



DEALING SUMMER BLUES

Rakul Preet Singh reveals about her unique recipe that she resorts to in order to beat the summer heat

LEISURE P2



EU'S INDO-PACIFIC PLAN

The EU will step up influence in the Indo-Pacific region to protect its interests and counter China

INTERNATIONAL P10



DC TAKE ON MI

Delhi Capitals lock horns with Mumbai Indians in an Indian Premier League encounter today

SPORTS P12

State goes for weekend shutdown

ODISHA SEES RECORD 4,445 FRESH COVID-19 INFECTIONS MONDAY, PUSHING THE TOTAL TALLY TO OVER 3.72 LAKH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: In the wake of the highest ever single-day rise in Covid-19 cases in the state, the government Monday extended the weekend shutdown to all urban areas of the state from April 24. At present, weekend shutdown is in force in the urban areas of 10 districts sharing borders with Chhattisgarh.

The state Monday reported 4,445 fresh infections pushing the state's tally to over 3.72 lakh while four more people died taking the toll due to Covid to 1,948. The previous daily high was recorded September 25 last year when the state reported 4,356 cases. "In the interest of public health and containment of Covid-19, weekend shutdown Saturday and Sunday shall be imposed in all urban areas of the state from April 24," Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena said.

At the same time, night curfew will continue to be in force in all urban areas. The night curfew is being enforced in the urban areas of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Bolangir, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Koraput and Malkangiri from 6 pm to 5 am while the timing for urban areas of other districts is 9 pm to 5 am.

During the shutdown all activities



excluding emergency and essential services will be closed. The shutdown will continue to remain in force till May 15. Medical services, nursing homes, medicine stores, telecom services, petrol pumps, LPG distribution, industrial establishments, factories, construction activities, agriculture and allied activities will continue to operate during the shutdown, Jena said.

Similarly, he said, movement of district & municipal officials, media persons, police, fire services, central & state government officials on emergency duty, water supply, sanitation & sewerage workers and goods & goods carriers, rail, air transport, road transport

on highways have been permitted. Movement of public transport, private vehicles and taxis (including cabs by aggregators like Ola, Uber) to and from airports, railway stations and bus terminals for facilitating movement of passengers has been allowed by the government. The government has allowed service sector industries including IT/ITeS, hotel & hospitality units, home delivery of foods, groceries, vegetables and essential items by restaurants and aggregators such as Zomato, Swiggy to operate during the shutdowns. ATMs & critical financial institutions like RBI and clearing houses will continue to function

as usual. Dhabas along the highways and major roads are allowed to operate for takeaway only.

Milk booths and related activities will continue. Food and grocery stores have been permitted to operate for home delivery only. Newspaper hawkers are allowed to distribute papers between 5 am and 8 am. The government has also allowed marriages and funeral events with prior permission of the local authorities. However, more regulations have been imposed for holding such social events. The SRC said in any case, the number of persons allowed in a marriage function shall not exceed 50 (for the entire event) including hosts, guests, priests and catering and other support staff.

In case of funerals, the ceiling on number of persons including host and family members, guests, priests and other support staff will be 20. In no circumstances, the number of participants will exceed the ceilings, he said. "No marriage procession shall be allowed. In case of violations of this condition, the vehicles and equipment and accessories used in the procession will be seized and criminal actions taken against the hosts/owners of the band/ light and sound service provider initiated," Jena warned. Now, the organiser will have to submit the list of participants to the local authorities.

BJD CANCELS PIPLI RALLIES

BHUBANESWAR: In view of worsening pandemic situation, the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday said his party will not hold any public rallies or campaign meetings in Pipli which will go to bypoll May 13. "Every life is precious and I always consider people of Odisha to be my family members. In this extremely serious #COVID19 situation amidst surge in cases in the country, @bjd_odisha has decided not to hold any public rallies or campaign meetings in Pipli bypoll," Naveen tweeted. "The BJD as a responsible party will not like to put the lives of people in danger. We contest elections to serve people," he said. As the campaign has a potential to endanger lives, he appealed to all political parties and the Election Commission of India to reconsider both the duration and method of campaigning. "India is a mature democracy and together we can come out with a solution. Democracy is by the people, for the people and of the people. Jai Hind," the CM said. Earlier in the day, the ECI issued a formal notification for the Pipli bypoll, which will be held May 13. Polling will be conducted between 7 am and 6 pm.

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22 flying squads to check hoarding

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: A state-level special committee headed by Crime Branch ADG Yashwant Jethwa Monday announced the creation of 22 special flying squads to prevent illegal hoarding and black marketing of Covid-19 related drugs and medical equipment across the state. Jethwa revealed this after a discussion with the officials of the state drug controller, DIG Special Task Force, commissionerate police at the DGP camp office here.

of the enforcement wing of the drug controller and STF sleuths will conduct surprise raids at entry points of medical drugs and equipment including the stocks at C&F agents, wholesalers, and hospitals. The surveillance teams will carry out surprise checks at wholesale and retail counters in order to thwart black-marketing at the state. Seven teams have been constituted for Cuttack and Bhubaneswar where most of the entry points are located. 15 flying squads will keep a strict vigil on illegal hoarding, stocking or sale of Covid-19 drugs in other parts of the state.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



We trust our govts. That is why we decided to return home.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	47949.42 ↓ 882.61
NIFTY	14359.50 ↓ 258.40
DOLLAR	75.23 ↑ ₹0.42
EURO	90.17 ↑ ₹0.89
GOLD	₹47,422 ↑ ₹69
SILVER	₹68,414 ↓ ₹270

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	40.6°C	38.2°C
TEMP MIN	23.0°C	21.5°C
Humidity	88%	76%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	artly cloudy sky	

FROM MAY 1, VAX FOR ALL ABOVE 18

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 19: The Union Government Monday announced that everyone above the age of 18 will be eligible to get a vaccine against Covid-19 from May 1. The decision was taken in a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Prime Minister Modi said the government has been working hard for over a year to ensure that maximum number of Indians is able to get the vaccine in the shortest possible time. "India is vaccinating people at world record pace and we will continue this with even greater momentum."

The third phase of vaccination, which will start May 1, aims at liberalised vaccine pricing and scaling up of vaccine coverage. Private vaccination providers have to transparently declare their self-set vaccination price and the eligibility through this channel would be opened up to all adults everyone above the age of 18.

Vaccine manufacturers are empowered to release up to 50 per cent of their supply to state governments and in the open market at a pre-declared price. On the other hand, states are empowered to procure additional vaccine doses directly from the manufacturers, as well as open up vaccination to any category of people above the age of 18 for the same.



Vaccination will be provided free of cost to the eligible population as defined earlier which include Health Care Workers (HCWs), Front Line Workers (FLWs) and all people above 45 years of age at government of India (GoI) vaccination centres. The division of vaccine supply 50 per cent to GoI and 50 per cent to other than its channel would be applicable uniformly across for all vaccines manufactured in the country. Manufacturers would have to make an advance declaration of the price for 50 per cent supply that would be available to the state governments and in the open market before May 1, 2021, an official statement said.

Vax manufacturers are empowered to release up to 50 pc of their supply to state governments and in the open market at a pre-declared price

Domino's India: Credit data of 10 lakh users on 'sale' for ₹4 cr

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 19: In what could add to latest string of cyber breaches at India-based entities, a cyber security researcher claimed that credit card details of nearly 10 lakh people who purchased online on Domino's Pizza India is allegedly being sold for over ₹4 crore on the Dark Web.

According to Alon Gal, CTO of security firm Hudson Rock, a threat actor has claimed to have hacked Domino's India database worth 13TB. The threat actor is looking for around \$50,000 (approximately ₹4 crore) for the database and



saying they have plans to build a search portal to enable querying the data, Gal claimed. "Information includes 180,000,000 order details containing names, phone numbers, emails, addresses, payment details and a whopping 1,000,000 credit cards," Gal

claimed in a tweet. "Plenty of large scale Indian breaches lately, this is worrying," he added. Domino's India was yet to react to Gal's tweet. Independent cyber security researcher Rajshekhhar Rajaharia said that he had alerted about this possible hack to the CERT-in (India's national cyber defence agency) March 5. "I had alerted CERT-in about a possible Domino's Pizza India hack where the threat actor got data access with details like 200 million orders and personal data of the users too," Rajaharia said. There has been a string of hacking incidents involving Indian firms in the recent past, including BigBasket, BuyUcoin, JusPay, Upstox and others. Earlier, Gal claimed that personal data of 533 million FB users, including 61 lakh Indians, were leaked online after a hacker posted the details on a digital forum.

The inspiring legacy gets a new look

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At MGM we believe in reinventing ourselves, but with deep rooted principles. Keeping up with our legacy this new identity will carry on adding value and touching human lives.

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leisure



CARAX'S ANNETTE TO OPEN 74TH CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

Leos Carax's Los Angeles-set drama *Annette*, starring Marion Cotillard and Adam Driver, will open the 74th Cannes Film Festival July 6. *Annette*, Carax's first film in English, will premiere in Competition nine years after the premiere of his film *Holy Motors*.

JODIE, JOSHUA ARE LIKE MIRRORS FOR EACH OTHER

Actress Jodie Turner-Smith says she and her actor husband Joshua Jackson 'high five all the time' over their marriage. "We're so similar in so many ways. We're like mirrors for each other. And I just really love that human being," Turner-Smith told *People* magazine, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today will be an industrious day. The stars foretell that you may visit a historical place, or perhaps a museum. However, Ganesh says, you may need to pay a little attention to your health. If such is the case, it would be better to take the evening off for yourself.

TAURUS
Today, Ganesh sees your mind shifting from your professional affairs and drifting, time and again, towards your home and family. You are likely to return home early and get happily engrossed in discussing pressing domestic issues with your family members.

GEMINI
Today, you will have the required intentions and courage to propose your sweetheart. You will be dressed to kill, or rather to marry. You will make a favourable impression with the way you'll look tonight. You will be an open book to your future partner, which is likely to work in your favour.

CANCER
You can improve your finances with your mental capabilities. Ganesh says that you will get success in both private life and career. You will be entrusted many tasks and responsibilities. Yet by evening, you will spend time in your pursuits.

LEO
If it's a fresh start that you have been looking for, then this day promises to give you just that, predicts Ganesh. If you have already chalked out any plans for your future, today is the day to initiate the implementation.

VIRGO
You will be in a very ambitious and conscientious mood today. Your actions will speak louder than words. You set the pace with your meticulous planning and careful execution. Ganesh says you may expect a lot of appreciation and recognition for your work coming from your boss and your colleagues.

LIBRA
Ganesh says today is a day where you will spend happy moments with your family members. You will feel happy and will get to spend some romantic time with your beloved. Your innermost feeling will be showcased in the internal thoughts of your life partner and both of you will be in tandem with each other today.

SCORPIO
You nearly emerge as a superhero today, as you have the knack of balancing home and work just perfectly. Intellectual discussions and brainstorming with peers would provide food for thought today.

