



PRICELESS MOMENTS

Actor Anushka Sharma and hubby Virat Kohli love to spend leisure time with their pets

LEISURE P2



NO HAJ WITHOUT VAX

The Haj Committee of India says no Indian Muslim shall be allowed to go for pilgrimage without taking two vaccine doses

TWO STATES P7



SRH TAKE ON MI

Sunrisers Hyderabad lock horns with Mumbai Indians in an Indian Premier League match today

SPORTS P12

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Let's get cracking... fudging numbers, gagging media & activating IT cell!

SHORT TAKES

Man on shooting spree kills 8 in US

Indianapolis: A gunman killed eight people and wounded several others before killing himself in a late-night shooting at a FedEx facility near the Indianapolis airport, police said, in the latest in a spate of mass shootings after a relative lull during the pandemic. Five people were hospitalized after the Thursday night shooting, according to police. One of them had critical injuries, police spokesperson Genae Cook said. Another two people were treated and released at the scene. P10

China's Q1 GDP up at 18.3 pc

Beijing: China's economy grew a record 18.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2021, riding on strong domestic and foreign demand and aided by recovery from a low base in early 2020 when COVID-19 stalled the world's second-largest economy, according to statistics released Friday. The GDP reached 24.93 trillion yuan (about USD 3.82 trillion) in Q1, data released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said. P11

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	48832.03 ↑ 28.35
NIFTY	14617.90 ↑ 36.40
DOLLAR	74.85 ↓ ₹0.63
EURO	89.297 ↓ ₹0.68
GOLD	₹47,345 ↑ ₹170
SILVER	₹68,725 ↑ ₹185

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	39.3°C	38.0°C
TEMP MIN	24.6°C	23.0°C
Humidity	55%	52%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Partly cloudy sky	

Below normal rains in state: IMD

POST NEWS NETWORK/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/New Delhi, April 16: The southwest monsoon is expected to be below normal in Odisha during this year, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Friday.

Director General of IMD Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said, "The country is going to experience a normal rainfall this year. However, rainfall in some parts of Odisha, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal is likely to be below normal."

This was a preliminary prediction made by the IMD. The forecast will be again updated in May-end, he said.

Asked about specific places or districts of Odisha which are going to face below normal rainfall, Mohapatra said, "So far we have not been empowered to give district-wise seasonal forecast. The prediction has been made for a larger area."

Most probably, areas like north Odisha, Jharkhand, north Chhattisgarh and adjoining parts of West Bengal would receive less rain, he added.

Last year, the state had received a normal rainfall. Of the 30 districts, deficient rainfall was observed in five districts. Khurda recorded 28 per cent deficit rainfall, while in Puri it was 25 per cent deficit, Balasore (24 per cent deficit), Gajapati (23 per cent deficit), and Jajpur (20 per cent deficit).



REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO

At the national level, the Long Period Average (LPA) will be 98 per cent with an error margin of plus and minus 5 per cent, said M Rajeevan, secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

While releasing the first Long Range Forecast for the four-month rainfall period from June to September, Rajeevan at a virtual press conference, said, "The monsoon will be 98 per cent of the LPA, which is normal rainfall. It is a really good news for the country and will help India have a good agriculture output." The LPA, the average of the season's rainfall across the country from 1961-2010, is 88 cm.

“The country is going to experience a normal rainfall this year. However, rainfall in some parts of Odisha, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal is likely to be below normal”

MRUTYUNJAY MOHAPATRA | DIRECTOR GENERAL OF IMD

The news augurs well for the economy, battered due to the coronavirus pandemic. The southwest monsoon is one of the primary drivers of the country's economy, which is largely based

on agriculture and its allied activities. Large parts of the country rely on the four-month rainfall season for agriculture and also for filling reservoirs.

This is the first time the IMD has made a specific forecast on spatial distribution.

Rajeevan said the IMD will also issue month-wise forecasts during the next four months and also for the homogeneous regions of the country -- IMD's four divisions -- the Northwest India, East and Northeast India, Central India and South Peninsula. The country has recorded above normal rainfall for the last two rainfall seasons.

1800 266 266 1 (tollfree)

CICSE defers Class X, XII exams over Covid

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 16: The CICSE Friday deferred the board exams of Classes X and XII in view of a rise in Covid-19 cases across the country.

In light of the nationwide surge in coronavirus cases, the Class X and XII exams which were to be held from May 4 have been deferred, the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations' chief executive and secretary Gerry Arathoon said. "We will closely monitor the situation and review it in the first week of June to take a final decision on conduct of examination," he said.



"While Class XII exams will be conducted at a later stage, Class X students will get an option to either appear in offline exams later or get evaluated on basis of fair and unbiased criteria to be developed by the board," Arathoon added.

Earlier this week, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) had cancelled its Class X board exams and deferred the Class XII board exams. Several state boards have postponed or cancelled their exams too.

Srimandir to remain shut on weekends

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, April 16: Srimandir, the abode of Lord Jagannath, would remain closed for devotees on all Saturdays and Sundays to contain the spread of Covid-19, said a revised standard operating procedure (SOP) issued by the shrine administration Friday.

The new SOP has been prepared after due consultation with Puri Collector, SP, Srimandir officials and senior servitors of the 12th century shrine, said Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief Krishan Kumar. As per the new SOP, all devotees coming from outside Odisha will be required to produce Covid-19 negative certificates (RT-PCR) obtained within 96 hours or the reports of their second dose of anti-Covid vaccination to visit the shrine.



Moreover, all devotees will be required to bring their photo identity cards for identification at the shrine entrance. It is mandatory for the devotees to follow Covid-19 norms including social distancing and wearing of masks on the temple premises, said the SOP. The revised SOP will come into force from April 19.

PANIC & PANDEMIC



People anticipating another period of lockdown/shutdown wait in long queues to board trains to reach their homes at Bhubaneswar railway station, Friday

3 women die, 1 critical as quarry caves in

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pottangi/Koraput, April 16: In a tragic incident, three women died and another suffered critical injuries after a limestone quarry caved in on them at Podaguda village under Pottangi block of Koraput district, Friday.

According to reports, a group of tribal women belonging to Podaguda village under Renga panchayat had

gone to a site to fetch limestone, which is smeared on the walls of houses. While they were collecting the limestone, a chunk of earth from top part of the limestone mine came crashing on them. Four women were trapped under the heap.

The deceased were identified as Musuru Ramuluamma (43), her daughter Musuru Devi (17) and Mutula Kota (27). Immediately after the mishap, Pottangi police rushed to the spot

and conducted a preliminary investigation. Local MLA Pitam Padhi also visited the site and held discussions with locals on the tragic incident.

Expressing grief over the incident, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced an ex-gratia of ₹5 lakh for the next of the kin of the deceased from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. The government will also bear the medical expenditure of the injured woman.

State to up oxygen stock by 10 times

Producers will have to take permission from the Drugs Controller to supply oxygen to other states

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: In view of the ongoing oxygen crisis in many parts of the country, the state government has decided to augment its oxygen stock by more than 10 times the stock maintained during the peak of Covid-19 last year.

Speaking to **Orissa POST**, Health Director Bijay Mohapatra said, "We have sufficient stock of oxygen now in liquid form, gas pipeline, cylinder and concentrated form. We are augmenting the stock limit keeping the last year's demand in view."

The stock will be enhanced by 10 times the stock of September, 2020, when Odisha witnessed the highest number of Covid-19 cases, he said. Mohapatra said the state government has made provision of gas pipeline in all Covid hospitals so that the entire hospital can get oxygen through one source. Moreover, concentrated oxygen plants have been installed in the medical colleges, the director stated. The state government is also closely regulating the supply and export of oxygen produced in the state. The producers will have to take

Panel to check drugs hoarding

BHUBANESWAR: The Home Department Friday issued an order for constitution of a high-level panel to check hoarding and black marketing of drugs and medical supplies in the wake of rising Covid cases. The department has appointed the Additional Director General (Crime Branch), Cuttack as chairman of the panel. The other two members will include an officer who should not be below the rank of Joint Secretary from health department besides the Drugs Controller from the state.

permission from the Drugs Controller to supply the essential item to other states, he added.

Sources in the office of the Drugs Controller said the state has 29 oxygen production units, of which cylinder refilling is being carried out at 23 units while oxygen is produced in liquid form in bulk quantity at another four units. The state has a capacity to produce around 12,000 oxygen cylinders each day and there is sufficient stock of liquid oxygen, the sources said.

India shifts from mass vaccine exporter to importer

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 16: After gifting and selling tens of millions of COVID-19 vaccine doses abroad, India suddenly finds itself short of shots as new infections surge.

Facing soaring cases and overflowing hospitals after lockdown restrictions were eased, it also abruptly changed the rules to allow it to fast-track vaccine imports, having earlier rebuffed foreign drug-makers like Pfizer. It will import Russia's Sputnik V vaccine starting this month to cover as many as 125 million people. The reversal in fortunes could hamper not only India's battle to contain the pandemic, but also vaccination campaigns in more than 60 poorer countries, mainly in Africa, for months.

The COVAX programme, backed by the WHO and Gavi vaccine alliance, aims at equitable vaccine



Covid-19 patients share a common bed at the casualty ward, as shortage of bed increased due to rising cases, at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences, in Ranchi, Friday

access around the world, and is relying heavily on supplies from India, Asia's pharmaceutical powerhouse.

But so far this month India has only exported around 1.2 million vaccine doses. That compares with 64 million doses shipped abroad between late-January and March, according to

data from the foreign ministry. An official with knowledge of India's vaccine strategy said that available shots would be used domestically while the country faced an "emergency situation". "There is no commitment to other countries," he said.

Resulting shortages are already

FORTUNE REVERSAL

The reversal in fortunes could hamper not only India's battle to contain the pandemic, but also vaccination campaigns in more than 60 poorer countries, mainly in Africa, for months

The US ring-fenced the supply of key equipment and raw materials for its own vaccine makers, limiting SII's operations and delaying by months its goal of raising monthly output to 100 million from up to 70 million now

being felt in some countries in the COVAX scheme, and a UN health official involved in the vaccine rollout in Africa said: "To be so reliant on one manufacturer is a massive concern." The director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, John Nkengasong, said

earlier this month delays in supplies from India could be 'catastrophic'.

Four sources involved in discussions on vaccine supplies and procurement said factors including delays by India and COVAX in placing firm orders, a lack of investment in production, raw material shortages and underestimating the coronavirus surge at home had contributed to vaccine shortages.

The Serum Institute of India (SII), the world's biggest vaccine manufacturer, had vowed to deliver at least 2 billion COVID-19 shots to low and middle-income countries, with nearly half of that by the end of 2021. But it has also come under pressure to meet the needs of other governments, including Britain, Canada and Saudi Arabia, amid AstraZeneca's global production problems.

A further initial hurdle to SII's supply ambitions was India's hesitation in placing firm orders, two

sources said. That could have allowed it to boost output of the AstraZeneca vaccine early, even though regulators had yet to approve it. India spent months discussing the final price per dose, and inked an initial purchase order roughly two weeks after India's drug regulator approved the AstraZeneca shot, according to the sources.

SII has sought more than \$400 million from the government to increase capacity but no commitment has yet been made. The health department and foreign ministry did not respond to requests for comment on issues of funding, purchasing delays and other aspects of India's vaccination rollout.

Having originally aimed to cover 300 million of its highest-risk people by August, or just over a fifth of its 1.35 billion population, the government has now expanded that by another 100 million.

Nirav extradition cleared by UK

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 16: In a major boost to the CBI probe into the ₹13,500 crore PNB fraud case, UK Home Secretary Priti Patel has approved the extradition of fugitive diamondaire Nirav Modi, sources said Friday.

"The UK Home Secretary has approved the extradition request of Nirav Modi," a CBI source related to the probe told IANS. Asked how long will it take for the CBI will bring back the businessman, who has been lodged in a prison in London since his arrest in March 2019, the source said that if Nirav Modi files an appeal, then it may take some time. February 25 this year, a UK court allowed extradition of Nirav Modi in PNB scam case. The findings of the court were sent to the UK Home Department.

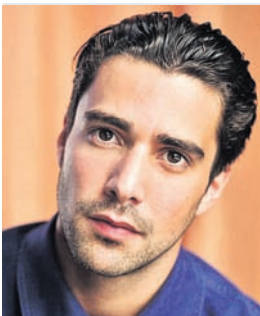


ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER USES HIS HIT CATCHPHRASES IN REAL LIFE

The action star's son Patrick Schwarzenegger, who was a guest on *The Kelly Clarkson Show* to promote his new film *Moxie*, was asked if his father used his famous catchphrases. Patrick replied, "Yeah, everybody asks that. They're like, 'Does your dad always say his one-liners?' And I'm like, 'All the time'."

GAME OF THRONES PREQUEL ADDS FABIEN FRANKEL TO ITS CAST

British actor Fabien Frankel has been cast in a key role in HBO's upcoming *Game of Thrones* prequel series *House of the Dragon*. It is set over 300 years prior to the events of *Game of Thrones*. The series will tell the story of House Targaryen and the Targaryen civil war, known as the Dance of the Dragons.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL \$5181

ARIES
You are not so much in a mood to socialise today. Something unsavoury may also be hard to overcome. Although you are industrious, Ganesha advises you not to bite off more than you can chew. A bit of faith in providence can go a long way in your life.

TAURUS
Ganesha sees you preferring your outer appearance, having a good time over getting internally organized. You will seek your comfort level from creature comforts, not from within. You are due to spend most of the day, dressed in your best and going out to your favourite haunts for good food and company.

GEMINI
It is possible that the start of the day may not see you in the best of moods and some mental distress is the likely reason behind it. You need to consult an expert to find out the best way out of your current predicament.

CANCER
Though the day will spring a lot of challenges, you will be up to it every single time. Your mind will be sharp, and will run like an athlete taking part in a marathon. All you need is a little self-belief. And there will be no stopping you once you set your mind free.

LEO
Your interactions with those around will be tinged with understanding and empathy, as you will make an effort to solve their problems. Your relations with people will become stronger as a result.

VIRGO
In all likelihood, you will want to go into seclusion today, both mentally and physically. You have a knack to work yourself up to face challenges and gather your resources to come up trumps in unpleasant situations. However, you will not be able to go beyond your limitations.

LIBRA
Ganesha says you will be able to make new inroads in your professional field. People will be mesmerized by your attractive personality and follow you to the T. You will also be able to win the love of someone of the opposite sex.

SCORPIO
Fully charged up, your enthusiasm and sense of humour is quite contagious today. People who belong to creative fields should let their creative juices flow freely. In short, you are performance driven today. All's well that ends well, and this day is sure to end on a positive note, says Ganesha.

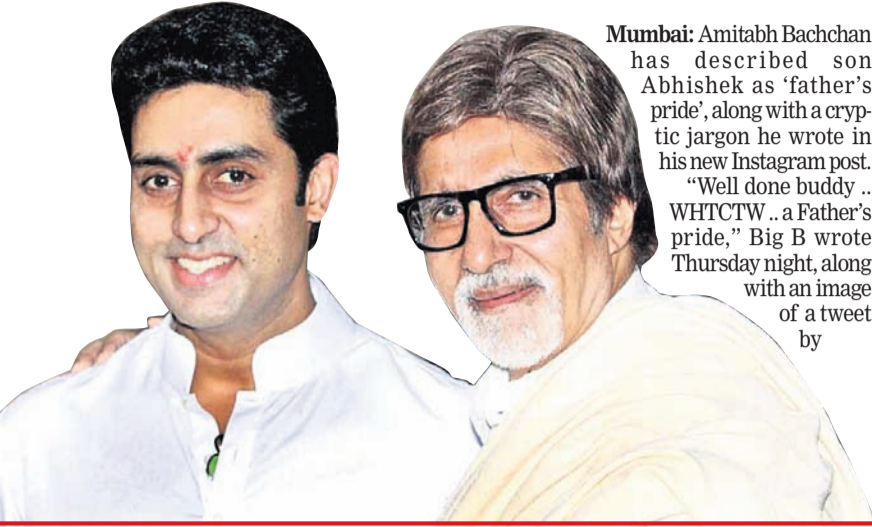
SAGITTARIUS
A day full of highs and lows in store for you, predicts Ganesha. Stress and worries are likely to surround you today. A quick makeover or a haircut may make you feel better. Try to complete the pending tasks.

CAPRICORN
Mounting work load may give you wrinkles on the forehead, but you see light at the end of the tunnel. With undying spirit you keep on going irrespective of the magnitude of the problems. Don't get demotivated though, says Ganesha, as you are blessed with loving and supportive family members.

AQUARIUS
Your intelligence and positive attitude will get you through every situation today. You will spend afternoon with friends and have a gala time with them. Why should family be left alone? Plan the evening with family members, and enjoy their presence in your life, suggests Ganesha.

PISCES
Your hidden hopes will be shown today or you will share them with someone. You will suddenly come across people who had gone away from your life some time back. Today is the day to dream and to foster new hopes and dreams. With Ganesha's blessings your planetary positions are favourable.

BIG B CALLS ABHISHEK 'FATHER'S PRIDE'



Mumbai: Amitabh Bachchan has described son Abhishek as 'father's pride', along with a cryptic jargon he wrote in his new Instagram post. "Well done buddy .. WHCTW ... a Father's pride," Big B wrote Thursday night, along with an image of a tweet by

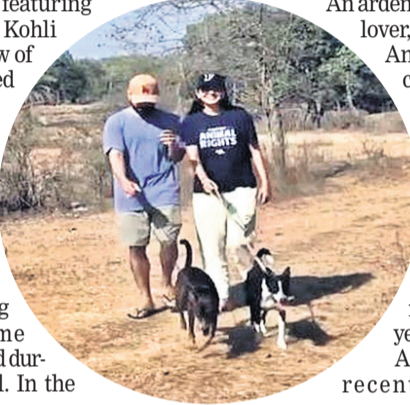
Abhishek about his latest digitally-released film *The Big Bull*. This is not the first time that the Bollywood veteran has used the acronym. Earlier, when Abhishek had announced the release of *The Big Bull*, Big B had written: "Remember bhaiyu WHCTW ..!!!" *The Big Bull* draws its story from the securities scam of 1992. It is said to be loosely based on stockbroker Harshad Mehta's life and his involvement in financial crimes over a period of 10 years, from 1980 to 1990.

Anushka shares 'priceless moments'

Mumbai: Actress Anushka Sharma Friday shared snapshots from last year, featuring husband Virat Kohli along with a few of their four-legged friends. Anushka posted a video on Instagram, where Virat and the actress are seen enjoying their time with pet dog Dude and some strays they found during their travel. In the

clip, they are seen feeding puppies and playing with them. An ardent animal lover, Anushka captioned the clip: "Some special, priceless moments from last year." Anushka recently re-

turned to action after her maternity break. The couple became parents in January, to a daughter named Vamika. The actress has two films in the pipeline. She will be seen in Navdeep Singh's *Kaneda*, and a biopic of cricketer Jhulan Goswami. The actress was last seen in the film *Zero* in 2018. She produced the web series *Paatal Lok* and the film *Bulbbul* for OTT last year.



Pooja reminiscing pre-pandemic life

Mumbai: Actress Pooja Hegde has reminisced in a new social media post about the times when people roamed around freely, adding that we have taken too much for granted.

Pooja posted a picture on Instagram in the wee hours of Wednesday night, from her vacation in Vienna.

"Back when people didn't wear masks and roaming around freely was a thing... There's so much we took for granted! #majormissing #takemeback #throwback-thursday," Pooja wrote as caption.

Currently, she awaits the release of her upcoming film *Radhe Shyam* starring Prabhas. The film, which will be released in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Kannada, and Malayalam, is scheduled to hit screens July 30 this year. Radha Krishna Kumar has directed and written the period romantic drama.

Besides Prabhas and Pooja, the film also features Sachin Khedekar, Priyadarsi Pulikonda, Bhagyashree, Murli Sharma, Kunaal Roy Kapoor, Riddhi Kumar, Sasha Chettri and Sathyan.



North and South stars collaborate for mega projects

Calling it the 'pan-India' film for maximum reach, many new generation stars from North and South are coming together in some of the biggest ventures, over the coming months

Mumbai: B-town and South stars collaborating on screen has been a trend in the past with the likes of Rajinikanth, Kamal Haasan, Chiranjeevi, Nagarjuna, Prabhu Deva, and many others collaborating with Aishwarya Rai, Deepika Padukone, Sonakshi Sinha, Manisha Koirala, Raveena Tandon, Kajol etc.

