests to disinfect campus no step has been taken by the BMC or the university authorities. Recently, five cases of Covid were reported from OUAT. "We will continue to protest until our demands are met,' Kamal said.

Notably, five cases were reported from OAUT recently.

Similarly, the Rajdhani College students also staged a protest demanding online examinations.

In a related development, the stu-Cuttack staged a sit-in in front of the wake of the surge in Covid-19 cases.



Include Krushnaprasad under Bharatmala plan: Pradhan BHUBANESWAR: Union Minister Dharmendra

SAIL hospital turns Covid care unit PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Minister of Steel, SAIL's super specialty hospital at Rou Odisha, is approved to be used as Covid Care Hospital (CCH),' the company said.

ine exam

dents of Ravenshaw University in Vice-Chancellor's office seeking examinations through online mode. The students urged the VC to refrain from holding offline exams in the

VIRUS SCARE



OP PHOTOS

Demonstration at Rajdhani College

Pradhan has urged Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari to include Krushnaprasad block of Puri district under Bharatmala project. Pradhan has written to Gadkari and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik after receiving a petition from a Class V student, Master Rishap Pradhan, to reconsider inclusion of east coast of Chilika lake via Krushnaprasad block to be part of Bharatmala project. Pradhan also requested the government to consider construction of a bridge from Satapada to Jahnikuda of Krushnaprasad block to ensure that isolated areas are linked to the mainstream and access to basic facilities. He requested Gadkari and the CM to look into the matter.

The star of the Bank

New Delhi, April 15: Stateowned steel maker SAIL Thursday said its super specialty hospital at Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has been approved as a Covid Care hospital.

The step has been taken in the wake of rising cases in the region. Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) said in a statement.

"Inspired by the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and under the guidance of Dharmendra Pradhan,

DECIONAL OFFICE, DAVACADA

The local district authority had also sent a request for utilising the ICU facilities of the hospital for treatment of Covid-19 patients. The 60 bedded ICU facility of SAIL-RSP will be used for Covid-19 treatment, it said. This hospital will further augment the treatment facilities for Covid patients in the state.

Odisha among top 6 in pangolin smuggling

THE WILDLIFE CRIME WATCHDOG CLAIMED THAT THE MAXIMUM CASES OF PANGOLIN CRIMES WERE REPORTED FROM THE NORTH EASTERN STATE OF ASSAM WHICH SAW 21 SUCH CRIMES BETWEEN 2015 AND 2020

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 15: Rampant smuggling of pangolins seems to be a cause of concern as Odisha figures among top six states in such cases, a reply from Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) says.

The response from the WCCB, a wing of Union Environment and Forest department, came to the fore against queries posed by this reporter through Right to Information (RTI). The wildlife crime watchdog claimed that the maximum cases of pangolin crimes were reported from the north eastern state of Assam which saw 21 such crimes between 2015 and 2020.

Other states reporting substantial number of such cases include Madhya Pradesh (18), Maharashtra (17), Sikkim (17) and Uttarakhand (10). Odisha and Mizoram recorded eight cases of pangolin smuggling each during the period.

Experts, however, claimed that the scale of pangolin smuggling is much higher than the government figures. Some claimed that pangolin smuggling is quite rampant in the state and the wildlife department fails to curb the menace.

"Elephant ivory and pangolins are some of the most sought after smuggled items from Odisha. Live pan-



5-yr data on smuggling of scaled mammal

STATES	CASES OF SMUGGLING
Assam	21
Madhya Pradesh	18
Maharashtra	17
Sikkim	17
Uttarakhand	10
Odisha	8

golins as well as Keratin scales of the mammals are often seized during raids. The smuggling rackets are flourishing due to the apathy of the wildlife department," Biswajit Mohanty, a wildlife expert from the state said.

Sasmita Lenka, Deputy Conservator of Forest (DCF), who personally had investigated a number of such cases as the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Athagarh told Orissa POST that there are links of these smugglers with other states and even countries.

"During my investigation, I found links of pangolin smuggling to West Bengal and other states. They (smugglers) are highly organised in executing the trade and use cyberspace to do their business with least personal meeting unless required," she said.

Interestingly, neither the state nor the Centre has any clue about the pangolin population. Due to the nocturnal nature of the scaled animal, not much information is available on their overall behaviour. Acting Principal Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Shashi Paul said that the state like other Indian states does not estimate the population of this endangered species.

He, however, said that the state is working towards conducting more research on the animal under the captive breeding programme. "We are also taking all possible steps to check the smuggling. We often conduct raids on tip-offs and nab persons involved in such cases with the involvement of our department and Special Task Force (STF)," he said.

According to experts, body parts of pangolins find a special place in the traditional medicine systems of China and other South East Asian countries. The species was categorised as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

यूनियन बैंक () Union Ba ste gita ware union and a subset Mandhra	India	NAL OFFICE: RA r, Hanshini Towers, Sambalpur-76800	Ainthapalli,
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unt of Security Interest Act, 2002 to pay the sum mentioned above against your notice together with interest from the date mentioned above at contractual rate as per the terms and conditions of loan documents executed by you and discharge your liabilities in full within 60 days from the date of receipt of this notice, failing which, we shall be constrained to enforce the above securities created by you in favour of the Bank by exercising any or all of the rights given under the said Act. 1) Please note that if you fail to remit the dues together with contractual rate of interest from the date mentioned above within 60 days as per the terms and conditions of loan documents executed by you, and if Bank exercises all its rights under this Act, and if the dues are not fully satisfied with the sale of proceeds of the secured assets, we shall be constrained to take appropriate legal action against you in a court of law/Debts Recovery Tribunal for recovery of the balance amount from you. 2) As per sec.13 (13) of the Act, on receipt of this notice you are restrained/prevented from disposing of or dealing with the above securities except in the usual course of business without the consent of the Bank. Please note that any violation of this section entails serious consequences. Your kind attention is also invited to the provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. Place: Rayagada, Date: 15.04.2021 Sd/- Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India



POST NEWS NETWORK

Government of Odisha.

He said that inter-modal capac-

ity building can be a game changer

on addressing the logistics issues.

Mishra, who was also present at

MSME Minister Dibya Shankar

Padhi.

recommendations: AG HIGH COURTS ARE REOUIRED TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO OCCURRENCE OF VACANCIES OF JUDGES

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, April 15: Attorney General of India KK Venugopal Thursday informed the Supreme Court that the Union Ministry of Law and Justice is yet to receive recommendations from Orissa and other High Courts for filling up 220 vacancies of judges.

OrissaPOST

FRIDAY | APRIL 16 | 2021 | BHUBANESWAR

The Attorney General made a statement in the apex court saying that the High Courts of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Meghalaya and Sikkim have not recommended names for vacancies from Bar quota which have been existing for five years. Similarly, the Orissa High Court has not recommended names for vacancies from the Service quota that have been existing for 1 to 5 years, the AG said in the court.

Significantly, the High Courts are required to make recommendations six months prior to occurrence of vacancies.

In case of Odisha, the present working strength of Judges in the High Court is 15 including the Chief Justice. Out of 18 sanctioned strength from Bar quota and nine

ASI caught

POST NEWS NETWORK

complainant.

in this regard.

searched.

receiving bribe

Bhubaneswar, April 15: Vigilance sleuths Thursday caught red-

handed Pramod Kumar Pradhan,

an assistant sub-inspector (ASI).

of Pahal outpost under Balianta

PS while receiving bribe from a

According to sources, Pradhan

had allegedly demanded ₹3,000

from one Sanjib Patry of Sahid

Nagar to submit a report favour-

ing the complainant in connec-

tion with a case pertaining to il-

legal construction on his land.

Patry lodged a complaint with

Bhubaneswar division of Vigilance

Subsequently, a trap was laid

by the Vigilance sleuths who caught

Pradhan while accepting the bribe

at the outpost Thursday, Vigilance

registered a case (14/21) in this

regard and arrested Pradhan who

was sent to judicial custody. His gov-

Chandrasekharpur here is being

OJEE to begin June 17

at

ernment quarters

The present working strength of Judges in the High Court is 15 including the Chief Justice

The apex court was told that the first vacancy in Orissa High Court from the Bar occurred April 21, 2016 and the recommendation has been delayed by 61 months

Similarly, the first vacancy from service occurred May 18, 2019 and the High Court has delayed recommendation to fill this vacancy by 23 months

from Service quota, the present functional strength of Judges from Bar segment is 10 and from Service

segment is five. Accordingly, the HC has eight vacancies from Bar and four from Service.

The AG told the apex court that the first vacancy in Orissa High Court from the Bar occurred April 21, 2016. The apex court was told that Orissa High Court has delayed recommendations to fill the first vacancy from Bar by 61 months. Similarly, the first vacancy from service occurred May 18, 2019 and the High Court has delayed recommendation to fill this vacancy by 23 months.

The Attorney General made the statement during the hearing of a transfer petition i.e. PLR Projects Ltd vs Mahanadi Coalfields Pvt Ltd. The petition was filed in the Supreme Court in 2019 seeking transfer of a petition from the Orissa High Court owing to the lawyers' strike.

Earlier, the Orissa High Court had filed an affidavit in the apex court in the same matter stating that since the Chief Justice of Orissa High Court has assumed the charge recently, it would be difficult to make recommendations for appointment of judges immediately.

MEGA INFRA SUMMIT Bhubaneswar, April 15: The state government Thursday said that it would formulate a Logistics Policy for which it is seeking industry's inputs. This was stated by Commerce & Road Transport department Principal Secretary Madhusudan Padhi was addressing the ICC Mega Infra Summit organised by Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in association with the Department of Commerce & Road Transport & Department of Steel & Mines,

State to come up with Logistics Policy

the meet, mentioned that infrastructure plays a vital role for an economy to prosper. Mishra also

DESERTED SHORE

urged that the think tanks must

come up with innovative ideas to

bring down the logistics cost.

Ashis Bose, Deputy Chairman, Paradip Port Trust, said that the commissioning of Haridaspur -

Paradip line a proving to be a boon. On the other hand, Subrat Tripathy, CEO, Adani Mundra Port, urged that the east deserves proper container terminal while providing a overall logistics scenario of Odisha as far as ports are concerned.

P L Haranadh, Chief Traffic Planning Manager, East Coast Railways mentioned about the Sambalpur – Titlagarh 182 km line, Raipur – Titlagarh 203 km line and Sambalpur – Talcher line is completed for movement of ores and other goods.

Haranadh also informed that railway is coming up with 9 new lines and 7 electrification projects with ₹17,000 crore investment.





Otherwise crowded Puri beach wears a deserted look, Thursday, owing to the scare over surge in Covid cases

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 15: Odisha Parents' Federation (OPF) Thursday welcomed Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's decision to put all board examinations in the state on hold in view of surging coronavirus cases.

It also appreciated the decision of promoting the students of Class IX and Class XI to next classes without in any examination.



2 die of asphyxiation in Cuttack manhole

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, April 15: Even with strict laws banning manual scavenging, the practice continues unabated in the state. Two persons died of asphyxiation while clearing a manhole located in CDA's Sector 10 area here, Thursday.

The deceased were identified as P Shankar, 23, of Meria Bazar Makarbagh Sahi area here, and Bishnu Nayak, 22, of Badamba area in the district. D Shiva, 25, a resident of Meria Bazar Makarbagh Sahi here, who has been rescued in a critical condition, is undergoing treatment at SCB Medical College

and Hospital, said a source. According to sources, the mishap took place around 11.30am when the trio had entered into a manhole to clean the sewage.

"It was around 11.30am when Shankar entered deep into the manhole. After getting no response from him for a long, a suspicious Bishnu entered the hole. As both of them did not return for a long, Shiva too went into the manhole.

1 killed as bus, truck collide on NH-16

KHURDA: A person died while a few others sustained injuries when a bus carrying migrant workers and a truck collided head-on on the National Highway no. 16 here in the wee hours of Thursday.

Police said the bus was bringing migrant Odia workers to Kendrapara from Kannur area of Kerala. The truck driver died at the spot while a few passengers of the bus sustained injuries. The front portions of the two vehicles were badly damaged in the mishap, locals said. Informed, Tangi police reached the spot and sent the deceased truck driver for a postmortem. Police also seized the two vehicles.

"We are yet to identify the deceased while all the passengers of the bus have been sent to their destination in another vehicle.'

Prison official show-caused over jailbreak

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 15: The state prisons directorate is in line of fire over the escape of dreaded gangster Seikh Hyder from the SCB medical hospital April 10. The episode exposed the sheer negligence by Sambalpur district police and officials of Sambalpur circle jail.

Similarly, in another escape case, the prisons department has issued notice against one senior jail staffer found guilty of negligence that led to the escape of two Under Trial Prisoners (UTPs) from the sub jail at R Udavagiri in February. The embarrassed prisons directorate sought response from the jailor before taking departmental actions against

Repeated incidents of escape from jails have raised serious questions over the lack of adequate surveillance and inept jail officials

The involvement of the jail staffers in these incidents has become major headache for the prisons directorate as well

the help of jail staff in February. Subsequently, the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Prisons for Online exam is the solution

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha Joint Entrance Examination (OJEE)-2021 will be held between June 17 and 24 this year, OJEE chairman said Thursday. While filling-up of online application forms through OJEE website (www.ojee.nic.in) began April 14, the process for submission of applications will continue till May 15. Students interested in taking admission to B Pharm/MBA/MCA/MTech (Part-Time)/ M Arch/M Plan/M Pharm/Integrated MBA/ lateral entry to BTech/BPharm courses can apply online. For this they have to visit www.ojee.nic.in. They can download admit cards from the website in the first week of June. Notably, the exam will be conducted on computer-based test (CBT) mode.

WASSUP TODAY

BHUBANESWAR

Demonstration by Electricity department workers' association, in front of Idco Tower, 10.30 am

BALIANTA

 Badipala, Maa Gelhidevi Puja Mandap, Sundarpatna-Rudrapur, 8 pm

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

Later, Shiva, however, managed to raise an alarm following which passersby rushed to their help as well as informed the Fire Services department.

Informed, Fire Services personnel reached the spot within no time and pulled the trio out of the

said a police officer.

manhole.

"The three were rushed to the SCBMCH where Bishnu and Shankar were declared dead on arrival. Shiva who is in a critical condition is undergoing treatment at the facility," it pointed out.

him. The jailor has been asked to submit his defense within 30 days of the receipt of the officials notice.

According to sources, the two UTPs of the sub jail, Sarat Kumar Dey and Karuna Gomango, who were caught in a narcotics case in January escaped from the jail custody by scaling over the jail wall with

The

Bhubaneswar

Corporation

Municipal

has built

centres in

three of its

the homeless

and destitute

Berhampur range initiated a probe into the matter 28 February to find out the factors led to the escape

and the persons responsible for it. The DIG, during enquiry, found that a plan was being hatched by the two accused persons for many days while the jailor failed to smell any rat. The probe also revealed that the

to fore regularly too.

According to experts.

the state police should

use of the plastic pipes

are using the plastic pipes unoffi-

cially. The state police are still sup-

plying wooden sticks to the cops to

Officials on field duty are them-

selves collecting the plastic pipes

to use so there is uniformity. They

are reportedly using thicker pipes

The Delhi Police have been sup-

plying specially-made plastic batons

to its officials. These batons are

It is pertinent to mention here

that police are often criticized for

using third degree torture against

any accused but that remains on

meant to be used during riots only.

The wooden batons are only

causing major damages too.

immediately stop the

or bring uniformity

deal with the unruly.

designed to hurt less.

paper only.

guarding staff and other officials

inside the sub jail helped the duo

for the successful execution of their

escape plan. Sources also revealed

that one of the warders in the sub

jail even supplied mobile phone to

the UTPs while the guarding staff

helped arrange ladder for them.

The accused UTPs with the help

of the ladder jumped over the high

Similarly, the jail superinten-

dent of open air jail at Jamujhari

here has been asked to probe the per-

sons responsible for the escape of

one of the inmates few months

back. Reports about the seizure of

incriminating items like ganja,

drugs and mobile phones from jails

across the state have been coming

wall of the jail with ease.