SAGITTARIUS
Chances of you hitting a roadblock today are high. But remember the saying, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." So don't succumb to pressure, advises Ganesh, but rise up to the occasion and show who's the boss.

CAPRICORN
Your accomplishments may take you on cloud nine today. Success may come easily to you, but don't try your luck too much, advises Ganesh. Make the most of today as tomorrow may not be the same as today. You will be popular today, especially in your social circle as you'll impress everyone with your wit and humour.

AQUARIUS
You will be able to strike a balance between the emotional and rational side of your personality. You will find pleasure in your work and may successfully mix your personal life into your professional life. Financially, there are no major issues, but negligible matters may keep your mind occupied, feels Ganesh.

PISCES
You will be inspired to travel to a far off place or to a foreign land because of a very warm invitation. Some old friend or relative residing in a foreign land will get in touch and please you today. Ganesh says that today is a good day for those wishing to go abroad for some specialized study or work.

Rakul's unique recipe to beat summer heat



Mumbai: Actress Rakul Preet Singh Monday shared her recipe to beat the summer blues. Rakul reveals that she resorts to barley water, which not only helps her stay cool during the scorching months but has its numerous health benefits, too. She shared the health tip on Instagram along with a post where she poses with a glass of barley water. "Thinking how to beat the summer heat? Let barley water come to your rescue. A cool drink suggested by my super cool nutritionist @munmun.ganerwal, it will rid you of all summer woes; be it bloating, acne or any digestive issue. *Ise kehete hai: chota naam, bada kaam,*" Rakul wrote.

The actress appears alongside Arjun Kapoor in the latest music video *Dil Hai Deewana*, which released Saturday. Composed by Tanishk Bagchi with vocals by Darshan Raval and actress-turned-singer Zara Khan, the song is pitched as a party track. Arjun and Rakul are also set to appear in Kaashvi Nair's OTT film *Sardar Ka Grandson*.



When Kareena put on 8 kilos

Mumbai: Kareena Kapoor Khan says she gained eight kilos after her recent holiday in Tuscany with her husband, actor Saif Ali Khan, because all she did was watch the chef make pizzas day in and day out. It was like an art, making a pizza is easy but starting from scratch and actually doing it the way they do is an art," Kareena said. Kareena also spoke about being health conscious. "I think most of the times actors have been very healthy with what they eat. This generation specially is extremely conscious of their food, no gluten, no sugar, or everyone is on some sort of packed meal," Kareena said.



'No failures, there are only lessons in life'

New Delhi: Ranveer Singh made debut in 2010 hit *Band Baaja Baaraat*. A decade later, having established himself firmly on solid tinsel terrain, Ranveer is clear about his biggest learning. "An important thing I've learned is to keep taking risks. The bigger the risk, the bigger the reward. You may falter during that process, but I believe that there are no failures in life, there are only lessons," said the actor while shooting for a new campaign here. Ranveer acknowledges the importance of getting the right break, and the fact that it can often become the defining factor for success.

Rahman, Mira Nair, Anupam Kher in BAFTA Breakthrough India jury

India has one of the most fascinating creative industries and is home to so many talented film, games and television practitioners, said Amanda Berry OBE, Chief Executive at BAFTA



Mumbai: Ten winners from the fields of television, films and games, selected by a jury including AR Rahman, Anupam Kher and Mira Nair, are to receive one-to-one mentoring and career guidance at the BAFTA Breakthrough India Initiative, besides full voting BAFTA membership and access to BAFTA events and networking opportunities, in the UK and internationally. Artists from across the country had applied for the BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) initiative. Owing to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the jury met virtually to decide the winners. The jury also included filmmaker-writer Shonali Bose, producer Siddharth Roy Kapur, former BAFTA Breakthrough and Games Producer Charu Desodt, BAFTA Chair and TV Producer Krishnendu Majumdar, VP, Content,



Netflix India Monika Shergill. Rahman said that he was honoured to be part of this panel. "BAFTA is a platform where artistes from around the world, including the best from India, are represented and celebrated, and it's my honour to be a part of its Breakthrough India jury. Through Breakthrough, we offer artistes our knowledge and connectivity, as well as opportunities that'll hopefully nurture their craft and help them leave their mark on the world. India is home to incredible artistes and I'm proud of us. It's time we make our names known, it's time we all shine." Amanda Berry OBE, Chief Executive at BAFTA said, "India has one of the most fascinating creative industries and is home to so many talented film, games and television practitioners. The BAFTA Breakthrough initiative will facilitate meaningful collaborations between creative communities globally and that is the one of most exciting, extraordinary parts of the initiative."

PEANUTS



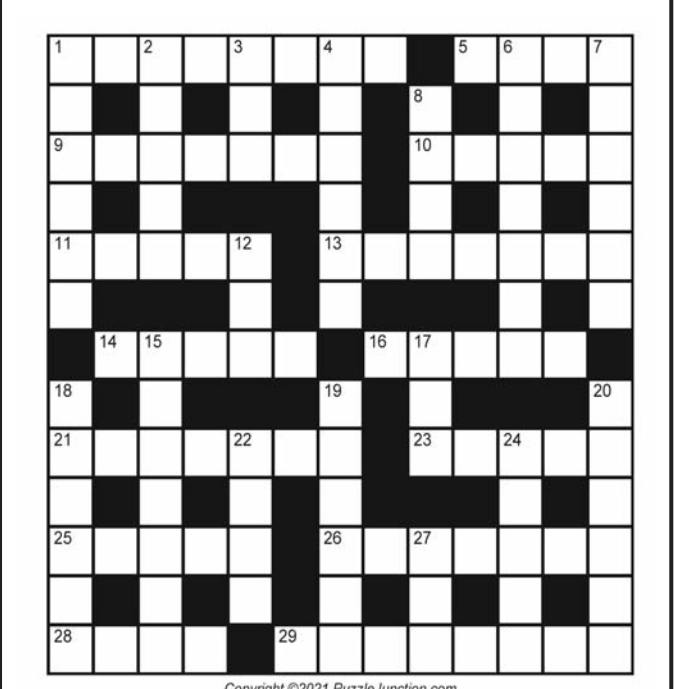
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



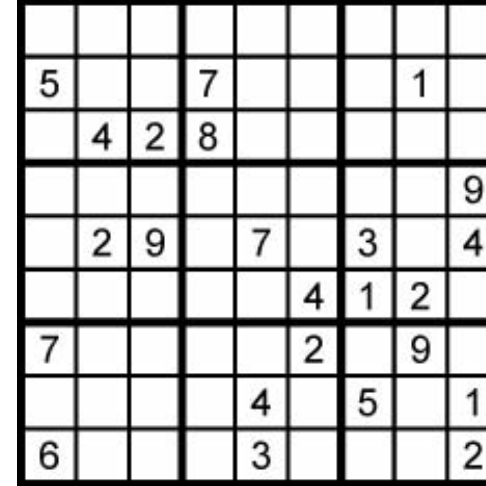
FUN post CROSSWORD



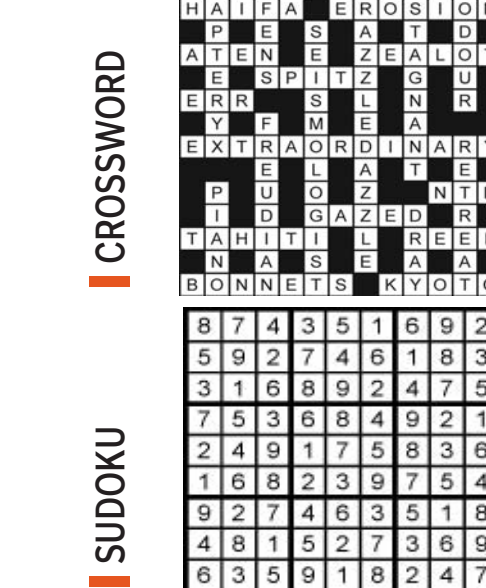
- Across**
1 New moon
5 At a distance
9 "Arabian Nights" hero (3,4)
10 Cousin of a bittorn
11 Choir voices
13 Fragrance
14 Show flexibility
16 Dog's bane
21 Bon vivant
- Down**
23 Sir or madam
25 Soprano type
26 Genial
28 Taxing trip
29 Railway stops
- Across**
7 Take turns
8 Diner's card
12 Small intake
15 Light rain
17 Fortune
18 Head protector
19 Take off
20 Carpenters' tools
22 Rides for ETs
24 Forbidden
27 Like Falstaff

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



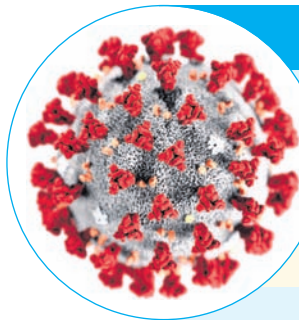
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



LIGHTER VERSION

A trolley auto-rickshaw carries a model of an elephant made of plaster of Paris near Satyanagar in Bhubaneswar, Monday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	14,21,16,751	12,06,65,979	30,35,300
India	1,50,61,919	1,29,53,821	1,78,769
Odisha	3,72,703	3,47,637	1,948

Inter-state buses halted as cases up

THE PREVIOUS DAILY HIGH WAS RECORDED SEPT 25, 2020 WHEN THE STATE REPORTED 4,356 CASES

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 19: In the wake of sharp rise in Covid-19 cases, the state government suspended permission for all inter-state passenger buses. However, the intra-state bus services will continue, Transport Minister Padmanabha Behera said.

The state Monday reported the highest ever single-day rise in Covid-19 cases as 4,445 people tested positive, pushing the coastal state's tally to over 3.72 lakh, a senior Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

Four more people died in the state taking the death toll due the virus to 1,948, he said.

The previous daily high was recorded September 25 last year when the state reported 4,356 cases.

All 30 districts in the state reported new cases, the official said.

Of the new cases, 2,574 were reported from the quarantine centres, while the rest 1,871 were local contacts.

Sundargarh, bordering Chhattisgarh, reported the highest 722 new cases.

Khurda reported 587 cases, followed by Nuapada (437), Kalahandi (273), Cuttack (251) and Sambalpur (241). As many as 13 districts have reported over 100 cases, he said.

Two of the latest deaths were reported from Sundargarh, while Jharsuguda and Keonjhar reported one each.

There are 24,568 active cases in the state at present, while 3.46 lakh patients have recovered so far.

There are around 9,000 beds in 48 hospitals across the state, while the number of active cases crossed the 24,000 mark, a health official said. The government has decided to increase the number of beds by four-fold and make oxygen support available for more beds, he said.



COVID: THE UNSTOPPABLE

FOUR MORE PEOPLE DIED IN THE STATE TAKING THE DEATH TOLL DUE THE VIRUS TO 1,948

SUNDARGARH, BORDERING CHHATTISGARH, REPORTED THE HIGHEST 722 NEW CASES

KHURDA REPORTED 587 CASES, FOLLOWED BY NUAPADA (437), KALAHANDI (273), CUTTACK (251) AND SAMBALPUR (241). AS MANY AS 13 DISTRICTS HAVE REPORTED OVER 100 CASES

Efforts are also underway to increase the number of ICU beds, he added. There are only 541 ICU beds and 248 ventilator beds in the state, the official said, adding that the government is working to add 400 more ventilators.