While the trend had slowed down in between, the new generation of stars seems to be reviving the idea. The films are set to release in multiple languages such as Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam which helps in reaching out to a bigger audience. This, in turn, helps stars gain fandom beyond their respective region.

RRR
B-town actors Alia Bhatt and Ajay Devgn will be seen in this magnus opus by SS Rajamouli. The film also features South stars Ram Charan and Jr. NTR. The film is set against the backdrop of the independence era.



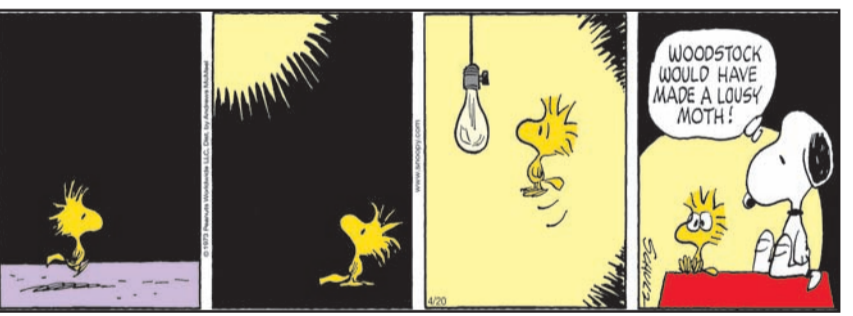
LIGER
Telugu star Vijay Deverakonda's upcoming ambitious action film also features Hindi film actress Ananya Panday. Vijay will be seen playing a boxer in the film directed by Puri Jagannadh directorial. It is scheduled to hit the screens September 9



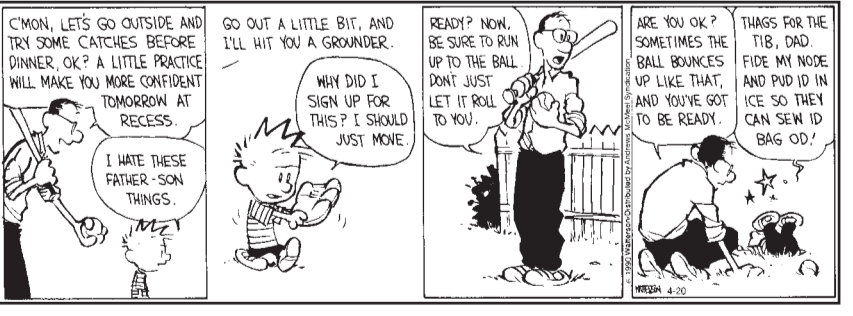
HAATHI MERE SAATHI
The film stars Rana Daggubati along with Hindi film actors such as Pulkit Samrat, Shriya Pilgaonkar and Zoya Hussain. It has three different titles for three different versions — *Haathi Mere Saathi* is called *Aranya* in Telugu version and *Kaadam* in Tamil.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

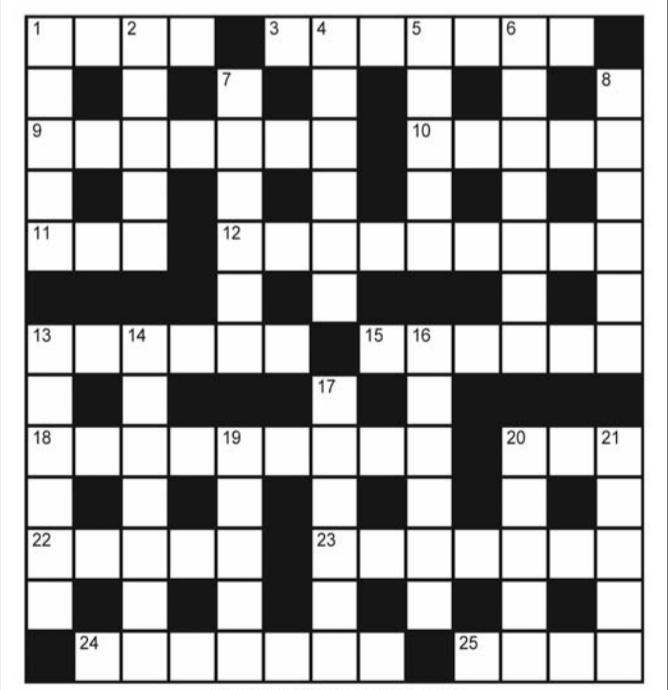


BREVITY



FUN post

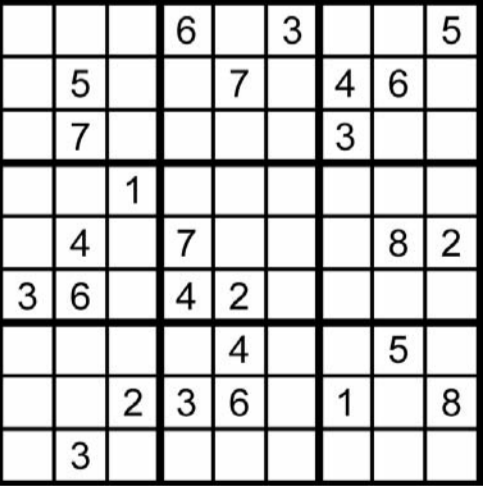
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Alaska city
 - 3 Shoreline
 - 9 Feminine
 - 10 Russian drink
 - 11 Merino mother
 - 12 Showing keen perception
 - 13 Sound quality
 - 15 Radiance
 - 18 Handrails
 - 20 Cohort
 - 22 Guessed wrong
 - 23 Warned
 - 24 Take a chance
 - 25 Tart plum
 - Down**
 - 1 Elbow
 - 2 Billiards stroke
 - 4 Garbage
 - 5 Break off
 - 6 Seasoned sailor (3,4)
 - 7 Steam
 - 8 Baby's toy
 - 13 Restaurant items with balconies
 - 16 Heavy overcoat
 - 17 Freshen up
 - 19 Marsh plant
 - 20 Corolla part
 - 21 Soup scoop

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



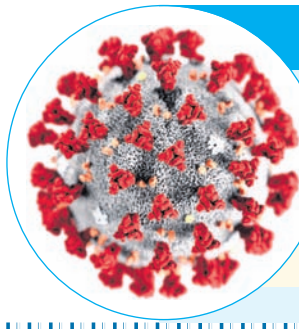
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



SRIMANDIR RITUAL

Badi Nrusingha, a subsidiary deity at Srimandir, being taken on a procession on the Grand Road in Puri as part of a ritual, Friday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	14,00,91,616	11,90,08,176	30,04,739
India	1,42,91,917	1,25,47,866	1,74,308
Odisha	3,61,450	3,42,570	1,938

Centre sanctions ₹50.30Cr for ROPAX Jetty project

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, April 16: In what would further give an impetus to waterway projects in Odisha, the Union government has approved Rs 50.30 crore for developing all-weather ROPAX (Roll-on/Roll-off Passenger) Jetty and allied infrastructure on Dhamra river.

According to the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW), the ROPAX Jetty project will connect Kaninali in Bhadrak district and Talachua in Kendrapara district under Sagarmala initiative of the Centre. This project will reduce travel time for passengers from 6 hours by road to 1 hour through waterway.

The ministry stated that the total capital cost of the project is Rs 110.60 crore which includes construction of RO-PAX Jetty at Kaninali and Talachua, utility infrastructure such as parking area development, navigational aids and dredging. The ministry said that the state government will fund 50 per cent of the project cost.

"Development of the existing ghat with all-weather ROPAX jetties is being carried out with intent of accommodating boats, launches and other vessels as well as to ply vessel having capacity to carry 10



BOOST TO WATERWAYS

The ROPAX Jetty project will connect Kaninali in Bhadrak and Talachua in Kendrapara under Sagarmala initiative

The project will facilitate indirect employment opportunities to locals around Dhamra river and reduce road distance of 200 km from Talachua to Dhamra

The total capital cost of the project is ₹110.60 crore which includes construction of RO-PAX Jetty at Kaninali and Talachua and other utility infrastructure

light motor vehicles, 20 motorbikes along with 60 passengers at a time, simultaneously ensuring safety of all passengers and vehicles," the ministry said.

The project will facilitate indirect employment opportunities to locals around Dhamra river and reduce road distance of 200 km from Talachua to Dhamra, the ministry mentioned. "Kaninali in Bhadrak district and Talachua in Kendrapara district are located on the northern

and southern banks of River Dhamra. Local population depends upon passenger ferries at ghats of Kaninali and Talachua to cross the river (a stretch of 7 km). This project will enhance the safety of passengers and vehicles with state-of-the-art utility infrastructure," the ministry said. Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Mansukh Mandviya for the project and said that it would further enhance the speed of development in Bhadrak and Kendrapara.

"I thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi and my colleague Mansukh Mandviya for their continued focus on the development of Odisha. The jetty project will boost connectivity, reduce travel time and facilitate job creation for locals in Bhadrak and Kendrapara," Pradhan said.

No vax drive in urban areas during shutdowns

HEALTH MINISTER NABA KISHORE DAS WRITES ANOTHER LETTER TO THE UNION HEALTH MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTING SHORTAGE OF VACCINES IN ODISHA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: The Health department Friday ordered cancellation of Covid-19 vaccination in all urban areas of 10 high-burden districts of Odisha where weekend shutdowns would be imposed from Saturday.

Health department's additional chief secretary PK Mohapatra Friday wrote a letter to the district Collectors and Commissioners of urban local bodies ordering cancellation of the vaccination programmes in the urban areas of 10 districts during the weekend shutdowns beginning April 17.

The state now has zero stock of Covishield while only 1,74,004 doses of Covishield and 2,49,196 doses of Covaxin are in pipeline

These districts are mostly bordering districts of Odisha which were identified as vulnerable earlier and night curfew was imposed in these districts. These districts include Sambalpur, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Bargarh, Bolangir, Sundargarh, Koraput and Malkangiri.

With the new order, the inocu-



FILE PHOTO

lation drive will remain suspended in urban areas of these districts every Sunday and Saturday but the drive will continue in other 20 districts based on availability of vaccine doses.

SHORTAGE OF JABS CONTINUES

The state government Friday shot off another letter to the Union Health Ministry reiterating the demand for supply of more doses of Covid vaccines.

State Health Minister Naba Kishore Das Friday sent a letter to the ministry apprising them about the acute shortage of Covid vac-

cines in the state.

The minister admitted that it received a total of 50,79,675 doses of the vaccines. He also said that presently there is zero stock of Covishield in the state/regional/district stores and only 1,74,004 doses of Covishield and 2,49,196 doses of Covaxin are in the pipeline.

The minister told the Centre that the current stock could last for one more day.

Das has reiterated the demand for 25 lakh doses of vaccines so that the state government could plan the drive for 10 days.

48% vaccine centres shut in state

BHUBANESWAR: With the shortage of Covid-19 vaccines in the state, around 48 per cent of the vaccination centres remained closed Friday.

The data of vaccine drive for Friday, supplied by the state Health department, claimed that the inoculation drive in the state could take place only in 781 sites while the state government has around 1,500 vaccination centres. With the performance, around 48 per cent of the identified vaccination centres in the state remained closed Friday.

Data claimed that in Koraput, not a single session of vaccination drive was conducted owing to shortage of the vaccines.

Other districts too suffered with a few sessions of the vaccination. Nuapada district saw only three sessions while Cuttack and Kandhamal witnessed only seven sessions.

The government claims that a total of 49,01,975 persons have been vaccinated till now. The state has been demanding more vaccines to keep the vaccination drive going.

Daily Covid count in state goes past 3K

SECOND WAVE IS INFECTING YOUNGSTERS MORE THAN ELDERLY PEOPLE, SAYS DMET

PNN/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 16: Odisha's Covid-19 caseload Friday mounted to 3,61,450 after 3,108 more people tested positive for the infection, while three fresh fatalities pushed the death toll to 1,938, a Health department official said.

The single-day spike of 3,000 plus cases Friday is considered to be the highest figure so far this year, the official added. The coastal state had registered over 3,000 cases, six months ago October 8, 2020, when 3,144 people had tested positive for the highly infectious virus.

Of the 3,108 new positive cases, 1,806 were reported from quarantine centres, while the remaining were detected during contact tracing.

Khurda district reported the highest number of 534 new cases, followed by Sundargarh (523).

The other districts which reported more than 100 new cases are Cuttack (163), Nabarangpur (156), Sambalpur (153), Balasore (151), Nuapada (140), Bargarh (132), Bolangir (133), Puri (114) and Keonjhar (105).

The number of active cases has increased to 16,889, which was 2,125



The world famous Sun Temple at Konark has been shut for visitors till May 15 in the wake of surge in Covid-19 cases in Odisha

barely a fortnight ago April 1, the official said.

The states coronavirus death toll also mounted to 1,938 after three fatalities were reported from Bolangir, Ganjam and Sambalpur districts.

Besides, 53 other Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities. The Covid-19 death toll in Ganjam district has climbed to 251, which is the second highest after 341 coronavirus deaths in Khurda.

As many as 3,42,570 patients have recovered so far, he said.

The state has tested over 95.28 lakh samples for Covid-19, including 31,891 Thursday.

Odisha's positivity rate stands at 3.79 per cent, the data released by the Health and Family Welfare department said.

Meanwhile, the Director of the Directorate of Medical Education and Training (DMET), CBK Mohanty, said that the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic is infecting youngsters more than elderly people.

"The trend has changed in the second wave as it is spreading faster

MHA urged to cancel trains from Ch'garh

Bhubaneswar: The state government Friday urged the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to cancel train services from Chhattisgarh to Odisha in view of rising Covid cases in the bordering districts. In a letter, Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra urged Union Home secretary Ajay Bhalla to stop special trains from Chhattisgarh to Odisha for at least 15 days. At present, 18 special trains are running between the two states.

this time. Since elderly people were mostly infected by the virus in the first phase, antibodies have been created among them," he said.

During the briefing, state Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, also indicated that young people are most vulnerable to the infection this time.

Since people below 45 years are not entitled to get vaccines, they are vulnerable to Covid-19. This time, the infection is less among the elderly as senior citizens have been inoculated, a health expert said.

SIGHT TO BEHOLD



Puri beach looks stunning as sun sets on the horizon, Friday

OP PHOTO

Water-based tourism in 42 rivers, lakes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: The Tourism department has planned to develop water-based tourism projects at 42 water bodies across the state.

The department has identified 42 water bodies including rivers, lakes and reservoirs for development water-based recreation projects like water sports, boating, mini parks, restaurants and other facilities. The Tourism department has

submitted a proposal in this regard to the Water Resources department seeking the latter's opinion.

The department has identified 31 rivers, five lakes and six dams across the state. As per the proposals, the government has decided to develop tourism projects on Mahanadi river in Sambalpur, Sonepur, Boudh, Nayagarh, Angul, Cuttack and Jajpur districts; on Brahmani river in Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Cuttack and Jajpur districts; on Bhargavi &

Daya rivers in Khurda district; Kushabhadra in Puri district; Kolab in Koraput; Sileru in Malkangiri; and Rushikhulya in Kandhamal and Ganjam districts.

Similar projects are likely to be developed on Chilika, Ansupa, Pata, upper Jonk & Kanjia lakes along with reservoirs like Hirakud dam, Indravati, Kolab, Mandira, Deras and Rengali. The Water Resources department has forwarded the proposal to the chief engineer, Minor Irrigation, for its views and feasibility report.

Ramp up testing, Chief Secy tells BMC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: The state government, Friday, directed Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) authorities to ramp up testing, tracking and isolation of patients to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Reviewing the pandemic situation in Bhubaneswar, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra directed the BMC to enhance daily testing up to 3,000. Mahapatra also asked the BMC Commissioner, Prem Chandra Chaudhary, to keep the call centres active 24 hours and provide assistance to people within 30 minutes of receiving the calls.

"In light of detection of around 300 cases in city daily during the current week, the BMC is requested to increase Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) from just 33. The RRTs must be allotted specific areas. The teams will monitor home isolation cases and ensure strict implementation of Covid appropriate behaviour. The patients in home isolation should be contacted on a daily basis and be given necessary advice," the Chief Secretary said.

He also emphasised on intensifying enforcement activities by decentralising marketplaces and dispersing people gathering near roadsides, tea stalls and other



FILE PHOTO

shops. He instructed the officials to close shops found violating social distancing norms.

Moreover, it was also decided to request temple management committees for regulating entry of people to the temples and other celebrations for containing spread of the virus.

Meanwhile, ahead of the night curfew that would be imposed the Capital city from Saturday, Development Commissioner Pradeep Kumar Jena directed the civic body to announce Covid restrictions and night curfew through loudspeaker. Meanwhile, Additional Chief Secretary Health and Family Welfare, PK Mohapatra, assured supply of sufficient number of testing kits and medicines to all hospitals in BMC.

BMC: Refrain from panic buying

BHUBANESWAR: Ahead of the night curfew to be imposed Saturday, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner, Friday, urged the citizens not to indulge in panic buying and stockpiling essential commodities, assuring that there won't be any scarcity of essentials in the city's market.

"I request you all not to hoard and go for panic buying. I assure that there will be no shortage of essential items such as milk, edibles and medicines among other items in the city. Therefore, citizens of Bhubaneswar should not indulge in panic buying of these items and overcrowding at marketplaces," BMC Commissioner, Prem Chandra Chaudhary, said in a video message to citizens.

The Commissioner's appeal came after it was observed that the citi-

zens thronged various markets here Thursday and Friday night after the state government announced night curfew and weekend shutdown in urban centres in 10 districts due to spike in Covid cases. Night curfew will be imposed in Bhubaneswar between 9pm and 5am from Saturday as per the state government's order.

Seeking cooperation from the public, the BMC Commissioner further said that people can go for online shopping and prefer home delivery of items instead of going to markets for daily shopping. "We will ensure that there is no dearth of supply of essentials. And, please do not believe in rumours and hoax messages on social media and personal messaging platforms regarding complete shutdown or market closure," he said.



A rush at Unit-II market in Bhubaneswar, Friday

PRAYER TIME



People offering prayers at a mosque in Unit-IV area of Bhubaneswar on the first Friday of the ongoing Ramadan month

'Insensitivity' of cops leaves 3 kids stranded

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: Police officials are expected to show utmost compassion towards the children in distress while performing their duty. However, many forget or even don't care about deal with such children compassionately.

In such an incident, the crying faces of three children at Nayapalli police station Friday moved the onlookers present at the station. According to sources, police Friday arrested the lady over petty charges. A case was registered in connection with a dispute with her neighbour over falling of a banana tree.

Police arrested three persons along with the lady Friday at around 12.15 pm. Meanwhile, her seven-year-old daughter along with two younger sons also followed her mother to police station. The children were seen waiting for the release of their mother at the police station without food and water till 5pm.

The police was reportedly busy in documentation process to forward the lady to court and did not

The crying faces of the children at Nayapalli police station moved the onlookers

bother offering food or water to the kids.

The other visitors present at the police station seemed more concerned as they were consoling and offering food to the children who refused to take anything without their mother's approval.

Speaking on the issue, noted child rights activist Benudhar Senapati told **OrissaPOST**, "It is the duty of the police to inform the child line in such situations. Under no circumstances, juvenile in need of care should be made to sit or remain present in the police station. It is quite disheartening to see such behavior of police despite repeated efforts of sensitization."

The investigating officer said that she did not know that the lady's children were waiting at the police station.

Revenue generation up by 20% in 2020-21

CHIEF SECRETARY SC MAHAPATRA SETS A TARGET TO COLLECT ₹61,500 CRORE REVENUE IN 2021-22

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: In spite of economic wreck created due to Covid-19 pandemic, the revenue generation of Odisha has grown by 20 per cent during the financial year (FY) 2020-21 as compared to the last fiscal year of 2019-20.

This was known from a high-level meeting held on digital mode under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra here Friday.

The total revenue generated in 2020-21 was Rs 56,363 crore while the state had collected 46,970 crore during the year 2019-20.

While complementing the revenue earning departments for good performance, Mahapatra set a target to collect Rs 61,500 crore revenue in the current financial year 2021-22.