Repeated incidents of escape from jails have raised serious questions over the lack of adequate surveillance and inept jail officials. The involvement of the jail staffers in these incidents has become major headache for the prisons directorate as well

Federation chairman Basudev Bhatt said that the state government will decide to conduct the exams towards June first week. If the situation doesn't change by June, the students will be in risk of losing the important academic year. So the state government should take precautionary steps from now.

Online exam is the only option through which students can give this examination. For this, both state and Union governments have to work together for arrangement of infrastructures i.e. network connectivity, laptops and mobiles for those who can't afford, to successfully conduct online exams etc.

The state government should talk to companies like Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys for helping and providing necessary infrastructure.

Federation also questioned the success of digital India initiative of union government. Earlier, after Union government had decided to cancel the CBSE Class X and postponing class XII exam, OPF had asked CM Patnaik to write to Union government proposing online examination. Bhatt had stated, "We need students to get their exam results as per their study.

BMC to rehabilitate third gender beggars

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 15: In a first, the state government approved proposal for Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) to begin rehabilitation programme for the beggars of the third gender category in the state capital Thursday.

In a notification by the Social Security & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Department (SSEPD), the state government gave nod to set up and manage rehabilitation exclusively for transgenders. The proposed centre will have a capacity of 50 beds.

"This is a welcome move by the state government. The initiative was taken under the idea of making Ekemra Kshetra beggar free. The centre will accommodate 50 inmates presently. Tenders will soon be floated for selection of an agency for its management," said BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary.



He also mentioned that the civic authority has also completed the process of selection of agency for management of three centres for beggar rehabilitation. The 100bedded centres were earlier approved by the state government that were aimed for rehabilitating differently-abled women, chil-

dren and elderly.

It can be mentioned that the BMC had proposed a roadmap to make the state capital free of beggars by rehabilitating the people begging in the city. Three centres in all three zones were constructed to shift homeless and destitute people to shelter homes

Plastic pipes replacing wooden batons

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 15: The plastic pipes are slowly replacing the colonial era wooden batons as tool to disperse rioters. Cops in the state police force including the commissionerate police are found using plastic PVC pipes in place of wooden sticks. The Quick Action Team and Special Squad officials too are using the same.

Police sources claimed that the field staffers are finding it much lighter to use and less harmful than the wooden batons. It has become a good tool in the hands of police officials to inflict third degree torture on the criminals and rioters without inflicting major bodily damages. The accused or rioters sustain only some injury marks that go away within few hours.

However, experts raised serious questions against the use of the plastic pipes as there are no uniform rules and specifications regarding the type of pipe to be used as cops

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state

Higher GST deals big blow to state's kendu leaf biz

AS TRADE IS STUCK IN SLUMP, WORKERS WARN OF PROTEST FROM MAY DAY



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, April 15: The Goods and Service Tax (GST) on minor forest produce has dealt a blow to scores of workers engaged in the trade. The Centre has imposed an 18 per cent GST on kendu leaves which has hit workers engaged in the trade.

Distressed workers have warned of protests from May 1 demanding withdrawal of 18 per cent GST on kendu leaves. The workers posted at various kendu leaf godowns will

wear black badge while working. This was stated here by Bijay Mohanty, president of Odisha Kendu

Leaf Workers Association. He alleged that the Centre has imposed GST on kendu leaves from 2017. However, despite repeated demand, the Centre is yet to withdraw it. This has seriously affected 12 lakh bidi and other workers engaged in kendu leaf collection and bidi manufacturing.

Many of the bidi manufacturing firms have closed down due to losses arising out of imposition of

Centre has imposed GST on kendu Cleaves from 2017. Despite repeated demand, it has not withdrawn the tax. seriously affecing 12 lakh bidi and other workers

any of the bidi manufacturing firms Mhave closed down due to losses arising out of imposition of GST. Moreover, kendu leaves collected are lving in godowns without being disposed. This has happened as many hidi and other firms have stopped procuring kendu leafs due to higher GST

GST. Moreover, kendu leaves collected are lying in godowns without being disposed. This has happened as many bidi and other firms have stopped procuring kendu leafs due to higher GST.

On the other hand, the government collects GST regularly which is Rs 311, 12, 65,000. This tax is being collected from government-managed institutions depriving emplovees of their bonus and other

social security benefits.



After detection of Covid positive cases, the premises of a court in Angul being sanitised, Thursday

MPC College students Traders decide to shut shops for 9 days seek online exams

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, April 15: Amid a spike in Covid cases across Mayurbhnaj district, Plus-III students (2nd year) of MPC Autonomous College in Baripada staged protests Thursday, demanding online examinations. They locked the college gate and demanded an immediate decision to this effect.

The agitating students lamented that the second wave of the Covid infection was sweeping the state, but the college authorities have decided to hold examination offline from April 19.

The students had also staged demonstrations Wednesday. They alleged that an employee of the college has tested Covid-19 positive while the college authorities are not abiding by any safety and preventive measures on the premises. They said, private hostels in the area have been closed while students coming from other districts and neighbouring states will face difficulties for accommodation. Principal of the college Jharna

Behera said keeping the problems of the students in mind, necessary steps will be taken.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nuapada, April 15: Khadiala Byabasayee Sangha (KBS) in Nuapada district Thursday decided to shut all shops under Khariar block for next nine days starting April 16 in order to keep COVID-19 at bay

However, the shops dealing in essential commodities will be allowed to remain open. Vegetable shops will be opened from 5 am to 10 pm every day during this period, a source said.

"There has been a steady surge in the number of COVID-19 cases in Nuapada district. We have taken a strong measure to close the shops in order to break the chain. We urge people to cooperate and be cautious. Otherwise, things will go out of control," president of the local traders' association Rashmi Ranjan Chhalan said.

On the other hand, the proactive decision taken by the local traders' association to prevent probable spread of COVID-19 virus in Khariar block was welcomed by Nuapada Collector Swadha Dev Singh.

"If the village community wants to self-regulate itself, it is great news for the administration. We



Akhandalamani shut as servitor tests positive

BHADRAK: Akhandalamnai temple at Aradi village in Bhadrak district Thursday was closed for devotees after a servitor tested positive for COVID-19.

Bhadrak Sub-Collector Pitambar Samal said that the temple will be out of bounds for people from April 15 noon to April 17 evening.

The affected servitor is under isolation. it was learnt. When asked about the rituals of

the temple, Samal said that the



servitors will perform the rituals as usual. During the ban period, the temple premises will be sanitised and all other servitors will undergo COVID-19 tests.

Girl rescued from Mahanadi

welcome the move. It will go a long way in keeping the pandemic at bay in the region," Singh said.

Notably, Odisha registered the maximum number of COVID-19 cases in a single day Wednesday with 2,989 persons testing positive for the virus. Two patients have succumbed to the disease in the last 24 hours. While nine districts registered three-digit figures, Sundargarh district topped the list with 631 cases, followed by Khurda (438), Kalahandi (260), Cuttack (208), Nuapada (151) and Sambalpur (148).

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, April 15: The state government Thursday imposed the annual ban on fishing along the state coast for two months. The ban, viewed as necessary for safe breeding of fish, will be in place from April 15 to June 15.

The two-month ban is being imposed annually over last 10 years as it is feared that rampant fishing activities could be disastrous for the ecosystem. At the same time, around 50,000 people are expected to lose their livelihood during this period, it was learnt.

Over the years, fish population in the sea along the Odisha coast has been on a downward spiral. While regular fishing and using of nets are two reasons blamed for

Opening of Tender Paper

decreasing fish population, the role of climate change and industrialisation in the decline cannot be ruled out either.

Fishing ban along coast till June 15

"Keeping this in view, a restriction has been imposed on fishing," informed marine fisheries officer Manoranjan Mahapatra. About the loss caused by the ban,

Arabinda Swain, a trawler owner, said the ban renders fishermen jobless and they suffer a huge loss. "The government has announced some financial assistance to them. But there should be a proper system so that the benefits reach the right persons at the right time," he maintained. In this regard, Mahapatra said. "The fishermen of some coastal districts like Kendrapara and Balasore get this assistance

	NCHAYATI RAJ AND	DR	DF ODISHA INKING WATER DEPARTMENT MITI, SAHARAPADA
1.	Name of the Works	:-	Construction of AWC Building at
2.	Total No. of Works	:-	4 Nos.
3.	Approximated Estimated Cost	:-	Rs.12,32,144/- Each
4.	Class of Contractor	:-	"D" & "C"
5.	Period of Completion	:-	4 (Four Calendar months)
6.	Date of sale of Tender Paper	:-	Dt.19.04.2021 to 26.04.2021 during office hour.
7.	Last date of receipt of Tender Paper	:-	Dt. 26.04.2021 till 1.00 PM.
8.	Date and time of	:-	Dt.27.04.2021 at 10.00 AM.

amount.

Elderly woman consuming food from road receives aid

Meanwhile, the administration's decision has not gone down well with the servitors. Opposing the decision, they staged a dharna at the entrance of the temple.

Notably, Bhadrak district Thursday reported 34 fresh COVID 19 cases, taking the district's tally to 7,799. Of them, 7,532 patients have already recovered from the disease while the active cases stand at 237. The virus has so far claimed 26 lives in the district.

She said she did not know what had

After her treatment, Sanyasi

Sonv's foster parents thought about

trict. Her wedding has been scheduled

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Dated : 09.04.2021

AME OF WORK : CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD OVER BRIDGE AT KM 454.939

(454/45A - 455/2) IN BETWEEN STATIONS RETANG - KHURDA ROAD

ON HOWRAH - MAS LINE ON EAST

der Notice No. ETCPMIIBBS2021013

for April 21.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, April 15: In a heartwrenching incident, a septuagenarian woman was seen eating food that was lying on the road in Malkangiri town Thursday.

Some media persons met the woman at her house and gave her some essentials Thursday.

In fact, the incident exposes how the administration fails to provide a decent living to those who do not receive any support from family members.

The feeble woman was seen crossing the road carrying two polythene bags - one containing 'puri' and another curry. As she was crossing the road, the curry polythene bag somehow fell on the road and the curry spilled on the street.

She seemed to feel sorry for dropping the polythene. She sat there, took out the 'puris' and started eating with curry from



the road. Even though some passersby asked her not to eat the food from the road, the woman went on eating as if she had heard nothing

Some approached her and asked her if she is receiving any pension. By that time, she had finished her food and was still sitting on the road. Instead of giving answers to them, she stood up and slowly crossed the rest of the road.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharsuguda, April 15: The Mahanadi may be a subject of discord between Odisha and Chhattisgarh but here is a story of a girl from Chhattisgarh who was swept away in the river and rescued in Odisha five years later. Soni Yadav's life story has all the

makings for a box office hit. It was September 14, 2016. Sanyasi Kalo, a fisherman of Kushmel village in Jharsuguda district, set out on his boat in Mahanadi for fishing. While fishing in the river, he spotted something that resembled a human

body floating in the water close to the river bank. Out of curiosity, he paddled to the spot only to find a girl floating unconsciously. He immediately took her back to

was out of danger.



her conscious and narrated how she was swept away in the river and all the details about her family.

After losing her parents, she was staying with her aunt at Jebara village under Saranggarh police limits in Raigarh district. One day, she

the shore and rushed her to a nearby along with her family members had hospital where the doctors said she come to Chandrahasini Devi temple on the bank of the Mahanadi for a Following treatment, she regained visit. While washing her feet, she

s can be seen from and from the DTCN Sd./- Block Development Officer, SAHARAPADA OIPR-19083/11/0001/2122



No. C-92: Sealed tenders, in conformity with the Detailed Tender Call Notice in two bid system are invited from the intendina registered firms/Entrepreneur/NGOs/private Companies/Contractor for the exection of providing cleaning & sanitation work from Ward No. 01 to 09 and 12, 15 (Part) (Package - I, Sunabeda) & 18 to 25 (Package - II, Semiliguda) of Sunabeda Municipality so as to reach the Executive Officer Sunabeda Municipality through Registered Post/Speed Post only upto 09.00 A.M. of Dt.29.04.2021 & the Technical Bid of the two bid tender will be opened at Sunabeda Municipality Office on the same day i.e. 29.04.2021 at 10.00 A.M. and Financial Bid will be opened on 04.05.2021 at 11.00 A.M. The details of works, bid document, scope of work, eligibility criteria & submission of tender can be downloaded from the website www.sunabedamunicipality.in from Dt.12.04.2021 to 27.04.2021 upto 1.00 P.M.

> Sd./- Executive Officer Sunabeda Municipality OIPR-13076/11/0002/2122

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When goddess is offered eggs and liquor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khandapara, April 15: Non-veg items are usually a taboo in case of religious rituals. But there are some rituals where eggs and liquor are offered to deities.

Such strange rituals are associated with Patamara Parba being celebrated by Tiara community at Harisubudhipatana and Panusahupatna in Kantilo area of Nayagarh district.

In the month of Chaitra, Danadavatra is celebrated across the state. Devotees with vows stay away from eating non-veg food. But they offer eggs and liquor as bhog to Goddess Mangala.

Patmamara Paraba was part of the Dandayatra. It was celebrated with religious fervor at Dholamara, Kumbharapada, Kantilo



Panusahupatana and Harisubudhipatana under Khandapara block Wednesday. Most of the devotees were seen walking barefoot on burning em-

bers in pits, some rolled on beds of spikes and some were found piercing their bodies with hooks. This festival usually begins from

Dola Purnima. Since then, devotees re-

frain from taking non-veg food. For nine days before Vishubha Samkranti, the devotees leave their homes and stav at the shines of the goddess.

In the evenings and nights, devotees drink pana, a kind of liquid prepared from various fruits. The custom is while drinking pana, the devotees must stop eating instantly if hear sound of any animals or birds. A man plays as kalisi, dressed quaintly. Kalisi is the representative of the goddess. The Kalisi and the devotees carry the idol of the goddess into Badapokhari (a sprawling pond) at Panusahipatana.

Amid the pond, some devotees were seen hugging the idol in water while others pierce crooked spikes in their back. The hooks are tied with ropes. Strangely, not a single drop of blood oozes from their backs.



power post

FOCUS GENDER GAP

The great are strongest when they stand alone, a God-given might of being is their force **SRI AUROBINDO**



Social Capitalism

The COVID-19 pandemic has damaged the stock of physical and human capital. Firms have postponed or canceled investment projects, and laid-off or furloughed workers' skills have deteriorated. The crisis, however, has boosted the oft-overlooked variable of social capital, elevating its role as a key source of economic growth.

Popularised in the 1990s by Harvard University political scientist Robert Putnam, social capital refers to "the features of social organisations, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit." A somewhat nebulous concept, it comprises the shared values, behavioral conventions, and sources of mutual trust and common identity that allow a society to function. The more social capital a group has, the greater its willingness and ability to act collectively in pursuit of valuable objectives.

In other words, social capital is the glue that holds communities and nations together. Under the right conditions, repeated and mutually beneficial social interactions lead to faster economic growth, better health outcomes, and greater stability

In the case of the pandemic, social capital provided the first line of defense against the virus when vaccines and effective medical treatments had not yet become available. Here, individuals taking steps to prevent contagion provided a public good. Each conscious act aimed at reducing exposure to the virus lowered the probability of infection for the rest of the community. In the jargon of economists, those who reduced their mobility and social interactions internalized a negative externality that they otherwise would have imposed on society

A sense of attachment to a larger group induces people to tolerate the high individual costs of cautious behaviors. A large and growing body of academic research has shown that spontaneous social distancing is more likely in places with better-developed civic cultures. For example, a European cross-country comparison found that "a one standard deviation increase in social capital [led] to between 14% and 40% fewer COVID-19 cases per capita accumulated from mid-March until end of June [2020], as well as between 7% and 16% fewer excess deaths.

Edoardo Campanella

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economic growth,

Under the right

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Moreover, places with high social capital tend to be more economically vibrant and civicminded than places where people are isolated. Not surprisingly, in the early stages of the pandemic, the virus spread more rapidly in densely populated cities like Paris, New York, London, and Milan, because nobody realized what was coming. But as soon as the need for behavioral changes became apparent, inhabitants in more civic-minded areas adopted social distancing measures even before formal restrictions were imposed, and they were more responsive to subsequent state directives. Social capital also played a key role in powering economies through months of lockdowns and remote working. While digital technologies helped people to stay connected, it was social capital that kept those connections alive. Employees working from home remained productive because they had built up a sense of reciprocal trust, shared identity, and common purpose with their colleagues. And on that basis, many were able to develop entirely new (digital) working relationships.