Seven districts that have more than 1,000 active cases have been categorised as 'Red Zone'. These districts are Sundargarh (4,375), Khurda (3,841), Sambalpur (1,408), Nuapada (1,377), Cuttack (1,363), Kalahandi (1,255) and Bargarh (1,236).

Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Assembly, Pradipta Kumar Naik tested positive for Covid-19. The

BJP leader confirmed it on his Twitter handle Tuesday. "After getting repeated tests for Covid-19, my report has come out positive. All those who have come in contact with me in the last 5 days may please get themselves tested and self isolate & take necessary precautions," he tweeted.

In the wake of sharp rise in Covid-19 cases, the state government suspended permission for all inter-state passenger buses. However, the intra-state bus services will continue, Transport Minister Padmanabha Behera said.

The government also issued a

50 associated with Srimandir nCoV +ve

Fifty persons associated with the Srimandir in Puri, including 22 servitors, have tested positive for the infection, sources in the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration said. Besides, 19 people from Puri visited the Kumbh Mela. Of them, 17 have so far returned to the holy town, officials said. Fifteen returnees underwent RT-PCR tests and two were found to be Covid-negative, while reports of 13 others were awaited, he said. Meanwhile, Covid-negative reports and complete vaccination certificates were made mandatory for people visiting Srimandir in Puri from other states.

new SOP for passenger buses operating within the state. While buses have been allowed to operate with full seating capacity, standing of passengers will not be permitted, Behera said.

Two passengers will be allowed in auto-rickshaws and taxis, he said.

City's crowded markets to be decentralised soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Monday ordered decentralisation of markets citing constant violation of social distancing and use of masks in prominent market areas in the wake of skyrocketing Covid-19 cases in the city.

According to sources, the daily markets at Dumduma, Patia, Damana, Unit-4, Unit-I and Unit-II areas will be decentralised by shifting vegetable vendors to other places to avoid large gatherings.

The places identified during the first phase of the pandemic are likely to be utilised this time too. The vendors have been asked to sit with adequate distance between each other and ensure that social distancing norms are adhered to both by them and the buyers.

"We had a meeting with market associations and have decided to decentralise the important market places within a day or two. We have instructed zonal deputy commissioners (ZDC) to undertake demarcation and barricading activi-



ties. It has been found that Covid violation is still continuing in market areas as Unit-I and Unit-IV ZDCs are also authorised to shut down those market areas found flouting norms," said BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary.

The BMC Commissioner also mentioned that Neelachal and Hi Tech Covid hospitals have been

BMC seeks more manpower

In the wake of record spike in daily Covid-19 cases, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Monday urged the state government to provide additional manpower to efficiently handle the pandemic.

As per a communication by BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary, the civic authority has requested a deputation of about 25 Assistant Section Officers (ASOs) from different government departments to be transferred temporarily to BMC. While 17 of them have joined, the remaining are ex-

pected to follow the suit soon.

"The additional staff will be placed at zonal offices, airport, railway station, and monitoring cell. We will be requesting even further deputation of officers who will assist in contact tracing, awareness and enforcement activities. Earlier, during September-October, we had about 150 ASOs at our disposal when a sudden spike in Covid was observed. However, most of them were transferred back to their departments after the cases decreased," said Suvendu Kumar Sahoo, nodal officer of BMC.

made operational again to increase bed strength in the city. Meanwhile, Blue Wheel hospital will be activated for Covid-19, treatment, Tuesday. Similarly, a provision of 500 beds will be made at KIIMS Covid hospital. It can be mentioned that the BMC earlier had ordered a 150-bedded Covid facility to operate in Aditya Ashwini Hospital and had increased bed strength from existing 250 to 500 at SUM Hospital.

Coaching centre sealed in Capital

The BMC Monday sealed a private coaching centre at IRC Village for flouting the COVID-19 guidelines. Acting on a tip-off the BMC inspected Sri Vinayaka Coaching institute at IRC Village on complaints of the institute operating despite state government's orders of shutting all educational institutions. However, the centre continued to hold classes. A team led by Assistant Commissioner Lian Sahoo and enforcement inspector and other staffers visited the centre and sealed.

IFFCO TO SET UP O₂ PLANT NEAR PARADIP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) Monday said that the company has planned to set up an oxygen plant at its Paradip fertiliser unit.

The IFFCO took the decision in order to increase the supply of oxygen in the country and meet the requirement of patients affected by Covid-19.

IFFCO, in a letter, stated that the oxygen plants will be set up in its three fertiliser units located in Aonla in Uttar Pradesh, Kalol in Gujarat and Paradip in Odisha.

IFFCO said that the company will ensure supply of oxygen to hospitals treating Covid-19 patients.

"We have already placed an order for setting up one such oxygen plant at Kalol unit, which is expected to be operational in around two weeks. We have also placed an order to set up such plants in Aonla and Paradip," IFFCO says.

The IFFCO plant at Kalol will have capacity of 200 M3/hour to produce 700 cylinders per day. Each cylinder has a capacity of 46.7 litre with medical grade oxygen of 99.5% purity.

This plant will produce around 33,000 litres of oxygen per day. A total of Rs 7 crore will be invested for the establishment of the plant.

The initiative was highly applauded by DV Sadananda Gowda, the Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilisers.

"Kudos to IFFCO for dedicating their four plants for production of medical oxygen. I request other urea units to kindly follow the suit wherever possible. Government is taking all measures to ramp up production and availability of medical oxygen," Gowda tweeted.

"I urge other urea cos. to kindly follow the suit of IFFCO & set up oxygen plants in their plant premises wherever possible. This is time to fight the pandemic together & with full strength, he writes.

POLLUTION-FREE RIDE



A couple enjoys a horse cart ride near Raj Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Monday

PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

Odia jawan robbed in Neelachal Express

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: Unknown miscreants looted jewellery and valuables worth around Rs 2 lakh from an Odia CRPF Jawan, Balaram Nayak, who was travelling in a train along with his wife near Parasnath railway station in Bihar Monday morning.

The couple has lodged a complaint with GRP after they arrived at Bhubaneswar railway station.

Nayak who is posted at Pratagarh in UP hails from Ganjam. On Sunday, the jawan along with his wife boarded Neelachal Express to attend the marriage function of his brother-in-law. However, some unknown miscreants took away the air bag containing the ornaments weighing around 40 gm and some costly items taking advantage of an absent-minded jawan. The robbers also engaged in a fight with Nayak as they tried to snatch away the vanity bag and mobile of Nayak's wife. The GRP registered a case and intimidated the Railway police of Gaya.

OCAC told to fix technical glitches in scholarship portal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: Higher Education department Monday directed Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC) to fix the technical glitches occurring while applying for scholarship schemes for 2020-21 academic year through Odisha Scholarship portal.

A meeting was held Monday under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary on virtual mode to address such issues.

Prativa Sahu, deputy secretary of Higher Education department, has written to OCAC stating that the common scholarship portal for the session 2020-21 is live from April 1, 2021 for three schemes of our department's e-medhabruti scheme, Vyasakabi Fakir Mohan Senapati Bhasabruti and Gopabandhu Sikhya Sahayata



Students are unable to submit their applications through the portal due to some serious technical glitches

Yojana.

"At the time of implementation, it is noticed that there are some serious technical glitches in the software for which the students are unable to submit their applications through the portal and we are receiving many calls from students and institutions/colleges on technical issues like adding new colleges and new courses, deletion of courses, providing user id, Aadhaar

card issues and others," said Sahu.

Students are currently facing such technical difficulties at the time of application. They failed to submit even their grievances. "It is expected that development agency will fix such issues with immediate effect," she mentioned.

The department requested OCAC not to release the money to customer service management (CSM) until it gives the green signal.

Covid observers visit call centre in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: Covid observers for Bhubaneswar, Labour Commissioner Dr N. Thirumala Naik and Principal Secretary for Women and Child Development Department Anu Garg, visited 1929 call centre here at the Bhubaneswar Operations Centre, Monday.

The Covid observers interacted with staff members who are presently involved in calling up those in home isolation and those receiving queries from people, doctors on duty and others. The observers advised to increase the team strength so as to reduce the waiting time.

Till April 18, 3792 calls were made and 886 calls were received. The 1929 call centre started March 25 this year. The BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary, General Manager Social and Special Projects of BSCL Diptirani Sahoo and General Manager Administration of BSCL Kamaljit Das and senior officials of BSCL were present.

Vaccine will reduce mortality, says director of public health

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: When people are eagerly waiting to get vaccinated, state's Public Health director Niranjana Mishra Monday said there is no guarantee that Covid-19 vaccines will prevent infection completely. However, it will reduce the chances of developing severe infection and mortality, he said.

Speaking to reporters here, Mishra said there is no such guarantee that the vaccinated people won't get infected with the coronavirus. People will have to follow the universal precautions which include wearing masks, sanitising hands and maintaining social distance even after receiving the shots, he suggested.

Two approved vaccines - Covaxin by Bharat Biotech and Covishield manufactured by Oxford-AstraZeneca - are being adminis-



tered to people of Odisha, he said.

As many as 1,42,886 persons have been vaccinated at 1,084 centres across the state, Monday. The government has planned vaccination at 890 centres Tuesday. Till evening, there was a stock of 3,55,270 doses of Covishield and 2,10,170 doses of Covaxin in the state.

To contain the spread of the virus, the state government has opened temporary medical centres

As many as 1,42,886 persons have been vaccinated at 1,084 centres across the state, Monday

The government has planned vaccination at 890 centres Tuesday

The Health department is planning to increase the tests to 50,000 per day

(TMCs) in some districts while instructions have been given to the district Collectors of those along the Odisha-Chhattisgarh border to open the TMCs as per requirement, Mishra added.

Camps have been set up at several places which have been engaged to collect samples for RT-PCR tests of the people at block level. The Health department is planning to increase the tests to 50,000 per day.

Prisons Directorate blames cops for Hyder's escape

THE DIG OF PRISONS HAS GIVEN CLEAN CHIT TO THE OFFICIALS OF CIRCLE JAIL AT SAMBALPUR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: The State Directorate of Prisons and Correctional Services which has been in the line of fire following the gangster Sk Hyder's escape from SCB medical College and Hospital has held the police responsible for the incident.

The notorious criminal had managed to escape from the surgery ward of the hospital by reportedly drugging the lone guard on duty April 10 afternoon. Hyder was later nabbed by the special team of Commissionerate Police with the help of their Telangana counterpart from Sangareddy district of



EARLIER, HYDER WAS BROUGHT TO THE SCB MEDICAL JANUARY 19 AND FEBRUARY 23, 2021 FOR CHECKUP

Telangana April 15. The Home department immediately sought a detailed report from the jail directorate

- The notorious criminal had managed to escape from the surgery ward of the hospital by reportedly drugging the lone guard on duty April 10 afternoon

- Hyder was later nabbed by the special team of Commissionerate Police with the help of their Telangana counterpart from Sangareddy district of Telangana April 15

The prisons department claimed that the jail staff seek police escort while shifting any sick hardened criminal to hospital as per the procedure. The jail officials shifted Hyder to SCB medical with police escort March 23. Earlier, Hyder was brought to the SCB Medical January 19 and February 23, 2021 for checkup.