Target was fixed to collect Rs 40,000 crore from own tax resources, which is around 15 per cent more than that of the FY 2020-21. Similarly,

IN A NUTSHELL



THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARIES AND SECRETARIES OF THE REVENUE EARNING DEPARTMENTS WERE ADVISED TO FIX MONTHLY TARGETS FOR REVENUE GENERATION AND FOLLOW UP THOSE VIGOROUSLY

he set the revenue target of Rs 21,500 crore from non-tax sources for the year 2021-22.

It may be pertinent here to mention that the budget estimate from non-tax and own-tax sources was

fixed at Rs 20,000 crore and Rs 37,500 crore respectively for the current year.

"There is need for more revenue generation to keep up the higher growth trajectories in the areas of

Following the 5-T principles in financial management, around 95 per cent of the state's revenue collection has been brought into electronic fold as around 95 per cent of the state's own revenue is being collected electronically

The departments were asked to explore all possibilities of mutual and out of court settlement methods for collection of arrear industrial water and electricity dues

social service, capital investment and higher outlay for programme expenditure," Mahapatra said.

Finance Secretary AK Meena appraised that following the 5-T principles in financial manage-

ment, around 95 per cent of the state's revenue collection has been brought into electronic fold. At present around 95 per cent of the state's own revenue is being collected electronically.

The Chief Secretary asked to achieve hundred percent electronic receipts of the taxes during the current FY.

Further, Mahapatra directed the departments to focus on collection of arrear revenue from different sources. The departments were asked to explore all possibilities of mutual and out of court settlement methods for collection of arrear industrial water rate and electricity dues.

The departments were also told to mop-up the parking of funds in the banks.

The Principal Secretaries and Secretaries of the revenue earning departments, present in the meeting were advised to fix monthly targets for revenue generation, and, follow up those vigorously.

₹10 lakh aid for kin of asphyxiation victims

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: A day after two labourers died of asphyxiation while clearing a manhole in Cuttack's CDA area, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday announced an assistance of Rs 10 lakh each to the next of the kin of the deceased.

Expressing deep concern over the mishap, Naveen ordered the transfer of Sushanta Ghada, who is the executive engineer with Public Health and Engineering Organisation and also the general manager (GM) of Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO), as well as Subash Rout, who is the SDO and also GM of WATCO, for dereliction of duty, said a press statement.

The CM has also suspended junior engineer Pradyut Kumar Sahoo in connection with the mishap. "This apart, the Cuttack Municipal Corporation has filed an FIR with the local police against Sahoo as well as the service provider Deepak Nayak," it added.

ENFORCING NORMS



Commissionerate Police officials ensure enforcement of Covid norms at Unit-IV market in Bhubaneswar, Friday

Varsity, college exams suspended

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: A day after mass protests by undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students against the offline examinations amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the Higher Education department Friday decided to suspend the physical classes as well as the examinations in all higher education institutions under its jurisdiction.

Higher Education department Principal Secretary Saswat Mishra Friday sent a communiqué in this regard to the Vice-Chancellors (VCs) of all state universities and principals of all government degree colleges, aided and unaided degree colleges in the state.

As per the decision, the examinations and physical classes will be suspended with effect from April 19. Revised examination schedule will be communicated later after due consultation with VCs and principals, said the letter. Further, hostels will be closed down and boarders will be asked to vacate their rooms by



April 19. However, online classes will continue till the completion of syllabi, added the letter.

"The decision to suspend physical classes, both theory as well as practical, and examinations has been taken in accordance with the restrictions imposed by the state government to contain the virus spread," said the Higher Education Secretary.

Notably, students of several universities and colleges in the state including BJB Autonomous College, College of Basic Science & Humanities and Centre for Post Graduate Studies, OUAT, Rajdhani College, Ramadevi Women's University, Ravenshaw University Thursday had staged protests at

Close all technical institutions: SDTE

Bhubaneswar: The Skill Development and Technical Education department (SDTE) Friday directed to close the technical universities, engineering and professional colleges, polytechnics and diploma institutions, and ITIs. In a letter, Joint Secretary of SDTE Ajay Kumar Nayak said that all technical institutions including universities, engineering and professional colleges coming under the administrative control of the department shall remain closed from April 19 until further order. Classes and examinations shall be conducted online. The authorities of technical educational institutions will take all appropriate measures for conducting the classes through online mode to complete the syllabus in time. All hostels of technical educational institutions shall also remain closed.

their respective educational institutions seeking online exams in the wake of the recent surge in Covid cases.

Tight security for curfew

Bhubaneswar: The commissionerate police has planned elaborate security arrangements in the capital city for stricter enforcement of Covid-19 induced night curfew from Saturday. As many as 10 platoons of forces will be deployed at important junctions of the city during the night from 9pm till 5 am in the wee hours of the next day.

OPSC recruitment calendar out

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha Public Service Commission Friday released its recruitment calendar, much to the respite of the public service aspirants. Released by OPSC chairman Satyajit Mohanty, the calendar features details of recruitment to 17 types of positions.

STF arrests six for ferro-chrome theft

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, April 16: Six persons involved in the inter-state theft and transport of ferro-chrome were arrested Friday by the STF of Crime Branch after the conduct of raids at various places near Manguli and Tangi areas in the last two days. The arrested were identified



as Ajit Gupta, Santosh Kumar Verma, Babli Gupta, Kundan Paswan, Nanda Kishore Singh and Radheshyam Gupta.

The inter-state gang was operating in Odisha, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand. A huge quantity of stolen ferro-chrome of around 214 tonne was recovered from them. The market value of the recovered mineral is estimated to be more than Rs 2 crore. Three trucks, a generator set, an electric sewing machine were also seized during the raids.

The gang-members would steal the mineral from trucks while it was being transported to consignees at various ports, a STF official said.

Notably, ferro-chrome is exported from India through various ports to different countries including Japan and South Korea.

Hyder on seven-day police remand

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, April 16: Gangster Sheikh Hyder, who was nabbed from Telangana Thursday following his escape from police custody at SCB Medical College and Hospital, was Friday produced in the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) court here amid tight security.

The court has allowed the Commissionerate Police to take Hyder on a seven-day remand, said a police officer. The police will interrogate Hyder to know details regarding his escape plan, he added.

The gangster had reportedly drugged a constable and fled SCB here April 10 while being treated for some ailments.

A special team of the



The gangster had reportedly drugged a constable and fled SCB here April 10 while being treated for some ailments

Commissionerate Police led by Chauhan inspector in-charge Tapas Pradhan and his Badambadi counterpart Rashmi Ranjan Mahapatra, with the help of Telangana police, had nabbed Hyder from Sangareddy district Thursday.

"Our team brought Hyder to Odisha after producing him in a court in Telangana," said the

officer. Twin city police commissioner Soumendra Priyadarshi, meanwhile, revealed that at least eight persons, including three women, had assisted Hyder in fleeing the police custody.

Banita Rout, 26, of Mahanga, Baruna Rath, 32 of Laxmisagar in Bhubaneswar, Archana Parida, 18, of Bhogara in Balasore, Sarat Nayak, 54, and Sonali Swain, 22, of Pattamundai in Kendrapara, Sheikh Raisuddin, 26, of Kendrapara Town and Sheikh Ibrahim, 18, and Istiyak Khan, 34, of Malgudown area of Cuttack had helped Hyder to escape police custody, Priyadarshi said.

"We have detained these eight persons who are being interrogated by our officials," he added.

WASSUP TODAY

BHUBANESWAR

■ Biju Patnaik death anniversary, Biju Patnaik Park, 9am

BALIANTA

■ Blood donation camp, Jaydev panchayat office, 9am

PURI

■ 'Deepadana' by Biju Yuva Janata Dal, near Lion's Gate, 7.30am
■ 'Jeeven Bindu' by BJD, Gopabandhu Ayurveda Vidlaya, 9am
■ Plantation by 'Odisha Mo Parivaar', Biswambar Vidyapeeth, 9am

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.

Two more special trains from this month

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: The Ministry of Railways has decided to run two more special trains between Mysore and Vasco-da-Gama from Howrah through East Coast Railway jurisdiction.

The Howrah-Vasco-da-Gama-Howrah Special from Howrah will leave at 23:30hrs Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturdays between April 17 and 29, 2021 and arrive at Vasco-da-Gama at 15:45hrs on the next 2nd days.

In the return direction, Vasco-da-Gama-Howrah Special from Vasco-da-Gama will leave at 06:50hrs every Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday and Fridays between April 20 and May 2, 2021 and arrive at Howrah at 23:25hrs on the following days.



The train will have stoppages at Bhadrak, Jajpur-Keonjhar Road, Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Khurda Road, Brahmapur, Palasa, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam in East Coast Railway jurisdiction and important nominated stations between Howrah and

& Vasco-da-Gama from both the directions.

Similarly, Howrah-Mysore-Howrah Special from Howrah will leave at 16:15hrs every Friday between April 23 and 30, 2021 and arrive at Mysore at 03:50hrs on the next 2nd days.

In return direction, Mysore-Howrah Special from Mysore will leave at 23:45hrs every Sunday between April 25 and May 2, 2021 and arrive at Howrah at 10:55hrs on the next second days.

This train will have stoppages at Bhadrak, Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Khurda Road, Brahmapur, Palasa, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam in East Coast Railway jurisdiction and important nominated stations between Howrah & Mysore from both the directions.

Refrain from visiting railway offices: ECoR

Bhubaneswar: Looking at the alarming upsurge in Covid-19 cases, East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Vidya Bhushan appealed the public to refrain from visiting Railway offices.

He also requested that, instead of visiting offices physically, correspondences may be done by means of email, phone, fax or SMS. Apart from this, Vidya Bhushan also advised Railway staffers to follow Covid appropriate behavior strictly by wearing face masks, maintaining social distancing, sanitizing hands frequently and vaccinating themselves on their turns. This will save them, their families, the country and the society as a whole from the resurging pandemic.

Have stamina, will not wear mask: Cong MLA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: Congress leader Suresh Routray Friday, in his interaction with media, said that he would deliberately defy the Covid safety protocol of wearing mask.

The Jatani MLA said that he would abide by other protocols like washing hands and not going into crowd but would avoid wearing masks. He cited his stamina as a reason for flouting the government norms. These norms are based on recommendations from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

"I will not wear masks. I suspect that wearing a mask can make me sick. I have stamina and strong willpower. But I will keep on washing my hands and legs, and avoid going into populated areas," he said.

Routray said that Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and several other state ministers had been roaming around in election campaigns without following the Covid-19 safety protocols.

"I know one Congress person has died due to Covid-19 so we need to take precautions. I have the blessing of Lord Jagannath and Lord Lingaraj," he said.



FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemana-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baisnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Infiltration by B'deshi immigrants continues unabated in Kendrapara



The coast guard regularly patrols the coastlines to prevent infiltration while three marine police stations Jambu, Talachua and Tantiapala and police stations in Rajnagar and Mahakalapara are also keeping a watch on the coastal security. However, all these have failed to check the infiltration as the Bangladeshi immigrants continue to enter the district by the sea route

The immigrants find the sea route safer to come to Kendrapara as it takes only 8-10 hours to reach the district. Moreover, absence of road connectivity makes the immigrants all the more dependent on the sea to travel to the district

A majority portion of the coastal area is covered in forests. A lack of road connectivity has come in handy for the Bangladeshis to make the place their home and carry out their criminal activities with impunity. Even Babubali, Agarnasi, Sholamuhan, Madali, Luchghola islands in the prohibited zones of Gahirmatha marine sanctuary are used to carry out subversive activities by these immigrants

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara/Mahakalapara, April 16: Infiltration by Bangladeshi immigrants into Kendrapara district through the sea route continues unabated due to lack of sincere and tough measures by the district administration and the state government, a report said.

As a result, the district is fast turning into a safe haven for Bangladeshi criminals engaged in illegal marine, wild life and cattle trade as well as human trafficking. Reports said the district has a 48 km long coastline which has proved favourable for the immigrants to get into the district.

The coast guard regularly patrols the coastlines to prevent infiltration while three marine police stations Jambu, Talachua and Tantiapala and police stations in Rajnagar and Mahakalapara are also keeping a watch on the coastal security. However, all these have failed to check the infiltration as the Bangladeshi immigrants continue to enter the district by the sea route.

The immigrants find the sea route safer to come to Kendrapara as it takes only 8-10 hours to reach the district. Moreover, absence of road connectivity makes the immigrants all the more dependent on the sea to travel to the district.

Reports said that the Bangladeshi

immigrants after their arrival forcibly occupy the forest land to settle down and acquire various documents as proof to identify themselves as local residents. Once in, they engage in illegal marine, wildlife, cattle trade, drug and human trafficking to boost their incomes. The Mahakalapara block in the district which is fast turning into a safe haven for the Bangladeshi criminals is a case in this point.

A majority portion of the area is covered in forests and a lack of road connectivity has come in handy for the Bangladeshis to make the place their home and carry out their criminal activities with impunity. Even Babubali, Agarnasi, Sholamuhan, Madali, Luchghola islands in the prohibited zones of Gahirmatha marine sanctuary are used to carry out subversive activities by these immigrants.

Residents Sunil Kumar Gantayat, Pratap Kumar Tripathy and Arabinda Rout said the large scale infiltration of Bangladeshi is harmful for the district as well as for national security.

They alleged even as Covid restrictions are in force, hundreds of women and girls have been reported missing from Mahakalapara and Rajnagar blocks. Missing cases have been filed in all five police stations of these two blocks but police are not conducting probe

into these cases claiming them as elopements. However, these cases have been later found to be human and labour trafficking.

Moreover, encroachment is on rise in Bhitarkanika National Park spread over 682 sq.km near the sea coast and on the forest lands in Mahakalapara due to lack of regular verification by the district administration and the concerned departments. The immigrants after settling down construct illegal prawn gheries which has become a menace to flora and fauna of the sanctuary as well as for the farmland.

The illegal occupation of the land has often given rise to a law and order problem. The busting of a fake radio station at Banipal in 2001 and the murder of a forest guard Shyam Singh in 2002 are indicative of the intensity of the problem.

However, lack of patrolling boats and staff in three marine police stations has failed to check the influx of Bangladeshi immigrants into the district. A policeman on the condition of anonymity said that each police station is required to have 81 employees and high speed boats to carry out patrolling in the sea which is lacking.

When contacted, SP Madkar Sandeep Sampad said attempts are on to strengthen the manpower and infrastructure of the three marine police stations.



Amid a spurt in Covid-9 cases in Keonjhar, Plus-III students of DD Autonomous College stage protests, demanding scrapping of their 3rd semester exams

LED light scam: Vigilance starts probe after 6 years

NINE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE SCAM PUT TO GRILLING IN FIVE PHASES



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharsuguda, April 16: A scam allegedly took place in the purchase of LED lights in Belpahar municipality of Jharsuguda district six years ago. On the basis on an allegation, the Vigilance had registered a case and started an investigation which later slowed down and could not be carried forward thereafter.

After six years, the anti-corruption agency has become active and resumed its investigation. The vigilance had issued notices to nine people for inquiry.

The Vigilance officials grilled former Belpahar civic body chairperson Rashmirekha Mishra, former chairperson Prasuram Sahu, former executive officer Sachidananda satpathy, former executive officer Tapas Ranjan Jena, clerk Ashok Sahu, lineman Pramod Kumar Rath, helper

Debananda Pradhan, helper Ashok Bhainsal and owners of LED bulb supply agency Sachidananda Mishra.

The Vigilance has obtained valuable data about the scam from these people during the five-phase grilling. Besides, the Vigilance has seized documents while samples of the signatures of these people put in the documents have been sent to a laboratory to verify if they had genuinely signed on the documents.

This was stated by Vigilance inspector Pradip Kumar Aindia.

He said that the Vigilance would prepare a report on the basis of the seized documents and some evidence.

In 2016, the Vigilance sleuths had registered a case against former Belpahar municipality chairman Rashmirekha Mishra and then executive officer Sachidananda Satpathy for embezzlement of government fund in the purchase of LED bulbs.

It was alleged that over Rs 17 lakh has been misappropriated in the purchase of LED bulbs in 2015.

It was alleged that during the tenure of Rashmirekha as the chairman, there was no tender for purchase of 432 LED lights for Belpahar municipality. At that time the retailing price of each LED light was Rs 10,404, but its price was inflated as Rs 44,152.

Earlier, the Vigilance inquiry report had indicated involvement of other people in the scam. The LED lights were supplied by the TechMake company based in Bhubaneswar.

Differently-abled minor raped

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, April 16: Khaira police Friday detained the father of a rape accused for interrogation and started a probe into the alleged rape of a differently-abled minor girl under this city's police limits.

Family members of the victim lodged an FIR at Khaira police station alleging that the minor girl was repeatedly raped by a man of their village and she has become pregnant. The ac-

used was identified as Pradip Sethi. Sethi had physical relationship with the 17-year-old girl on the pretext of marriage. He later came to know about her pregnancy and tried to persuade the victim to go through an abortion, but failed, informed a police official.

Family members of the victim came to know about the relationship after observing physical changes that took place in her, when the victim was already six months pregnant.

Containment Zones declared in 3 dists

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi/Keonjhar/Rourkela, April 16: In view of the rising number of Covid-19 cases, the Gajapati and Keonjhar district administrations have announced the most affected areas as 'Containment Zones'.

Officials of the Gajapati district administration Friday announced 'Basant Vihar' under Paralakhemundi municipality area as a Containment Zone as there is a surge of Covid-19 cases in the locality. The locality has been sealed with barricades with no one allowed to go in or come out. Only essential service providers are being allowed to enter Basant Vihar area. The administration has taken steps to supply essentials to the families in the Containment Zone.

The district Friday reported 18 new Covid-19 cases. Its total case load has gone up to 4, 205. Similarly, after eight members of a family at 'Swam Bira Jay Govind Pur' under Patna block in Keonjhar district tested positive Thursday, the Keonjhar district administration announced the specific plot as a 'Micro Containment Zone' Friday.

The restrictions will remain in



Eight members of a family residing at Swam Bira Jay Govindpur under Patna block in Keonjhar district have tested Covid-19 positive

place till April 21. The local administration has been directed to carry out contact tracing within 72 hours. The house where the new infections were reported from was sanitised Thursday.

A total of 105 fresh positive cases of Covid-19 were reported from Keonjhar district Friday, taking the district's tally to 8,554.

Reports from Rourkela said, with

a spurt in Covid-19 positive cases, the authorities of the Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) declared two areas in Sector-1 and Sector-20 as micro containment zones. Friday, Sundargarh district has recorded 523 positive cases Friday. The micro containment zones are H-Block quarter from 313 to 340; quarters from 353 to 380 in Sector-1 and B-Block quarters from 123 to 130 and quarters from 133 to 140. The containment order will remain in force till further orders, said the RMC.

The administration has stated contact tracing in the area. RMC Commissioner Dibyajyoti Parida said, measures are being taken for active contract tracing. Supply of essentials and medical requirements will be ensured through various teams.

FARMERS WORRIED OVER MASSIVE FISH DEATHS IN UPPER SUKTEL DAM



POST NEWS NETWORK

Khaprakhol, April 16: Quintals of fish are found dead in Upper Suktel dam under Khaprakhol block in Bolangir district over one week or so. However, the causes of the mass fish deaths are yet to be ascertained. Local fish farmers are at a loss.

Fish farmers affiliated to Upper Suktel Matsyajibi Mahanangh had grown fish in the dam. About 30 quintals of fish are dead, said Nabaghan Pradhan, the president of the Mahsangh.

Pradhan was worried over such development and said that he had never seen such mass death before. "Our livelihood is at stake. The government should look into the matter," he demanded.

Block fisheries officer Sanjib Kumar Sahu said that he has visited the dam and taken stock of the situation. "Due to the water contamination in the dam, fishes might have died. Fishermen should immediately catch fish. The higher-ups were apprised of it," he added.

Telemedicine in Silk City soon

Migrants start returning to Ganjam; admin lays stress on registration

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, April 16: Amid a resurgence in Covid-19 in Ganjam, the district administration has enforced a host of safety measures and guidelines as migrants have started returning to the district. As a strategy to counter the pandemic, the administration has laid stress on registration of the returnees.

Significantly, the administration has decided to start telemedicine service. It was started by Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange.

"There is every possibility for Covid-19 to proliferate in Ganjam unless people remain wary of its prevention. For the next 30 days, all need to have to be careful," said the Collector.