In most cases, companies ended up expanding their internal social capital during the pandemic. Having partly lost their ability to control their workers directly, they ended up empowering them. With more flexibility to manage their time and lives outside of work, many employees could take on even more responsibility and deliver higher-quality output. According to a cross-country survey by the Boston Consulting Group, 75% of employees maintained or increased their productivity despite the pandemic restrictions.

In today's hybrid workplace, social capital is clearly one of the most important factors behind such results. Unlike its physical counterpart (facto ries, equipment, and so on), social capital does not deteriorate with use - just the opposite. But like any other form of capital, it needs to be maintained and upgraded, and this will be especially true in the post-pandemic phase. In normal circumstances, our connections and relationships evolve and expand over time. Yet without appropriate measures to reactivate and reopen social networks, months of lockdowns and restrictions could exhaust some relationships or result in group segregation. Owing to what Putnam calls "bonding social capital," people might become so attached to a specific group that they succumb to clannishness or tribalism. Indeed, populism and nationalism are social capital's degenerate forms, and they have been resurgent in some places during the pandemic. Governments and corporations thus should try to build more "bridging social capital," by leveraging the sense of responsibility, solidarity, and altruism developed during the COVID-19 crisis. This form of social capital links people across different groups, and will be necessary to prevent the next pandemic and to combat climate change. But civic mindedness alone will not be enough. Individuals will need to be convinced to internalize the negative externalities of their actions. With that goal in mind, governments should extend more autonomy to citizens. positioning themselves less as controllers and regulators and more as catalysts and facilitators. And corporations, for their part, should look for ways to foster a culture of reciprocal trust, invest more in the digital transition, and explore new ways to organize work.

INDIA'S SAD SCRIPT orld Economic Forum's recently published Gender Gap Report (2021) shows that India has slipped by 28 places compared to the Gender Gap Report (2020), with a rank-

SN Misra & Sanjaya Kumar Ghadai **THE PRESENT TREND OF** DWINDLING FEMALE WORKFORCE **AND THEIR HIGH VULNERABILITY**

CAN BE MITIGATED THROUGH **EFFECTIVE POLITICAL WILL WHICH PUTS A PREMIUM ON**

GENDER JUSTICE

Pakistan and Afghanistan. The overall refrain of the report is that out of the four dimensions of gender gap viz. economic participation, political empowerment, educational attainment and health and survival, most countries seriously lag behind gender gap in political employment empower ment and economic participation. Globally only 26.1% of women have parliamentary seats and 22.6% hold the post of ministers. In contrast, India has 13.3% women who are in the Parliament as against 20.9% in case of Bangladesh, which has achieved the highest ranking amongst the South Asian countries. The report brings out how in terms of educational attainment 95% of the gender gap has been closed and 96% in terms of health and survival. However, in contrast, India has the dubious record of ranking 155/165 in regard to health and survival index. This is largely due to its abnormally high maternal mortality rates, and very high percentage of girls who are anemic during their adolescent period. The Human Development

ing of 140 out of 156 countries sur-

veved. Sadly, in South Asia, India

is in the dubious company of

Report contains a Gender Inequality Index where it expressed serious concerns regarding the dwindling participation of female workforce in India. The female workforce participation is a measly 20.5% against male workforce participation of 76.1%. This is significantly less than China, where female workforce participation is 60.5% as against 75.3% for male workforce participation. It would be interesting to note that India's economic participation and opportunity index for women was rising till the year 2012. It has been declining since then, reflecting their vulnerable position in the job market. Steven Kapsey, Silbaman et.al. in a perceptive report for the International Labour



World Economic Forum's recently published Gender Gap Report (2021) shows that India has slipped by 28 places compared to the Gender Gap Report (2020), with a ranking of 140 out of 156 countries surveyed. Sadly, in South Asia, India is in the dubious company of Pakistan and Afghanistan

Organisation in 2017 have brought out how India is passing through the paradox of falling female workforce participation, and fertility rate is falling from 3.1 in 2000 to 2.6 (2011). The NSSO Survey in 2009-10 has also brought out that during the decade (2000-2010) there was a 10.1% drop in workforce participation compared to previous survey, a decade back. They have assessed that the loss of jobs of female workers would be in the region of 22.6 million during 2005-2010. The ILO study brings out how the falling trend of economic participation is due to lack of employment opportunities (42%), poor level of education and pressure of child care and genderbased discrimination and occupational segregations.

The 68th NSSO survey has brought out three specific reasons for the precipitate fall in female workforce participation. Increased mechanisation in agriculture by use of seed drillers, harvesters, threshers, and husk equipment has displaced women by bringing in male workers. The female workforce which was earlier 63% as against 37% by of men has gone down considerably. Further, textiles, power looms, button stitching, mechanisation has phased out women labour significantly. As per the McKinsey Global Institute Report, around 12 million women could lose jobs owing to automation.

The other concern area is poor vocational training to women. The NITI Aayog's Three Years' Action Agenda (2017-2020) has brought out how only 3.4% women underwent vocational training in mechanical, electrical and electronic engineering trades as against 29% men. Sectors that require disruptive technical skills are not adequately represented by women. As per the World Economic Forum Report, only 17% of women are into cloud computing, 20% in engineering and 24% in artificial intelligence. Therefore, the major opportunities for employment in sunshine sectors like Industry 4.0 are eluding women. Besides, the NSSO survey brings out how, on an average, a woman is engaged in five hours of domestic work as against 30 minutes by men. Gender budgeting was introduced in 2005. with around 57 government departments setting up gender budget cells. An analysis conducted by NIPFP reveals that GRB has not translated effectively into policies that impact women.

The Indian Constitution provides in Article 15(3) that the state can make special provisions for women, apart from ensuring that

there is not gender discrimina tion for entry into educational institution and employment. However, the momentous change came in 1992 through the 73rd amendment by establishing grass roots democracy at the Panchayat level. Article 243(d)(3) stipulates that not less than 1/3 of total seats would be reserved for women. Odisha has the proud record of increasing it to 50%. However, the debate for reserving 33% of seats parliamentary and state Assembly seats for women has been caught in the vertex of caste politics. Unfortunately, unlike many developing economies, India has a poor record in terms of health and survival of women. The preference for sons and gender biased prenatal sex selection practices are rampant. The gender gap report 2021 brings out how India and China account for 90% of the estimated 1.2 to 1.5 million missing female birth annually. In terms of maternal mortality rate the HDR brings out that India still carry a dubious record 133 deaths per lakh, as against 29 by China and

2 by Norway. The major lessons that the report has for India is to provide proper educational and skilling opportunities to women, ensuring nutritional food to adolescent girls and women and ensuring that women get proper representation in the parliament and assemblies to lend their voice for making effective change in the way that can promote true gender justice. The NITI Aayog has suggested that the skill development programme should move beyond traditional skills for women and provide them training for professions like taxi driving and missionary. The present trend of dwindling female workforce and their high vulnerability can be mitigated through effective political will, which puts a premium on gender justice

SN Misra teaches Economics and can be reached atmisra.sn54@gmail.com. Sanjaya Kumar Ghadai is a Research Scholar and he can be reached at ghadaisk77@gmail.com

SPECTRUM DIGITAL ECONOMY

Digital revolution eating its young

s massive online platforms actional and capital-intensive, this assets, a K-shaped corporate recov-

Viewed in these terms, COVID-19 could leave a positive legacy: a firmer base of social capital to underpin the responsibility and altruism that the world will need as it faces the challenges ahead.

Edoardo Campanella, an economist at UniCredit Bank, is a fellow at the Center for the Governance of Change at IE University in Madrid. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE, 2021

WISDOM CORNER

- If people doubt how far you can go, go so far that you can't hear them anvmore.
- We need to accept that we won't always make the right decisions, that we'll screw up rovally sometimes - understanding that failure is not the opposite of success, it's part of success.

ARIANNA HUFFINGTON

Write it. Shoot it. Publish it. Crochet it, sauté it, whatever. MAKE. JOSS WHEDON

Give him another chance

football coach walked into the Alocker room before a game, looked over to his star player and said, "I'm not supposed to let you play since you failed math, but we need you in there. So what I have to do is ask you a math question, and if you get it right, you can play." The player agreed, and the coach looked into his



then he answered, "4?" "Did you say 4?!?" the coach exclaimed, excited that he got it right. At that, all the other players on the team began screaming, "Come on coach, give him another chance!"

Mark Esposito, Landry Signé & Nicholas Davis **AS MASSIVE**

ONLINE PLATFORMS HAVE GIVEN RISE TO NUMEROUS VIRTUAL MARKET-PLACES, A GAP HAS **OPENED BETWEEN THE REAL AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY**

etters

are most welcome to contribute letters

postal address/email ID. They may also

and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

send in their valuable comments, opinion

101

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST

(200 words), articles and

requested to send their contact numbers and full

columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are

have given rise to numer-Lous virtual marketplaces, a gap has opened between the real and the digital economy. And by driving more people than ever online in search of goods, services, and employment, the coronavirus pandemic is widening it. The risk now is that a new digital industrial complex will hamper market efficiency by imposing rents on real-economy players whose daily operations depend on technology.

The premise of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is that the tangible and intangible elements of today's economy can coexist and create new productive synergies. The tangible side of the economy provides the infrastructure upon which automation, manufacturing, and complex trade networks rest, and intangibles logistics, communication, and other software and Big Data applications -allow for these processes to achieve optimal efficiency.

More to the point, the tangible economy is a prerequisite for the intangible economy. Through digitalization, tangibles can become intangibles and then overcome traditional limitations on scale and value creation. While heavily trans-

process hitherto has been a positive mechanism for growth, providing some equity of opportunities for small and large countries alike.

But this standard account of the 4IR omits the recent decoupling of the digital and real sectors of the economy. Digitally native companies that benefited from the suspension of traditional factors of production have been growing even faster than they did before COVID-19.

By the beginning of September 2020, Facebook, Amazon, and Apple's share prices had more than doubled since the start of the pandemic, with Apple becoming the first company ever to achieve a \$2 trillion valuation. And while shares of Netflix and Alphabet (Google) - the other so-called FAANG firms – hadn't quite doubled, they were nonetheless trading at or near all-time highs. Meanwhile, ExxonMobil, the S&P 500's oldest member and a former icon of the tangible economy, was driven out of the index by Apple's decision to split its stock. Those who own and run the tech giants are making ever more money, while the rest of the world continues to experience economic devastation.

With real-economy assets being po sitioned far below digital financial

ery has emerged. Digital firms can grow apparently without limit, whereas others' growth remains circumscribed by the finite conditions under which they operate. This trend is not only challenging neoliberal assumptions about the creation of value; it is also pushing us toward a scenario in which government policies to redistribute value will no longer be plausible options.

To be sure, governments and some within the private sector have proposed remedies, such as a tax on digital assets, while proponents of a laissez-faire approach continue to insist that any form of government intervention will merely introduce more market distortions. But neither camp has offered enough evidence for its preferred policy.

We suggest three other solutions. First, government grants and subsidies can be used to promote technological diffusion, and to close the technology gap between platforms and small and medium enterprises. Rather than expecting the market to provide equitable access to technologies like artificial intelligence, governments can fund programmes that reach smaller firms directly, such as through tax write-offs or other measures.

ward a more agile, multi-stakeholder model of innovation, so that concerns about inclusion and representation are addressed without curtailing the pace of technological advance. The goal, here, should be to reduce the tensions between winners and losers across the platform economy's new value chains.

Third, it is time to start identifying appropriate areas for "digital protectionism." Just as some countries use trade tariffs to support nascent local production, digital tariffs could be used to foster local innovation ecosystems.

There are ways to ensure that the digital revolution benefits the many, not just the few: but they will require that we rethink how we pursue innovation and create value in the twenty-first century.

Mark Esposito co-directs Arizona State University's 4IR Research Initiative at the Thunderbird School of Global Management. Landry Signé is a member of the World Economic Forum's Regional Action Group for Africa. Nicholas Davis is Head of Society and Innovation

at the World Economic Forum. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

Thankless job

Sir, In the extended 294-seat West Bengal Assembly elections, stray incidents of skirmishes snowballed into sporadic violence as the fourth phase of polls neared culminating into a ghastly tragedy - killing of four people when Central forces fired at a mob in a polling booth in Sitalkuchi constituency of Cooch Behar district. Neither the mob nor the police can be blamed because either or both are acting at the behest of a supreme power: the politicians. The BJP is adept at instigating a crowd. For Mamata Banerjee it is a do-or-die battle. She is a type of politician who does not believe in taking things lying down - paying an opponent back in his own coin is her forte. The Cooch Behar violence may or may not have been fomented by her party; but the political veteran has created a flutter by accusing the CISF of wrong doing - that the security force intentionally shot down four people is her serious allegation. Over and above, she has put the blame at the doorsteps of BJP leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah by accusing him of 'genocide'. Likewise, Shah, not the one to be cowed down so easily, has accused the Chief Minister of provoking the people. In between, the two political bigwigs are the CISF and the EC. It is a mockery of democracy that Constitutional bodies and top security institutions are ridiculed and berated by the politicians

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Good decision

Sir, The Central government's decision to cancel the CBSE Class X examination and postpone the Class XII exams to a later date owing to high surge in COVID-19 cases in the country is truly a welcome decision. Lakhs of students and parents were undergoing severe tension as the scheduled exam dates were nearing. The Class X exam has been cancelled and marks will be awarded based upon the basis of an objective criterion to be developed by the Board. Now regarding admission to Class XI the board should adapt a subject-based aptitude test for the \rightarrow students and based on that the students must be allowed to opt for their choice of course they would like to pursue. A uniform pattern aptitude test can be followed by the schools affiliated to the board. This can avoid confusion, discrimination and unfairness during the admission process. The test of course can be conducted in the online mode.

M Pradyu, KANNUR





Allahabad HC suggests complete lockdown in UP

HEARING A PIL RELATED TO COVID-19. A DIVISION BENCH MADE IT CLEAR THAT IF THE COURT LEARNS OF ANYONE MOVING ON ROADS WITHOUT MASK, THE COURT SHALL TAKE IT AS AN ACT OF CONTEMPT ON THE PART OF POLICE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh), April 14: The Allahabad High Court has directed the Uttar Pradesh government to look into the viability of complete lockdown in districts where the COVID spread has increased alarmingly.

The court further directed that all public gatherings must be restricted to 50 persons immediately.

"We understand that complete lockdown for weeks together may not be feasible but looking at the current surge of pandemic, we direct the government to look into the viability of complete lockdown in those districts where spread has increased alarmingly," the court stated in its order Tuesday.

Hearing a PIL related to COVID-19, a division bench comprising Justice Siddhartha Varma and Justice Aiit Kumar, made it clear that if the court learns of anyone moving on roads without mask, the court shall take it as an act of contempt on the part of police and will certainly haul up the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Pravagrai and other concerned districts for the same

The court also directed the district administrations to religiously comply with the guidelines issued by the state government April 11 to check the spread of COVID-19 in the state. The court emphasised that



the immunization programme must be vigorously carried out through vaccination of a large number of people and directed the Central government and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to rethink extending the benefit of vaccination to students pursuing higher education and those appearing in board examination of high school and intermediate.

"If the board and other exami-

nation conducting bodies are going for offline examination, then the government must explore viability to extend the benefit of vaccination to such students as well," the court added.

Passing the above directives, the court observed, "Night curfew or corona curfew is a very small step. It can curb only night parties and large religious congregations in the coming month of Ramzan and

curfew is a very small step. It can curb only night parties and large religious congregations in the coming month of Ramzan and Navratri. What we need to ensure is that there is no unnecessary public movement even during day timings: Allahabad **High Court**

Navratri. What we need to ensure is that there is no unnecessary pub-

lic movement even during day timings. We know that when a river acquires velocity no embankment can stop it and yet efforts are made to restrict it. We need to restrict public movement at least for a week or 10 days to break the chain. If life survives one would regain wealth and improve his economy. After all, every development is for people and

if there are no people, there will be no use of any development activity."