It is also revealed that the dreaded gangster has been suffering from multiple diseases such as Hypertension, Diabetes Mellitus, CKD, cervical and lumbar spondylosis, old injury in right elbow and right knee joint with restricted movement, Obesity along with Urological, Skin, Nephrology and Neurology problems.

The Ophthalmology doctor at VIMSAR had reportedly advised for a plastic surgery of Hyder at SCB 29 December, 2020. The DIG of prisons has blamed the police force for Hyder's escape while giving clean chit to the officials of Circle jail at Sambalpur.

"Jail staffs are no way responsible since he (Hyder) escaped from police custody," the jail department concluded in the report to the Home department.

in connection with the reasons and persons responsible for the escape of the gangster. According to sources, the DIG prisons (Headquarters) has recently submitted a detailed factual report to the Home department.

Sources also revealed that the Prisons department has put all the blame for the gangster's escape on the state police force, especially the Sambalpur police. The directorate reportedly claimed that the officials of Circle Jail at Sambalpur had followed the Standard Operating Procedure (as instructed by the National Human Rights Commission.



Prisons dept's new circular

The Prisons department has issued a circular directing the superintendents of jails across the state to seek permission from the courts where the sick prisoners are being tried before shifting them to referral hospitals for police escort to prevent any escape by prisoners. The department has been facing flak for repeated incidents of prisoners fleeing custody. The officials have also been asked to seek official written recommendations of superintendents of hospitals where the prisoners are getting treated before shifting to referral hospitals. As per the circular, many sick prisoners are succumbing on their way to the referral hospitals or medical colleges. Some prisoners are also dying after getting admitted to referral hospital after a very short period. "In future, you must obtain specific recommendation of the superintendent of hospital concerned that such facility is not available and specific recommendation to referral hospital (by name) by concerned Superintendent with seal/ stamp mentioning probable period of treatment also," directs Director General for prisons, SK Upadhyaya.

50% staffers to be present in schools

Bhubaneswar: The School and Mass Education department Monday informed that 50 per cent teaching and non-teaching staffs of the schools coming under the department control will remain present in the schools. The head of the institution should prepare duty chart accordingly, so that programmes like admission of students, distribution of books, monitoring of mid-day meal programme and other works assigned by district administration from time to time can be taken up. Anybody wishing to leave the headquarters should take prior permission of the Collector and District Magistrate through head of the institution.

DISTANCING AT CAPITAL HOSP GOES FOR A TOSS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: At a time when Covid-19 cases are skyrocketing, the officials at the Capital Hospital seem to be indifferent towards ensuring compliance of Covid safety protocol at the hospital.

Lack of social distancing at the counters of the hospital has exposed the lackadaisical approach of the hospital authorities. One can find gathering of a great number of people at the ticket and free medicine counters at the Capital hos-



pital in blatant violation of all the Covid-19 guidelines.

Sources also claimed that putting the life of the people in severe jeopardy, the hospital authorities are dispatching both positive and

negative reports of (RTPCR or antigen) tests at the same counter. The persons tested positive and negative can be seen standing in the same queue without any social distancing.

WASSUP TODAY

BHUBANESWAR

- 40th death anniversary of Kedarnath Mohapatra, Kedarnath Research Centre, 5pm
- Gopinath Mohanty Memorial Lecture, Sanskriti Bhawan, 6pm

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.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

I, Nirupama Jena spouse of Army Service No. 15661952A HAV (TTC), Gobinda Chandra Pradhan of Army AD College, PIN - 928992, C/o. 99 APO, Vill- Nuapada, P.O.- Inkarbandha, Dist.- Angul (Odisha) have changed my DOB from 17.05.79 to 17.05.1975 vide affidavit Dt.08.04.2021 before the Notary Public, Bhubaneswar, Khurda (Odisha).

I, Chaturimani Pradhan, Mother of Army Service No. - 15661952A HAV (TTC), Gobinda Chandra Pradhan of Army AD College, PIN - 928992, C/o. 99 APO, Vill- Nuapada, P.O.- Inkarbandha, Dist.- Angul (Odisha) have changed my DOB from 01.07.1956 to 07.06.1953 vide affidavit Dt.08.04.2021 before the Notary Public, Bhubaneswar, Khurda (Odisha).



A man bows down before the third consignment of wood logs from Nayagarh that reached Puri, Monday

OP PHOTO

Man cries son's murder at Pipli de-addiction centre, demands justice

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pipli, April 19: A 54-year-old man from Bargarh, whose son died under mysterious circumstances reportedly at Capital Hospital after having been taken ill at a de-addiction centre here March 2, Monday threatened to stage a sit-in if the police fails to ensure stringent action against the agency.

According to Golak Bihari Mallick, his son Goutam, 24, had been undergoing treatment at Disha Foundation, a de-addiction centre here, for around four months. World came crashing down for Golak when he learnt about his son's death March 2.

Things were smooth until 9.30pm



FILE PHOTO

Pipli police registered a case (177/21) and arrested five persons in connection with the case after examining the fateful day's CCTV footages of the de-addiction centre

of March 2 when Golak received a phone call from the de-addiction centre informing him that Goutam

has been admitted to Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar as the latter was taken ill while having

HC takes suo motu cognisance of sanitation workers' deaths

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, April 19: Taking suo motu cognisance of the recent death of four sanitation workers while cleaning sewer lines and septic tanks in the state, the Orissa High Court Monday issued notices to the Chief Secretary and several government departments seeking reports from them on the matter.

While two sanitation workers died and another became critically ill due to asphyxiation while working in sewer lines in Cuttack last week, two others were suffocated to death after entering into a septic tank in Bhubaneswar last month.

"It shocks the judicial conscience, as it should the society's collective conscience," a division bench of Chief Justice S Muralidhar and Justice B P Routray observed and directed that criminal procedures be initiated on the matter.

The High Court said that the shameful practice of manual cleaning of sewer lines and septic tanks



It appears that in both the incidents, there were egregious violations of the mandatory provisions of the PEMSAR Act, the HC observed

are continuing unabated in the country though the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation (PEMSAR) Act was enacted in 2013.

It appears that in both the incidents, there were egregious violations of the mandatory provisions of the PEMSAR Act, the high court observed.

Most of the sanitation workers belong to the SC or ST community and hence provisions of the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act might be invoked in the case.

Arresting the Chief Secretary, secretaries of Housing and Urban

Development and SC-ST Welfare departments, commissioners of municipal corporations of the two cities and others, the HC issued notices seeking separate reports in affidavits from them.

It also appointed two advocates as amicus curiae, an impartial adviser to a court of law in a particular case, to assist the HC in deciding the matter.

Fixing the next date of hearing May 10, the bench asked the respondents to ensure that by that date, a compensation of Rs 10 lakh each is disbursed to the family of the deceased workers.

Traffic advisory for Rukuna Rath Yatra

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: The Commissionerate Police Monday issued traffic advisory for Car Festival of Shree Lingaraj on the occasion of Ashokashtami, Tuesday and the return festival April 24. No vehicles will be allowed on Rath road from Mausai maa Chhak. They will be diverted either towards Museum Chhak or towards Vivekananda marg.

No vehicles will be allowed on Rath road from Barik sahi lane, Maharana shai lane, Gosagareswar Chhak, Sital Sasthi lane, Tinimundia Chhak, Harchandi lane, Muna medical lane and Punama gate lane or any other lane or by-lane emerging at Rath road. Vehicles from Rath Khala will not be allowed on Rath Road, instead they will be diverted from Rath Khala, towards Bata Mahadev Temple.

Job scheme for all 114 ULBs in state



REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: The Urban Wage Employment Initiative (UWEI) will now be implemented intensively in all the 114 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of the state.

A total 342 dedicated professionals and domain experts have been positioned in the ULBs. A two-day (April 19-20) orientation programme is being organised for the professionals to orient the newly inducted personnel on the scheme, guidelines and implementation strategy. The two day training programme in virtual mode is organised for the personnel in all 114 ULBs to carry out the programme.

Principal Secretary G Mathi Vathanan, Director, Municipal Administration Sangramjit Naik and senior officers of the Urban Development department interacted with the team on key deliverables and timelines for the programme.

The UWEI was launched in April last year during Covid-19 lockdown to help the informal workforce in the state's 114 ULBs. Under the initiative, around Rs 100 crore was allocated for all labour-intensive projects in the ULBs for providing temporary employment to the urban poor.

It is apprehended that Covid-19 pandemic has the potential to push vast majority of informal sector workers in India into poverty with the lockdown and other containment measures affecting jobs and earnings, the circular adds.

"In Odisha, about one-third of the

The UWEI was launched in April last year during Covid-19 lockdown to help the informal workforce in the state's 114 ULBs

Under the initiative, around Rs 100 crore was allocated for all labour-intensive projects in the ULBs for providing temporary employment to the urban poor

In last 9 months, more than 6,000 projects have been completed under the initiative with an expenditure of Rs 70 crores

At least 3.5 lakh workers participated in the initiative of which 40 per cent were women

people in the urban areas (approximately two million) may face severe consequences especially with reduction of working hours, decrease in wages and abrupt layoffs. In this context the government has decided to implement UWEI for enabling the urban poor, who are mostly working in the informal sector, get immediate wages by execution of labour intensive projects.

As per the Urban Development department, in last 9 months, more than 6,000 projects have been completed under the initiative with an expenditure of Rs 70 crores and 13 lakh person-days generated. At least 3.5 lakh workers participated in the initiative of which 40 per cent were women.

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2 dead, 3 critical in blast at stone crusher unit



POLICE SUSPECT THAT EXPLOSIVE MATERIALS SUCH AS GELATIN STICKS AND DETONATORS STOCKED AT A TIN-ROOFED HOUSE FOR USE IN THE STONE CRUSHER UNIT MIGHT HAVE CAUSED THE BLAST

ALL ASPECTS OF THE CRUSHER UNIT WILL BE VERIFIED, INCLUDING THE SOURCES OF PROCURING THE EXPLOSIVES AND THE PURPOSE FOR STOCKING, POLICE SAID

THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SANCTIONED AN EX-GRATIA OF ₹20,000 AND ₹10,000 FROM THE DISTRICT RED CROSS FUND TO THE FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE DECEASED AND INJURED PERSONS, RESPECTIVELY

Police personnel conducting a probe at the blast site

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 19: Two persons were killed and three others critically injured in an explosion at a crusher unit in Ganjam district Monday, police said.

The incident happened near Fardipalli village under Kukudakhandi block and in the Berhampur Sadar police station area, they said.