He also added that the government is laying stress on the life and livelihood of people. Wearing mask is necessary for people to keep the virus away, he suggested. By Monday, Ashwni and Tata



Migrants will be in isolation and their health status will be enquired over phone. Phone numbers of designated doctors will be in the medicine kits

Covid hospitals will be operationalised while telemedicine service will resume in Berhampur.

Migrants returning to the district are required to register themselves. They will be put in isolation and their health status will be inquired over phone. Accordingly, medicines will be prescribed by doctors. In case of their health turning serious, patients will be brought to Covid care centres and hospitals.

Five-point guidelines will be enforced in the battle against Covid

in the present scenario while phone numbers of designated doctors will be given in the medicine kits to the patients.

All village Covid management committees have been directed to be ready to deal with the migrant issue and ensure observation of safety guidelines. It was learnt that by April 14, as many as 6064 migrants have returned from various states to the district. In coming days, Covid care centres will be made functional at Aska, Bhanjanagar and Hinjilicut.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/21-22/E-Tender/05
Dt. 09.04.2021

(1) Tender No. e-Tender-EASTKUR-12-2021, Dt. 07.04.2021

DESCRIPTION - MAINTENANCE WORKS FOR UTILITY CUM SPECIAL SERVICE (ROUND THE CLOCK) TO THE OFFICER REST HOUSE, SUBORDINATE REST HOUSE, DIVISIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL (ENGINEERING) AND ITS HOSTEL BUILDING WITH REGULAR CLEANING OF FOUNTAIN AT CUTTACK.

Approx Cost of the Work (₹):
101.95 Lakhs, Completion Period : 24 (Twenty Four) Months.

(2) Tender No. e-Tender-EASTKUR-13-2021, Dt. 07.04.2021

DESCRIPTION - PROVISION OF 1ST FOB AT BAGADIA PH, BANBIHARI GWALIPUR PH, BADAKHANDAITA, JHANKAD SARALA ROAD PH, BADABANHA (EXTENSION) UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL ENGINEER-J1 / CUTTACK OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx Cost of the Work (₹):
507.97 Lakhs, Completion Period : 12 (Twelve) Months.

Tender Closing Date and Time:
At 1500 Hrs. of 28.04.2021 (For all the Tenders).

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is available in website <https://www.irps.gov.in>

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / Corrigendum issued for this tender.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg) / PR-27/M/21-22

Sl. No.	Name of the Project	Approx. Cost of Project in Rs.	Cost of tender Schedule in Rs.	EMD @ 1% in Rs.	Stipulated period of completion
1	New construction of Sub centre Building at Kelua	2426702.00	6000.00	24300.00	6 (Six) calendar months
2	New construction of Sub centre Building at Khurasigada	2426702.00	6000.00	24300.00	6 (Six) calendar months
3	New construction of Sub centre Building at Tadakashahi of Ankuli.	2293422.00	6000.00	23000.00	6 (Six) calendar months
4	Construction of New Sub centre at Tumba of Tambagada	2293422.00	6000.00	23000.00	6 (Six) calendar months
5	Construction of labour Room at Turubudi	2284617.00	6000.00	22900.00	6 (Six) calendar months
6	Construction of New Sub-Centre Building at B. Nuagam	2300635.00	6000.00	23100.00	6 (Six) calendar months

The approved Tender Schedule along with DTN will be available in the official website <http://www.ganjam.nic.in> from Dt. 19.04.2021 to 28.04.2021 up to 5.30 PM and can be downloaded from the above website. The last date of receipt of Tender paper is upto 1.00 PM of dated 30.04.2021 through Registered Post/Speed Post only. The sealed tenders received through Registered/Speed Post will be opened on dated 03.05.2021 at 10.30 AM in presence of the contractors or their authorized representatives at Patrapur Block Office. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason therefor.

Office of the Panchayat Samiti, Patrapur, Ganjam
Ph. No.: 0680-2642224(O), Mail ID: ori-patrapur@nic.in
TENDER CALL NOTICE: 01/2021-22 DATED 15.04.2021 Date: 15.04.2021

REGIONAL OFFICE: 108 - B, Unit-VII, Surya Nagar, Gopabandhu Square, Bhubaneswar-751003, Ph. No.: 0674-2397551, 2397199

INVITATION OF BIDS/OFFERS FOR PREMISES ON LEASE

Central Bank of India requires premises admeasuring 92.90 to 139.35 Sq. m. (1000-1500 sqft.) carpet area in ready possession / ready for possession within 3 months at Janpath preferably on the ground floor with adequate parking space & approach road for their **Janpath Branch/Office**. There should be a provision for an on site ATM with an area of 5.94 to 9.29 Sq.m. (64 to 100 Sq.ft.). The premises should be located on the Main Road in between **Master Canteen Square to Ram Mandir Square, Unit - 3, Bhubaneswar**. No brokers or intermediaries please. Priority will be accorded to Government / Semi Govt. bodies or public sector undertakings. Kindly download the formats/terms and conditions from the website <http://www.centralbankofindia.co.in> or collect the same from **Central Bank of India, Janpath Branch / Regional Office at 108-B, 1st Floor, Unit - VII, Surya Nagar, Gopabandhu Square, Bhubaneswar - 751003** during office hours. Interested owners should send their proposals in prescribed formats in two separate and sealed covers superscribed as Technical Bid (cover-I) and Financial Bid (Cover-II). The last date for submission of offers is **01.05.2021 upto 4p.m.** The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the proposals without assigning any reason therefor.

Date: 16.04.2021 **Sd/- Chief Manager**

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, SUNDARGARH (R&B) DIVISION, SUNDARGARH
E-mail id: pvd_sng@yahoo.co.in
Tel./Fax: (06622)272230

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
No. B-29
"e"-Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No.- EE-R&B-SNG-01 OF 2021-22
Letter No. 1978/WE **Date: 13.04.2021**

- The Executive Engineer, Sundargarh (R&B) Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in Double cover system on ON-LINE mode from eligible contractors with valid licenses for Construction of **Building works (including EI Works)** as detailed in DTCN.
- Nature of Works :- **Building Works**
- No. of work :- **01 (One) No.**
- Tender Cost :- **Rs.10,000/-**
- Class of Contractor :- **"B" & "A" Class Contractor**
- Availability of bid :- **From 10.00 A.M. of date-16.04.2021 to 05.00 P.M. of date-26.04.2021.**
- Date of opening of Bid :- **10.00 A.M. on Dt.27.04.2021**
- The bidders have to participate in ON-LINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>). Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the website said only.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Sundargarh (R&B) Division
OIPR-34043/11/0001/2122

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, ANGUL
No. 779 Date: 08 / 04 / 2021
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
e- Procurement Notice

Bid ID. E.E, M.I. Division, Angul No.- 01 /2021-22
E-mail ID: eemidivision_angul@yahoo.com

No. A-37

- Name of the works :- Improvement to Minor Irrigation Projects under different Block of Angul District under critical grant-2021-22
- No. of Works :- 07 (Seven) Nos.
- Estimated Cost :- Approximately from Rs.17.86 Lakhs to Rs.53.58 Lakhs
- Cost of Tender Paper :- **From Rs. 6000 /- to Rs. 10000/- (Non-Refundable)** to be paid electronically through the payment gateway of designated Banks
- Class of contractor :- "D", "C", "B" and "A"
- Period of Completion :- 10 (Ten) calendar months.
- Available of bid documents for sale and receipt through Online :- From dt. 20-04-2021, 10 A.M, to dt.29-04-2021, upto 5.00PM in website (www.tendersorissa.gov.in)
- Date of opening of bid documents :- On dt.30-04-2021 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer, M.I. Division, Angul.
- Date of lottery if required :- Dt.07.05.2021 at 11.00 AM
- Digital Signature :- The Bidder must possess compatible Certificate of Bidder. Digital Signature Certificate (DSC).
- The tender detail call notice an also be seen in the DOWR website.
- Name & Address of the OIT. :- Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Angul. At / P.O.: Hakimpinada, College Square Division : Angul, PIN-759143 Ph. No. : 06764-236522 Email ID: eemidivision_angul@yahoo.com

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement market place. <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, M.I. Division, Angul
OIPR-32284/11/0001/2122



I am on Earth because it is on earth that the divine work must be done, and for no other reason.

THE MOTHER



PM Modi pushes for administrative reforms

In September last year, the Modi sarkar gave the go-ahead to its most ambitious bid to reform the bureaucracy – a national capacity building programme. Finally, the programme has got underway with the creation of the Capacity Building Commission (CBC) under the National Programme for Civil Service Capacity Building aka “Mission Karmayogi”.

And given the government’s recent obsession with domain experts from the private sector, the man appointed to head the new CBC is no babu, but Adil Zainulbhai, the chief of the Quality Council of India (QCI), which is an autonomous body under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion. He is a former chairman of McKinsey India and a known supporter of the Prime Minister. The CBC will have two members – Ramaswami Balasubramanian and Praveen Pardeshi – with only the latter being an IAS officer (of the 1985 batch).

For those who look for patterns in these things, consider that Zainulbhai’s appointment came on the same day as the announcement that Mallika Srinivasan will be the chairperson of the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB), the first time that a private sector specialist has been appointed as the head of the board that is responsible for the appointment of top management posts in the Central Public Sector Enterprises.

Looking back further, there was another clue when in February Prime Minister Narendra Modi attacked the IAS in the Parliament, no less. The message then is clear: the government has firmly announced its intention of bringing in more domain knowledge specialists than continue to depend on the “heaven-born” who are generalists by training. They will no doubt put up some resistance, but Modi is bent upon breaching this wall and bring in much-needed reforms.



BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

HC STAYS APPOINTMENT OF FORMER TN CS AS NGT EXPERT

Former Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary Girija Vaidhyanathan faces uncertain days ahead. Slated to join the National Green Tribunal (NGT) as an expert member, the appointment has been put on hold by the Madras High Court.

The court has granted an interim stay on her appointment stating that she did not meet the minimum eligibility criterion of possessing five years of experience in handling environmental issues. The court was acting in response to a petition filed by a group of environmental conservation activists, which argues for cancellation and nullification of the December 12 notification about Vaidhyanathan’s appointment.

Sources point out that Vaidhyanathan was appointed an expert member of the NGT along with her 1987 batch colleague K Satyagopal, who retired as Additional Chief Secretary and Commissioner of Revenue Administration. Vaidhyanathan’s argument that she had held various administrative positions related to the environment clearly did not cut much ice with the court. The court will continue hearing the case.

SUNIL ARORA WRAPS UP INNINGS AS CEC

Sushil Chandra took charge as Chief Election Commissioner from Sunil Arora whose tenure has ended. This came as a surprise to many who expected Arora to be given an extension, given the trend seen in the Modi sarkar when it comes to some prestigious positions and those who it deems as performers. But for Arora, punters still hold out hope that he may land another plum post-retirement assignment that would keep him in the limelight for a few more years.

Chandra is a 1980-batch Indian Revenue Service officer and was the senior-most Election Commissioner ahead of Rajiv Kumar in the three-member poll panel. Thus, the government stuck to the convention of appointing the senior-most election commissioner as CEC. The new CEC is counted among officials who were at the forefront of the Centre’s fight against black money. As Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), he led the department’s action against tax evasion after the demonetisation in 2016.

Share a babu experience! Follow [@dilipthecherian](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian) on Twitter. Let’s multiply the effect.

WISDOM CORNER

Keep your feet on the ground, but let your heart soar as high as it will. Refuse to be average or to surrender to the chill of your spiritual environment. **ARTHUR HELPS**

I don’t believe you have to be better than everybody else. I believe you have to be better than you ever thought you could be. **KEN VENTURI**

The first step toward success is taken when you refuse to be a captive of the environment in which you first find yourself. **MARK CAINE**

WORDSWORTH

Butterfly

This has been suggested as a possible source of the name – the inversion is terribly seductive. There’s a big problem, though. JBS Haldane once spoke sadly of “a beautiful theory, slain by an ugly fact” and I’m about to tread all over the idea with my size nine clodhoppers of evidence. The word can be traced right back to the Old English *butterflege*, found in a glossary of about the year 700. Nowhere along its trip from those times to today does it ever appear in the inverted form. The word does indeed seem to be *butter* plus *fly*. Words in some other European languages also contain the same idea, such as the German *Schmetterling*, whose ultimate root is a Czech word for cream. Why *butter*? We wish we knew for sure. Some authorities suggest the link comes from the insect’s yellow faeces. Others point to the old belief that butterflies like to land on milk or butter left uncovered, or even that fairies and witches took on the form of butterflies at night to steal butter from the dairy. Nice stories, but lacking rather a lot on the firm-evidence front.

LOL

NEW STIMULUS PLAN

Three contractors are bidding to fix a broken fence at the White House. One is from Chicago, another is from Tennessee, and the third is from Minnesota. All three go with a White House official to examine the fence. The Minnesota contractor takes out a tape measure and does some measuring, then works some figures with a pencil. “Well,” he says, “I figure the job will run about \$900. \$400 for materials, \$400 for my crew, and \$100 profit for me.” The Tennessee contractor also does some measuring and figuring, then says, “I



can do this job for \$700. \$300 for materials, \$300 for my crew, and \$100 profit for me.” The Chicago contractor doesn’t measure or figure, but leans over to the White House official and whispers, “\$2,700.” The official, incredulous, says, “You didn’t even measure like the other guys! How did you come up with such some measuring, then works some figures with a pencil. “Well,” he says, “I figure the job will run about \$900. \$400 for materials, \$400 for my crew, and \$100 profit for me.” The Tennessee contractor also does some measuring and figuring, then says, “I

POLICE-POLITICIAN NEXUS

FOCUS CRIME

The Maharashtra Police-politician squabble is now being legally processed by the CBI under orders of the Bombay High Court. Hence, this analysis is not on that specific issue but on a larger subject of police-politician relations affecting the general public.

While one should summarily reject the notion that an elected politician has no role in overseeing the working of the police, it is also true that propriety demands that politicians should not interfere in the inner working of the police department unless it is connection with correcting any grave misdemeanour in the department or for guidance in its working towards greater public good.

The second report of the Dharma Vira National Police Commission (1979) had observed that the manner in which political control has been exercised over the police in India through ‘threats of transfer and suspension’ has led to ‘gross abuses, resulting in erosion of rule of law and loss of police credibility as a professional organisation’. The Commission recommended that the superintendence of the state government over the police should be limited to ensure that police’s performance was in strict accordance with the law by laying down broad policies. “There should, however, be no instructions in regard to actual operations in the field”.

This policy was more or less strictly followed by successive governments in Maharashtra where I served in the state police till 1976. I remember an occasion in 1974 when the late VP Naik, then Chief Minister, discussed with the Commissioner of Police, in my presence, complaints from a powerful Congress MLA against a police inspector of an important police station in Central Bombay. I was then head of Bombay Special Branch, in which capacity I used to meet the CM every day. The CM “suggested” to the Commissioner that the police inspector may be transferred. The Commissioner,



While one should summarily reject the notion that an elected politician has no role in overseeing the working of the police, it is also true that propriety demands that politicians should not interfere in the inner working of the police department unless it is connection with correcting any grave misdemeanour or for guidance in its working towards greater public good

who had already checked the MLAs’ complaints and had found the charges not correct and opposed the transfer. The CM did not press the matter any further. The inspector was not transferred.

Things drastically changed a decade later due to various reasons. In 1987, the Maharashtra government brought in a legislation to amend Section 4 of the Bombay Police Act, 1951 to bring “control, direction and supervision” of the police directly under the Home Department. Section 6 detailing powers of the police chief was made so weak that he or she had to depend upon the Home Department even for regular work. In other words, the Director General of Police (DGP) was made a mere figure head.

A comparison with Tamil Nadu is interesting. Under Section 4 of the Tamil Nadu District Police Act, 1859 duly amended, vests the “superintendence” of the police with the state government, but

confers “administration of the police” to the DGP through Section 5.

As a result, the Maharashtra Home Department started controlling even postings of police inspectors. Till the 1980s the DGP had the powers to transfer all inspectors within the state, the Deputy Inspectors General (DIGs) within the “Range” and the Superintendent of Police (SP) within the district. The DGP had to seek permission of the state government only for transfers of Deputy Superintendents of Police (DySP) outside the districts as they were considered “senior” appointments.

The result of this was total weakening of the functional independence of police officers at different levels. This was due to the police officers manning police stations looking to politicians who had the ‘right kind of approach’ to the Home Department to get them choice postings. This trend af-

ected even Indian Police Service (IPS) officers, some of whom managed to continue in comfortable urban postings without doing a single rural or tribal district. As a result, discipline within the force collapsed affecting police accountability towards the public.

During 2008-09 I was a part of the two-member “High Level Enquiry Committee” appointed by the Government of Maharashtra to probe into the police response to the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. We found that some Inspector level officers in Mumbai were taking certain decisions without even consulting their superior officers because of their political clout. As a result, senior officers came to know of these decisions much later, affecting police efficacy.

A former Home Minister in Maharashtra started a practice in 2011 of personally perusing the case papers of crimes recorded in Mumbai city. This was after journalist Jyotirmoy Dey’s sensational murder on June 11, 2011 by a gangster. Thirteen zonal Deputy Commissioners and their investigating staff had to be present at the Secretariat by turn daily and wait hours for the minister’s review of crime detection, thereby, wasting hundreds of man hours.

This is the basic malady affecting the police not only in Maharashtra but also in other states. Although we compare ourselves with “Scotland Yard” we have never followed the London Metropolitan Police’s motto of “Policing by Consent” laid down by Sir Robert Peel in 1829. The general motivation and intent of “Policing by Consent” is that the British Police derived its authority from the Crown, the law and the consent and cooperation of the people. This cannot be achieved unless the police force is given functional independence and the politician engages in only a broadly supervisory role.

The writer is a former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat.

©THE BILLION PRESS

SPECTRUM DATA

Dangers of data-based certainty



Diane Coyle

THE CURRENT HUNGER FOR DATA-BASED CERTAINTY IS BECOMING DANGEROUS AS WE INCREASINGLY RELY ON TECHNOCRATIC DECISION PROCEDURES FOR POLICYMAKING IN AREAS SUCH AS CRIMINAL JUSTICE, POLICING, AND WELFARE

Friends of mine who work in the arts and humanities have started doing something unusual, at least for them: poring over data. This is due to the pandemic, of course. Every day, they check COVID-19 case numbers, how slowly or quickly the R factor is declining, and how many people in our area got vaccinated the day before.

Meanwhile, social media is full of claims and counterclaims about all manner of other data. Is global poverty declining or increasing? What is the real level of US unemployment? The scrutiny, sometimes leading to tetchy arguments, results from people’s desire to cite – or challenge – the authority of data to support their position or worldview.

But in other areas where data are used, there is remarkably little focus on its reliability or interpretation. One striking example I have noticed recently concerns the “CAPTCHA” tests designed to protect websites against bots, which ask you to prove your humanity by identifying images containing common features such as boats, bicycles, or traffic lights. If your choice – even if correct – differs from that of the machine system using your selection to train an image-recognition algorithm, you will

be deemed inhuman.

In this example, the machine’s error is obvious, although there is no appeal against it if you want to access the website it is guarding. But in other cases, it may not be possible to identify what conclusions either machine-learning systems or human analysts are drawing when they put more weight on data than the data can bear.

Economists are rushing to embrace the use of big data in their research, while many policy-makers think artificial intelligence offers scope for greater cost-effectiveness and better policy outcomes. But before we entrust more decisions to data-based machine-learning and AI systems, we must be clear about the limitations of the data.

Already, too little attention is paid to the uncertainties inherent in economic data. Although policymakers generally appreciate that even something as basic as GDP growth is subject to large uncertainties and revisions, it seems impossible to stop people from building narratives on weak foundations.

For example, cross-country comparisons of the pandemic’s impact on national GDP are fraught with difficulty, owing to differences in economic structure and statistical

methodology. But that does not stop claims about which economies are weathering the crisis better or worse.

Or consider the “true” rate of inflation. Seemingly technical disputes about how best to construct a price index mask profound distributional conflicts, such as those between borrowers and bond holders, or workers and employers.

The data we use shape our view of a complex, changing world. But data represent reality from a particular perspective. Data of the kind deployed in policy debates are rarely completely unanchored from the world they describe, but the lens they provide can be sharp or blurry – and there is no escaping the perspective they offer.

One possible reason for the current distrust of economic “expertise” is the growing gap between top-down, technical economic assessments based on familiar data series, and an alternative world of more granular data presenting the bottom-up picture. Standard economic statistics capture average experience, which ceases to be typical when people’s fortunes diverge.