"The situation is so alarming that if it is not handled carefully and cautiously, we may lead to a stage of complete collapse of the public health system," the court added.

Expressing concern over insufficient infrastructure to meet the COVID patients' requirements, the court directed the Uttar Pradesh government to acquire open places in the city areas of districts that are the worst-hit in the state, to set up temporary level 1 hospital in a makeshift structure.

"Arrange manpower on contract basis immediately to serve all those who are admitted to temporary level 1 COVID hospitals/centres, the court directed.

"We must give priority to public health over elections and the government is expected to streamline every department of public health and public care in the light of the observations made hereinabove," said the bench while fixing April 19 as the next date of hearing in the case.

The court directed the state gov ernment to file an affidavit of an officer not below the rank of secretary in this court by the next date fixed, detailing out the measures taken in the light of the observations made hereinabove

The court also directed that the district magistrate and chief medical officer (CMO), Prayagraj shall

SPARKS START TO FLY, FIREWORKS NOT FAR BEHIND



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, April 15: With May 2, the day of judgement for the political parties in Kerala fast approaching and a week after the crucial voting for the 140-member Assembly, sparks have started to fly between them on what could be the possible final results.

Incidentally, this is perhaps the first Assembly election in which the ruling government came out with a hashtag that they will become the first government to retain office in the state. The campaign was led by none other than Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan himself.

Hence, contrary to the public perception about the maze of allegations flying thick and fast against the Vijayan government, the hashtag soon became the most talked about thing as many including the Congress-led Opposition leaders felt that electoral history might be re-written.

Though the Left appeared to have the initial edge, as the campaign peaked, the Congress-led UDF also was able to catch up. On the election day, the Sabarimala issue became the most talked about and when the polling ended, but the Left riding on a few pre-poll surveys expressed absolute confidence that they will rewrite electoral history in the state. However, after the initial analysis, the Left which was riding high on presumptions now appears to be jittery, when the first sparks flew from Alappuzha district, which has always been a strong bastion of the CPI-M. State PWD Minister G

Sudhakaran, who failed to get renominated, attacked his own party men and a section of the vernacular media in his hometown. He said that he has always been a loval party man and has held many posts in his very long political career. Soon a war of words was witnesse

This is perhaps the first Assembly election in which

the ruling government came out with a hashtag that they will become the first government to retain office in the state

The war of words took place during a party meeting when both, Anil and Divakaran, came face to face, and it was only after the sen-

iors intervened, things cooled down. In the Congress party, known for mudslinging and washing dirty linen in the public, the first shot has been fired by Kannur Lok Sabha member K Sudhakaran demanding that there should be an overhaul in the party's organisational structure. Likewise in the faction ridden BJP also, things are getting hotter as the present state leadership led by state president K Surendran with the blessings of the Union Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan can come under duress, if they fail to retain the only seat which they won in the 2016 Assembly polls.

Moreover, these two will be put on the hot seat, when the votes at the Kazahkootam Assembly constituency are counted as their arch rival Sobha Surendran's fate will be known May 2. A media critic on condition of anonymity said from the responses that have come so far it appears the ruling Left has got a feel of what's in store and that's why one heard that people like Sudhakaran and the otherwise ret icent CPI are feeling restless.

"Definitely the pre poll surveys predicting the Left to retain power did a world of good for them and it also worked wonders for the Congressled UDF because they were able to put more efforts in their campaign. The situation is fluid as there are a lot of undercurrents, much more than in the past. The clincher would be which front gets more votes from the minority communities. Irrespective of which front wins, one thing is certain, it's going to be a free for all May 2, as the stakes are quite high." said the critic.

Muslim women have right to invoke extra-judicial divorce: Kerala HC



The bench overruled a 1972 ruling of the single bench of the court barring Muslim women from resorting to extra-judicial modes of dissolving marriage.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ochi, April 15: Overruling a



bench of Justices A Muhamed Mustague and CS Dias analysed four major forms of dissolution of marriages as recognised under Islamic Law and protected under the Shariat Act at the instance of the wife This includes Talaq-e-tafwiz, Khula, Mubara'at and Faskh. "On an overall analysis of the scheme of the Shariat Act as well as the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act as above, we are of the considered view that the **Dissolution of Muslim Marriages** Act restricts Muslim women to annul their marriage invoking Faskh except through the intervention of the Court." "All other forms of extra-judicial divorce as referred in Section 2 of the Shariat Act are thus available to Muslim women. We, therefore, hold that the law declared in KC Moyin's case (supra) is not good law," the court said in its judgment April 9.

DESERTED GHATS

nearly five-decade judgment, the Kerala High Court has restored the rights of Muslim women for divorce without resorting to judicial proceedings.

A division bench of the high court pronounced the judgment in a bunch of cases that arose out of different proceedings before the family courts seeking varied relief.

The bench overruled a 1972 ruling of the single bench of the court barring Muslim women from resorting to extra-judicial modes of dissolving marriage

Noting that the Holy Quran recognises the right to divorce equally for both men and women, the bench observed that the

UP girl strangles younger brother with earphone wire

AGENCIES

Rai Bareli, April 15: A 15-year-old girl in Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareli district strangled her 9-vear-old brother with an earphone cable after he objected to her chatting on her phone with a male friend.

The incident took place last Thursday and came to light Monday evening. The accused was sent to juvenile home Tuesday. According to the police, the girl

used to spend several hours on her phone when the parents were not around. The younger brother had complained to their parents about it a few days ago and the parents had reprimanded the girl. On Thursday, when the parents were not at home, the girl started to talk to the friend on her phone.

Rae Bareli Superintendent of Police Shlok Kumar said, "The boy spotted his sister talking over the phone and objected to it. It led to a scuffle between the two, following which he attacked the girl, but she strangled him using an



earphone wire." Rae Bareli's Dalmau police station received information about a missing nineyear-old, following which they instantly launched a hunt to look for the child.

Shlok Kumar said, "Next day, a foul smell started emanating and the parents of the girl opened the storeroom of the house to find the body of their son. After this, the victim's father lodged a named FIR against a neighbour who was

also detained by the police.' The police questioned all the members present on the day, including family members. The girl was questioned by the police in the presence of her parents and the child welfare officer. She confessed to her crime and said she didn't want to kill her brother.



View of Ganga ghat during a night curfew to curb the spread of coronavirus in Varanasi

in the CPI-the second biggest ally in the ruling Left, when one of the candidates - GR Anil, who replaced sitting party legislator C Divakaran at the Nedumangad Assembly constituency in the capital district, accused the latter for failing to be in the forefront of the campaign.

UP panchayat polls could be barometer for Assembly election

PTI PHOTO

THE PANCHAYAT **POLLS ARE EXTREMELY SIGNIFICANT IN UTTAR PRADESH AS THEY ARE BEING HELD LESS THAN A YEAR BEFORE THE STATE GOES TO THE ASSEMBLY ELECTION**

AGENCIES

intervened this year.

In February, the High Court directed the Uttar Pradesh government to complete the panchayat election process by May 25. In 2005 too, panchayat election in Uttar Pradesh was held after the High Court's intervention - that is, two of four panchayat elections required judicial order.

phase panchayat election in Uttar Pradesh began Thursday morning. The Uttar Pradesh panchayat election is being held at four levels – gram panchayat, gram pradhan,



Lucknow, April 15: Panchayat polls in Uttar Pradesh should have happened last year as the term of panchayat bodies ended in December. But the election was not held until the Allahabad High Court

Voting for the first of the four-

block panchayat and zila panchayat.

Over 2.2 lakh seats are to be decided in these panchayat polls, which are not held along party lines. But these polls are extremely significant in Uttar Pradesh as they are being held less than a year before the state goes to the assembly election. Uttar Pradesh is largely a rural state with about 78 per cent population living in rural areas. This means the panchayat election would cover more than three-fourths of Uttar Pradesh in terms of population, and also voters.

The panchayat election is expected to provide a measure of the political standing of all parties, particularly the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Samajwadi Party (SP), and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Even though the candidates are not contesting on a particular party's symbol, these parties ex-

tend support to the nominees and their workers take part in poll campaigns. The BJP released a list of candidates in a centralised manner at the state level for the Uttar Pradesh panchayat election. Several of them were spouses, children and relatives of established leaders of the party. In one case, the BJP was forced to drop a candidate.

The SP and the BSP too have given similar importance to the panchayat polls.

The Uttar Pradesh panchayat election is being held in the middle of a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic when the cases of coronavirus infections are rising in an unprecedented manner, there is an acute shortage of hospital beds, and vaccination drive has fallen awfully short to meet demand.

Additionally, the four-level panchayat polls are being held under the

shadow of unrelenting protests by farmers over three agricultural reform laws that the Narendra Modi government brought last year. Western Uttar Pradesh was one of the biggest theatres of farmers' protest. Farm policies, anyway, have direct impact on rural economy and the lives of villagers.

Thirdly, this is the first grassroots-level election exercise in Uttar Pradesh since the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which saw violent protests particularly by Muslim groups and strict action by security forces in the state. This is expected to play a role in panchayat polls.

Fourthly, this is also the first election test after the formal beginning of the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Construction of this temple had been the BJP's core agenda since 1980s.

The outcome of panchayat election in Uttar Pradesh is likely to give the three main parties — the BJP, the SP and the BSP — a fair idea about how they need to proceed towards assembly election next year.

Since a majority of the population resides in rural areas, the government's policies and schemes are mostly routed through panchayats - the local governing bodies. An estimated 70 per cent of rural development funds reach beneficiaries through panchayat bodies. Mahatma Gandhi National **Rural Employment Guarantee** Scheme, better known as MNREGA, is one such policy.

Visible development works such as road construction, drinking water supply, toilet construction, and housing schemes - are implemented by various panchayat bodies.

These are the works that often dominate election narrative in rural areas. Visible development or absence of it in villages practically decides the fate of a government in an assembly election.

In these COVID-19 times, panchayat bodies have also emerged as the nodal centres in villages for distribution of benefits announced by the central and state governments, and also in vaccination drive. With such high stakes, many see

these panchayat polls in Uttar Pradesh as a 'semi-final' before the 'final' Assembly election. The ruling BJP will be looking for signs of a possible backlash overthe farm laws protest and COVID-19 situation.













national



INDIA SIMPLIFIES PROCESS FOR RE-ISSUE OF OCI CARDS

In a decision which is expected to significantly ease the process for re-issue of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cards, the Central government has simplified the process. Presently, the OCI card is required to be re-issued each time a new passport is issued up to 20 years of age and once after completing 50 years of age, in view of biological changes in the face of the applicant





The farmer faces indifference and neglect from the government, from the mandis of the state to the

borders of Delhi where they are protesting for legitimate demands. The government has turned a blind eye and is pretending that farmers don't even exist

BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

People are facing untimely deaths. The dead bodies are queueing up in state crematoriums for last rites

AKHILESH YADAV SAMAJWADI PARTY SUPREMO

Millions of Puniabi's who live and work abroad have made hetter lives for themselves because those countries

have endeavoured to create relatively classless societies where merit coupled with hard work and

not the colour of your skin or religion or ethnicity is the determining factor that defines whether you succeed or fail MANISH TEWARI CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT **TAKES**

NIA arrests LeT recruiter

Srinagar: A school teacher, who was a recruiter for proscribed Pakistan-based terrorist organisation Lashikar-e-Taiba (LeT), was arrested from his residence in north Kashmir Thursday, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said. Altaf Ahmad Rather, a resident of Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district, was wanted in a case registered in West Bengal last year following the arrest of a woman, Tania Parveen, for her association with the terror group, a spokesman of the NIA said.

JD(U) and RJD shut offices

to ensure availability of essential supplies



'Proclaim Covid

natural calamity'

As Maharashtra bears the Abrunt of the second wave of

Covid-19 sweeping India, Chief

Minister Uddhav Thackeray on

declare the pandemic a "natural

calamity". Penning two separate

Thursday appealed to Prime

Minister Narendra Modi to

letters addressed to the PM,

enable relief funds to be

Thackeray said that this would

extended by the State Disaster

Response Fund (SDRF) for the

pandemic victims. "In view of

necessity. Covid-19 pandemic

calamity for the State Disaster

'Accordingly, the state may be

allowed to pay Gratuitous Relief

of Rs 100 per adult per day and

Rs 60 per child per day during

the period of lockdown to all the

Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and

Priority House Hold (PHH) family

to enable them to register com-

plaints for redressal by the public

authorities on issue of maintain-

states have been asked to review the

situation and take appropriate ac-

India added a record over 2 lakh

new COVID-19 infections in a day

pushing the total tally of cases to

1.40.74.564, while the active cases

surpassed the 14-lakh mark, ac-

cording to the Union Health

Ministry data updated Thursday.

The

ing essential supplies.

tion based on exigencies.

members whose names are

included in the AAY and PHH

ration cards," Thackeray said.

may be notified as a natural

Response Fund (SDRF).

the Covid-19 pandemic situation

in the state, a mini-lockdown is a

AEGNCIES

New Delhi, April 15: Amid concerns over availability of essential items in view of rising COVID-19 cases, the Centre Thursday directed state governments to take steps to stop panic buying by people and ensure there is no hike in prices of key supplies.

In a letter written to state governments, Additional Secretary in Union Consumer Affairs Ministry Nidhi Khare said due to sudden spike in COVID-19 cases, concerns have been raised about "availability of essential commodities to the common man at fair prices.

To maintain smooth supplies, the states have been asked to keep operations of grocery stores/warehouses and chemist shops outside the restrictions under Section 144. "It should also be ensured that the prices of all essential supplies are not increased and they are at fair prices, unless necessitated by cost enhancement due to raw material costs and exchange rates fluctuations," she said.

States have been asked to undertake awareness activity and sensitise public at large to address their concerns so as to "mitigate panic buying" of essential supplies, she added. That apart, states have been asked to set up joint teams of food and civil supplies, legal metrology, food safety, health and policy at state/district level for effective surveillance and enforcement in order to avoid demand-supply mismatch, hoarding and exorbitant pricing of essential

supplies. States have also been directed to set up helplines for consumers

Centre asks states India concerned over US troops' forthcoming exit from Afghan

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 15: India is concerned about the vacuum that will be created after withdrawal of the US and NATO troops from war-torn Afghanistan, Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat said Thursday.

He said that the main concern should not create "space for other disruptors" and therefore, see violence continue in Afghanistan.

India wants to see peace and tranquility returning to the region, he added.

We would be very happy to provide whatever support we can in the development of Afghanistan and making sure peace returns to that nation. People have got tired and are looking at peace," General Rawat said speaking in a virtual discussion at the ongoing Raisina Dialogue 2021. Asked whether it was Iran and Pakistan that could exploit the situation, the Chief of Defence Staff said there are many nations that would like to step into Afghanistan.



"Many people are looking at the opportunity to exploit the vacuum that is being created. Afghanistan is a nation which is rich in resources," he said. Noting there are nations "that tend to exploit resources for their own benefit without the benefit going to the community of that nation", he said: "The international community must step in to ensure Afghanistan is for the Afghans." President Joe Biden announced in Washington on Wednesday that he will withdraw remaining US

troops from the "forever war" in Afghanistan. His plan is to pull out all US forces -- numbering 2,500 now -- by this September 11, the 20th anniversary of the 9/11

> attacks The UN, together with Turkey, and Qatar, announced Tuesday that a high-level conference aimed at ending decades of conflict in Afghanistan will go ahead beginning April 24. There would be representatives from both the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Weekend curfew in Delhi till April 30

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 15: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Thursday announced a curfew this coming weekend and the closure of malls, gymnasiums and auditoriums till April 30 as part of sweeping restrictions to break the chain of the COVID-19 infection in the city.

According to an official order; the weekend curfew will be effective from 10 pm on April 16 (Friday) to 5 am April 19 (Monday), even as gymnasiums, auditoriums, malls, spas, entertainment parks and assembly halls will remain closed in the national capital till April 30. Cinema halls will function with only 30 per cent capacity. In just a matter of weeks, Delhi has become the worst-hit city in the country in the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, a situation that some doctors are describing as an "absolute rampage". Delhi recorded 16,699 fresh cases of COVID-19 Thursday, and 112 fatalities from the infection a frightening positivity rate of 20.22 per cent, the highest ever since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, according to data shared by the health department.