The deceased have been identified as A Santosh Kumar (37) of Kukudakhandi and Suresh Kumar Patra (40) of Fardipalli, police said.

One of the injured persons was referred to AIIMS- Bhubaneswar, and the other two are undergoing treatment at the MKCG Medical College and Hospital here, they said. Their condition is stated to be

critical, police said. The injured persons are also from Kukudakhandi and its nearby villages, they said.

It is suspected that explosive materials such as gelatin sticks and detonators stocked at a tin-roofed house for use in the stone quarry might have caused the blast, police said.

The intensity was much severe as two gas cylinders, which were inside the house, also exploded, they said. Senior police officers, including Superintendent of Police Pinak Mishra, visited the spot.

A person has been detained in connection with the incident, police said. "We have detained one person, the husband of the owner of the crusher unit, for interrogation," said JK Mohapatra, the sub-divisional police officer of Berhampur

Sadar. All aspects of the crusher unit will be verified, including the sources of procuring the explosives and the purpose for stocking, police said. The district administration has sealed the crusher unit and started an inquiry, officials said.

All the victims were in that tin-roofed house near the crusher unit when the explosion took place, police said. While Santosh died at the spot, Suresh succumbed to the injuries on the way to the hospital, they said.

The explosion caused a fire, which was doused by firefighters, sources said. The district administration sanctioned an ex-gratia of ₹20,000 and ₹10,000 from the District Red Cross Fund to the family members of the deceased and injured persons, respectively, they said.



With no lull in heatwave conditions, a vendor makes brisk business of ice apples on a roadside of Angul

OP PHOTO

30 YRS ON, 'GREATER BERHAMPUR' PLAN YET TO SEE LIGHT OF THE DAY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 19: An ambitious plan for formation of 'Greater Berhampur' region comprising of Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC), the civic bodies areas of Chhatrapur and Gopalpur and adjoining 139 revenue villages as well as Lochapada and Ankushpur on the outskirts is stuck in red-tape for the last 30 years.

The plan had its beginning when the election to the then Berhampur Municipality was held in 1992. The election was held under the newly revised rules of Municipal Act where the voters had to cast their votes twice for the candidate contesting for the post of chairman and for the candidates contesting for the post of councillors.

In that election, the then Congress candidate Chandra Sekhar Sahu defeated his nearest rival Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik of Janata Dal and got elected as chairman of the civic body.

Sahu after joining office mooted a plan to create a 'Greater Berhampur' region.

He sent a proposal to the state government to which the then Chief Minister Biju Patnaik gave his consent. Later, the Congress formed the government in the state and late Janaki Ballav Patnaik became the Chief Minister. However, the plan failed to make any headway as Sahu had differences with the Chief Minister. Since then 30 years have passed and the ruling BJD during its long 20-year tenure never gave any emphasis to implement the plan.

On the other hand, the Berhampur Development Authority (BDA) tried to give shape to the



IT HAS BEEN 12 YEARS SINCE BERHAMPUR MUNICIPALITY WAS UPGRADED TO MUNICIPAL CORPORATION. HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN NO PROGRESS ON THE CDP AS IT IS GATHERING DUST IN THE FILES

When contacted, Sahu said he was making efforts on the plan for 'Greater Berhampur'. He said that he will try to convince the state and Union governments for implementation of the plan.

he was the chairman of Berhampur Municipality in the 1990s and a Union Minister from 2004 to 2009.

Man hangs self after hacking aunt to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jagatsinghpur, April 19: In a tragic incident, a man allegedly died by suicide after killing his aunt over a family dispute at Akasudha village under Town police limits in Jagatsinghpur district Monday.

The deceased have been identified as Debi Prasad Jena, son of Prasanna Jena, of Akasudha village and his aunt Lipsa Jena. According to a source, there had been a long-standing dispute between the two families over a patch of land. Debi Prasad, who had been harbouring a grudge against Lipsa, attacked her with an axe Monday morning. He inflicted severe wounds due to which Lipsa died on the spot.

Debi Prasad then suffered remorse or may have lost his mental balance. A few minutes later he was found hanging from a tree near the village. Fearing police action, family members of Debi Prasad are learnt to have fled the village immediately after the incident. Police reached the village and sent the bodies for post mortem. A detailed probe has been launched to ascertain why Debi Prasad killed his aunt.

RSP supplying oxygen for treatment of Covid patients

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rourkela, April 19: The Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) is supplying liquid medical oxygen (LMO) to different hospitals of Odisha and other states for treatment of COVID-19 which has seen a sudden spurt in cases, an official statement by RSP said.

The SAIL plant has stepped up its liquid oxygen generation so that it can supply it to hospitals during the crisis being faced by the country. While the gaseous oxygen it produces is being used for sustenance of the plant processes, the entire production of liquid oxygen is being provided for medical use, the statement said.

The three air separation units of RSP's oxygen plant are producing oxygen in gaseous form for use in the making of hot metal and steel. The LMO is being supplied to the Ispat General Hospital of RSP, it said.

The plant is operating two more air separation units on build, own, operate basis by Linde India Ltd to



meet its oxygen demand.

Since April 2020, the oxygen plants of RSP along with Linde India has supplied more than 7,740 tonnes of LMO to Odisha, as well as other states to meet the requirement of this vital life saving item, the statement said.

Though tanker availability is a bottleneck, 572 tonnes of LMO has been supplied so far to Odisha and other states so far this month, it said.

RSP has also developed COVID care and isolation centres and is running vaccination centres at its Ispat General Hospital, which is equipped with a testing centre and a plasma bank, the statement added.

Its 'Kendu' season in Keonjhar



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 19: Every summer, markets and roadsides in Keonjhar district get flooded with a fruit locally known as 'Kendu'. This summer is no different.

Keonjhar district is also known as Kendujhar. And the district gets its name from this fruit. In fact, 'Kendu' is a fleshy fruit which is available here abundantly during summer season. It equals lemons in size but tastes sweet.

Since Kendu trees in hills and forests here are naturally grown ones and their fruits get ripen naturally, traditional Ayurvedic practitioners say consumption of Kendu is good for health.

During this time of the year, one can see tribal people selling 'Kendu' in markets and roadsides. The ripe fruits fall from trees on their own. The tribal people living in forested areas collect them in baskets from early in the morning. They then come to Keonjhar town and other nearby markets to sell them. They instead of selling them by scales sell them in heaps with each heap selling for ₹20. Even though 'Kendu' is one of the main fruits available in the district and has a

demand in other districts and neighbouring states as well, nothing has so far been done to create a proper market for this fruit. Since there is no cold storage or warehouse, these tribal people, mostly women, have to sit in scorching sun for hours to sell all their fruits.

Most days, they waiting for customers for hours goes in vain. When they find their fruits still lying unsold, as they can ill afford waiting till afternoon as they have to return their villages, they have no option left but to either sell them at throwaway prices to traders or just throw them away on roads. In that case, they don't make money commensurate to the labour involved. Some even struggle to manage the travelling cost.

According to senior lecturer Sumant Naik, traders buy these fruits from the traditional sellers at cheap rates and transport them to other districts as well as neighbouring states and rake in the moolah. So if the administration intervenes and makes arrangement for their marketing, the demand for the fruit will go up and the traditional sellers will get the proper price for the fruits. Though Kendu trees are found across

Keonjhar district is also known as Kendujhar. And the district gets its name from this fruit. In fact, 'Kendu' is a fleshy fruit which is available here abundantly during summer season

the district, they are abundant in jungles and forests of Bansapal, Telkoi and Harichandanpur. However, it has been a matter of great concern that the number of trees has drastically fallen owing to reasons such as climate change, wild fire and soil erosion. If steps are not taken for their preservation, it will be just a matter time when these forest-based berries and fruits become scarce, some local residents observed.

TENDER CALL NOTICE

8872/16.04.2021

No. E-37:- Sealed tenders are invited by the undersigned from the Manufacturers / Registered Agency / Firm suppliers for Installation of Medical Gas Pipe-line System (COVID-19 Care) in SCB MCH, Cuttack. The detail of tender papers along with terms and conditions can be obtained from Central Store Section, Office of the Superintendent, SCB Medical College Hospital, Cuttack during office hour from 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM on all working days on payment of Rs.1,000/- (Rupees One Thousand) only in the Account Section and also can be downloaded from website i.e. <http://www.scbmch.in>. from 20.04.2021 to 10.05.2021. The bidders are requested to inspect the site prior to participation the tender for needful. The tender paper should reach in the office of the undersigned through Speed Post/Regd. Post only. The authority reserves the right to accept / cancel / reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons thereof.

Sd./- Superintendent
SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack
OIPR-10011/11/0005/2122

No. A-44
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PARALAKHEMUNDI IRRIGATION DIVISION, PARALAKHEMUNDI (GAJAPATI)
Phone/Fax: 06815-223249, e-mail: eepkhemundieicwr.od@gov.in
Tender Call Notice No. EE-PKID-01/2022-22

1. Type of Work	: Civil Construction work
2. Form of Contract	: Percentage Rate
3. Period of Completion	: 06 (Six) to 08 (Eight) Calendar Months

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Bid Amount Rs. in lakhs	Availability & submission of Bids online
Executive Engineer, Paralakhemundi Irrigation Division	PKID-01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08,09,10 & 11 2021-22 (Total 11 (Eleven) Nos. of work)	Varies from Rs.17.82 lakhs to 43.67 lakhs	23.04.2021 at 10.00 A.M. to 03.05.2021, 5.00 PM

Date of opening of the Technical & Financial Bid: 04.05.2021 at 11.00 A.M. Further details can be seen from the Govt. website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in; Date of Lottery - 11.05.2021 at 11.00 A.M.
Sd./- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PARALAKHEMUNDI IRRIGATION DIVISION, PARALAKHEMUNDI
OIPR-32358/11/0001/2122

NOTICE

It is for information of all concerned that the Registered Sale Deed No. 3767 executed on Dt.03.05.2007 at SRO, Khandagiri executed by Ajit Kumar Mangaraj as Power of Attorney Holder of (1) Manjulata Mohanty, (2) Prahallad Mohanty and (3) Chaturbhuj Mohanty in favour of Amiya Kumar Sahoo was in custody of AXIS Bank pursuant to the Deed of equitable mortgage executed by Amiya Kumar Sahoo in favour of AXIS Bank Ltd. Inadvertently, the said sale deed has been misplaced/lost from the custody of the Bank. In spite of due diligence, I could not trace the same. Therefore, take notice that if anybody gets it kindly return back the same to the undersigned. If it is found to be misused, penal action will be taken against the miscreants and AXIS Bank will not be responsible for the same.