In general, advocates of evidence-based policy are aware of the inherent uncertainty of available data. Researchers take great care regarding sampling, the scope

for error, and the limitations of the data-collection method used. But the degree of false certainty tends to increase with proximity to policy and political decision-making. Former US President Harry S. Truman is far from the only politician to have expressed impatience with economists who say, “On the one hand...,” then, “but on the other...”

But the current hunger for data-based certainty is becoming dangerous as we increasingly rely on technocratic decision procedures – including machine-learning systems – for policymaking in areas such as criminal justice, policing, and welfare. Democracies often rely on constructive ambiguity to reconcile conflicting interests, such as those regarding the distribution of returns to an asset, or to address the question of whether law-enforcement authorities should err on the side of imprisoning innocent people or letting criminals walk free. Claims to data-based authority minimize or eliminate the scope of ambiguity, with potentially significant consequences.

The writer is a Professor of Public Policy at the University of Cambridge.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

Orissa POST

B-15, Russalgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Another attack on farmers

Sir, Even as the farmers continue with their agitation for the repeal of three farm laws, their troubles have increased on another front. The country’s largest fertilizer organization, Indian Farmers’ Fertilizer Cooperative Limited (IFFCO), has increased the price of several fertilizers, including DAP, by 45 per cent. The price of 50 kg DAP has been increased from ₹1,200 to ₹1,900. In the past, farmers were worried about rising prices of diesel and other commodities, but rise in fertilizer prices have broken their backs. “The price hike is temporary and fertilizers will be sold to farmers at the old price,” IFFCO said in a statement after the price rise. But with the rise in prices, the crisis in the fertilizer market has begun. Some questions have also been raised about IFFCO’s statement. News of the rise in fertilizer prices came via a departmental letter dated April 7. According to the letter, the price of NPK has been increased from ₹1,175 to ₹1,775 and the price of NPS has been increased from ₹925 to ₹1,350. The government has taken such a step in the midst of the second wave of the COVID-19 epidemic and the chaos of the four state elections, so that it escaped the attention of people. The price of fertilizer has never risen so steeply before. The rise in raw materials in the international market has been blamed for this. The question is, if the price is not for the farmers, then for whom? If fertilizer had to be sold at the old price, why did the price increase? Such a move by IFFCO will benefit depositors and, in particular, will provide opportunities for private companies to raise prices. It will affect the poor farmers. The question of rising fertilizer prices will have an impact on the Bengal elections and the Uttar Pradesh panchayat elections. This will also be the main issue in the peasant movement. That is why the government is trying to suppress this issue for a while by talking about the old stock. The fact is that the government treasury is completely empty so it is exploiting all the sectors to raise money.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

SC votes may decide next 4 phases

THE BJP HAS TURNED THE TABLES ON TRINAMOL BY PROMISING CITIZENSHIP FOR THE MATUAS, WHO CONSTITUTE ALMOST 20 PER CENT OF THE STATE'S POPULATION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, April 16: Ashis Ghosh – a former worker at the Gouripur Jute Mill in Naihati in North 24 Parganas district – had to leave his home in search of a job when the mill was shut in 2017. After working as a mason for around three years in Kerala, he had to return home last year after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now with the high-octane Assembly elections on in the state where all the political parties are promising employment and creation of job opportunities, Ghosh is holding his breath with a beating heart for something unusual to happen.

Ghosh is perhaps the reflection of the sentiments of the people along the other side of Hooghly river which once had industrial prospects but now looks desolated.

Initially hit by the unionism of the Left Front and then by the wrong industrial policies taken by the Mamata Banerjee-led government, the once throbbing industrial hub looks barren and desolate now.

"There were huge prospects and potentials in the districts like South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Hooghly and Howrah. There were skilled labour, resources, water and roadways that could have been used properly, but no government has tried to sue this workforce and resources effectively," a former



Industry Secretary of the state said.

With 33 Assembly constituencies in North 24 Parganas going to the polls in the next two phases, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will have to face these uneasy questions and her approach towards these legitimate problems will determine her prospects in this election.

In 2016, she had won 27 of the 33 seats in North 24 Parganas, 29 of the 31 seats in South 24 Parganas and 15 of the 16 seats in Howrah. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, despite a BJP surge, the Trinamool had managed to maintain lead in the 21 Assembly segments in North 24 Parganas, in all the 31 segments in South 24 Parganas and the 15 segments in Howrah.

With the BJP aggressively campaigning in all the constituencies

BENGAL POLLS 2021

in North 24 Parganas, promising jobs and other facilities, it would be difficult for the Trinamool Congress to retain its traditional fortress.

The BJP causing dents into the SC and Matua vote-bank is perhaps another aspect that might keep the Trinamool supremo worried. In 2009, it was Banerjee who brought in caste-based politics in the state. Now, the BJP has turned the tables on her by promising citizenship for the Matuas, who constitute almost 20 per cent of the state's population. Matua votes will be a deciding factor across 40-45 Assembly constituencies in this election. These people are largely present in the rural areas of North 24 Parganas such as Barasat, Basirhat, Bongaon and in some parts of Nadia

like Krishnanagar, Kalyani and Ranaghat that will all go to the polls in the next four phases.

The aggressive campaigning of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah in these areas will be a big reason for worry for the Trinamool chief. The Modi-Shah duo has played the refugee and citizenship card like Mamata Banerjee to take the air out of her sail. The Bengal Chief Minister's once well-calculated move to ensure vote banks for her party now threatens to dislodge her in Bengal.

The Scheduled Caste (SC) aspect is also keeping the ruling party worried. At 23.51 per cent, West Bengal ranks third in the country in terms of SC proportionate to its population.

In terms of absolute numbers, Bengal outranks the other two states, with its 60 recognised SC groups making up above 25 per cent of the population in more than nine districts. Together, these nine districts account for 127 Assembly seats. Besides, in six districts with 78 Assembly seats, the SCs constitute 15-25 per cent of the population.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, when it had won 18 seats, the BJP led in 33 of the total 68 SC-reserved Assembly segments in the state. Out of these 33 seats, 26 are Matua-dominated. The Trinamool led in 34 segments, and the Left-Congress combine led in only three seats.

No Haj without two vaccine doses: Haj Committee of India

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 16: In a major development, the Haj Committee of India (HCI) has said that no Indian Muslims shall be allowed to go for the annual Haj pilgrimage unless they have taken the two vaccine doses.

The HCI CEO Maqsood Ahmed Khan made the announcement late Thursday following the latest directives from the Saudi Arabian Health Ministry and the Indian Consulate-General in Jeddah.

Accordingly, he advised those who have applied for the Haj 2021 to take the first dose of the vaccine on their own now so they can be administered the second dose before departure.

However, Khan made it clear that there is no official communication on the status of the Haj pilgrimage yet from the Saudi Arabian authorities so far and the entire process would be subject to their approval.

"In case Indian pilgrims perform Haj-2021, outgoing flights will start from mid-June," Khan said, for the most important pilgrimage in a Muslim's life, this year falling July 17.

It may be recalled that in 2020, the Haj pilgrimage was out of bounds for the Muslim faithful from India as it came during the surging peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in late-July, and this year, the country is witnessing a second and much deadlier COVID wave.

'In lack of evidence, conviction can't be on moral grounds'



THE BOMBAY HIGH COURT HELD THAT A CONVICTION ON "MORAL" GROUNDS WAS NOT THE SUBSTITUTE FOR LACK OF EVIDENCE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 16: Bombay High Court has acquitted four members of a family, convicted in 2010 in connection to a woman's death by suicide within two months of her marriage into the family. The court held that a conviction on "moral" grounds was not the substitute for lack of evidence.

Megha, the deceased had a post-graduate degree in Mathematics from Aurangabad. Her family members feel that she killed herself as she couldn't bear the pain inflicted upon her by her in-laws.

A bench of Justices Sadhana S Jadhav and Nitin R Bokar of Bombay HC was hearing an appeal from the deceased's husband, his parents and his brother who were given life sentence by a Solapur court after being accused of murder. The couple got married July 28, 2010 and used to live in Malshiras, Maharashtra. On September 6, around 8.30 am, the woman's husband and her brother left the house. The husband dropped his brother at a nearby bus depot and went to work.

When Megha did not open the door for a long time, the other family members finally barged in only to find her hanging from the ceiling. They brought down her body and immediately informed the police. The woman's

relatives told the police that was mistreated by her in-laws over unmet dowry demands.

At the time of marriage, the groom's family was gifted ₹75,000 in addition to gold jewellery.

The advocate representing the convicted family argued in the court that "there is cogent and convincing evidence to show that there was no dispute between the members of both the families over dowry and the golden ornaments. Megha had committed suicide just within two months of her marriage which would prima facie show she was getting married against her wish."

The government pleader, on the other hand, argued that the woman died in her matrimonial home and the reason for her mental depression and suicide ought to have been known to the accused persons and that the woman was harassed for dowry. However, the court looked through evidence submitted in the case and saw that the husband had indeed been at his workplace when the woman died. Moreover, the door had to be broken as it was latched from inside.

"Medical evidence also proves beyond reasonable doubt that the cause of death was asphyxia due to hanging and, therefore, a conviction for an offence under Section 302 (murder) of IPC was unwarranted," the court said.

"In cases like the present one just because the wife has died in her matrimonial house within two months of marriage, the entire family cannot be stigmatised as having committed offences as serious as an offence under Section 302 of IPC. In absence of legally admissible evidence there cannot be a moral conviction," said the court while adding that the prosecution could not prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt.

ALL-PARTY MEET

EC rules out TMC's proposal to club last three phases of polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 16: Ruling Trinamool Congress Friday sought clubbing of the last three phases of Assembly elections after the fifth round on Saturday considering alarming COVID situation in West Bengal.

The Election Commission, however, ruled out the possibility of clubbing the next three phases of polling in West Bengal.

After Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had on the previous day mooted the idea of conducting polls for the remaining phases at one go, TMC secretary general Partha Chatterjee sought clubbing of the last three rounds of voting into one at a meeting with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Ariz Aftab here. The Election Commission had Thursday dismissed chance of holding the last three phases of Assembly polls in West Bengal together, saying "(There is) no such plan of clubbing phases."

Emerging from an all-party meeting called by the CEO, Chatterjee said that in order to save the lives of people and to control COVID-19 infections while allowing candidates ample time for campaigning, a balance has to be drawn by the Election Commission.

"We have told the commission that in order to give the people proper healthcare facilities amid COVID situation, the last three phases may be clubbed into one, while ensuring that the democratic rights of the people are upheld," Chatterjee told reporters. He said that all stakeholders, including the candidates, political parties and the general public, have a role to play in controlling the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

The BJP Friday said it has told

EC bans rallies from 7 pm-10 am

New Delhi: Against the backdrop of rising COVID-19 cases, the Election Commission Friday put in place restrictions on campaigning by political parties, including curtailing its time, for the West Bengal Assembly elections. In an order, the poll panel curtailed the time for campaign up to 7 pm. Earlier, it was up to 10 pm. Now there will be no campaign between 7 pm and 10 am on campaign day in the state, the Election Commission said. It also extended the silence period from 48 hours to 72 hours in each of the remaining three of the eight phases of the West Bengal polls to be held April 22, 26 and 29.

an all-party meeting called by the Chief Electoral Officer on the COVID-19 situation that it is against clubbing the next phases of West Bengal assembly elections since that would be disadvantageous for voters and candidates of the seats that are yet to go to polls.

Meanwhile, BJP leader Swapan Dasgupta, who represented the party in the meeting, said the party does not want any step that would affect the "democratic spirit". "We said that our party will abide by all COVID-19 protocols put in place by the Election Commission, and urged that no steps be taken that discriminates those voting in the next phases from those who have already exercised their franchise.

"We have not said anything about clubbing (of phases)... We feel that the elections will be held in eight phases," Dasgupta told reporters after the meeting.



BJP leader Swapan Dasgupta (2nd L) with other party leaders arrives to attend all-party meeting over COVID-19 norms in rallies for ongoing state Assembly polls in Kolkata, Friday



Passengers stand in a queue outside the Lokmanya Tilak Terminus to board outstation trains amid the ongoing spike in COVID-19 cases in Mumbai

Haffkine Bio-Pharma targets 22.8 crore Covaxin vials a year

THE COMPANY SAYS IT WILL TAKE A YEAR'S TIME TO START PRODUCTION OF THE VACCINE



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 16: After receiving permission to make Bharat Biotech's COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin, Mumbai-based Haffkine Bio-Pharmaceutical on Friday said it would take at least a year's time for the company to start actual production.

A top official said the state-run company is targeting to produce 22.8 crore vials of the vaccine per year. Speaking to reporters here, Dr Sandeep Rathod, managing director, Haffkine Bio-Pharmaceutical Corporation Ltd, said, "Our target is to produce around 22.8 crore vaccine vials, but it will take one year for us to start production."

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech and the ICMR have developed Covaxin, one of the two vaccines being used in the ongoing nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive. "And now we received a contract to produce the

vaccine at our Parel facility in Mumbai," he said.

"A proposal was submitted in January this year owing to the rising cases of coronavirus and need for more vaccines to immunise a large number of people. It is an ambitious project which is important from the angle of vaccination of such a large population," said the managing director of the Maharashtra government undertaking.

"There will be an internal team as well as a technical team to set up the facility for production of raw materials. Once we receive all the clearances from the Centre about safety and quality standards, we will start vaccine production," he said. "The installed capacity of the new facility will be of 22.8 crore vials per year and we will make optimum use of it," Dr Rathod said.

There are two stages of vaccine manufacturing – production of drug substance and fill-finish, which

means filling the vaccine in bottles and dispatching them to the market, Dr Rathod explained.

"We need a bio-safety level (BSL-III) laboratory for production of drug-substance, which will take at least 7-8 months to come up at the Parel facility of Haffkine. Post-set up, it will be inspected by central agencies and after meeting all quality standards, it will start production. We are hopeful of starting production of the vaccine in one year's period," he said.

Asked about the pool of experts needed for vaccine production, he said, "We have some experts in this field as well. However, we will also rope in scientists from TIFR (Tata Institute of Fundamental Research) and the Mumbai University."

The Union government has given its permission to Haffkine to manufacture Covaxin, an indigenously developed COVID-19 jab being made by Bharat Biotech.

'Life has come to a halt' say Mumbai's famous 'dabbawalas'

The 130-year-old delivery network has seen business plunge by nearly 90% with many offices in the country's financial capital still closed

REUTERS

Mumbai, April 16: The famed 'dabbawalas' or lunchbox delivery men of Mumbai who used to deliver 200,000 lunches by bicycle every day, say a loss of customers due to the coronavirus pandemic has destroyed their income and driven them to the brink of survival.

The 130-year-old delivery network has seen business plunge by nearly 90% with many offices in the country's financial capital Mumbai still closed.

Dabbawalas are mostly semi-literate deliverymen from rural areas who collect hot lunches from customers' often distant homes and, using a low-tech but reliable deliv-

ery system and over-laden bicycles, carry them to offices and schools across the city.

"It feels like life has come to a halt. So many changes have taken place (during the pandemic) that out of 5,000 dabbawalas only 450-500 are working because customers are very few," said Vishnu Kardukey, a lunchman and spokesperson of their union.

The delivery system was the primary source of income for 5,000 men and their families who lost their income overnight when Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered a nationwide lockdown in March 2020. "People are doing any job they can get... some have taken up farming while some have become construction labourers. And those who



had rented homes in Mumbai fled from the city (during lockdown) and never returned," added Kardukey.

Dabbawalas used to earn around ₹20,000 (\$267.08) a month but now struggle to earn even ₹5,000 in Mumbai, India's financial capital

and worst-hit city in the pandemic.

The surrounding state of Maharashtra earlier this week imposed stringent curbs on industry and e-commerce and ordered establishments to close. "The income drop is a huge problem for us, as we have children to look after at home," said Vitthal Rao, who said he had never seen such difficult times in 25 years of service. He urged the state government to provide financial assistance as it does to other sectors hit by the pandemic.

Britain's Prince Charles visited the dabbawalas during a visit to India in 2003 and even invited some of the lunchmen to his wedding with Camilla Parker Bowles in Windsor two years later.



I will tell the EC to stop the inflow of outsiders from states like Gujarat who are responsible for the COVID-19 spread in Bengal

COAI SEEKS BAN ON ILLEGAL MOBILE SIGNAL BOOSTERS

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has asked the Department of Telecommunications to ensure a complete ban on sale of illegal repeaters and boosters, offline or online, through e-commerce websites



of the day quote

I have full faith in the Congress leadership and hence have fully abided by what the party leadership told me. I went everywhere where the party assigned me, in Assam, Kerala and even in Rajasthan during filing of nominations by candidates for three seats. However, later the party deputed ministers and senior leaders for campaigning and I had no issues with it

SACHIN PILOT | RAJASTHAN PCC PRESIDENT

Kerala CM @VijayanPinarayi is a #COVIDIOT. There is no better word to describe a Chief Minister who continuously violates #COVID Protocols

V MURALEEDHARAN | UNION MINISTER

The money of the public cannot be kept secret. Amarinder Singh should give an account of the money collected in the Covid relief fund

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB AAP PRESIDENT

EC MAKES RECORD SEIZURES THIS YEAR

THE POLL PANEL CALLED THESE SEIZURES BY ITS VARIOUS FIELD AND TECHNICAL ENFORCEMENT TEAMS A 'HISTORIC MILESTONE' ACHIEVED 'FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ANY ASSEMBLY ELECTORAL PROCESS'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 16: The seizure of illegal inducements to voters, such as liquor and cash, during the ongoing polls to five assemblies and by-polls to some seats has crossed the record value of Rs 1,000 crore, a whopping jump of over four times since the 2016 polls, the Election Commission said Friday.



ASSEMBLY POLLS

Polling in Assam, Kerala and the Union Territory of Puducherry has also finished. Counting of votes for these five assemblies is slated to be held May 2.

The poll-panel called these seizures by its various field and technical enforcement teams a "historic milestone" achieved "for the first time in any assembly electoral process", meaning during simultaneously-held assembly polls.

"The stupendous rise in seizure figures is because of better preparedness and multi-pronged strategy of the Commission. The Commission conducted exhaus-

ive reviews at various levels which included review meetings with enforcement agencies of the state/UT and central agencies," the EC said in a statement. The agencies of the Union government primarily include the Income Tax Department, the Customs and GST directorates and the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU). According to data compiled till Thursday, the EC said, Tamil Nadu had reported a total seizures of Rs 446.28 crore, West Bengal Rs 300.11 crore (so far), Assam 122.35 crore, Kerala Rs 84.91 crore,

Puducherry Rs 36.95 crore. Additionally, the seizure of cash, liquor, drugs and other freebies of Rs 10.84 crore was reported in constituencies that saw by-polls during the same period, it said. The total value of these seizures stands at Rs 1001.44 crore while it was Rs 225.77 crore in these five assemblies during the 2016 assembly polls.

A pie chart analysis shows that while liquor (Rs 41.97 crore out of total Rs 122.35 crore) was the freebie that was being pushed maximum to lure voters in Assam, precious metals (Rs 27.42 crore out of total Rs 36.95 crore) was used the

most as a bribe to attract voters in the Union Territory of Puducherry. Similarly, in Tamil Nadu, cash (Rs 236.69 crore out of total Rs 446.28 crore) was abused the most as poll bribe, while in Kerala precious metals was used the most to attract voters (Rs 50.86 crore out of Rs 84.91 crore). In West Bengal - where the remaining four phases of polls are scheduled to take place Saturday followed by April 22, 26 and 29 - drugs and narcotics are the highest category of illegal inducements seized till now (Rs 118.83 crore out of the total Rs 300.11 crore).

The EC said it had deployed a total of 326 expenditure observers, including five special expenditure observers, for free and fair conduct of these polls, while 259 assembly seats were marked as 'expenditure sensitive' for what it called "focussed vigil" to check the flow of black money and freebies.

As per the law, distributing cash and gifts during the electoral process with the intent to influence voters is not permitted and such expenditure comes under the definition of "bribery" which is an offence both under 171B of IPC and under the Representation of People Act.