Patna: Considering the rapid increase in Coronavirus cases in Bihar as in other parts of the country, major political parties in Bihar including the ruling JD(U) and main opposition RJD have closed their party offices. While JD(U) shut its state headquarters here from Thursday till April 20, the RJD locked its office from April 15 till further orders seeing the sharp increase in COVID-19 cases.

Oxygen cylinder shortage in hosps

Patna: The mounting number of Covid cases has resulted in a shortage of oxygen supplies at several hospitals in Patna. The city's maior facilities including Patna Medical College and Hospitals (PMCH), Nalanda Medical College and Hospital (NMCH) and AIIMS are full with Covid patients as a result the smaller hospitals and nursing homes are treating the non-Covid patients. But they have been facing the challenges in obtaining the oxygen cylinders from the companies.

4 of family found burnt to death

Visakhapatnam(AP): Four members of a family were found charred to death under mysterious circumstances at Madhurawada here in the wee hours of Thursday. After inspecting the scene of offence this afternoon, Visakhapatnam city Commissioner of Police Manish Kumar Sinha told reporters that they were investigating whether the deaths were accidental, suicidal or homicidal.

'50 people can offer namaz at Nizamuddin Markaz'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi. April 15: The Delhi High Court Thursday allowed 50 people to offer namaz five times a day at Nizamuddin Markaz during Ramzan, saying there is no direction in the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) notification to close down places of worship.

The court also noted that there was "no clear stand" of the central government as to whether religious congregations or gatherings were permitted in other places of worship. Justice Mukta Gupta directed that namaz is to be offered on "first floor above the basement" of the mosque, making clear that it has to be "strictly in accordance" with the

DDMA's April 10 notification and other standard operating protocols

'Considering the fact that re $ligious \, places / places \, of \, worship$ are not closed by the DDMA notification, this court finds that the petitioner (Delhi Waqf Board) has made out a prima facie case for permitting devotees to offer namaz at Masjid Bangley Wali," the court said. It directed the Station House Officer of Nizamuddin police station to permit entry of 50 people five times

a day to offer namaz only on the first floor of the Masjid Bangley Wali. 'Considering the fact that devotees require to perform namaz

five times a day during the holy month of Ramzan and at the same time care has to be taken that COVID-19, which is increasing exponentially in Delhi, does not spread and does not affect the health of the public at large and those who will visit the mosque to offer namaz, the SHO is directed to permit 50 persons five times a day to offer namaz on the first floor of the masjid," the court said, adding that social distance has to be maintained.

The court declined to increase the number of people or allow use of other floors of the mosque for offering prayers as sought by senior advocate Ramesh Gupta on behalf of the Delhi Waqf Board, saying "day-by-day situation is getting worse in Delhi". "Please wake up to the grim situation in Delhi." the court said.

ASI monuments closed for visitors till May 15

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 15: All centrally protected monuments, museums and sites under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) have been closed with immediate effect till May 15 due to the surge in coronavirus cases in the country, the Union culture ministry said Thursday. An order to this effect was issued by the ASI and it was tweeted by Culture Minister Prahlad Patel this evening.

"Due to the prevailing COVID situation, it has been decided to close all centrally protected monuments, sites and museums under the ASI with immediate effect



orders," the ASI said. These in-

clude 3,693 monuments and 50

In live monuments like Puri

Jagannath Temple and Somnath

Temple, daily 'puja' will be con-

ducted but no public gathering

will be allowed, said Nitin

museums.

advisor. Last year, too, all monuments and sites maintained by the ASI were closed due to the coronavirus pandemic on March 17. They reopened in July with strict restrictions like mandatory wearing of masks, cap on the number of visitors and social distancing.

Tripathi, the ministry's media

The curbs were relaxed later in the year. India's daily COVID-19 cases surged to a record high of 2.00.739 on Thursday, taking the country's cumulative tally to 1,40,74,564, according to Union health ministry data. The death toll climbed to 1,73,123 with 1,038 new fatalities, the highest since October 3, the data stated

Govt begins mapping of states with greater need of oxygen

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 15: Amid reports of shortage of medical oxygen from various parts of the country, the Centre has clarified that the present availability of "oxygen is sufficient", however, it has started mapping of states with greater need of oxygen.

Of the states with greater needs of oxygen are Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Chhattisgarh. Besides, there is more consumption of medical oxygen in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Rajasthan.

Considering reports, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

(MoHF) maintained that India's daily production Capacity of medical oxygen is 7,287 metric tonne and the current stock is more than 50,000 metric tonne, more than the daily consumption of 3,842 metric tonne. However, the government has expected that "the challenge presently is to move oxygen from states with less necessity to states

with increased necessity' The Ministry has said, "mapping of the surplus sources with states that have greater need for oxygen has been started in consultation with the manufacturers, states and other stakeholders".

This has been undertaken through coordinated planning be-



in the country

For the purpose, the Ministry

said, a sub-group has been formed

tween the Central and state governments to map their requirements up to April 30 with the available sources and stocks of oxygen under Ministry of Road Transport

and Highways (MoRTH) with Ministry of Railways and transport departments of states to facilitate the movement of transport tankers for Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO).

'Moving of oxygen tankers by rail is also being actively worked out." For the seamless movement of oxygen tankers, orders have been given by PESO (Petroleum and Safety Organisation) for conversion of argon and nitrogen tankers for use as oxygen tankers; thereby the fleet available for transportation of tankers has been enhanced.

Free movement of oxygen tankers inter-state has been facilitated through MoRTH without registration in other states. Further, mapping of cylinders state-wise has been done and industrial cylinders have been permitted to be used for medical oxygen after due purging. Placing of orders for purchase

of another one lakh oxygen cylinders by MoHFW is also being undertaken and PSA plants sanctioned under PM-Cares are being closely reviewed for early completion of 100 per cent of the plants to enhance selfgeneration of oxygen in hospitals especially in remote areas.

Noting that "there is sufficient production capacity of around 7,127 metric tonne for oxygen in the country", the Minister said the surplusoxygen available with the steel plants is also being utilized as per the need.



national



The Pandemic situation is very serious and no one knows how long it will last. People should think for the best but prepare for the worst NITIN GADKARI

DIFFICULT TIMES

Supreme Court judge Justice MR Shah Thursday said all his staff members involved in arranging virtual hearings have tested positive for Covid-19. Justice Shah was sitting on a bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud as it took up a case through video-conferencing. In the pre-lunch hearing, he broke the news to the lawyers



UNION MINISTER



At this time, due to COVID-19, life may be put in danger, so this is not the right time to protest (farmers' stir)

MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER

The sanitisation drive in the revenue villages is already in the process, and now it is time to sanitise all the cold storages operating in the state YOGI ADITYANATH

UTTAR PRADESH CM

While vaccination has increased to 90,000 per day, we need to further take it up to 200,000 per day AMARINDER SINGH

PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

U'khand forest fire toll rises

Dehradun: The death toll in Uttarakhand forest fires since January this year has risen to eight with one more person dying while dousing a wildfire in Chamoli district, a police official said Thursday. Raghuvir Lal, 65, a retired PWD employee, was charred to death when he was engulfed in flames while trying to extinguish a blaze in Soniyala forest area near his farm in Gadoli village Tuesday, Station House Officer of Gairsain police station, Subhash Jakhmola, said.

Two burnt alive

Hyderabad: Two persons were charred to death after a moving container truck caught fire on the Outer Ring Road here Thursday. Police said the fire engulfed the container truck after it hit another vehicle from rear. The accident occurred near Telangana State Police Academy at Himayat Sagar.

India will not get pushed under any pressure: Rawat

INDIA AND CHINA ARE LOCKED IN A MILITARY STANDOFF AT MULTIPLE FRICTION POINTS IN EAST-

ERN LADAKH SINCE EARLY MAY LAST YEAR THAT HAS SIGNIFICANTLY STRAINED BILATERAL TIES AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 15: India stood firm in preventing a change of status quo on the northern borders and the country proved it will not get pushed under any pressure, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat said Thursday, referring to the border standoff with China in eastern Ladakh.

In his address at the Raisina Dialogue here, Gen Rawat said China felt that it will be able to compel nations to give in to its demands by doing a little bit of "shove and push" as it has superior armed forces because of technological ad-

vantage. "But, I think India stood firm on the northern borders and we have proven that we will not get **STANDOFF** pushed," he said at the

virtual conference. The Chief of Defence Staff(CDS) said India was able to get support of the international community by standing firm in preventing the attempt of chang-

MAN HACKS 6 **OF FAMILY TO DEATH IN AP**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Visakhapatnam, April 15: A person allegedly hacked six members of a family, including an infant, to death and later surrendered to the police at a village in Visakhapatnam district early Thursday.

City Commissioner of Police Manish Kumar Sinha visited Juttada village under Pendurthi mandal to take stock of the situation. Police said Battina Appala Raju attacked the family members of Bammidi Ramana with a large sickle, allegedly owing to a running feud between the two families for some time now.



ing the status quo in the region. 'They tried to ensure that they can change the status quo by the use of disruptive LADAKH technologies without using force...They thought that

India, as a nation, will succumb to the pressures that they have been putting on us because of the technological advantage that they have," he said, adding that did not happen. Gen Rawat said the in-

ternational community came to India's support to say that "yes there is an international base-rule order which every nation must follow. That is what we have been able to achieve."

As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, India and China completed withdrawal of troops and weapons from the North and South banks of Pangong lake in February. The two sides are now engaged in talks to extend the disengagement process to the remaining friction points. "They feel that they have arrived and they have a superior armed force because of the technological advantage that they have," Gen Rawat said.

"They have been able to create disruptive technologies which can paralyse systems of the adversary, and therefore, they feel that just by doing a little bit of shove and push, they will be able to compel nations to give in to their demands,' he said. Referring to modernisation of the armed forces, Gen Rawat described the F-35 fighter jets of the US as a state of the art platform but added that he was not sure whether the US will share the technology with India.

Organised by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), a thinktank, in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs(MEA), Raisina Dialogue is India's premier conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics, and its sixth edition is being held from April 13 to 16.

MARCHING AHEAD

Security personnel during the 73rd Himachal Day parade at the Ridge, in Shimla

CJI, SAYS SA BOBDE The observation from the CJI came during the mentioning of an application filed by the SCWLA to consider elevating experienced women lawyers

TIME FOR WOMAN

from the top court as High Court's judges



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 15: A Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice of India SA Bobde Thursday said the time has come for a woman Chief Justice of India, however when women lawyers are asked to come on the bench, they refuse citing family responsibilities.

The observation from the Chief Justice came during the mentioning of an application filed by the Supreme Court Women Lawyers Association (SCWLA), through advocate Sneha Kalita, to consider elevating experienced women lawyers from the top court as High Court's judges, as a step to increase the number of women judges in the judiciary. SCWLA, in the application, said women's participation in the justice delivery system is an important factor for societal progress and gender equality. Chief Justice Bobde said, "We

think the time has come for woman Chief Justice of India. Kalita submitted the memorandum of procedure (MoP), but does not have a whisper on women judges' appointment.'

The bench also comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Surva Kant replied: "Chief Justices of High Courts stated that when lawyers are asked to come on the bench, they deny saying that they have domestic responsibility or their children are in class 11 or 12." The bench clarified that this information has been communicated to the court, when women lawyers declined to accept judgeship. The bench said, "we have the

interest of women in mind only and that, we need only capable candidates." Concluding the hearing in the matter, the Chief Justice said we will deliberate what to say in the matter, however the top court did not issue notice.

The application filed by SCWLA highlighted the "abysmally low" 11.04 per cent share of women as judges in higher judiciary. The application also gave a chart on women judges presently posted in various High Courts across the country. "From the chart it is reflected that, from the 1,080 of sanctioned strength of judges (including both Permanent and Additional Judges) we have 661 number of judges out of which, only 73 are women judges which accounts for a 11.04 of women

judges", said the plea. The women lawyer association sought from the top court to issue an appropriate order/direction to the Secretary, Department of Justice, Ministry of Law & Justice, government of India to expedite the process of inclusion and appointment of women judges on meritorious ground to the respective Supreme Court and High Court benches

FIR against Mamata for instigating people

2 Nigerians held

Bangalore: Four drug peddlers including two Nigerians and a Keralite, who were selling drugs outside a montessori school have been arrested with synthetic drugs worth ₹20 lakh, police said Thursday. Acting on a tip-off, the police arrested the drug peddlers when they were selling drugs outside Vriddhi Montessori School at Bagalur Tuesday afternoon.

Man booked

Thane: The Navi Mumbai police have registered an FIR against a 53-year-old school teacher for allegedly attempting to kill his wife over a domestic dispute, an official said Thursday. According to the police, Mukund Deshmukh allegedly attacked his wife Poornima (47) with a hammer, leaving her critically wounded at their home in Panvel in the intervening night of April 11 and 12. The victim was rushed to a hospital, where her condition remains critical, while the accused fled the scene following the attack, the official said.

30 shanties gutted

New Delhi: Around 30 shanties were gutted after a major fire broke out in a slum cluster in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Camp of west Delhi's Paschimpuri, a Delhi Fire Services official said Thursday. No injuries were reported in the incident that occurred Wednesday night, the official said. According to the fire department official, a call about the blaze was received at around 9.55 pm and 25 fire tenders were pressed into action.



'What triggered the mayhem is not clear yet. We are investigating whether it was old rivalry or an extra-marital affair that led to the killings," a senior police official said.

Besides Ramana, his kin Usharani (35), Allu Ramadevi (53), N Aruna (37), Usharani's children Uday (2) and Urvisha (6 months) were done to death, according to police. Appala Raju later went to the Pendurthi police station and surrendered. The bodies have been removed for post-mortem

while police were questioning Raju to establish facts in the case.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cooch Behar (WB), April 15: An FIR has been lodged against West

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at a police station here, alleging that she instigated voters to gherao central forces and that, in turn, led to the incident of firing in Sitalkuchi and the subsequent death of four persons.

Siddique Ali Mia, the zilla president of BJP's minority cell in Cooch Behar, cited the TMC supremo's comments during a rally in Banerswar area as he filed a complaint on Wednesday claiming that her address provoked people to attack CISF personnel during the fourth phase of state elections. He attached a video clip of

Banerjee's speech in his complaint at Mathabhanga police station.



Villagers, after being provoked by such provocative statements of Mamata Banerjee, tried to snatch fire arms of the deployed paramilitary forces, Mia said.

"The said villagers including women launched attack upon the paramilitary forces with the intention of causing bodily injury, knowing it to be likely to cause death of the deployed paramilitary forces," he wrote in the FIR, a copy

24-HOUR CAMPAIGN BAN ON DILIP GHOSH

PTI PHOTO

The Election Commission Thursday evening imposed a 24-hour campaign ban on the BJP's West Bengal president Dilip Ghosh for his "there will be Sitalkuchi in several places" remarks. The order said the Commission "sternly warns" Ghosh and advises him to desist from using such statements while making public utterances during the period when the Model Code of Conduct is in force.

of which is with the PTI.

The BJP leader, when contacted, said he would launch a massive protest demanding the chief minister's arrest, if the police "sit idle" on the FIR in the next few days. "She is solely responsible for the

death of those four people. She is answerable to all the voters of our

district," Mia stated. At least four persons died outside a polling booth in Sitalkuchi assembly constituency on April 10 when CISF personnel opened fire in "self defence" allegedly after coming under attack from locals. The Election Commission had suspended the voting exercise at the booth following the incident. In its statement, the EC said, "The joint report of the two special observers has been received ... Wherein they interalia stated that recourse to open fire by the CISF personnel became absolutely necessary in order to save the lives of the voters lined up at the polling booth, those of other polling personnel and their own lives as the mob had attempted snatching their weapons.'

MISSION India, France sign agreement for cooperation

GAGANYAAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 15: Space agencies of India and France Thursday signed an agreement for cooperation for the former's first human space mission, Gaganyaan, a move that will enable Indian flight physicians to train at French facilities.

French space agency CNES said under the agreement, equipment developed by it, tested and still operating aboard the International Space Station (ISS) will be made available to Indian crews.

The CNES will also be supply ing fireproof carry bags made in France to shield equipment from shocks and radiation, it said.

The agreement was announced during French Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian's visit to the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) headquarters in Bengaluru.