Bhubaneswar
Dt.:20.04.2021

Area Operation Manager
Bhubaneswar Loan Centre
AXIS Bank Ltd., Bhubaneswar
Cell: 7541806901

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

We Sri Niranjan Jena & Sri Nirmal Chandra Jena aged about 60 years and 54 years respectively, At- Kuansarpur, Po.- Debidwar, Ps/Dist.- Jajpur have laminated the Regd. Sale deed No. 266 dt. 23.01.1980. This plot is situated in Jajpur Municipality, Ward No.-13, Area of Ac.0.8dec., We have not created any equitable mortgage / charge with any bank / financial institutions by depositing the sale title deed in original as security for any advance before creating mortgage in SBI Jajpur Town Branch. If any individual Bank or financial institution is holding the said document in original as security for any advance / loan granted, they are requested to inform the State Bank of India, Jajpur Town Branch from which we have availed loan by depositing the title deed within one month from the notice / advertisement relating to the property (described in the schedule of the property) as security for the advance.

Schedule of property: CS Khata No. - 121, CS Plot No. - 492 & 493 in Mouza: Unit No. 6, Gobindajew Nagar, Thana/Tahasil/Dist.- Jajpur.

Sd/- Niranjan Jena & Nirmal Chandra Jena

ODISHA HYDRO POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
OHPC
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
MURAN DAM DIVISION, KHATIGUDA, DIST- NABARANGPUR,
Email : - eemurandamdivision@gmail.com
No. 389 Dated: 16.04.2021

EOI Notice No. 01/2021-22 Dated 16.04.2021
NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)
No. A-47:- Expression of Interest in two part bid in duplicate are invited from the intending Contractors/ Bidder/ Firms having sufficient experience in similar nature of work as well as having valid PAN, GST Registration certificate, EPF registration certificate, Firm registration certificate for the "Expression of Interest for Inspection of water conductor System including lifting of loose stones, debris & foreign materials with videography and NDT test of structures (Head Race Tunnel, Surge tank & Pressure tunnel) at Mahulpatna, UIHEP, Khatiguda"
The EOI should reach this office of the undersigned on or before 16:00 Hrs. of Dated:04.05.2021 and technical Bid will be opened on same day at 16:30 Hrs. For details of EOI Terms & Conditions, Eligibility criteria and downloading please visit our website www.ohpcld.com.

Executive Engineer
Muran Dam Division
OIPR-32211/11/0001/2122

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

RUSSIA-US RAPPROCHEMENT?



It seems that Russia is trying to avert the tough, new sanctions that the Biden administration is threatening in retaliation for Russia's election meddling, hacking attacks and more

Biden administration is threatening in retaliation for Russia's election meddling, hacking attacks and more. Last week, the US president signed an order to introduce sanctions against Russia. In particular, the US prohibits its companies from buying Russian state bonds issued by the Central Bank, National Wealth Fund or the Finance Ministry after June 14, 2021. Washington also imposed sanctions against 16 organisations and 16 individuals allegedly involved in meddling in US elections. The sanctions also covered eight people and companies, connected to Crimea, including members of the regional government. This game of sanctions and offer to hold a summit simultaneously is perplexing for Moscow and the international community, both.

Putin's intentions may become clearer next week when he's due to make his annual "state of the nation" address, a podium he's often used for sabre-rattling against the West. But the call from Biden may have given him chance to pull back from this particular fight. The US has also decided to cancel sending two US warships to the Black Sea, a move which is seen as being conciliatory.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said that Moscow will act out of the principle of reciprocity towards Washington and its sanctions. According to Peskov, the new sanctions will not facilitate the summit proposed by Biden.

In the end a lot depends on how the two leaders interact at the summit and what more conciliatory and mollifying steps are taken by the two to de-escalate the regional tension and work towards normalising the bilateral relationship. However, chances of a rapprochement seem too far-fetched, as each rival wants to lead the new world order.

The writer is a political commentator based in New Delhi.

IAN S

The recent announcement by White House sources that US President Joe Biden has proposed that he and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin hold a summit in a third country in the coming months, has increased hopes of a rapprochement between the two old rivals.

This personal invitation was extended during a telephonic conversation between the two leaders trying to address deep differences, including Russia's recent troop build-up near Ukraine.

Biden during the call with Putin stressed his commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while expressing concern over a Russian troop build-up on Ukraine's borders.

The White House said Biden also made clear that the US would defend its national interests in response to Russian actions including "cyber intrusions and election interference". The call took place as Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Brussels to meet Ukrainian officials and NATO allies.

NATO has called on Russia to end the military build-up. The Russian move has sparked concerns of a major escalation in the conflict between the two countries, which has simmered since the Kremlin invaded it in 2014.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin confirmed the two leaders discussed a possible summit, saying Biden "expressed interest in normalising the state of affairs on the bilateral track."

The Russian build-up along Ukraine has been impossible to be ignored by the international community. In response there were reports of two US warships reportedly heading for the Black Sea and Russia's Foreign Ministry warning them off "for their own good". As the hostile rhetoric and military moves around Ukraine have intensified, Western politicians have begun fearing an open invasion and urging Putin to "de-escalate".

In response Russia has refused to oblige. The Russian Defence Ministry insisted that its moves were in response to "threatening" NATO exercises in Europe.

However, a rational analysis of the recent and past events leads one to surmise that it is all a part of the political brinkmanship, by both the Americans and the Russian establishment. And in this game Biden has blinked first, giving advantage to Putin.

The invitation for a summit contrasts to Biden's earlier actions and statements and his overall political ideology, which observers describe as being built on the principles of American pre-eminence. This invitation comes just weeks after Biden agreed with an interviewer that the Russian leader was "a killer". A comment which sparked international concern.

Biden's new move has started a new debate, whether it is disaster prevention or a mistaken concession. But, in reality, now the risk of a major military action by Russia has certainly waned. Russia's recent ostentatious troop movement always looked like grandstanding by a country that has given up trying to be liked by and now wants the West to fear it instead.

When Putin sent troops and

hardware into eastern Ukraine seven years ago, those were secret operations that are still denied to this day. However, this time, Russia seems more intent on sending signals rather than soldiers.

Another angle to the whole issue is the recent reinforcements in eastern Ukraine by Kiev government and the recent Russian actions are seen to avert any move to retake areas controlled by Russian-backed militants, by Kiev.

One senior Kremlin official has warned that such military action would be "the beginning of the end of Ukraine", whose government was children "playing with matches". Moreover, Russia has another excuse to intervene in the region: some half a million people in the self-proclaimed "People's Republics" of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine have been issued with Russian passports since fighting broke out in 2014. And it would be plausible for Russia to come to their rescue if these 'republics' faced any threat.

However, one is led to infer that the real aim of troop amassing on the Ukrainian border is not the real intention. Instead the goal is somewhat different. It seems that Russia is trying to avert the tough, new sanctions that the



Asad Mirza

THE RUSSIAN BUILD-UP ALONG UKRAINE HAS BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TO BE IGNORED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

A requiem for the stiff upper lip

The late Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and husband to the queen, was long celebrated (or parodied) for his distinctive personality. Before his death on April 9, at the age of 99, he was the United Kingdom's grand, grumpy, and eccentric uncle — a man totally out of step with the modern world.

To take just one of many notorious examples, Philip couldn't understand why servicemen today would need therapy. Back in World War II, he observed, "We didn't have counsellors rushing around every time somebody let off a gun, asking 'Are you all right? Are you sure you don't have a ghastly problem?' You just got on with it."

If Philip's passing means that we also will be burying the iconic image of the British "stiff upper lip," should we mourn that loss as well? There was a time when this characteristically British display of stoic resolve was widely admired. When the UK was the world's leading power, it seemed to owe its position to a "mustn't grumble" approach to life. And, of course, this attitude was on full display when Britain resisted a Nazi onslaught that had already swept over its European neighbours.

In March 1912, the explorer Captain Lawrence Oates joined a British Antarctic expedition seeking to be first to the South Pole. The mission failed, and Oates, suffering from gangrene and frost-

bite, begged his companions to leave him and save themselves. When they refused, he casually said, "I am just going outside and may be some time." He never returned to the group's tent, but his last words lived on, stiffening upper lips throughout the realm.

It is impossible to imagine Oates' generation venting about anything with Oprah Winfrey. But Philip's grandson, Prince Harry recently did precisely that. Has the UK lost its claim to being the strong, silent type? Psychologists have established that different national cultures do indeed exhibit and inculcate distinct attitudes and ways of life. Most Nordic European, Anglo, and Latin American countries have been found to have highly "indulgent" cultures (preferring leisure and a higher quality of life), whereas East Asian countries tend to place less value on leisure and more on a strong work ethic.

In recent cross-country comparisons based on psychological tests, Vietnamese, Singaporeans, Japanese, and South Koreans demonstrate a high propensity to exercise restraint relative to Britons and Americans. From these findings, one can infer that the first countries to industrialise and deliver affluence and comfort to their populations also may be the first to succumb to decadence, abandoning the ethic that drove their initial growth. In the past, physical endurance, determination, and for-

titude were the defining characteristics of those who succeeded in staking a claim on the world. But today, success comes to those who can promote their brand or schmooze a venture capitalist. Traditional "masculine" attitudes are no longer revered, and often are outright scorned (sometimes for very good reasons). Being likable — something to which Philip certainly never aspired — has become the sine qua non of career success.

Even if today's social tensions and conflicts are different than in the past, might Philip's cool, flappable still have something to recommend it? In psychological parlance, Philip's character type was that of a "repressor": he was good at suppressing any negativity within himself, and convincing others that he was in peak form. The opposite personality type is often associated with a trait that is very much in vogue: "emotional intelligence" (EI), the ability to discern how others truly feel.

And yet, recent research finds that repressors still come out with the highest EI scores on academic psychological tests, implying that those who show no emotion may be exerting more skill or psychological effort than is commonly realised. Beneath their placid brows lies a constant weighing of whether and when it is appropriate to vent one's spleen.

Of course, while hiding one's true mental state from others can

lead to more successful social interactions, the effort not to burden others with one's emotional baggage can of course be taken to extremes. The danger for repressors is that they can delude themselves about how they really feel. While "emoters" pursue psychological assistance from others early and often, repressors do so too late, if ever. Hence, while South Korea ranks higher than the UK on personal restraint, it also scores much higher in suicides as a proportion of its population. And despite its superior handling of the pandemic, South Korea's pandemic-induced increase in suicides and self-harm has been much higher than that of Western countries that failed to control the virus.

The key, as in most things, is to strike the right balance. In his consummate display of emotional moderation, Philip perhaps had something to teach us after all. Upon getting stuck in an elevator at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, he is reported to have quipped that "this could only happen in a technical college."

Now that he is gone, we should reserve a place for his style of irascible wit. We may find it useful in our next crisis.

Raj Persaud is a psychiatrist. Adrian Furnham is a professor at the Norwegian Business School.

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Do not be eager for things above.

SRI AUROBINDO



Vaccine Transparency

The Centre April 19 decided to allow vaccination against Covid-19 for all above 18 years of age from May 1 on a day when the country reported a new record high of 2.73 lakh infections. In "a liberalised and accelerated Phase 3 strategy of Covid-19 vaccination," vaccine manufacturers will supply 50 per cent of their monthly doses to the central government and will be free to supply the remaining 50 per cent doses to the states and in the open market at a pre-declared price. It may be noted that on April 17 Orissa Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had written to PM Narendra Modi urging him to make vaccines available to all in the open market.