DUSTY LANE



A commuter rides a scooter during a dust storm in New Delhi

SHORT TAKES

Javadekar tests Covid positive

New Delhi: Union minister Prakash Javadekar Friday said he has tested positive for coronavirus and urged those who came in contact with him in the last few days to get themselves tested. Javadekar, who holds the key portfolios of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; Information and Public Enterprises; informed about it on Twitter. "I have tested #COVID positive today. All those who have come in contact with me in the last 2-3 days may please get themselves tested," he said. Javadekar had received the first shot of COVID-19 vaccine at a private hospital in Pune March 5.

Army reduces physical attendance

New Delhi: The Indian Army has informed its personnel that physical attendance in offices has been reduced by 50 per cent due to the rise in COVID-19 cases in the country, officials said. The personnel who would be physically present in offices will have to avoid crowding, stagger their timings and follow all COVID-19 protocols strictly. According to the directions, all meetings and conferences should be done virtually as much as possible, they added.

SpiceJet diverted

New Delhi: A SpiceJet plane was diverted to Zahedan airport in Iran Friday after its windshield cracked when it was flying from Riyadh in Saudi Arabia to Lucknow. "On April 16, SpiceJet Boeing B737 aircraft was operating flight SG-9749 (Riyadh - Lucknow). During flight, P2 side windshield outer pane cracked (Inner pane intact)," the airline's spokesperson said in a statement. Pressurisation was observed to be normal, it said.

Nun found dead

Kollam (Ker): A 42-year-old Catholic nun was found dead inside the well of the St Joseph convent at Kureepuzha in this south Kerala district Friday, police said. The other inmates noticed the body of Mable Joseph, a native of Karunagappally here, inside the well of the sprawling convent campus in the morning. They carried out a search after she failed to turn up for the usual morning prayers.

NPPA directs reduction in Remdesivir price



AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 16: The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has asked manufacturers of Covid drug Remdesivir to implement the revised MRP through a voluntary reduction of prices.

In a letter to Cadila Healthcare, Cipla Limited, Dr Reddy's Labs, Hetero Drugs, Jubilant Pharma, Mylan Labs and Syngene International, the NPPA has sought compliance of revised MRP with respect to Remdesivir as per the DPCO, 2013.

"Based on the Form-V furnished regarding voluntary reduction in Maximum Retail Price (MRP) of Remdesivir, manufacturers/marketers of Remdesivir are hereby directed to implement the revised MRP throughout the distribution chain w.e.f. 15.04.2021, irrespective of the batch numbers," the NPPA said. Sun Pharma in a letter to retailers and stockists has asked them to implement the new MRP

of Remwin which will be Rs 2,450, including GST.

"As you all are aware that currently our country has been badly hit by the second wave of Covid-19, it is very important for us to serve the impacted patients by making available required medicines at an affordable price," Sun Pharma said in the letter to retailers.

During these challenging times and particularly in the last 2-3 weeks, there has been a steep increase in the demand for Remdesivir injection across the country, it noted. "We seek your support in this and request you to issue necessary communications to all your stakeholders to ensure that the above product is made available to the patient at revised MRP only from April 15, 2021. We will take strict action against those found selling the product at a higher MRP than the revised MRP, including black listing them," the company said.

Govt should start vaccination centres at protest sites: Farmers' union

New Delhi: The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of agitating farmer unions, Friday demanded that the government start vaccination centres and provide related facilities at the protests sites. This is for the first time that the union has made such a demand. It even asked farmers protesting at the various border points of Delhi to wear masks and follow necessary COVID-19 guidelines to stem the spread of the virus. Interestingly, its leaders in the vulnerable age group had earlier said that they are not "afraid of COVID" and "won't take jabs". However, they had said that they would not stop any farmer camping at the borders from getting vaccinated as it was an individual choice.

Wearing mask is not enough

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 16: With Covid-19 spreading fiercely in many parts of the country, it has now become extremely important to follow all the precautionary measures, besides wearing a mask, to keep infections at bay, health experts have said.

It is important to understand that the virus responsible for Covid-19 spreads mainly from person to person. Therefore, coming in close contact with a sick person can put them in danger.

Doctors have therefore advised that in times like these indoors social gathering could be full of risks. "Covid cases in India are increasing because people are not taking even basic protective and preventive measures such as hand washing, regular sanitation, social distancing," Rahul Bhargava, Director and Head, Haematology and Bone Marrow Transplant, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram, said.



And at any time, people should try to minimise touching their eyes, nose and mouth.

"Even if one wears mask but doesn't maintain social distancing and keep it below the nose then also, she or he is at the risk of getting infected," said Swadesh Kumar, Consultant and Head of Emergency Department and Medical Services, Narayana Hospital Gurugram.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), when a person with suspected or confirmed Covid-19 has been indoors, the virus can remain suspended in the air for minutes to hours. Numerous factors can influence the length of time the virus remains suspended and is

infectious. These include viral load in respiratory droplets or in small particles, disturbance of air and surfaces, ventilation, temperature, and humidity.

"Wearing masks consistently and correctly can substantially reduce the amount of virus indoors, including the amount of virus that lands on surfaces," the CDC said. But the health agency also pointed out that based on limited epidemiologic and experimental data, the risk of infection from entering a space where a person with Covid-19 has been is low only after 24 hours.

During the first 24 hours, the risk can be reduced by increasing ventilation and waiting as long as possible before entering the space, and using personal protective equipment to reduce risk, it said.

The health agency pointed out that routine cleaning performed effectively with soap or detergent, at least once per day, can substantially reduce virus levels on surfaces.

Kumbh Mela might culminate early amid Covid-19 surge

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 16: The Niranjan Akhadas has announced curtailing the ongoing Kumbh Mela April 17, almost two weeks ahead of schedule, after several senior BJP leaders in Uttarakhand held discussion with the Akhadas to convince them to end it amid surge in Covid-19 cases and concerns of violation of Covid protocols, a senior party leader said.

However, the BJP-ruled state government has already announced that Kumbh Mela will go on as per schedule. The Kumbh Mela started April 1 and was scheduled to end April 30. "Senior BJP leaders met 13 Akhadas with a request to take a decision to wind up the mela seeing the severe situation of Covid. After the discussion, Akhadas have agreed to our request," the senior party leader from the hill state said. The state government is also holding consultation to take a final call on the continuation of Mela.

'Women aren't spared in Naya Kashmir'

The J&K Police Friday arrested and terminated the services of a lady SPO for allegedly glorifying terrorism

AGENCIES

Srinagar, April 16: PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti Friday said when it comes to cruelty "even women aren't spared in Naya Kashmir" as she reacted to the arrest of a woman special police officer (SPO) from Kulgam district for allegedly glorifying terrorism.

Saima Akhter, a resident of Frisal area of the south Kashmir district and working as SPO, was terminated from service for "obstructing" government officials in the discharge of their duty and booked under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act. "Saima Akhter from Kulgam has been slapped with UAPA for raising legitimate ques-



MEHBOOBA BACKS SPO

tions about searching her home repeatedly without any reasons. Saima's ailing mother under-

standably exacerbated her worries. When it comes to cruelty even women aren't spared in Naya

Kashmir," Mufti said in a tweet.

According to a police spokesperson, security forces Wednesday launched a search operation in Karewa Mohallah of village Frisal on a specific input regarding the presence of militants there.

During the operation, the search party was obstructed by by Akhter, the spokesperson said. "The lady resisted the search party and turned violent and uttered statements glorifying violent actions of terrorists," he said.

Akhter captured a video on her phone and uploaded it on social media platforms for dissemination "with the intent of disrupting the search operation", the spokesperson added.

Covid 2.0 may claim 2,320 lives per day in India by June: Report

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 16: The lethal second wave of Coronavirus will likely claim nearly 1,750-2,320 lives per day in India by the first week of June 2021, if proper steps are not immediately taken to curb its spread, warned a report by the Lancet Covid-19 Commission.

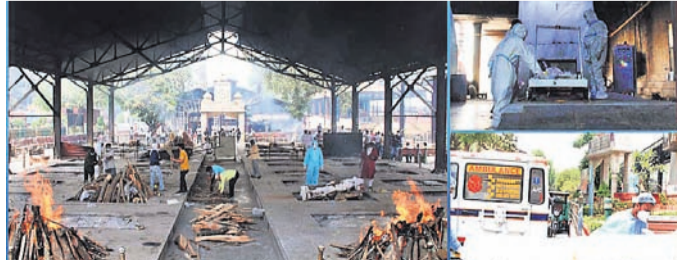
Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat will likely remain the most affected, according to the report titled "Managing India's second Covid-19 wave: Urgent steps".

The second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic hit India hard with the

number of new infections rising from 11,794 in the first week of February 2021 to 152,565 as of April 10, 2021. Death rate also touched new heights daily - from 116 in the first week of February 2021 to 838 as of April 10, 2021.

The second wave also took less than 40 days to reach the 80,000 mark. From 10,000 new cases per day in February to 80,000 new cases per day in April. In September, this journey took 83 days. Many positive cases are asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic, the report said.

Fiscally, India may need to spend more than \$7.8 billion on testing and \$1.7 billion on health care utilisation due to Covid-19 infections



leading to death by September 2021, it added.

"All efforts need to be made to break the transmission chain and reduce the rate of new infections, with minimum disruption to the economy and to the livelihood of its people," the report said, noting

that accelerating vaccinations is key. "The past year has shown us, both within India and in other countries, that strong political will, together with building preparedness in the health system, and individual and community behaviour change can yield powerful results.

DEADLY FOR 30-45 AGE GROUP

As a lethal second Covid wave hits people in all age groups, including children below age 12 and even infants, those between 30 and 45 years of age, who were spared last year, are now falling victims amid acute shortage of ventilator beds in the national capital and beyond, according to health experts. The novel coronavirus that has gone through several mutations is hitting healthy adults with some kind of a vengeance. The second surge swung into action in March: From about 15,000 new cases per day in the beginning, it reached around 55,000 fresh cases a day towards the end of the month.

We hope that strong, decisive actions taken now will spare India a long second wave and set in place actions to prevent further waves of Covid-19 infections," the report said. To combat the spread of Covid-

19, the report suggested measures such as ensuring vaccinations for all adults, including those below 45, need to ramp up manufacturing capacity, address vaccine hesitancy among others.

of the day quote

Government is taking every necessary step to accelerate the production facilities of #Remdesivir, it's capacity enhancement & availability



D V SADANANDA GOWDA | MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS OF INDIA

We are trying our best to serve the people. No government or leader would think of losing any of its citizens



AJIT PAWAR | MAHA DEPUTY CM

The Central government's COVID-19 strategy -- Stage 1- Impose a Tughlaqi lockdown, Stage 2- Ring bells, Stage 3- Sing praises to the Lord



RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Yediyurappa tests Covid +ve again

Bangalore: Hours after chairing the Covid review meeting, Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa tested positive for Covid-19 Friday. He tested positive for the second time in eight months. In August 2020, he was tested Covid positive and had undergone treatment in Manipal hospital.

Ranjit Sinha passes away

New Delhi: Former CBI director Ranjit Sinha died here Friday morning at the age of 68 in what is believed to be a COVID-19 related death, senior officials said. He was confirmed positive for coronavirus Thursday night and breathed his last at 4.30 am, the officials said. Sinha, a 1974-batch IPS officer of Bihar cadre who had cracked the coveted UPSC examination at the age of 21, headed the CBI for a controversial two-year term in 2012 as its 26th chief during which the agency earned the sobriquet of "caged parrot".

Honey trap gang busted

Bangalore: Bangalore police have solved a honey trap extortion case by arresting two youngsters from Rajasthan. The police said that a 26-year-old MBA graduate and IAS aspirant died by suicide March 23 after being blackmailed by a group of cyber criminals. This shocking incident, however, had come into public glare only April 7. At that time, police couldn't ascertain the reason for suicide and registered a case of unnatural death

NSUI members hold protest

Jaipur: NSUI members Friday held a demonstration against Rajasthan's Leader of Opposition Gulab Chand Kataria for his controversial remarks on warrior king Maharana Pratap. The Congress-affiliated National Students Union of India (NSUI) also burnt an effigy of the BJP leader who Tuesday tendered an apology for his remarks that triggered outrage among Rajputs in the state.

Man killed by son

Agra: A retired Uttar Pradesh Police officer was allegedly killed by his son over a domestic dispute Friday, an officer said. Chokhelal (63), a retired police sub inspector, was found lying in a pool of blood at his residence in Itmad-ud-daulah locality of Agra city, he said. He was allegedly killed by his youngest son Devesh (30) on the intervening night of Thursday-Friday, police said, adding that the accused has surrendered and confessed to the crime.



Afghanistan needs a double peace. It needs peace within and it needs peace around

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

15-DAY-OLD INFANT DIES OF COVID-19

A 15-day-old baby girl, who was born to a COVID-19 patient, succumbed to the infection at a hospital in Gujarat's Surat city, an official said on Friday



PM reviews medical oxygen stocks

SEVERAL STATES, INCLUDING WORST-HIT MAHARASHTRA, HAVE COMPLAINED OF A SHORTAGE OF MEDICAL OXYGEN BECAUSE OF MASSIVE DEMAND TRIGGERED BY THE COVID SURGE

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 16: Amid a steep rise in coronavirus cases, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was today briefed about the efforts being made by the government to import medical grade oxygen to bridge the demand-supply gap amid a massive surge in coronavirus cases across the country. At a review meeting comprising senior officials of several ministries, PM Modi suggested that the production of medical oxygen should be scaled up as per capacity of each plant, a government statement said.

With cases hitting a new peak in several parts of the country, the demand for medical oxygen has increased as it is a critical component in the treatment of COVID-19-affected patients. Prime Minister Modi took a comprehensive review to ensure adequate



medical grade oxygen supply in the country, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a statement. Inputs from ministries like health, steel, road transport, and the Department for Promotion of

Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) were also shared with the prime minister during the review, it said. Prime Minister Modi stressed that it is important to ensure synergy across ministries

and state governments, the PMO said.

He also took a detailed review of the current situation of oxygen supply and projected use in the coming 15 days across 12 high-burden states - Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.

The PMO said that an overview of district-level situation in these states was presented to the prime minister. He was informed that the Centre and states are in regular contact and estimates for projected demand have been shared with states as on April 20, April 25 and April 30, it said.

The PMO said, accordingly, 4,880 MT, 5,619 MT and 6,593 MT have been allocated to these 12 states for meeting their projected demand of medical oxygen as on April 20,

April 25 and April 30, respectively.

The Prime Minister was briefed about production capacity in the country to meet the rising demand, it said. He suggested increasing oxygen production as per capacity of each plant.

It was discussed that surplus stocks of oxygen supply in steel plants are being offered for medical use, the PMO said. The prime minister also asked officials to ensure seamless and free movement of tankers carrying oxygen throughout the country.

The government has exempted all inter-state movement of oxygen tankers from registration of permits to enable easier movement, the PMO's statement said. Prime Minister Modi was informed that states and transporters have been asked to ensure tankers move round the clock with drivers working in shifts to ensure faster turn-

around and adequate capacity to meet the surge in demand.

Cylinder filling plants will also be permitted to work for 24 hours with necessary safeguards, the PMO said. The government is allowing industrial cylinders to be used for medical oxygen after due purging, it said. Similarly, nitrogen and argon tankers will be automatically allowed to be converted to oxygen tankers to overcome the potential shortage of tankers. During the review, officials also briefed the prime minister about the efforts being made to import medical grade oxygen, the PMO said.

India added a record 2,17,353 new coronavirus infections in a day taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 1,42,91,917, while active cases surpassed the 15-lakh mark, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Friday.

'NO STATE HAS ASKED TO STOP TRAIN SERVICES'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 16: No state has asked the railways to stop any train service yet, Railway Board Chairman Suneet Sharma said Friday, adding that wherever the states have raised concerns about containment zones, passengers have undergone random tests and checks at the destinations.

Addressing a press conference, Sharma said the railways has highlighted that all protocols are being followed by the states on the IRCTC's e-ticketing website, advising passengers if they need to undergo an RT-PCR test or carry COVID-negative certificates while travelling to certain areas.

Sharma also said the railways is doing a thermal screening of the passengers and has also notified the fine amounts for not following COVID protocols.

He ruled out running Shramik Special trains and said trains will be run wherever there is demand and requirement.

Sharma also said the price of platform tickets has been increased at several stations to discourage crowding.

"We have 4,000 isolation coaches for COVID-19 at different locations across the country. We have received a demand from Nandurbar in Maharashtra for over 100 coaches and 20 isolation coaches have been provided," he said when asked about the converted coaches that can act as COVID care centres.

Sharma said the railways is keeping a close watch on all stations in Mumbai, Gujarat, Karnataka and wherever the demand is high, the zonal general managers have been authorised to



operate more trains. "I assure you that there is no dearth of services, the situation is quite normal, particularly in Mumbai, Surat and Bengaluru," he said in statement. The Indian Railways is currently running 1,490 mail and express trains and 5,397 suburban train services on an average per day.

RIYAZ KAZI GETS JUDICIAL CUSTODY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 16: A court here Friday remanded police officer Riyaz Kazi, an associate of suspended cop Sachin Vaze, in judicial custody till April 23 in connection with the case of an explosives-laden SUV found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence and the subsequent death Thane-based businessman Mansukh Hirani.

Kazi, an assistant police inspector, was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) April 11. He was produced before a holiday court here at the end of his NIA remand Friday. The court sent him to judicial custody as the central probe agency did not seek his further remand.

VIEW FROM TOP



A Muslim boy during the ongoing holy fasting month of Ramadan, at Jama Masjid in New Delhi

A COVID PATIENT'S LAST MESSAGE BEFORE DEATH

"Don't be careless about Covid," a forest officer wrote to his friends in a poignant farewell message before dying

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bahraich (UP), April 16: "Don't be careless about Covid," a forest officer wrote to his friends in a poignant farewell message before leaving the "lap of Mother Earth" from a Lucknow hospital.

Yashwant Singh, the divisional forest officer (DFO) at Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, tested positive for coronavirus April 2 and was admitted at a private hospital in the state capital. He died there Thursday, Bahraich Divisional Forest Officer Manish Singh said.

The officer sent a WhatsApp message to his friends from his hospital bed, telling them about his



imminent death which took place three days later. "After spending 55 and a half years in the lap of Mother Earth, I am leaving for my last journey. Don't be careless about Covid. My blessings remain with everyone. Yashwant," he wrote in Hindi. Singh was cremated in Lucknow, where his fam-

ily lives, amid the COVID-19 protocol that restricts the number of people at the funeral. He had taken provisional charge of his new post six months back.

The officer is survived by his wife, an engineer son and a daughter who is an MBBS intern, according to Dabeer Hasan, a project officer with wildlife NGO WWF. Manish Singh sent Yashwant Singh's message to Hasan just before the colleague's death. There were 812 active COVID-19 cases in Bahraich city Thursday. Seventy-nine people have died there so far due to the infection, Chief Medical Officer Rajesh Mohan Shrivastava said.

AP GOVT ANNOUNCES IT HAS NO STOCK OF COVID-19 VACCINE



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, April 16: The Andhra Pradesh government Friday announced it has no stock of COVID vaccine even as Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy wrote another letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting that 60 lakh doses be immediately sent to the state.

On Friday, only about 4,300 doses of the coronavirus vaccine could be administered, the lowest in a day so far, before the stocks completely dried up. The Chief Minister thanked the Prime Minister for sending 6.4 lakh doses of the vaccine to AP (on April 12 and 13) in response to his letter April 9.

"I request you, sir, to instruct the officials concerned of Health Ministry to supply 60 lakh doses of COVID vaccine to my state to ensure that all the population above 45 years is vaccinated for the first dose in the next three weeks," he said in the letter, the second he sent to the PM in a week. Jagan said 6,28,961 people were vaccinated in Andhra Pradesh on April 14, "the highest single day COVID vaccination numbers by any state in the country". "We have not only established our capability of vaccinating over six lakh people per day, but also set up a model for all the states to emulate. However, we could not continue the same drive as the vaccine stocks have completely run out," he said. The state was poised to make the dream of vaccinating all vulnerable people a reality in the next three weeks if sufficient stocks of vaccine were made available, Jagan said. The state government set a target of vaccinating 24 lakh people during the four-day 'Tika Utsav' (April 11 to 14).

Coronavirus predominantly spreading via air: Study

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 16: There is consistent, strong evidence to prove that the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes Covid-19, is predominantly transmitted through the air, according to a new assessment published in the medical journal The Lancet.