ISRO has asked CNES to help prepare for the Gaganyaan mission and to serve as its single European contact in this domain, the French space agency said.

"Under the terms of the agreement, CNES will train India's flight physicians and CAPCOM mission control teams in France at the CADMOS centre for the development of microgravity applications and space operations at CNES in Toulouse and at the European Astronaut Centre (EAC) in Cologne, Germany," the CNES said.

The training of astronauts is a critical aspect of the human space \rightarrow mission project. Flight physicians or surgeons are responsible for astronaut's health before, during and after the flight. Currently, all space physicians are from the Indian Air Force.-France has a well-established mechanism for space medicine.

Temperature crosses 40°C in northern India

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 15: No heat wave Conditions are likely over the country Thursday but heavy rainfall is very likely at isolated places over Coastal & South interior Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Karaikal April 16, said the Ministry of Earth Sciences. However, heat wave conditions were observed in isolated pockets over Saurashtra and Kutch and Harvana April 14.

According to the National Weather Forecasting Centre of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), maximum temperatures more than 40 degree centigrade were recorded at most places over East Uttar Pradesh; at many places over Haryana, Chandigarh & Delhi, Gangetic West Bengal and West Rajasthan; at a few places over Madhva Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat and West Uttar Pradesh and at isolated places over Chhattisgarh,



Vidarbha, Odisha, Jharkhand and

Marathwada. As per the IMD, thunderstorm with lightning, hail & gusty winds (speed reaching 40-50 kmph) is very

likely at isolated places over Telangana; with lightning, hail & gusty winds (speed reaching 30-40 kmph) also likely at isolated places over Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra,

coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam. Odisha and Chhattisgarh; with lightning & gusty winds (speed reaching 40-50 kmph) at isolated places over Rayalaseema, Marathwada; lightning & gusty winds (speed reaching 30-40 kmph) at isolated places over Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan & Muzaffarabad, Rajasthan and Punjab. "Heavy rainfall very likely at isolated places over Odisha, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe and Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal. Heat Wave conditions very likely in isolated pockets over Haryana and Saurashtra & Kutch," the IMD said.

While Friday thunderstorm with lightning, hail & gusty winds (speed reaching 30-40 kmph) is very likely at isolated places over Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan & Muzaffarabad; with lightning and gusty winds (speed reaching 40-50 kmph) at isolated places over





Assam & Meghalaya; with lightning & gusty winds (speed reaching 30-40 kmph) at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram & Tripura, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry & Karaikal and Kerala & Mahe and with lightning at isolated places over East Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, Sub-Himalayan West Bengal & Sikkim, Madhya Maharashtra, Marathwada, Odisha, Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam, Rayalaseema, Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Karnataka and Lakshadweep.

Heavy rainfall is very likely at isolated places over Coastal and South Interior Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe and Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry & Karaikal.

Duststorm/Thunderstorm with gusty winds (speed reaching 30-40 kmph) very likely at isolated places over West Rajasthan.



international

China increasingly is a near-peer competitor, challenging the **United States in multiple areas** while pushing to revise global norms in ways that favour the authoritarian Chinese system AVRIL HAINES DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE, US

US CONGRESS RESOLUTION TO RECOGNISE 'VAISAKHI'

A US Congressman has introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives to recognise the significance of 'Vaisakhi' and those who celebrate it



uote 77

The denial of bodily autonomy is a violation of women and girls' fundamental human rights that

reinforces inequalities and perpetuates violence arising from gender discrimination

NATALIA KANEM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNFPA



points out, is a very real one in many parts of the world, those that have established democracies and those

where democratic governance is quite fragile WILLIAM BURNS | CIA DIRECTOR



women and girls, from Bosnia to Rwanda, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere we will rightly be asked what we did to honour our commitments

PRAMILA PATTEN UN SPL REPRESENTATIVE ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

SHORT TAKES

Bulgarian PM formally resigns

Sofia: Bulgaria's Prime Minister Boyko Borisov Thursday resigned from his coalition government, as expected, after the parliamentary election earlier this month. The announcement was made by the Interim President of the newly elected Parliament, Mika Saykova, during the first session, dpa news agency reported. The resignation of the nationalist government, which has been in office since 2017, was to be routinely approved by MPs. Thousands of protesters had demanded his resignation over corruption allegations during summer protests in 2020.

12 missing from capsized ship

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

officials told IANS

Kathmandu, April 15: Indian traders and businessmen doing business in China are now queuing up in hospitals in Kathmandu to get the Chinese Covid-19 vaccines, according to officials. The officials said that there was

ten in Chinese and they spoke in Hindi, the officials said, adding that it was later found they were flying from India only to receive the jab. Over 30 Indian traders who are an acute surge of Indian busidoing business in China got the nessmen and traders in Kathmandu Covid jab Wednesday, while a huge hospitals this week. We started

Kathmandu to receive the jab and

going back after the immunisation,

they added. Some Indian traders

had shown their identity cards writ-

number are still looking for the jab, probing this issue after we noticed a senior official at the Shukraraj that Indian businessmen are getting **Tropical and Infectious Disease** jabs, two senior Nepal government Hospital in Teku told IANS. Since Beijing has made Covid After the probe, we came to know vaccination mandatory to enter the that Indian businessmen flying to

country, Indian traders and busi-



nessmen are submitting the identity of doing business in China, the official said.

But only later we came to know that they were Indians, the official added. March 16, the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu issued a notice and informed that anyone visiting Beijing should have to submit a certificate of Covid-19 vaccination manufactured in China while applying for the visa.

Nepal has recently received 800,000 doses of Chinese vaccine called Vero Cell developed by Sinopharm as a grant and started inoculating its selected population.

Thursday, a similar line of Indian businessmen are queuing up in Kathmandu-based government hospitals to get the jabs, the officials confirmed. After the incident came into the light, authorities will now shut down the facility to the Indian businessmen and asked anyone seeking jab should provide a Nepali citizenship. After receiving the

Indian traders getting Chinese Covid jab in Nepal Chinese vaccine, the Nepal government has started inoculating those involved in essential services; students studying in China under the Chinese government scholarship but are currently stuck in Nepal due to pandemic; Nepali students preparing to leave for China for the higher study; and people involved in cross-border trade between Nepal and China.

As of Wednesday, 54 000 individuals have received the Chinese jabs. Amid the worsening Covid situation in India, Nepal is in also a spot. Covid cases are rising in Nepal

particularly people coming from India using the open border.

UAE mediating between India, Pak to restore 'functional relations'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Islamabad, April 15: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is facilitating and mediating back-channel talks between India and Pakistan with an aim to turn their rivalry into a healthy and functional relationship, its envoy in Washington has confirmed.

As part of the backdoor talks and meetings, top intelligence officials from both Pakistan and India have had secret meetings in Dubai during January 2021 as the UAE played important part in bringing the two sides to calm military tensions over the Kashmir region.

UAE played a role in bringing Kashmir escalation down and created a ceasefire, hopefully ultimately leading to restoring diplomats and getting the relationship back to a healthy level, said Ambassador Yousef Al Otaiba, during a virtual discussion with Stanford University's Hoover Institution.

They might not sort of become best friends but at least we want to get it (relations) to a level where its functional, where its operational, where they are speaking to each other, he added.

The revelation made by the UAE Ambassador to Washington has hinted towards the US's indirect intervention in the India-Pakistan relationship through its trusted ally, the UAE. It has also raised questions over statements from Pakistan's top ministers, of not

having any backdoor channel ac- ceasefire along the borders.



the UAE Ambassador to Washington has hinted towards the US's indirect intervention in the India-Pakistan

relationship through its trusted ally, the UAE

tive between India and Pakistan. Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has repeatedly maintained that there can be no talk with India until the Narendra Modi government reverses its decision to abrogate Articles 370 and 35A stripping the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifuracting into two Union Territories.

However, the intervention of the UAE to de-escalate tensions between India and Pakistan, especially in reference to the boiling tensions along the Line of Control (LoC), has certainly yielded positive results as both sides agreed to enforce the

Fire at Saudi varsity after Houthi attack

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Rivadh, April 15: A fire broke out at a university in southern Saudi Arabia Thursday after the air defence system intercepted an attack by Yemen's Houthi militia.

Saudi air defences intercepted and destroyed four bomb-laden drones and five ballistic missiles between Wednesday evening and early Thursday launched by the Houthis towards the southern Saudi city of Jazan, according to a statement by a Saudi-led military coalition.

"The interception resulted in scattered debris on campus, which caused a limited fire that was contained," dpa news agency quoted coalition spokesman Turki al-Malki as saying, adding that there were no casualties.

In Yemen, a Houthi military spokesman said the group launched 11 ballistic missiles and one drone targeting an oil facility for Aramco, Patriot anti-missile platforms and sensitive targets in Jazan. The attack on Aramco "caused a huge fire", the Houthis said. There was no comment from Saudi Arabia on an attack on an Aramco facility.

The biggest attack on Aramco was in 2019, when two of the company's facilities were hit, temporarily disrupting crude oil production.

The Houthis claimed responsibility for the attacks although Saudi Arabia and the US blamed Iran, which denied involvement.

Saudi Arabia has formed the coalition in March 2015 to support the internationally recognized government of Yemen against the Houthis, who control the capital Sanaa and other areas.

All French nationals advised to leave Pak



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, April 15: The French embassy here Thursday advised all French nationals in Pakistan to temporarily leave the country after violent protests by a radical religious group that has now been banned by the government. The Tehreek-i-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) took to streets Monday to launch violent protests to force the government to expel the French ambassador over blasphemous caricatures published last year. However, no French citizen was reportedly targeted so far but the embassy has urged all the French citizens to leave Pakistan, apparently as a precautionary measure. "Due to the serious threats to French interests in Pakistan, French nationals and French companies are advised to temporarily leave the country," the embassy said in an email message to its citizens in Pakistan. It said that the departures will be carried out by existing com mercial airlines. Interior minister Sheikh Rashid announced Wednesday to ban the TLP and officials said that Prime Minister Imran Khan and his cabinet endorsed the summary by the interior ministry to outlaw the group. The trouble began after police arrested the TLP chief Saad Rizvi Monday ahead of the April 20 deadline by the group to expel the French ambassador.

End of America's forever war Biden has announced that all US troops would be withdrawn from the strife-torn country by September 11, the 20th anniversary of 9/11 attack

Washington, April 15: Declaring that the war in Afghanistan was never meant to be a "multigenerational undertaking," President Joe Biden has announced that all US troops would be withdrawn from the strife-torn country by September 11 to end America's longest war that has cost trillions of dollars and the lives of over 2,400 American soldiers.

During a televised address to the nation Wednesday, Biden said that keeping thousands of troops grounded and concentrated in just one country at a cost of billions each year made "little sense" to him and to other leaders and urged countries in the region, especially Pakistan, as well as Russia. China. India and Turkey to "do more" to help ensure peace in Afghanistan.

They all have a significant stake in the stable future for Afghanistan," he said while speaking from the Treaty Room of the White House where former President George W Bush first informed the nation of US strikes on al-Qaida training camps in Afghanistan in October 2001.

"It is time to end America's longest war." he said.

Biden said the US will begin final withdrawal from Afghanistan May 1 of this year. There were 2,500 to 3,000 US troops in Afghanistan when Biden took office in January. 'We will not conduct a hasty rush to the exit. We'll do it responsibly, deliberately, and safely. And we will do it in full coordina-

tion with our allies and partners,

London, April 15: The risk of

rare blood clotting following the

COVID-19 infection is around 100

times greater than normal, several

times higher than it is post-vac-

cination or following influenza,

according to a new University of

Oxford study published Thursday.

The research found that the

after COVID-19 than in any of the

comparison groups, with 30 per

cent of these cases occurring in the

Compared to the current COVID-

19 vaccines being administered,

this risk is between 8-10 times

higher, and compared to the base-

rare blood clotting

known as Cerebral

Venous Thrombosis

(CVT) is more common

under 30s

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Blood clot risk higher from

We went for two reasons: to get rid of Bin Laden and to end the safe haven. From the very beginning, you may recall, I never thought we were there to somehow unify Afghanistan JOE BIDEN US PRESIDENT

Biden wipes his eye as he walks through Arlington National Cemetery to honor fallen veterans of the Afghan conflict in Arlington, Virginia

Blinken in Afghan to sell troop withdrawal

Kabul: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken made an unannounced visit to Afghanistan Thursday to sell Afghan leaders and a wary public on President Joe Biden's decision to withdraw all American troops from the country and end America's longest war. Blinken sought to assure senior Afghan politicians that the United States remains committed to the country despite Biden's announcement. Later, in a meeting with Abdullah Abdullah, who heads the National Reconciliation Council, Blinken repeated his message, saying that "we have a new chapter, but it is a new chapter that we're writing together." "We are grateful to your people, your country, your administration," Abdullah said.

Soon after, Biden went to the out was not a tough decision.

who now have more forces in Afghanistan than we do," he said. American troops, as well as forces deployed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allies and operational partners, will be out of Afghanistan before "we mark the 20th anniversary of that heinous attack September 11 (2001)." Biden said

Arlington National Cemetery to pay homage to the American soldiers who died in the Afghanistan war, which began in 2001 after Al Qaeda terrorists based in Afghanistan attacked the World Trade Centre in New York.

Responding to questions at the emetery. Biden said the troop-pull-



Port Fourcho: The Coast Guard searched for 12 people missing off the coast of Louisiana Wednesday after finding one person dead and pulling six survivors from rough seas when their commercial vessel capsized in hurricane-force winds. Coast Guard Capt Will Watson said winds were 130 to 145 km/h and seas were 7 to 9 feet when the Seacor Power lift vessel overturned. "That's challenging under any circumstance," Watson said.

1 killed, 12 hurt in market blast

Baghdad: A powerful explosion rocked a market in east Baghdad Thursday killing one person and injuring 12 others, according to Iraq's military. The cause of the blast in the city's Sadr City area, in the Habibiya neighborhood, was not immediately known. It sent a cloud of black smoke above the area. A military statement said one person was killed and 12 injured, according to a preliminary investigation.

21 killed in bus, truck collision

Cairo: A bus overturned while trying to pass a truck on a highway in southern Egypt Tuesday, causing a collision that killed at least 21 people and injured three others, authorities said. The bus was travelling from Cairo when it turned over and was hit by the truck on a road in the southern province of Assiut, 320 kilometers south of Cairo, Assiut Gov. Essam Saad said in a statement.

ROLLING OUT IN WHAT IS BEING **BILLED AS THE BIGGEST UPDATE TO GOOGLE EARTH**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

San Ramon, April 15: The Google Earth app is adding a new video feature that draws upon nearly four

COVID than vax: UK study line, approximately 100 times higher. The study follows reports of possible links between the OxfordAstraZeneca vaccine and rare cases of CVT, which are undergoing deeper investigations by the medicines regulators even as the jabs have been ruled as safe and effective.

"There are concerns about possible associations between vaccines

and CVT, causing governments and regulators to restrict the use of certain vaccines. Yet, one key question remained unknown 'What is the risk of CVT following a diagnosis of COVID-19'," said Paul Harrison, one of study authors as Professor of Psychiatry and Head of the Translational Neurobiology Group at the University of Oxford.



Migrant people and workers leave the city in speedboats before the countrywide lockdown imposed as the coronavirus cases increased, at Mawa ferry port in Munshiganj, Bangladesh

Google Earth adds time lapse video to depict climate change

THE TOOL UNVEILED **THURSDAY IS** IN FIVE YEARS

decades of satellite imagery to vividly illustrate how climate change has affected glaciers, beaches, forests and other places around the world. The tool unveiled Thursday is

rolling out in what is being billed as the biggest update to Google Earth in five years. Google says it undertook the complex project in partnership with several government agencies, including NASA in the US and its European counterpart, in hopes that it will help a mass audience grasp the sometimes abstract concept of climate change

in more tangible terms through its free Earth app. Cornell University climate sci-

entist Natalie Mahowald believes



that mission may be accomplished. "This is amazing," she told The Associated Press after watching a preview of the new feature. "Trying to get people to understand the scope of the climate change and

the land use problem is so difficult because of the long time and spatial scales. I would not be surprised if this one bit of software changes many people's minds about the scale of the impact of humans on the

environment." This isn't the first time time-lapse satellite imagery has been used to demonstrate show how parts of the world are changing before our eyes due to a changing climate. Most scientists agree that climate change is being driven by pollution primarily produced by humans.