Transparency is what was lacking so far in the government's vaccine policy. The country is reeling under the second wave of the pandemic which has assumed more devastating proportions than the first wave a year back. There are already complaints about partisan distribution of the two vaccines — Covaxin produced by Bharat Biotech and the Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield by Serum Institute of India. Reports of attempts of fraudulent sale and hoarding for black-marketing are surfacing from some parts of the country. In other words, cynical and inhuman business is seemingly being made in the name of vaccination programme when hundreds of thousands are getting infected and thousands are dying.

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal have written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 18 urging him to take immediate steps to make prompt and above board distribution of vaccine doses and other essential components of treatment to virus-hit people. It may be a coincidence that the three letters were sent on the same day, but they only underscore the gravity of the problem. Manmohan has urged Modi to come clean on the orders placed for vaccine doses and the strategy for their distribution. Mamata Banerjee sought the Centre's permission to purchase vaccine doses directly with state funds and launch a massive free vaccination campaign in the state covering the entire population.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has asked for beds and oxygen cylinders for patients requesting the PM that 7,000 out of 10,000 beds in Delhi's central government hospitals be reserved for Covid patients.

Distress calls are being sent to the Centre from different states of the country, including the worst-hit Maharashtra, complaining of severe shortage of oxygen. In a horribly limited response, the Centre announced on April 18 that the Railways will run 'Oxygen Express' to transport liquid medical oxygen and oxygen cylinders to different places. This shows the total lack of concern of the Central government during this grave crisis.

The Union Health Ministry has so far sought to obfuscate the second wave crisis by dishing out figures which hardly tell the real story of the alarming situation though it admitted that the daily positivity rate of Covid-19 in the country has doubled from 8 per cent to 16.69 per cent in the past 12 days. It takes pride in the fact that India took "only 92 days" to reach the mark of 12-crore vaccinations, the fastest country to do so, followed by the US which took 97 days and China which took 108 days. The cumulative number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the country has crossed 12 crore as part of the world's largest vaccination drive, the ministry claimed. Fact remains the country has a population of 135 crore which means not even 10 per cent have been covered by the vaccination drive.

Ever since vaccines were rolled out in the country, the Centre decided to monopolise procurement and distribution of the two vaccines seemingly to claim for itself all the credit for fighting the pandemic.

Meanwhile, reports of a sinister game being played out over production, supply and sale of the vaccines are surfacing. According to a report, the vaccine supply by the Serum Institute of India (SII) has been kept a secret by the Centre for a clause the SII agreed to while negotiating its manufacturing deal with Oxford-AstraZeneca. Under the purported agreement, SII has to sell a large number of doses to other countries for a profit. For this reason, it is learnt to have been producing more vaccines for foreign markets than for the people in the country. The Delhi High Court last month directed the Centre and the vaccine producers to file an affidavit giving the production details, while upbraiding the government for not ensuring the two companies fully utilised their production capacity.

It reflects poorly on the government that only after the spike in cases in the second wave, it has constituted Empowered Group-II and recommended to prohibit oxygen supply for industrial use. Likewise, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan announced on April 18 that there would be a 10 fold increase in the production of Covaxin by September while the manufacture of Remdesivir will be doubled to 74.1 lakh each month by May.

The government seems to have wasted the whole of 2020, one whole year, by not preparing the country and the people to face the present situation.

WISDOM CORNER

Progress lies not in enhancing what is, but in advancing toward what will be.

KAHLIL GIBRAN

Better remain silent, better not even think, if you are not prepared to act.

ANNIE BESANT

Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.

STEVE JOBS

WORDSWORTH

■ Mooncalf

It would indeed be reasonable to assume that the presence of calf here necessarily means that the word came out of animal husbandry. But by the time that mooncalf first appeared, in the 1550s, calf was being applied humorously to human beings, sometimes as a term of endearment, but also sometimes to somebody who was stupid, meek or inoffensive. The earliest recorded example of mooncalf was in a thesaurus of 1565, in which the term was explicitly applied to a woman. The reference here was to a false pregnancy, to a growth in the womb that was not a foetus. The idea was that it had been created under the baleful influence of the moon. Later — by Shakespeare's day — it could refer to a misshapen birth or a child with a congenital defect. But the figurative sense of calf, and the idea of somebody who is under the influence of the moon (later generations would talk about somebody being moonstruck) influenced mooncalf to the point where it shifted its sense to mean either a person who wasted time idly daydreaming (who mooned about in an absentminded way), or who was incorrigibly foolish.

LOL

Tour near glaciers

Swiss mountain guides who always do the same trails can get tired answering the same questions over and over. One time an English tourist was giving his guide an especially hard time with silly questions. They were walking through a mountain valley that was strewn with rocks, and the traveller asked,



"How did these rocks get here?"
"Sir," said the guide, "they were brought down by a glacier."
The tourist peered up the mountain and said, "But I don't see any glacier."
"Oh, really?" said the guide. "I guess it has gone back for more rocks."

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

OrissaPOST

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Nuke & North Korea

Sir, Recently, US President Joe Biden answered in the affirmative when asked whether North Korea was high on his global diplomatic list. No one would dispute the overriding importance of de-nuclearisation for fostering peace in northeast Asia. Kim Jong-un, the supreme leader of North Korea cannot be expected to bow to anybody's diktat. Even if de-nuclearisation happens, it is going to be long drawn. If Biden takes a step forward to meet with the US' bugbear, then he needs to be complimented because he looks determined to strike a different note than his predecessors. Kim is wary of the US because of Washington's closeness to Seoul. But the greatest strength of North Korea is undoubtedly China. Beijing is the big brother of Pyongyang for all practical purposes. Not that Kim is ever ready to dance to Xi Jinping's tune. Nowhere near that, but considering the sanctions imposed against North Korea by other nations, Kim may not mind the seemingly unpleasant task of leaning on Jimping's shoulder. It is true that Beijing had not opposed sanctions on Pyongyang but, sometimes, international relations warrant two friendly countries taking a joint course in interpersonal equations notwithstanding the global stance. Meanwhile, in the battle for the world "strongman" status, both the US and China have preferred to take sides without making it too obvious. Jimping's shrewd diplomatic brain knows his country can at least hope to count on the US in embarrassing scenarios with regard to contentious issues. Consequently, the big question is whether China can afford to placate North Korea to totally remove nuclear weapons from the latter's stables at a point in time. An astute planning, coupled with respect for the opposite number, is what one expected of Biden whenever he meets Kim. It is incumbent upon Biden not to make the same mistake of his predecessors - taking Kim lightly.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA (MAHARASHTRA)

Travel safely

Sir, The decision to impose Rs 500 fine from persons not wearing face masks on Railway premises, including trains is a step in the right direction. Railways is taking various measures to control the spread of COVID 19. To control spitting and acts of similar nature due to any person not wearing masks is important to avoid creation of unhygienic conditions which may cause danger to public health. Citizens need to follow all safety guidelines while travelling on trains.

Amit Singh Kushwaha, SATNA (MP)

HC orders lockdown in 5 cities; Yogi gov't refuses

The court slammed the state government for "not planning" for a second wave of the pandemic, and criticised the State Election Commission for holding the panchayat elections at this time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj, April 19: Amid a surge in coronavirus cases, the Allahabad High Court Monday directed the Uttar Pradesh government to impose strict restrictions including closing of malls, shopping complexes and restaurants till April 26 in five cities, but stopped short of calling it a "complete lockdown".

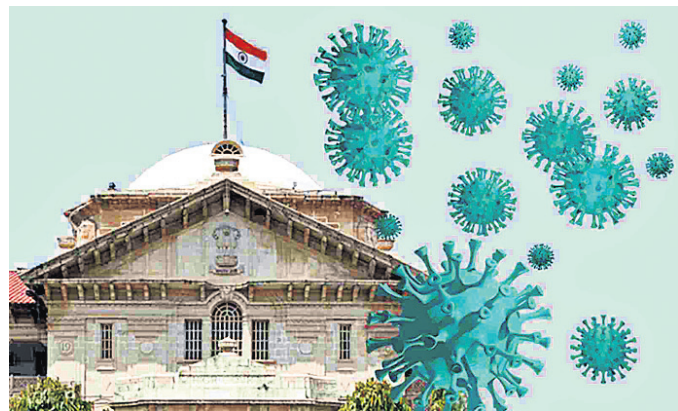
Responding to the order, UP Additional Chief Secretary, Information, Navneet Sehgal said strict curbs are necessary to control the spread of the virus and that the government has taken several steps in that direction.

However, he said, alongside saving lives, protecting livelihoods is also important.

"Therefore, there will be no complete lockdown in the cities for now. People are automatically closing many places," he said.

The court also slammed the state government for "not planning" for a second wave of the pandemic, and criticised the State Election Commission for holding the panchayat elections at this time and "exposing" poll officials to the threat of virus. Passing restrictions for Allahabad, Lucknow, Varanasi, Kanpur Nagar and Gorakhpur cities, the two-judge bench comprising justices Siddhartha Varma and Ajit Kumar said these curbs are "nowhere close to a complete lockdown".

The court said in its order, "If we have not imposed a lockdown it does not mean that we do not believe in it. We are still of the view that if we want to break the chain a lockdown for a duration of at least



two weeks is a must."

"It is a shame that while the Government knew of the magnitude of the second wave it never planned things in advance," observed the two-judge bench. It also directed the government to "consider imposition of a complete lockdown in the entire state for at least a period of two weeks".

"This would not only break the chain of the spread of the virus but would also give respite to health workers," it observed.

Reacting to the order, the UP government said there will be no "complete lockdown" in the cities for now. The court also expressed displeasure over the way government and the State Election Commission "proceeded to hold (panchayat) elections forcing teachers and other government staff to perform duties exposing themselves to the threat of pandemic".

"Further the photographs of the various places where elections were held definitely show that no social distancing was main-

tained. Also, we find that on many occasions in various political rallies masks were never worn by people," it observed.

Directing authorities to take actions against erring organisers of political events, it asked them to place an action taken report by the next date of hearing April 26.

During the course of hearing on a PIL on the condition of quarantine centres in the state and treatment of coronavirus patients, the court observed, "One would only laugh at us that we have enough to spend on elections and very little to spend on public health...One cannot even imagine what will happen if only 10% of the city population gets infected and needs medical help in hospitals. How the government will manage with the presently existing infrastructure is anybody's guess."

The court said if people are restrained from going outside their homes for a week in the first instance, the current chain of spread of COVID infection can be broken.

TN districts reel under vax crunch

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, April 19: Tamil Nadu Health Minister C Vijayabaskar has said there is a stock of 8.8 lakh corona vaccine doses and several districts in the state have reported a shortage of vaccines even as Covid-19 cases witness resurgence.

Tamil Nadu Monday reported yet another single-day high of COVID-19 cases, in excess of 10,000 for the second day in a row, while 44 deaths pushed the fatalities to 13,157. Coimbatore reported 727 fresh Covid-19 cases in a single day Sunday but the number of people who took the vaccine dropped from

7,850 on Saturday to 918 Sunday.