A multi-research team from the UK, US and Canada warned that public health measures that fail to treat the virus as predominantly airborne leave people unprotected and allow the virus to spread.

Silent (asymptomatic or presymptomatic) transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from people who are not coughing or sneezing accounts for at least 40 per cent of all transmission.

This silent transmission is a key way Covid-19 has spread around the world, "supporting a predominantly airborne mode of trans-



Representational image

mission," as per the assessment.

By contrast, the researchers found little to no evidence that the virus spreads easily via large droplets, which fall quickly through the air and contaminate surfaces.

"The evidence supporting air-

borne transmission is overwhelming, and evidence supporting large droplet transmission is almost non-existent," said Jose-Luis Jimenez, chemist at the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES)

and University of Colorado Boulder. "It is urgent that the World Health Organisation and other public health agencies adapt their description of transmission to the scientific evidence so that the focus of mitigation is put on reducing airborne transmission," Jimenez said.

Further, the researchers emphasise that while it is necessary to wash hand and clean surfaces, they should be given less emphasis than airborne measures.

If an infectious virus is primarily airborne, someone can potentially be infected when they inhale aerosols produced when an infected person exhales, speaks, shouts, sings, or sneezes.

The airborne control measures include ventilation, air filtration, reducing crowding and the amount of time people spend indoors, wearing masks whenever indoors (even if not within 6 feet or 2 metres of others), attention to mask quality and fit, and

higher-grade PPE for healthcare and other staff when working in contact with potentially infectious people. The team reviewed published research and identified 10 lines of evidence to support the predominance of the airborne route.

At the top of their list: Super-spreader events such as the Skagit Choir outbreak, in which 53 people became infected from a single infected case. Studies have confirmed these events cannot be adequately explained by close contact or touching shared surfaces or objects.

Moreover, transmission rates of SARS-CoV-2 are much higher indoors than outdoors, and transmission is greatly reduced by indoor ventilation.

The researchers also cited work demonstrating long-range transmission of the virus between people in adjacent rooms in hotels; people who were never in each other's presence.

international



It is not very difficult to resolve these issues if we can move forward by maintaining mutual trust and forging a political understanding. As Nepal and India are two friends, it is not difficult to resolve problems existing between the friends
PRADEEP GYAWALI | FOREIGN MINISTER, NEPAL

GOOGLE ROLLS OUT TIMELAPSE

Google CEO Sundar Pichai has announced that a 'Timelapse' feature has been introduced in Google Earth, the biggest update since 2017, which will make anyone watch time unfold and witness nearly four decades of planetary change



of the day quote

We are hopeful that the European Court of Human Rights will view these actions by the government of Russia for what they are: an attempt to suppress free speech and the human rights of the Russian people
JAMIE FRY | RFE/RL PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

Such an approach, I must say, is too negative. For a big country with 1.4 billion people, these goals are not easily delivered. Some countries are asking China to do more on climate change. I am afraid this is not very realistic
LE YUCHENG | VICE FOREIGN MINISTER, CHINA

It is clear the rescues at sea need to be carried out, also by NGOs, following safety criteria. On the other hand, there shouldn't be requests for excessive measures that impede this essential effort by the NGOs to save people who are crossing
FILIPPO GRANDI | UNHCR DIPLOMAT, ITALY

SHORT TAKES

Khan appoints Tareen as new FM

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has appointed Shaukat Tareen as the new finance minister of the country, the fourth to don the mantle, in another cabinet reshuffle, it was announced by his office Friday. A banker by profession, Tareen, 68, served in the same capacity in the government of PPP (2009-10) for a short period before he decided to step down to raise capital for his Silk Bank.

77 cases linked with India: UK

London: UK health authorities have identified 77 cases of the highly infectious B.1.1.617 variant of coronavirus which causes Covid-19, first found in India, and has designated it a Variant Under Investigation (VUI). Public Health England (PHE), which releases weekly updates on the number of confirmed new cases of Variants of Concern (VOC) and VUI in the UK, reported Thursday that the variant first detected in India includes a number of mutations.

Pro-democratic leaders jailed

Hong Kong: A Hong Kong court Friday sent five leading pro-democracy leaders, including media tycoon Jimmy Lai, to up to 18 months in prison for organising a march during the 2019 anti-government protests that triggered an overwhelming crackdown from Beijing. A total of nine advocates were given jail terms.

Iran begins enriching uranium to 60% purity

THE MOVE IS LIKELY TO RAISE TENSIONS EVEN AS IRAN NEGOTIATES IN VIENNA OVER A WAY TO ALLOW THE US BACK INTO THE AGREEMENT AND LIFT THE CRUSHING ECONOMIC SANCTIONS IT FACES

Dubai, April 16: Iran began enriching uranium Friday to its highest level ever, edging closer to weapons-grade levels to pressure talks in Vienna aimed at restoring its nuclear deal with world powers after an attack on its main atomic site.



A top official said only a few grams an hour of uranium gas would be enriched up to 60% purity — triple the level it once did but at a rate far slower than what Tehran could produce. International inspectors already said Iran planned to do so above-ground at its Natanz nuclear site, not deep within its underground halls hardened to withstand airstrikes. The move is likely to raise tensions even as Iran negotiates in Vienna over a way to allow the US back into the agreement and lift the crushing economic sanctions it faces. However, its scope also provides Iran with a way to quickly de-escalate if it chose.

The announcement also marks a significant escalation after the attack that damaged centrifuges at Natanz, an attack this past weekend suspected of having been carried out by Israel. While Israel has yet to claim it, it comes amid a long-running shadow war between the two Mideast rivals. Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, Iran's parliament speaker, announced the move in a Twitter post later acknowledged by Iranian state television. "The young and God-believing Iranian scientists managed to achieve a 60% enriched uranium product," Qalibaf said. "I congratulate the brave nation of Islamic Iran on this success. Iran's willpower is miraculous and can defuse any conspiracy."

The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, the country's civilian nuclear arm, later acknowledged the move to 60%, according to state TV. Ali Akbar Salehi said the centrifuges now produce 9 grams an hour; but that would drop to 5 grams an hour in the coming days. "Now, any enrichment (level) is possible if we decide it," Salehi said. State TV later referred to the decision as a "show of power against terrorist rascality."

It wasn't clear why the first announcement came from Qalibaf, a hard-line former leader in the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard already named as a potential presidential candidate in Iran's upcoming June election. While 60% is higher than any level Iran previously enriched uranium, it is still lower than weapons-grade levels of 90%. The IAEA, which monitors Iran's nuclear program, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Earlier this week, it sent its inspectors to Natanz and confirmed Iran's enrichment plans.

Senators call on Biden to back Covid vax patent waiver



AGENCIES

Washington, April 16: Ten liberal senators are urging President Joe Biden to back India and South Africa's appeal to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to temporarily relax intellectual property rules so coronavirus vaccines can be manufactured by nations that are struggling to inoculate their populations.

"Simply put, we must make vaccines, testing, and treatments accessible everywhere if we are going to crush the virus anywhere," wrote the lawmakers

The lawmakers, in a letter delivered to the White House on Thursday evening, wrote that Biden should "prioritise people over pharmaceutical company profits" and support the temporary waiver of the rules. A waiver could pave the way for generic or other manufacturers to make more vaccines.

tries that are struggling to acquire vaccine supplies. The Biden administration has said it is studying the issue.

The letter was led by independent Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, along with Democratic Sens. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and Sherrod Brown of Ohio. Democratic Sens. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, Chris Murphy of Connecticut, Edward Markey of Massachusetts, Jeff Merkley of Oregon, Chris Van Hollen of Maryland and Raphael Warnock of Georgia also signed the letter.

Opponents, including pharmaceutical companies, worry that it would set dangerous precedent in allowing scientists around the globe to copy American and European companies' research — some of which was funded by the US government — long before patents expire. The Trump administration had opposed calls for the waiver.

"Simply put, we must make vaccines, testing, and treatments accessible everywhere if we are going to crush the virus anywhere," the lawmakers say in the letter, which was obtained by The Associated Press. More than 100 nations support a temporary waiver, which could help vaccine manufacturing ramp up in poorer coun-

The White House did not respond to a request for comment on the lawmakers' letter. The lawmakers' appeal to Biden came after a group of 170 former world leaders and Nobel laureates earlier this week sent a similar letter to Biden urging him to support a temporary waiver of the WTO's intellectual property rules.

The coronavirus pandemic has killed nearly 3 million people worldwide, including more than 170,000 in India and more than 50,000 in South Africa, according to figures compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

Eight dead in shooting at FedEx facility in Indianapolis

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Indianapolis, April 16: A gunman killed eight people and wounded several others before apparently taking his own life in a late-night attack at a FedEx facility near the Indianapolis airport, police said, in the latest in a spate of mass shootings in the United States after a relative lull during the pandemic.



IT WAS THE LATEST IN A RECENT STRING OF MASS SHOOTINGS ACROSS THE US LAST MONTH, 10 DIED IN GUNFIRE AT A SUPERMARKET IN BOULDER, COLORADO

Five people were hospitalised after the Thursday night shooting, according to police. One of them had critical injuries, police spokesperson Genae Cook said. Another two people were treated and released at the scene. FedEx said people who worked for the company were among the dead. A witness said that he was working inside the building when he heard several gunshots in rapid succession.

A witness said that he was working inside the building when he heard several gunshots in rapid succession

"I see a man come out with a rifle in his hand and he starts firing and he starts yelling stuff that I could not understand," Levi Miller told WTHR-TV. "What I ended up doing was ducking down to make sure he did not see me because I thought he would see me and he would shoot me."

Police have not identified the shooter or said whether he was an employee at the facility. They said "preliminary information from evidence at the scene" indicated that he died by suicide. "We're still trying to ascertain the exact reason and cause for this incident," Cook said.

Israel targets Gaza after rocket attack

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Tel Aviv, April 16: Israel Friday struck several targets in Gaza after Palestinian militants fired a rocket into the Jewish state's territory. Fighter jets and attack helicopters struck a Hamas weapons production site, a weapons smuggling tunnel and a military post, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a social media post.

BRAVE BERNARD



A staffer on Capitol Hill pets Officer Clarence, a Saint Bernard from the Greenfield, Massachusetts police department. Clarence is the first official police comfort dog and he specialises in helping first responders in the aftermath of critical incidents

"We will not tolerate any threat to Israeli civilians," dpa news agency quoted the IDF as further saying. There were no immediate reports of injuries in the Gaza Strip. The rocket was fired from Gaza towards the end of Israel's Independence Day. No group immediately claimed responsibility. Sirens sounded a warning in the border town of Sderot after the rocket attack, according to the Israeli military.

A city spokesperson said the projectile landed on open ground outside Sderot. There were no reports of injuries or damage to property, he said.

Princely letter: Philip apologised to Nixon for 'lame' toast

AGENCIES

Washington, April 16: Throughout his decades in public life, Prince Philip was known for putting his royal foot in his mouth with occasional off-the-cuff remarks that could be embarrassing. But his faux pas at a White House dinner with President Richard Nixon in 1969 was enough for Philip to actually lose sleep.

In a handwritten note to the president uncovered by archivists at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in California, the Duke of Edinburgh wrote to "humbly apologise" for failing to toast the president's health



speakers and yourself, I am afraid my contribution was very lame," Philip wrote to Nixon from Greenland on November 7 after his solo US trip had concluded. He added: "That night I woke up in a cold sweat when I realised I had forgotten to propose your health!"

Philip died last week at age 99, and his funeral is Saturday. He was married to Queen Elizabeth for 73 years. "I think the letter itself shows the character of Prince Philip that so much of the public in the UK and across the Commonwealth, and really across the world, have come to admire," said Jim Byron, executive vice

president of the Nixon Foundation. He said the letter was discovered before the coronavirus pandemic but made public this week, as a way of marking Philip's death.

"It expresses some private feelings of a moment in time that the public really doesn't always get a chance to see," Byron added. During White House dinners, honoured guests usually offer a toast to the president's health and success. Philip wrote to Nixon that he couldn't "begin to tell you how much I appreciated your very great kindness and hospitality at the White House. I was quite overwhelmed by the guests but delighted to meet such a distinguished company." He mentioned having then traveled to New York, where he was interviewed by Barbara Walters for NBC's "Today" show.

EU-UK TALKS OVER BREXIT FAIL TO REACH BREAKTHROUGH

AGENCIES

Brussels, April 16: Top European Union and British officials failed to get a breakthrough at talks on Northern Ireland trade rules and said Friday that contact would continue over the coming weeks.

difficult issues remained and it was important to continue to discuss them." Frost said that "there should be intensified contacts at all levels in the coming weeks". The two sides are trying to find common ground on trade rules in Northern Ireland, where Britain's exit from the EU has unsettled a delicate political balance.

The dinner meeting late Thursday between European Commission Vice President Maros Sefcovic and UK Brexit minister David Frost took place a month after the EU started legal action against its former member country, arguing that the UK had not respected the conditions of the Brexit agreement and violated international law. A British statement said that "a number of

Northern Ireland is part of the UK, but remained part of the EU's single market for goods after Brexit to avoid checks at the territory's border with EU member Ireland. An open Irish border helped underpin the peace process that ended decades of sectarian violence, allowing people in Northern Ireland to feel at home in both Ireland and the UK.

business

of the day quote

Return on capital employed (RoCE), which even pre-COVID was sub cost of capital, was earlier expected to improve from FY21 onwards, however, with recovery currently a few years away, RoCE is expected to remain sub cost of capital until FY2025



VINUTAA S | ASST. VP AND SECTOR HEAD, ICRA RATINGS

As a result of the ongoing refresh of our strategy, we have decided that we are going to double down on wealth. We will operate our consumer banking franchise in Asia and EMEA solely from four health centers, Singapore, Hong Kong, UAE and London



JANE FRASER | CEO, CITI

As Boat enters the next phase of growth and innovation, we look forward to building a relationship with Qualcomm to deepen our R&D capabilities and further augment our efforts to manufacture products in India. We believe this relationship will contribute to greater technology collaboration and quicker deployment



SAMEER MEHTA | CO-FOUNDER, BOAT

SHORT TAKES

Jet fuel price cut by 1 pc

New Delhi: Jet fuel price Friday was cut by 1 per cent, the second reduction in rates this month following softening international crude oil prices. Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was reduced by ₹568.88 per kilolitre, or 0.9 per cent, to ₹57,805.28 per kl in the national capital, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. This is the second reduction in rates this month. Earlier, prices were cut by 3 per cent April 1. These price cuts were the first in six months.

MSP Metallics put up for sale

New Delhi: SBI has put up for sale non-performing asset (NPA) account MSP Metallics Ltd against which a total of 10 banks have collective loan outstanding of over ₹1,493 crore. State Bank of India (SBI) has the highest share of lending (37.19%) to MSP Metallics amounting to ₹555.51 crore. The other lenders to the company as part of the consortium arrangement are: Indian Bank (Rs 284.82 crore); PNB (Rs 229.83 cr); UCO Bank (Rs 176.53 cr) and IOB (Rs 73.56 cr).

'State-owned BHEL to procure goods'

Mumbai: State-owned Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) will procure ₹3,000 crore of products from small businesses annually as part of the government's efforts to encourage them, a senior official said Friday. The company has earmarked 300 products, which are to be picked up from the small and medium enterprises, its executive director Anil Joshi said while speaking at a webinar on reigniting growth for the MSMEs.

Ghana to acquire 100 pc stake

New Delhi: The Government of Ghana, Bharti Airtel and Millicom International Cellular SA Friday announced execution of the definitive agreement for transfer of 'AirtelTigo' to Government of Ghana, on a going concern basis. In effect, the Ghanaian government will take over the ownership of AirtelTigo joint venture.



The 1,000 Genomes Project, the world's first large-scale effort to index every letter of human's genetic code, began hosting data on AWS in 2012. We also did important early work with @NASAJPL, who used AWS to stream images & video of the Curiosity Rover landing on Mars in 2012

TERESA CARLSON | AWS EXECUTIVE

INDIGO WAIVES OFF CHANGE FEES

Airline major IndiGo waived-off change fees on new bookings made from April 17, 2021 till April 30, 2021. Besides, the airline announced that passengers can now do unlimited changes for new bookings made till April 30, 2021 on regular fares under this offer



'Key sectors should leverage increased digitisation'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 16: The pandemic has accelerated India's digital journey and the momentum should also be leveraged to make a fundamental shift in not only business processes but also in other sectors such as education, healthcare and governance, Hindustan Unilever Chairman & Managing Director Sanjiv Mehta said Friday.

This should also be used in creating jobs and easing the pressure on big cities while bringing development across the country, said Mehta while virtually delivering a keynote address at the Amazon Smbhav event.

"The pandemic accelerated our nation's digital journey, many of

our fellow citizens moved to online for the first time, whether to get news or to source essentials.

"City children have the first days of online schooling and office goers adapted to working from home, leveraging remote collaboration tools, it moved us from a state of theoretical debate on whether it will work or not to real hands-on experience," said Mehta. The enterprises which had adopted digital technologies in the core of the business were less impacted than others.

"Many SMEs in India are at low level of digitisation, and there is growing awareness of the handi-cap it creates," he said.

The RBI's financial stability report of July 2020 stated that it will be critical for small and medium



City children have the first days of online schooling and office goers adapted to working from home, leveraging remote collaboration tools, it moved us from a state of theoretical debate on whether it will work or not to real hands-on experience

SANJIV MEHTA | CHAIRMAN & MD, HINDUSTAN UNILEVER

businesses to navigate to a digital-first business model for the whole business value chain to survive and recover.

"In fact, leveraging technology in businesses will have a bigger impact on collective productivity gain that comes from widespread digitisation, both from the trans-

actional efficiencies and from the innovation multiplier that comes on top of digitised processes," he said.

Over the global impact of the pandemic, Mehta said the advanced economies and few emerging markets may recover faster from the COVID-19 pandemic and its im-

act but several developing countries could languish years to come.

The pandemic would not be "over anywhere until it is over everywhere" around the world and has pushed the social, economic and environmental issues into stark focus.

"The major risk, which we face today is that the advanced economies and few emerging markets may recover faster but several developing countries could languish years to come.

"This will not only worsen the human tragedy of the pandemic, but also the economic suffering of the most vulnerable," said Mehta. However, history alters the events, they may be unfortunate but very often pushed the world into a new direction, he added.

State MSME urged to use IT for promoting products

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: State MSME Minister Dibya Sankar Mishra has taken a review meeting on the activities of Directorate of Export Promotion and Marketing, Odisha, here today at the conference hall in Raptani Bhawan.

During the meeting, Mishra interacted with three entrepreneurs of Odisha viz: Valentina Pipes, Terra Block Machinery Pvt. Ltd and Super Closer and asked about their production of goods, marketing and related-problems.

All the entrepreneurs have expressed their pleasure on the support services rendered by the MSME department for manufacturing their goods and marketing of their products, both in domestic and International sphere.

The entrepreneurs appealed before the minister to create more marketing facilities for their products through the government agencies. Mishra assured that he will discuss the matter with the other departments for 'market promotion' of their products.

The MSME minister suggested that an exhibition may be organised for display of product manufactured by MSMEs of the State inviting buyers both from domestic and overseas countries for showcasing the goods to avail better marketing opportunity He also urged to invite Deepak Bagla, Managing Director & CEO, Invest India to enlighten the entrepreneurs of the state and give his valuable views for preparing a road map for business development of Odisha.

The Minister also emphasized that the MSMEs should manufacture good quality their units in the GeM of goods.

Economy in better shape compared to previous wave: CEA

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 16: The Indian economy is in a better shape as compared to the previous COVID-19 wave witnessed last year because of vaccines, Chief Economic Adviser KV Subramanian said Friday. Speaking at an event organised by e-commerce major Amazon, he said uncertainty is much lower this time but people should be cautious.

"There is a second wave therefore people should be careful about it and follow all regulations. But overall compared to previous episode, we are in a better shape because vaccine is out and vaccination drive is proceeding. So uncertainty is much lower," he said. Following the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, India went in for one of the strictest lockdowns in the world, leading to a massive contraction of about 24 per cent in GDP. Beginning March this year, the second wave started rearing its head with a sudden jump in cases, forcing many states to go for localised restrictions to break the Covid-19 chain.