But earlier images have mostly focused on melting glaciers and haven't been widely available on an already popular app like Google Earth, which can be downloaded on most of the more than 3 billion smartphones now in use around the world. Google is promising that people will be able to see a time lapse presentation of just about anywhere they want to search. The feature also includes a storytelling mode highlighting 800 different places on the planet in both 2D and 3D formats. Those videos also will be available on Google's YouTube video site, a service more widely used than the Earth app.

The feature was created from 24 million satellite images taken every year from 1984 to 2020 and provided by NASA, the US Geological Survey and the European Union, according to Google. The time lapse technology was created with the help of Carnegie Mellon University.

Google plans to update the time lapse imagery at least once a year.













The fiscal position has deteriorated after the pandemic and now we estimate fiscal deficit widened to 11.8% of GDP in FY21, up from 7.8% in FY20 TANVEE GUPTA JAIN | CHIEF ECONOMIST, UBS SECURITIES (INDIA)

APPLE, PARTNERS LAUNCH \$200mn 'RESTORE FUND'

iPhone maker Apple has announced a carbon removal initiative, 'Restore Fund' that will make investments in forestry projects to remove carbon from the atmosphere, while generating a financial return for investors



uote

'Good opportunity for Tesla to begin production'

shoots were visible in blue collar hiring in the second half of 2020, with demand surges during the festive season, the current sentiment in hiring is most welcome

While green

TARUN SINHA CEO, OLX PEOPLE Hydrogen has great potential to emerge as a future source of energy. The

enthusiasm about hydrogen has a simple reason; whether it's used in a fuel cell or burned to create heat, wherever hydrogen replaces fossil fuels, it slows global warming

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN OIL MINISTER

On an average, India requires 30,000 tonnes of pet foods. In India, there are pet food manufacturers but not sufficient enough to meet demand and guality OP CHAUDHARY CHAIRMAN, AWBI

SHORT TAKES

Mid-single-digit growth for PepsiCo

New Delhi: Global food and beverages major PepsiCo said it has clocked midsingle-digit growth in the Indian market in Q1 of 2021. This was slower than some emerging markets like Brazil, Russia and China, where it reported double-digit growth in Q1, PepsiCo said. "Our developing and emerging markets remained resilient and delivered mid-singledigit organic revenue growth in the quarter, including double-digit growth in Brazil, Russia and China, mid-singledigit growth in India," it said.

Aiwa re-enters Indian market

New Delhi: Japanese consumer electronics brand Aiwa Thursday re-entered the Indian market by launching personal audio devices. Earlier, Aiwa was present in the Indian market through third-party agreements. This is the first time that the company is entering the market directly. In the first phase, Aiwa has introduced five new products in the audio range and plans to expand to other products categories, including highfidelity speakers, televisions and air purifiers.

AGENCIES New Delhi, April 15: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari Thursday said American electric car major Tesla has a golden opportunity to set up its manufacturing facility in India given the coun-

try's thrust on e-vehi-

cles. Tesla is already

sourcing various

auto compo-

nents from

Indian au-

tomakers and

setting up base

here would be

economically vi-

Dialogue.

able for it, Road

Transport. Highways

and MSMEs Minister

Gadkari said while ad-

it will be golden opportunity for them to start manufacturing facility in India because as the automobile components are concerned, already Tesla is taking a lot of components from the Indian

manufacturers. So there will be will suggest them availability." (Tesla) that it will be a the mingolden opportunity for them to ister start manufacturing facility in India said. because as the automobile At

"I will suggest them (Tesla) that

components are concerned, already the Tesla is taking a lot of components same from the Indian manufacturers. So time, there will be availability the Indian NITIN GADKARI, HIGHWAYS AND market will MSMEs MINISTER be good for

Tesla also, he added. Gadkari exuded confidence dressing a session at the Raisina that given the improvement in

Indian products, within two years India would be capable of producing e-vehicles of Tesla's standard.

"So in the interest of Tesla, I suggest them that you start manufacturing as early as possible. It will be beneficial for you," Gadkari said. He said as far as manufacturing elsewhere and only marketing in

India was concerned, the company was free to do it but "if they manufacture here in India we will support them."

EVs IN INDIA

He also said Tesla can make industrial clusters and create and develop its own vendors here.

"They can export a lot of vehicles from India and as compared with

the other countries, it will be economically viable," the minister said. The government has a special thrust on e-vehicles and such vehicles will be easily available in six months to one year span and the sce-

nario will change, he said. "It is good for them (Tesla). I request them and suggest them but it is up to them to decide about it. But meanwhile, within two years whatever the e-vehicles we are getting into the market from Indian companies, they will be up to the mark of Tesla," he asserted.

The minister added that at a preliminary stage Tesla wants to start marketing, beginning with Bangalore, Delhi and Mumbai. Post approval to the vehicles

scrapping policy, "within five years India will be number one manufacturing hub for electric vehicle in the world", he said.

our clients with the same care, em-

pathy and dedication that we do

today," Citi India's Chief Executive

nounced today will strengthen our

ability to bring the full global power

of Citi to our institutional clients.

reinforcing our leading positions

across corporate, commercial and

investment banking, treasury and

trade solutions, as well as markets

and securities services." he added.

and started the consumer bank-

ing business in 1985.

March 2020.

Citi had entered India in 1902

From a social perspective, the

consumer bank had extended loans

of ₹27.911 crore to agriculture. af-

fordable housing, renewable en-

ergy and MSMEs (Micro, Small

and Medium Enterprises) as of

... the sharpened strategy an-

Ashu Khullar said.





Washington, April 15: Google Thursday pledged funds for 250,000 Covid-19 vaccinations and technical assistance towards vaccine delivery in low and middle income countries amidst a surge in infections across the world. The internet search giant also announced that it is helping to fund pop-up vaccine sites in the US and committing an additional \$250 million in Ad Grants to connect people to accurate vaccine information.

'We're also announcing that Google Cloud is launching a virtual agent where people without internet access can schedule vaccine appointments and ask questions about eligibility and availability over the phone - in up to 28 languages and dialects," it said.

The announcement came as Google's Chief Health Officer Dr Karen DeSalvo joined an event co-hosted by Gavi - the vaccine alliance - and the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to kick off a campaign to fund vaccines for low and middle income countries.

In a blog post, Google said more people have access to the Covid-19 vaccine, it is making it easier to learn why, when and where one can get immunised.

Tanishg announces – anniversary offers



Exports up 60% in March Citi to exit consumer but fall by 7% in FY'21

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVCIE

New Delhi, April 15: Base effect, along with healthy demand conditions abroad, pushed India's merchandise exports higher by 60.29% on a year-on-year basis in March 2021, official data showed Thursday. The country's merchandise exports during the month under review increased to \$34.45 billion as compared to \$21.49 billion in March 2020.

'Non-petroleum and non-gems and jewellery exports in March 2021 were \$27.42 billion, as compared to \$16.95 billion in March 2020, registering a positive growth of 61.75%," said a Ministry of Commerce and Industry statement said on the basis of preliminary data.

"Non-petroleum and non-gems and jewellery exports in April-March 2020-21 were \$238.72 billion, as compared to \$236.17 billion for the corresponding period in 2019-20, which is an increase of 1.08%.

Similarly, India's imports increased, rising by 53.74% to \$48.38 billion as compared to \$31.47 billion reported for March 2020.

JALA BAHINI SCHEME

Aditya Aluminium targets to

provide clean drinking water



\$34.45 billion as compared to \$21.49 billion in March 2020 Non-petroleum and

exports in April-March 2020-21 were \$238.72 billion, as compared to \$236.17 billion for the corresponding period in 2019-20

In terms of fiscal 2020-21, India's exports Accordingly, trade deficit for fell by 7.26% to \$290.63 billion, from FY'21 narrowed to \$98.56 billion \$313.36 billion during the previous fiscal from \$161.35 billion in FY'20

"Oil imports in March 2021 were \$10.27 billion which was 2.23% higher in Dollar terms compared to \$10.05 billion in March 2020."

"Non-oil imports in March 2021 were estimated at \$38.11 billion which was 77.90% higher in Dollar terms compared to \$21.42 billion

in March 2020.' As per the statement, non-oil and non-gold imports were \$29.62 billion in March 2021, recording a positive growth of 46.66%, as compared to non-oil and non-gold imports of \$20.20 billion in March 2020. Consequently, India's trade The country's merchandise exports during the month under review increased to

non-gems and jewellery

deficit widened last month to \$13.93

billion from \$9.98 billion in March 2020

In terms of fiscal 2020-21, India's exports fell by 7.26% to \$290.63 billion, from \$313.36 billion during the previous fiscal.

Likewise, merchandise imports fell during April-March 2020-21. The imports declined by 18.02% to \$389.18 billion, as compared to \$474.71 billion during the same period of last year.

Accordingly, trade deficit for FY'21 narrowed to \$98.56 billion from \$161.35 billion in FY'20.

banking ops in India AGENCIES Mumbai, April 15: American

banking major Citibank Thursday announced exiting the high visibility consumer banking business in India as part of a global strategy. The consumer banking business comprises credit cards, retail banking, home loans and wealth management. The bank will be exiting the segment in India after more than three decades. Citibank has 35 branches in the country and employs approximately 4,000 people in the consumer banking business.

The bank, Thursday, announced exiting from the consumer banking businesses in 13 countries, with its global CEO Jane Fraser attributing the decision to an absence of scale to compete in these geographies.

Contours of the exit were not immediately known and the proposed exit from the consumer banking business will also need regulatory approvals.

"There is no immediate change to our operations and no immediate impact to our colleagues as a result of this announcement. In the interim, we will continue to serve

Amazon announces \$250mn

fund for Indian startups, SMBs

Piramal aims to be among top-5

Mumbai: Piramal Retail Finance Thursday said it aims to focus on scale, and become one of the top five retail non-bank lenders in five vears, after the acquisition of mortgage lender DHFL and entering more products which ups the cross-sell opportunities. The legal and regulatory process for the acquisition of DHFL, bought through a bidding process, is going faster than expected. but a timeline cannot be given by when it will be over. its chief executive Jairam Sridharan said.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 15: Aditya Aluminium, a unit of Hindalco Industries. Aditva Birla Group's metal flagship company, launched the 'Jala Bahini scheme', to provide clean drinking water at the doorstep of 3,000 households across 52 villages in the six Gram Panchayats (GPs) of Rengali block in Angul, during the summers. This initiative would provide 5.000 liters of drinking water on a daily basis to the villagers.

This Jala Bahini initiative was flagged-off April 14, 2021, at Bomaloi

in the presence of Seshadev Pradhan, Sarpanch Bomaloi, Vivekanand Mishra, HR Head, Satyaprasad Das, DGM-HR, Bhavani Mahapatra DGM- HR, Sweta Upadhayay - Head CSR & RR.

GP playground in Tileimal village,

HR Head Mishra said, "Water crisis is severe during the summer season with villagers having to walk several kilometers in the scorching heat in search of clean water. This water scarcity is expected to make the fight against Covid-19 even more challenging. Hence, Hindalco's Aditya Aluminium unit has deployed 25 tankers, each with a capacity of 5,000 litres, to cater to this critical need of the community. This water tanker service will continue for 75 days. The company has engaged 25 vendors and its CSR team is mon-

itoring the service through surprise visits, what's app group with Vendors, SHG women as SPOCs and Sarpanch.

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 15: In the opening session of its flagship event Smbhav, Amazon India Thursday announced a \$250 million Amazon Smbhav Venture Fund (the Venture Fund) to invest in startups and entrepreneurs focusing on technology innovations in SMBs' digitisation, agriculture and healthcare.

The Venture Fund will invest in technology led startups that are passionate about unlocking possibilities of a digital India. The Venture Fund will specifically focus on encouraging the best ideas to digitise SMBs (Small & Medium Businesses), drive technology led innovation in agriculture to improve farmer productivity and enable them to bring the best of India's farms to consumers, and enable universal and quality healthcare access for all using technology.

Additionally, Amazon announced plans to digitally empower and bring 1 million offline retailers and



neighbourhood stores online, on the Amazon India marketplace, by 2025 through the Local Shops on Amazon programme.

At the same event, Amazon also launched the 'Spotlight North East' initiative to bring 50.000 artisans. weavers and small businesses online from the 8 states in the North East region of India by 2025 and to boost exports of key commodities like tea, spices and honey from the region. Amit Agarwal, Global Senior VP and Country Head.

Amazon India said, "In 2020, we pledged to digitise 10 million SMBs. enable \$10 billion in exports, and create 1 million jobs by 2025. The launch of Amazon Smbhav Venture Fund aims to attract best ideas and empower entrepreneurs in the country to partner in this vision.

Additionally, our initiatives to on-board 1 million offline shops on Amazon.in and digitally empower the North East region will accelerate the progress towards a digital and self-reliant India.⁴

Bhubaneswar, April 15: Tanishq, India's leading and most trusted jewellery brand, is celebrating another year of transforming the retail jewellery industry. To mark this occasion, Tanishq is offering customers up to 25% off on making charges of gold and on diamond jewellery value. This offer can be availed from April 16-19, 2021.

Tanishq is also offering an exciting gold exchange policy wherein customers can now avail an irresistible offer of 0% deduction on exchange of 22kt old gold jewellery.

Ever since its inception, Tanishq's objective has been to bring a much needed sense of organisation to the jewellerv sector in India. The brand continues to offer the best-in-class designer jewellery to customers, including its latest collections- Moods of the Earth: Ekatvam, Aarambh, Virasat. Ahalya, and Swayahm.

Since its inception, Tanishq has pioneered several path-breaking initiatives in the retail jewellery industry with its transparent business practices, exemplary work ethics and environmentfriendly operations.

Hero MotoCorp rolls out chatbot

.....

Mumbai: India's largest twowheeler maker Hero MotoCorp Wednesday launched a chatbot solution for accessing its sales and after sales services on the Facebook-owned social messaging platform, WhatsApp. The customers will now be able to avail a host of services from an easy-to-interact menu-based chatbot that can be accessed round-the-clock on the messaging platform, Hero MotoCrorp said. The company is offering informative, through this new initiative.

Airlines gain altitude, but will fly into losses this fiscal too

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 15: Domestic

airlines are expected to log net

losses in FY22 on the back of lower

domestic air traffic compared with

pre-pandemic levels, together with

high fuel prices, ratings agency

Crisil said. However, the agency

said that these net losses will be

35-40 per cent below the ones re-

ported for fiscal 2021 mark at ₹9,500-

A Crisil Ratings study of the top

three airlines, which account for

78 per cent of total passenger traf-

fic, noted: "A resurgence of Covid-

19 infections across the country --

especially in Mumbai and Delhi,

₹10,000 crore

which account for 36 per cent of overall air traffic - is expected to stall the recovery seen over the past six months.'

"In fact, average daily domestic passenger air traffic has fallen in April by almost 20 per cent to 2.35 lakh compared to February 2021." Nonetheless, it said that domestic traffic, which accounts for 75

per cent of airline revenues, is expected to surge 120-130 per cent this fiscal on a low base though it will still be significantly lower at 70 per

cent of fiscal 2020 level "Domestic traffic fell 85 per cent in the first half of last fiscal due to lockdowns and restrictions on operations," said Gautam Shahi,



Director, Crisil Ratings.

"Despite the second wave-induced fresh curbs, which will temper recovery, domestic traffic in the first half of this fiscal is likely to be 3.5-

4 times higher on-year, on a low base.

The second half should see good recovery in traffic, supported by acceleration in the vaccination

Domestic traffic fell 85% in the first half of last fiscal due to lockdowns and restrictions on operations. Despite the second wave-induced fresh curbs, which will temper recovery, domestic traffic in the first half of this fiscal is likely to be 3.5-4 times higher on-year, on a low base

GAUTAM SHAHI I DIRECTOR, CRISIL RATINGS

drive and people gradually taking to travel after prolonged stay at home.

Besides, a gradual recovery in international operations in the second half of fiscal 2022 will also boost traffic, it said.

But, airlines have also seen their cost of operations spurt due to a rise in the price of aviation turbine fuel (ATF), a key cost head for them. "The price, which remained low until November 2020, limiting their losses, has shot up 30 per cent since then," the report said.

"This will offset the benefits from some of the initiatives the carriers undertook to reduce cost - employee costs, rentals, etc. - last fiscal, and which arebeing carried forward into the current fiscal.'





OrissaPOST FRIDAY | APRIL 16 | 2021 | BHUBANESWAR

Miller, Morris lift DC SUPER KINGS FACE FORMIDABLE KINGS SOUTH AFRICAN DUO TURNS SAVIOUR WITH BAT FOR DELHI CAPITALS

sports

AFTER UNADKAT SHINES WITH BALL AS RAJASTHAN ROYALS GO DOWN



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 15: David Miller's (62, 43b, 7x4, 2x6) combative half century and Chris Morris' timely onslaught (36 n o, 18b, 4x6) powered Rajasthan Royals to a dramatic three-wicket win over Delhi Capitals in their IPL match here, Thursday.

Opting to bowl, RR pacer Jaydev Unadkat (3/15) took three wickets to restrict the Capitals to 147/8. Miller then anchored the Royals' chase but it was Morris whose blitzkrieg took Royals home with two balls to spare. It was Royals' first win of the season.

The Royals were 17/3 in the fourth over and 42/5 at the halfway mark. They needed 58 from the last five overs and 12 from the final over. Morris ended the run chase with a six off Tom Curran.

Royals' run chase was, however, in tatters as soon as it started. Chris Woakes (2/22) removed openers Manan Vohra (9) and Jos Buttler (1) in a space of three balls in the third

In the next over, Kagiso Rabada (2/30) dismissed the dangerous Royals captain Sanju Samson – the

YOUTH BOXING

WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SBPI Ltd. becomes associate sponsor

of Rajasthan Royals BHUBANESWAR: Shri Bajrang Power & Ispat Ltd. (SBPI Ltd.), announced that they became one of the associate sponsors of the Rajasthan Royals franchise in the ongoing season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) through their brands GOEL TMT & GOEL PIPES. Both the brands will be the associate sponsor for the Royals with branding rights and promotional activities throughout this season. The deal was signed ahead of IPL. The brand logo can be seen on the team's trousers.

only centurion so far this season. Shivam Dube (2) perished off an Avesh Khan (3/32) delivery. Avesh then got rid of Riyan Parag.

However, Miller and Rahul Tewatia (19) kept the Royals in the hunt with a 48-run stand for the sixth wicket before Rabada came back to give the much-needed breakthrough for the Capitals.

Earlier, Unadkat dismissed Prithvi Shaw, Shikhar Dhawan and Ajinkva Rahane to trigger DC's top

order collapse from which they never recovered fully. Captain Rishabh Pant's blistering 32-ball 51 (9x4) was not enough as DC could only post a modest total after being put in to bat.

DC made a disastrous start as they were two wickets down for 16 runs in the fourth over with Unadkat dismissing the opening duo of Shaw (2) and Dhawan (9) cheaply.

DC were 36/3 at the end of powerplay but the slump continued as Marcus Stonis (0), foxed by a Mustafizur Rahman (2/29) deliverv. checked his shot at the last minute to offer a running catch to Jos Buttler.

CHRIS MORRIS

The run rate started increasing once captain Pant came to the crease but still DC were 57/4 at the halfway mark. Once he had a full measure of the pitch, Pant opened up and hit four boundaries, three of which were consecutive, to take 20 runs from the 11th over bowled by Tewatia.

Pant reached to his fifty off 30 balls in the 12th over, with a four off Mustafizur but he was run out the next over with bowler Parag's throw crashing onto the stumps. Delhi were 88/5 then After Pant's exit Tom Curran gave some respectability to the DC innings with a 16-ball 21.





BRIEF SCORES Delhi Capitals 147/8 (Rishabh Pant 51; Jaydev Unadkat 3/15) lost to Rajasthan Rovals 150/7 (David Miller 62. Chris Morris 36 n o; Avesh Khan 3/32) by 3 wickets



THE SQUADS

MS Dhoni (C & wk), Suresh Raina, Ambati Rayudu, KM Asif, Deepak Chahar, Dwayne Bravo, Faf du Plessis, Imran Tahir, N Jagadeesan, Karn Sharma, Lungi Ngidi, Mitchell Santner, Ravindra Jadeja, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shardul Thakur, Sam Curran, R Sai Kishore, Moeen Ali, K Gowtham, Cheteshwar Pujra, Harishankar Reddy, Bhagath Varma & C Hari Nishaanth.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 15: Chennai Super Kings would look for inspiration from skipper MS Dhoni and a much-improved bowling effort when they take on a power-packed Punjab Kings in the IPL here Friday.

The two sides experienced contrasting fortunes in their respective tournament opener. While CSK lost by seven wickets against Delhi Capitals, Punjab Kings eked out a four-run win over Rajasthan Royals in a high-scoring thriller. With the dew playing a crucial

role at Wankhede, the side winning the toss would want to bowl first. In their first match here, CSK posted a competitive 188 for seven.

And come Friday, the onus would be on master tactician Dhoni to inspire his teammates to lift their performance and give Punjab a run for their money. But for that to happen, the CSK skipper himself needs to lead from the front after failing to score against DC.

Punjab Kings, on the other hand, had a narrow escape against RR the other despite posting a mammoth 221 for 6 on the board.

Opening the batting, KL Rahul played a captain's knock of 91 off just 50 balls. He was ably supported by big-hitting Chris Gayle (40 off 28) and Deepak Hooda (64 off 28).

For Punjab Kings and Rahul, batting is not at all area of concern as they showed with their performance in the opener, but just like CSK, the bowling unit remains a major worry despite spending big money at the auction.

RR skipper Sanju Samson almost single-handedly took the game away from Punjab Kings with his whirlwind 63-ball 119-run knock in their opener, but fell short just by four runs in the end.

And Rahul definitely won't be a happy man with the performances of his bowlers. Young Arshdeep Singh (3/35) eventually emerged as Punjab's saviour. Needing 13 runs off the last over, the left-arm pacer gave away just eight runs to pull off a fine win for his team.

Besides Arshdeep, veteran riding on fine contributions from Mohammad Shami (2/33) too had Suresh Raina (54), Moeen Ali (36), a decent outting with the ball but Sam Curran (34), Ravindra Jadeja the performance of Australian (26) and Ambati Rayudu (23). pace duo of Jhye Richardson (1/55) Despite failures from the openand Riley Meredith (1/49) should ing duo of Rituraj Gaikwad and Faf be a concern for Punjab, having du Plessis besides skipper Dhoni, shelled out Rs 22 crore for their

services.



Kohli named ODI player of the 2010s₋

WISDEN ALMANACK AWARDS: SACHIN, **KAPIL ALSO AMONG WINNERS**

Indians enjoy second successive all-win day advanced to the second round after a comprehensive 5-0 win over New Delhi, April 15: It was a sec-

Slovakia's Miroslav Herceg. Next up for him is Uzbekistan's Akhmadjon Akhmedov, who got a bye in the opening round.

over Bulgaria's Georgi Stoev to

In the 91kg category, Vishal Gupta notched up a unanimous victory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Almaty, April 15: Scripting a sensational comeback, an aggressive Sarita Mor reeled off nine straight points in the summit clash to retain her Asian Championship title in 59kg while Seema Bisla (50kg) and Pooja (76kg) settled for bronze

Wrestling: Sarita retains Asian title nical superiority in the first period.

The lanky Kazkah had good reach but Sarita was agile and aggressive. After earning a passivity point, Sarita unleashed a flurry of moves, starting with a take-down and followed that up with a gut-wrench and a couple of expose moves.

Against Kyrgyzstan's Nuraida

Trailing 0-2, Seema got on board with a passivity point and a takedown. She never looked back after that, winning more points by employing gut-wrench and eventually won 7-3.

She faced a stiff challenge from Uzbekistan's Jasmina Immaeva in the semifinal which she lost 2-3. The Indian then beat Taipei's Yung

PUNJAB KINGS KL Rahul (C & wk), Mayank Agarwal, Chris Gayle, Mandeep Singh, Prabsimran Singh, Nicholas Pooran (wk), Sarfaraz Khan, Deepak Hooda, Murugan Ashwin, Ravi Bishnoi, Harpreet Brar, Mohammed Shami, Arshdeep Singh, Ishan Porel, Darshan Nalkande, Chris Jordan, Dawid Malan, Jhye Richardson, Shahrukh Khan, Riley Meredith, Moises

Henriques, Jalaj Saxena, Utkarsh Singh,

CSK managed to put up a decent

But the Chennai outfit's bowling

unit looked completely out of sorts

and clueless against the DC open-

ing duo of Shikhar Dhawan and

Prithvi Shaw, who were ominous

from the word go and stitched a 138-

run stand to take the game away

The likes of Deepak Chahar,

Sam Curran, Shardul Thakur,

Jadeja and Moeen Ali all went for

big runs and looked rusty.

Fabian Allen & Saurabh Kumar.

total on the hoard

from CSK.

with two from the women's contingent advancing to the quarterfinals after clinching dominating triumphs.

ond successive all-win day for Indian

boxers at the Youth World

Championships in Kielce, Poland

Poonam (57kg) and Vinka (60kg) won their bouts comprehensively to make the last-eight stage Wednesday. While Poonam defeated Hungary's Beata Varga, Vinka sailed past Bosnia and Herzegovina's Tara Bohatjuk. Both the bouts were stopped by the referee before the three rounds could be completed.

In the men's draw, Asian youth silver-medallist Ankit Narwal (64kg)

enter the round of 16. He will square off against Croatia's Borna Loncaric. Also entering the pre-quarters was Vikas (52kg) after getting the better of Bulgaria's Yasen Radev 5-0. Radev is the reigning European champion and also a gold-winner from the recent Adriatic Pearl Tournament in Montenegro. Vikas will now square off against Mongolia's Sukhbat Enkhzorigt.

medals here Thursday.

Sarita, who won gold at the 2020 championship in New Delhi, trailed 1-7 after a botched-up challenge but turned it around with a tremendous fight back against Mongolia's Shoovdor Baatarjav.

Sarita had lost her opening bout to the same Mongolian rival by 4-5 margin but came back strongly in the next round against Kazakhstan's Diana Kayumova, winning by tech-

Anarkulova in the semifinal, Sarita was again aggressive from the beginning and finished the bout in a jiffy with quick expose moves after

getting hold of her opponent. In the 50kg competition, Seema had a terrible start as she lost her opening bout by fall against Kazakshtan's Valentina Ivanovna but made a strong comeback in the next round against Mongolian Anudari Nandintsetseg.

Hsun Lin by technical superiority to win the bronze medal.

In 76 kg, Pooja won her first bout 2-0 as the Korean Seoyeon Jeong was too passive and followed that up with a victory by fall against Uzbekistan's Ozoda Zaripboeva. She, though, was no match to Elmira Syzdykova in the semifinals as the Kazakh pinned her with a stunning move. Pooja clinched the bronze after winning 5-2 against Korea's Seyeon Jeong.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 15: India captain Virat Kohli has been named Wisden Almanack's ODI player of the 2010s, while England allrounder Ben Stokes was declared the 'Cricketer of the Year' for a second successive time by the highlyrated annual publication.

The 32-year-old Kohli, who made his ODI debut in August 2008 against Sri Lanka, is among the finest batsmen of all time, and has amassed a staggering 12,169 runs from 254 ODIs

"To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first One-Day International, five ODI cricketers of the decade have been named in the 2021 edition of the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack," the reference book, often described as Bible of Cricket, stated.

'One cricketer has been named for each of the decades between 1971 and 2021, with India captain Virat Kohli taking the award for the 2010s," Wisden said on their website.

Kohli, who was part of the 2011 World Cup winning Indian team, made more than 11,000 runs in the 10year stretch, averaging

over

SPANISH GIANTS THROUGH TO SEMIS; MAN CITY BEAT BORUSSIA DORTMUND TO SEAL LAST FOUR BERTH Champions League: Real Madrid outwit Liverpool

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Liverpool, April 15: (AP) Zinedine Zidane has shown Jurgen Klopp just how to turn a season around. Zidane is leading Real Madrid into the semifinals of the Champions League. Klopp will finish the season without a trophy.

In Dortmund, Pep Guardiola shared an emotional moment with goal scorer Phil Foden as Manchester City ended their run of failure in the Champions League quarterfinals, beating Borussia Dortmund 2-1 for a 4-2 aggregate win.

A 0-0 draw at Anfield in the quarterfinals Wednesday protected a 3-1 advantage from the first leg for Madrid. The record 13-time European champions are back in the semifinals - where Chelsea awaits -for the first time since 2018 when Zidane lifted the European Cup for a third consecutive season by beating Klopp's Liverpool in the final.

The victory in the 2018 final was Zidane's last game before ending his first stint in charge. He was tempted back in 2019 following disappointing results, but this season looked to be unraveling just a few months

Trailing Atletico Madrid by 10 points in La Liga in January, the defending champions are now just a





single point behind and the double is on.

For Liverpool, it's turning into a miserable season — which is now sure to end without a trophy. It's quite a comedown for Klopp's side,

Real Madrid goalie Thibaut Courtois denies Liverpool's Mo Salah a goal during their match at Anfield: Phil Foden (inset) celebrates after scoring Man City's winner against Dortmund, Wednesday

which won the Champions League in 2019 — after losing the 2018 final to Madrid — and ended a 30-year English championship drought by winning the Premier League by an 18-point margin in 2020.

Now Liverpool are struggling to even make the Champions League places, sitting three points outside the top four with seven games to go. Liverpool created chance after

chance but Mohamed Salah, Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mane could find no way past goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and a makeshift defense that stifled a front three that has endured a season of frustration.

A scene of many memorable European comebacks, Anfield lacked the fans who have so often inspired Liverpool in similar situations. The only way Liverpool sup-

porters could make their presence felt was outside the stadium with a red haze of flares greeting the teams before the game — and one of the Madrid buses being hit by an object that smashed a window.

Man City through

Jude Bellingham scored to put Dortmund on course for an upset win Wednesday before City hit back through a penalty by Riyad Mahrez and Foden's goal.

Guardiola reached the semifinals with City at the fifth attempt, matching the club's best ever result under his predecessor Manuel Pellegrini in 2016. City go on to face Paris Saint-Germain, who showed the defending champions Bayern Munich the exit door. Guardiola praised PSG for knocking out 'the best team in the world' — Bayern Munich—in the quarterfinals, "so we will see what will happen".

Guardiola Tuesday said he expected to be labeled 'a failure' if Dortmund became the fourth club in a row to eliminate City in a Champions League quarterfinal, after Lyon last year and before that Tottenham and Liverpool. Monaco beat City in the round of 16 in 2017 in Guardiola's first season.

Guardiola added that City would celebrate with 'a lot of wine tonight' before preparing to face Chelsea in the FA Cup semifinals Saturday.

60 and scoring 42 centuries.

Apart from Kohli, Wisden also named legendary Sachin Tendulkar as the ODI Cricketer of the 1990s. The right-handed India opener, in 1998, made nine ODI hundreds, more than any other batsman in a single calendar year.

India's World Cup winning former captain Kapil Dev too featured on the list when he was named as the ODI Cricketer for the 1980s.

Kapil led India to their first ODI World Cup win in 1983. He also claimed more wickets than any other in the decade and scored at the highest strike rate of any batsman with over 1000 runs.

Meanwhile, Stokes was declared the 'Leading Cricketer in the World' for the second year in a row. "His haul of 641 Test runs at 58 in the calendar year was more than anyone else, while his 19 wickets cost just 18 apiece. He did it all against a backdrop of personal tragedy: his father, Ged, died in December at the age of

65," Wisden editor Lawrence Booth said.

Dom Sibley, Zak Crawley, West Indian Jason Holder, Mohammed Rizwan and Darren Stevens were named Wisden Cricketers of the Year in the 2021 edition of Wisden Almanack.

Also, Australia's Beth Mooney was awarded 'Leading Women's Cricketer in the

World' while West Indian all-rounder Kieron Pollard was named the

Leading T20 Cricketer in the World. —

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