India added a record 2,17,353



new coronavirus infections in a day, taking the total tally of Covid-19 cases to 1,42,91,917, while active cases surpassed the 15-lakh mark, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Friday. This is the second consecutive day that the country has reported over two lakh cases. Subramanian further said "one key thing that stood out during this pandemic is the rollout of e-commerce and digitisation, something that India has embraced."

As many as 800 million people were provided essential supplies through the public distribution system and cash transfer through the Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile (JAM) in a seamless manner with a click of button, while most advanced countries like the US provided financial support to its citizens by issue of cheques implemented over 2 months, he added.

China's GDP surges by record 18.3% in Q1

AGENCIES

Beijing, April 16: China's economy grew a record 18.3% in the first quarter of 2021, riding on strong domestic and foreign demand and aided by recovery from a low base in early 2020 when Covid-19 stalled the world's second-largest economy, according to statistics released Friday.

The gross domestic product (GDP) reached 24.93 trillion yuan (about \$3.82 trillion) in Q1, data released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said. This is the highest quarterly growth rate since China first began publishing GDP data in 1993.

The double-digit growth puts the average Q1 growth of 2020 and 2021 at 5% from the 2019 level, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

In the first three months, China saw a steady industrial production rebound, improvement in market sales, recovery in fixed-asset investment, and noticeable momentum in foreign trade of goods, it said. China's economy, which was the first to be hit by the coronavirus pandemic when it broke out in central China's Wuhan city in late 2019, and early to recover from its impact, grew 2.3% in 2020, registering the lowest annual growth rate in 45 years.

The GDP of the world's second-largest economy grew by 2.3% ex-



panding to \$15.42 trillion in 2020, according to the data released by the NBS said.

In the local currency, the GDP exceeded the 100 trillion yuan (\$15.42 trillion) threshold to 101.5986 trillion yuan.

Early this month, the IMF increased China's GDP projection to 8.4 per cent for this year, a 10-year high but cautioned that the growth is unbalanced and private consumption has not recovered as fast.

The IMF projection is higher than the over six per cent target fixed by the Chinese government for this year.

In its World Economic Outlook, the IMF also cautioned Beijing to address its high corporate debt levels resulting from the easy monetary policy put in place during the coronavirus pandemic.

"It's still very heavily reliant on public investment. And private consumption has not recovered as fast as we would have hoped," Gita Gopinath, the IMF's chief economist and director of research, said while releasing the report.

China-US tensions that remain elevated on multiple fronts, ranging from international trade to intellectual property and cybersecurity, also got a mention in the report.

"Domestic economic disparities arising from the pandemic downturn may also prompt new trade barriers... Amid already high levels of trade restrictions, such actions would add to inefficiencies and weigh on the recovery. Furthermore, risks of protectionist tendencies surrounding technology are emerging," the IMF report said.

BIZ BUZZ

SBI Bhubaneswar Circle donates patrolling van



Bhubaneswar: State Bank of India (SBI), Bhubaneswar Circle donated a patrolling Van to the Odisha Police in Angul at a function organised by SBI, Regional Office, Angul Thursday. SBI officials who attended the programme were CLN Charyulu, GM, NW-1, Kundan Jyoti, Dy. General Manager, Zone-II, Sri Pramod Kumar Pradhan, Regional Manager, Angul. Sarthak Sarangi, DIG, (Central) & Sri Jagan Mohan Meena, SP, Angul, Odisha Police received the patrolling van from the bank. Sarthak Sarangi, DIG (Central) said.

Canara Bank observes Ambedkar Jayanti

Bhubaneswar: Canara Bank Circle Office Bhubaneswar celebrated 130th Birth Anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar, the father of Indian Constitution at their premises. The meeting was presided over by BL Meena, General Manager & Circle Head of Canara Bank Bhubaneswar Circle, along with Chief guest V Ashok Vardhan, Asst. Director, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, Bhubaneswar Region. The function began with lighting of lamp and offering floral tribute to the portrait of Ambedkar. Surya Narayan Panda, Asst. General Manager of Circle Office Bhubaneswar welcomed the chief guest to the function.



Samsung launches Smart Monitor

Bhubaneswar: Samsung launched its all-new Smart Monitor with an innovative, Do-It-All screen that lets users enjoy Netflix, YouTube, Apple TV and other OTT apps, remotely connect with their office PC and also edit documents using Microsoft 365. Samsung Smart Monitor is available in India with a starting price of ₹28,000 on Samsung's official online store Samsung Shop, Amazon and all leading retail stores. For a limited period, Smart Monitors will be available at an introductory price of ₹21,999 onwards. The model is available in two models - the M7 that supports Ultra-High Definition (UHD) resolution in 32-inch screen size and the M5 that supports Full HD (FHD) resolution in 32-inch and 27-inch screen sizes. Consumers buying Smart Monitor will get complimentary wireless mouse and keyboard for limited period.

Nalco gets mining lease for Utkal-E coal block in Odisha

PNN/AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 16: National Aluminium Company Ltd (Nalco) on Friday said it has been granted the mining lease of Utkal-E coal block in Odisha. The lease has been granted by the Department of Steel & Mines, Government of Odisha, through a notification issued April 12. As per the notification, the mining lease of Utkal-E coal block is over an area of 523.73 hectare, the company said in a filing to BSE.

The initial capacity of the block is 2 million tonnes per year with a total mineable reserve of approximately 70 million tonne. Nalco has already executed the mining lease for Utkal-D coal block in March 2021.

With the grant of Utkal D & E coal blocks, the total mineable coal reserve of the company will be 175 million tonnes, which will be pivotal in meeting the coal requirement of



its captive power plant at Angul, Odisha.

Sridhar Patra, CMD of the company said the NALCO team is very optimistic on starting the mining operation from Utkal-D coal block in this financial year.

"With the grant of the mining lease of Utkal E coal block, the planned expansion activities of the company will get a boost and will contribute significantly to the bottom line of Nalco," he said.

Residential realty attracts \$234mn PE investments in Jan-Mar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 16: Amid revival in housing demand, the residential segment witnessed private equity (PE) investments worth \$234 million in Q1 2021 which was 64 per cent of that witnessed during the entire 2020, said a Knight Frank India report.

It noted that in terms of the number of deals, the investment activity touched 100 per cent of 2020 levels and 39 per cent of 2019 levels in the first three months of 2021.

The report titled 'Investments in Real Estate - Trends in PE Investment (Q1 2021 update)' said that Indian real estate attracted private

equity (debt and equity) investments (\$3.24 billion) across 19 deals in Q1 2021 (January - March) period. In the first quarter of 2021, the investment in the sector has grown by 16 times compared to \$199 million in Q1 2020.

The investments in Q1 2021 in value terms were 80 per cent of that witnessed in full year 2020 and 48 per cent of full year 2019. The strong momentum in Q1 2021 was predominantly driven by two major factors, spillover of certain deals from 2020 and the rise in investor confidence due to the drop in Covid-19 infections during early parts of Q1 2021, which had created some rip-



ples of positivity in the economy, it said. The sustainability of this momentum in investors' sentiments will therefore depend on how soon

Out of the total PE investments in real estate, the office segment attracted 71% share, followed by retail at 15%, residential and warehousing with 7% each respectively

the second wave of infection subsides and also the pace of vaccination, as per the Knight Frank India. Out of the total PE investments

in real estate, the office segment attracted 71 per cent share, followed by retail at 15 per cent, residential and warehousing with 7 per cent each respectively.

Shishir Bajjal, Chairman and Managing Director, Knight Frank India said: "The deal street market of Indian real estate witnessed an impressive surge in both value and volume of private equity investments in the first quarter of 2021, when compared to the entire year of 2020." He said that office assets continue to be the preferred segment attracting over 70 per cent of PE investments Q1 2021 as the segment moves towards maturity which

includes sustained demand, stability in rental income and change in ownership profile over long-term. Investors are expecting demand to recuperate faster as the pace of vaccination increases.

"While Q1 2021 has been an encouraging quarter for PE investments, however, the upward trajectory can be impacted by the rising second wave of Covid-19 infections in India which started in the month of April 2021. The sustainability of revival in investor sentiments will therefore depend on how soon the second wave of infection subsides and the pace of vaccination," Bajjal said.

CHAHAR SPELL SINKS PK

CSK medium pacer finishes with 4/13 in his four overs to trigger Punjab's collapse helping his side to a comprehensive six-wicket victory



Deepak Chahar celebrates one of his scalps with Suresh Raina

sure and increased CSK's woes with his consistency and conceded only two fours in his four-over spell.

In-form Punjab skipper KL Rahul (5) was run-out by a brilliant direct hit from Ravindra Jadeja, who was fielding at short-cover, as the batsman tried to scramble for a single. Jadeja was in the act in the fifth over again, grabbing a superb catch, diving full-length to dismiss Gayle for 10 to give Chahar his second wicket. Nicholas Pooran bagged his second straight duck, pulling a short delivery straight into the hands of Shardul Thakur at long-leg.

Deepak Hooda (10) could not repeat his heroics, lobbing a simple

catch to Du Plessis as the team slipped to 26/5 in the seventh over.

Tamil Nadu's power-hitter Shahrukh was the only Punjab batsman to make an impression before falling to Sam Curran in the final over as CSK was all over their opponent. Shahrukh and Richardson (15) added 31 runs for the sixth wicket, in what was the best partnership of the innings.

BRIEF SCORES

Punjab Kings 106/8 (M Shahrukh Khan 47; Deepak Chahar 4/13) **lost to Chennai Super Kings 107/4** (Moeen Ali 46, Faf du Plessis 36 n o; Mohammed Shami 2/21) **by 6 wickets.**

Not giving Ashwin 4 overs 'a mistake'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 16: Not giving off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin his full quota of overs was 'probably a mistake', Delhi Capitals coach Ricky Ponting conceded after his side went down by three wickets in the IPL clash against Rajasthan Royals here.

Ashwin conceded just 14 runs and no boundaries in his three overs after being brought in following the powerplay Thursday night when DC were defending a modest 148.

"That's certainly something that we will talk about when I get a chance to sit down with the team. He had bowled beautifully. Three overs, none for 14. Hadn't even conceded a boundary," Ponting said in the virtual press conference.

"He had a disappointing game in game one, but he has worked really hard in the last few days to make sure he adjusted and got things right in this game. I thought he bowled beautifully tonight. Probably a mistake on our behalf, and something we will be talking about later on."

The Royals needed 58 from the last five overs. Morris smashed four sixes in the last two overs during his quick-fire 18-ball 36 to take

the team home with two balls to spare.

"We probably gave him (Morris) a few too many easy balls, a few too many slot balls if you like," Ponting said. "The length wasn't quite where it needed to be. If you look at the replay of the game, if you bowled a reasonable yorker, he didn't score off them."

"If it was back of a length, sort of, above stump high, he didn't get hold of them either, especially with pace on the ball. We talked about how to bowl to him, but the execution probably wasn't there."

The former Australian skipper said errors in the last four overs cost them the match. "Till around the 13th-over mark in our bowling innings, the second innings of the game, everything was going according to plan. We made a few errors coming in the last four or five overs of the game."

"When you are a little bit off against any team in the IPL, just bowl a couple of bad balls or just a couple of those here and there, it is quite often the difference in the outcome. We didn't get things right at the back end tonight."

Delhi Capitals will next play against Punjab Kings Sunday in Mumbai.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 16: Deepak Chahar produced a superb opening spell to help Chennai Super Kings beat Punjab Kings by six wickets to register their first victory in the 14th edition of the Indian Premier League here, Friday. MS Dhoni was playing his 200th game for CSK.

After medium-pacer Chahar's 4/13 enabled CSK to restrict the Punjab team to a below-par 106/8, Moeen Ali (46, 31b, 7x4, 1x6) put on 66 runs for the second wicket with opener Faf du Plessis (36 n o, 33b, 3x4, 1x6) to secure the win for the three-time champions. CSK finished at 107/4 in 15.4 overs with Sam Curran (5 n o) scoring the winning runs.

With the target in sight, CSK lost the wickets of Suresh Raina (8) and Ambati Rayudu (0) to Mohammed Shami (2/21) in consecutive balls in the 15th over.

Ali opened up after a rather cautious start, and played some lovely drives and also hit a big six. He was holed out to Shahrukh Khan in the deep off leggie Murugan Ashwin (1/32) with CSK needing 17 runs for victory.

Arshdeep Singh provided the early breakthrough for Punjab, when he had a struggling Ruturaj Gaikwad (5) caught at deep mid-wicket.

However, the Aussie pace duo of Jhye Richardson and Riley Meredith could not make much of an impression for the second consecu-

tive game.

Earlier, Chahar rocked the Punjab batting line-up with a superb four-over spell during which he picked up four wickets, including that of 'Universe Boss' Chris Gayle.

Aiming to bounce back after being outclassed by Delhi Capitals in their opening match, CSK bowlers justified skipper Dhoni's decision to bowl first by reducing Punjab to 26/4 in the powerplay (first six overs) and then to 26/5 before Shahrukh (47, 36b, 4x4s, 2x6) led a brief revival.

Chahar started the Punjab slide in the very first over by sending back Mayank Agarwal (0) with a beauty which nipped away from middle stump to hit the off stump. Chahar kept up the pres-



MOEEN ALI

SUNRISERS TAKE ON MUMBAI INDIANS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 16: Getting the combination right would be topmost on Sunrisers Hyderabad's to-do list when they take on a qualitatively superior Mumbai Indians in an IPL encounter here Saturday, trying to arrest an early slide after back-to-back defeats.

To make matters worse, the nature of the Chennai track is not great news for the David Warner-led 'Orange Army' that failed to chase down a total which was less than 150.

Chasing has been Sunrisers' achilles' heel during the first two matches, once again bringing under scanner, their lack of depth in the playing XI and below-par Indian bench strength.

In these circumstances, facing a formidable team like Mumbai Indians, fresh from their 'Houdini Act' against Kolkata Knight Riders, would be a difficult proposition.

For skipper Warner, there are some serious questions about the choice of the playing XI, which many believe hasn't been well thought out and the results

TODA'S MATCH

SRH VS MI

TIME 7.30 PM

Telecast: Star Sports channels

also back that assessment.

Using two wicketkeepers - Jonny Bairstow and Wriddhiman Saha - in the same XI hasn't served any tangible purpose with the veteran Indian looking completely out of sorts as an opener.

Saha has been playing IPL for the first edition (2008) and a closer look at his record indicates that he has not been consistently successful in scoring runs.

With a seasoned man like Kedar Jadhav in the dug-out, along with two talented youngsters Priyam Garg and

Abhishek Sharma, Saha is on borrowed time as far as his place in the side is concerned.

In case of Kedar and Abhishek, they also provide the option of slow bowling - off-breaks for the veteran and slow left-arm orthodox for the youngster.

With only Warner and Rashid Khan being certainties among the overseas players, a fit Kane Williamson is a must for SRH, factoring in his prowess against spin bowling.

The manner in which the likes of Manish Pandey and Abdul Samad played cross-batted shots against RCB left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed left Warner far from amused.

And Krunal Pandya, who bowls a much flatter trajectory and also a few clicks quicker than Shahbaz, can make matters even worse for the Pandey and Samads if they don't come up with a better gameplan.

For Pandey, being dropped from India's central contracts on Thursday, has been a blow but his inability to finish games regularly is one of the reasons that he might not wear the India

blues anytime soon.

However, this tournament gives him a platform to do course correction. He is one of the five with slowest strike-rates to reach 3000 IPL runs.

On a track like Chepauk, at times it becomes imperative to play as late as possible and use the depth of the crease well, which Williamson is adept at.

The other issue has been team's bowling with T Natarajan not in the kind of form he was last season and Bhuvneshwar Kumar also on the expensive side.

Options like Sandeep Sharma and Siddarth Kaul don't inspire too much confidence when one looks at Mumbai Indians top-order comprising Rohit Sharma, Quinton de Kock, Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan.

It is unlikely that MI will tinker with their playing XI and more so after winning a thriller against KKR. However, they would like to put up a better account of their batting as theirs is a line-up that can just throw the pitch factor out of equation on a given day.



MUMBAI INDIANS

Rohit Sharma (C), Suryakumar Yadav, Anmolpreet Singh, Chris Lynn, Saurabh Tiwary, Dhawal Kulkarni, Jasprit Bumrah, Rahul Chahar, Trent Boult, Mohsin Khan, Hardik Pandya, Jayant Yadav, Kieron Pollard, Krunal Pandya, Anukul Roy, Ishan Kishan, Quinton de Kock, Aditya Tare, Adam Milne, Nathan Coulter Nile, Piyush Chawla, James Neesham, Yuvvir Charak, Marco Jansen & Arjun Tendulkar.

EUROPA LEAGUE: ROMA, VILLARREAL ALSO SEAL SEMIFINAL BERTHS

Arsenal Man United in semis

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, April 16: With their season on the line, Arsenal's players produced a devastating first-half performance Thursday to beat Slavia Prague and reach the Europa League semifinals. They'll meet a familiar face there.

Arsenal's 4-0 win in the Czech capital - secured courtesy of a three-goal burst in six minutes from the 18th - clinched a 5-1 aggregate victory and set up a last-four match against Villarreal, which is managed by Unai Emery. The Spanish coach spent an underwhelming 18 months at Arsenal as Arsene Wenger's replacement in 2018-19 and is rebuilding his managerial career at Villarreal, which beat Dinamo Zagreb 2-1 and advanced 3-1 on aggregate.

Manchester United and Roma complete the semifinal lineup. United are back in the last four for a second straight season after beating Spanish team Granada 2-0 for



Alexandre Lacazette (Centre) celebrates one of his goals against Slavia Prague with his teammates, Thursday

a 4-0 aggregate win. Roma drew 1-1 with Ajax to squeeze through 3-2 on aggregate.

SENDING A MESSAGE

Arsenal responded to having an early goal by Emile Smith Rowe

ruled out for offside by VAR by scoring three times in quick succession, first though Nicolas Pepe in the 18th and then Alexandre Lacazette - from the penalty spot - and Bukayo Saka.

Lacazette, continuing as striker with Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang sidelined after contracting malaria, added a fourth in the 77th minute. Arsenal lost to Chelsea in the Europa League final in 2019.

Villarreal's goals were scored by Paco Alcacer and Gerard Moreno at the end of the first half, with Zagreb - the last-16 conqueror of Tottenham - grabbing a consolation through Mislav Orsic. Villarreal is in the semifinals of the Europa League for the first time since 2016.

CAVANI MILESTONE

Edinson Cavani scored his 50th goal in European competition to lead United to victory over Granada at Old Trafford.

The 34-year-old Uruguayan striker met a flicked header back into the middle of the area by Paul Pogba with a left-foot volley into the bottom corner in the sixth minute. A 90th-minute own-goal by Jesus Vallejo completed a second straight 2-0 win over Granada.

Vinesh, Anshu bag gold medals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Almaty, April 16: Dominating the proceedings in a depleted field, Olympic-bound wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Anshu Malik won their maiden Asian Championship titles after comfortable triumphs in their respective summit clashes here Friday.

There was no stopping Vinesh in the absence of the Chinese and Japanese rivals as she cruised to the title without losing a point in the 53kg category. Vinesh has notched up seven podium finishes at the Asian meet over the years, including three silver medals before this edition.

Also standing on top of the podium was Divya Kakran (72kg) while Sakshi Malik (65kg) settled for a silver medal, a performance which should boost her confidence after enduring a long wretched run.

India has a rich haul of seven medals from the women's event as the country won four gold, a silver and two bronze medals in this edition.

Sarita Mor (59kg) had won gold while Seema Bisla (50kg) and Pooja (76kg) settled for bronze medals



Anshu Malik



Vinesh Phogat

Thursday. Young Sonam Malik (62kg) unfortunately could not compete due to an injury. She also bagged Olympic quota along with Anshu recently.

The 19-year old Anshu was yet again impressive as she underlined her progress in the senior circuit with yet another confident performance in 57kg. She won her final 3-0 and was never really troubled by Mongolia's Battsetseg Altantsetseg, except for a double-leg attack initially in the bout. The Mongolian was mostly busy de-

fending and Anshu kept her lead intact for gold.

Earlier in the day, Vinesh won by technical superiority against Mongolia's Otgonjargal Ganbaatar and Taipei's Meng Hsuan Hsieh while an injured Hyunyoung Oh from Korea did not turn up for the semifinal.

Vinesh, who had won a bronze in the Delhi edition of the Continental championship last year, moved 6-0 up in the final and finished the bout in style by pinning her rival in the first period itself.