While the Coimbatore Corporation officials maintained that 9,550 Covid vaccine jabs were available, residents complained that the vaccines were in short supply. In Avinashi, Udumalpet and Palladam, people had to return owing to the non-availability of the vaccine jabs.

Jagdish Kumar, Deputy Director of Health services, Tiruppur, speaking to IANS said, "In a day or two we will get adequate number of vaccines and the issue will be sorted out."

In Madurai and Nagapattinam, the vaccination camps which were



to be held Sunday were cancelled following shortage of vaccines. In Trichy district, the state Health department allocated 2,000 doses of Covaxin to various vaccination camps in the district. However, Madurai was the worst-hit district in terms of vaccines in short supply. There were complaints in Chennai that private hospitals have sent back people without being vaccinated though they had registered on the CoWIN portal for taking the vaccine jab. However, state health authorities and corporation officials have put up a brave front saying that vaccines are available in sufficient numbers. G Prakash, Chennai

Corporation Commissioner, speaking to IANS said, "There is no such shortage of vaccines in Chennai. We are not for wasting the vaccine and a vial is opened only if there are 10 people ready to get vaccinated so that there is no wastage."

If a vial is opened, it has to be used within three or four hours or it would be wasted.

Tamil Nadu Health minister, C Vijayabaskar, speaking to IANS said, We have adequate stock of vaccines and are looking into the issues facing certain districts of Tamil Nadu. However, I can assure that there is no major issues as far as vaccines are concerned.

STALIN SEEKS SUPPLY OF 20L VAX DOSES

CHENNAI: DMK president M K Stalin has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting him to dispatch 20 lakh Covid vaccine doses to Tamil Nadu. In his letter to the PM Sunday, Stalin said that there has to be a "universal vaccination" and added that Tamil Nadu is witnessing a high rate of Covid surge and that inoculation is the only solution to put a break to the pandemic. He said that in the last seven days the number of Covid positive cases and fatalities have almost doubled. Stalin said that the PM had directed the concerned ministries to allocate Covaxin and Covishield vaccines in proportion to the population of Tamil Nadu in addition to the immediate need of 20 lakh doses of vaccine.

PANCHAYAT POLLS



Voters in queue to cast their vote during the second phase of Uttar Pradesh Gram Panchayat election, amid the rise in Covid-19 cases across the country, in Varanasi, Monday

NSA against Remdesivir black-marketeers: Yogi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 19: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Monday directed officials to check black marketing of remdesivir and other COVID-19 medicines, and invoke the stringent National Security Act (NSA) against those found guilty.

During a meeting to review the COVID-19 situation in the state, Adityanath said one lakh more vials of remdesivir have been ordered and over 30,000 will be brought to the state in the next two to three days. The chief minister has directed to stop black marketing of remdesivir and other medicines, and invoke the NSA and the Gangsters Act. Also, seize their properties to set an example for those involved in such acts, Additional Chief Secretary, Information, Navneet Sehgal told reporters. Adityanath has also di-



rected that all the units producing oxygen should supply it for medical use and stop the supply for industrial purposes keeping in mind the increase in demand.

He said there is adequate oxygen availability in the state and added

that oxygen units should be given 24-hour power supply so that there is no hindrance in the production.

The chief minister has also asked officials to double the number of beds in districts having a large number of COVID-19 cases.

Special counters for disabled: HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 19: The Madras High Court Monday directed the Tamil Nadu government to establish special counters exclusively for the disabled at all the vaccination centres in the State.

Immediate steps shall be taken by the state to ensure the special counters are disabled-friendly, the first bench of Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy said.

The bench was disposing of a PIL from Meenakashi Balasubramanian, co-founder of Equals Center for Promotion of Social Justice.

The petition prayed for a direction to the Union Health Ministry and the state unit to include persons with disability and their caregivers as a priority group for administering Covid-19 vaccines.

Earlier, the government told the bench that the Union gov-

ernment has not evinced any interest in giving priority to the differently abled and did not respond to its plea.

Priority would be given to the disabled, if the court passes an order to this effect, it said, adding the special counters will be provided exclusively to the disabled at all the Covid-19 vaccination centers in the state.

Recording the submissions, the bench gave the direction and disposed of the PIL.

30% LUCKNOW HEALTH WORKERS COVID POSITIVE



AGENCIES

Lucknow, April 19: More than 30 per cent of the health workers in Lucknow have tested positive for Covid. These include doctors, nurses, technicians, ward boys and administrative officials at major Covid hospitals.

With this, the Covid services at various hospitals have been adversely affected.

A senior doctor at the King George's Medical University, where 40 doctors had tested positive in a day, said, The disease is so infectious that every time a team goes on 14-day Covid duty, nearly one-fourth of them return with the infection. He said that while many of them are under home isolation, some with comorbidities have been admitted to hospital.

At Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences, at least 600 out of 2,000 staff members are Covid-positive. Around 30 per cent of the staff is infected. The non-Covid teams are also getting infected while identifying Covid patients, said RMLIMS spokesperson Dr Shrikesh Singh.

He further said, "We have almost completely vaccinated our staff and are asking them to use protective gear while working."

A similar situation prevails in the Balrampur Hospital where, in the past 72 hours, at least 24 staff members, including 15 doctors, have tested positive.

The testing unit has been shut for 48 hours for sanitization, said Dr V K Pandey, nodal officer for Covid facility at Balrampur Hospital. What makes the situation worse is the fact that the inflow of patients has increased manifold while the workforce has gone down.

184 patents filed by IIT Madras in 2020

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, April 19: Faculty, researchers and students at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM) have filed for 184 patents during 2020.

Despite the Covid-19 related lockdown last year, the number of patents filing was 184 (Indian 119, International 65), a shade less than the 190 filings (Indian 128, International 62) made the previous year.

According to IITM, the filings in 2020 include nine patents related to Covid-19 inventions ranging from 'Systems and methods for detection of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2' and 'A standalone, portable single-use and wireless ventilator system' besides 'A system for non-invasive calibration-free blood pressure measurement' and 'Smart and Sustainable devices for infectious Mask and PPE waste treatment'. "Besides medical and healthcare, several patents were also filed in other cutting-edge areas such as 5G, telecommunications, sensors and instrumentation, among others," the IITM said.

The institute also said there has been a steady increase in filing of international patents.



Despite the Covid-19 related lockdown last year, the number of patents filing was 184, a shade less than the 190 filings made in the previous year

"From 22 in the calendar year 2017, the total number of international patents has almost tripled in just four years, reaching 65 during 2020," the IITM said.

The institute said it facilitates online filing (e-filing) of Provisional application at Indian patent office and is also equipped to perform in-house management of patent maintenance and filing of working statements of patents. The institute has also empanelled reputed intellectual property (IP) firms for patent application filings, prosecutions of patent application, maintenance (Foreign) and providing IP activities-related support.

DRDO hospital to have non-stop oxygen supply

This is the first time that the self-sustainable oxygen generation technology for fighter pilots would be used in makeshift hospitals in UP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 19: A makeshift hospital being set up by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) in Lucknow is likely to have their own oxygen supply with the help of a technology that is used in the light combat aircraft (LCA) Tejas fighter jets.

This is the first time that the self-sustainable oxygen generation technology for fighter pilots would be used in makeshift hospitals in Uttar Pradesh.

Union Defence Minister and Lucknow MP, Rajnath Singh, had sent a team of DRDO officials to the state capital last week to start the process for setting up of hospitals at Haj House and Golden Blossoms resort.

The makeshift hospital is being



set up at Avadh Shilpgram. The hospitals that are likely to get ready by next week would have nearly 250-300 beds each and would be run by the doctors, nurses and support staff of Armed Forces Medical Services.

According to sources, DRDO has developed a medical oxygen plant as a spin-off technology of the 'On board oxygen generation system' (OBOGS) of the LCA Tejas.

A senior official, who spoke on

condition of anonymity, said This technology can provide medical grade oxygen round-the-clock at a high flow rate catering to at least 50 ventilator ICU beds. This technology will be used to activate oxygen plants at Covid hospitals.

The technology, which has been developed by DRDO's Defence Electromedical and Bio-Engineering Laboratory (DEBEL), breaks down molecular components of the atmospheric air to provide continu-

ous oxygen to the pilot within the aircraft for long duration and in high altitude flights.

Once set up, the technology would help in continuous supply of oxygen to critical Covid patients, refilling of oxygen cylinders and eradicating logistical problems related to cylinder transportation from one point to another, thereby reducing the increasing burden on the demand for oxygen in Covid hospitals.



The production of Remdesivir is adequate. We have banned export as precautionary but in panic people are buying in bulk which is leading to a shortage

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

A BIG WIN

The 61st Cavalry of the Indian Army bagged eight gold, six silver and 12 bronze medals at the recently concluded Delhi Horse Show, a defence spokesman said Monday



of the day quote

When people across the country are pleading for making available Remdesivir and struggling for each vial, at this moment one BJP leader (Devendra Fadnis) who has been on an important post is hoarding the injection which is a crime against humanity



PRIVANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

There are equal number of COVID-19 cases in Rajasthan and Gujarat. In Gujarat, 1,200 metric tonne oxygen is being supplied, whereas Rajasthan is getting only 124 metric tonne



RAGHU SHARMA | RAJASTHAN HEALTH MINISTER

There is a tremendous shortage of coronavirus vaccines and oxygen in various hospitals in different states of the country. Seeing this, the Centre is requested to ensure their supply on a priority basis. If needed, these should be imported



MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

Mamata urges EC to curtail poll schedule

Considering the steep rise of Covid cases in the city Mamata Banerjee has cancelled all 'big rallies' in Kolkata and has slashed the timing of the rallies in the districts



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chakulia/Hemtabad/Kaliaganj, April 19: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday urged the Election Commission to re-consider its decision to stick to the original poll schedule, as she stressed that wrapping up the last three phases of polls on a single day or at the most two days would check the spread of COVID-19 to some extent.

Indicating that the EC may have decided against clubbing the remaining phases at the behest of the BJP, Banerjee, who addressed three rallies during the day in Uttar Dinajpur district, requested the poll panel to prioritise public health.

"With folded hands, I request the EC to hold the next three phases of polls on a single day. If not one, conduct it in two days and save one day. Please don't take your decision based on what the BJP says. Please ensure that you protect public health by curtailing the poll

schedule, even if it is by one day," the TMC supremo said at her rally in Chakulia. Banerjee, who had in the past, too, made similar appeals to the EC, claimed that the poll panel was ignoring her pleas as it seeks to "satisfy the BJP, which is not in favour of truncating the election schedule".

"You (EC) are stretching the electoral process forcefully to satisfy the BJP. As the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) is slated to address meetings April 23, you are sticking to the original schedule. You are not bothered about people's well being," she alleged during her address in Hemtabad. Iterating that the BJP was responsible for the spike in COVID-19 cases in Bengal, "where the situation was largely under control", Banerjee said, "Modi and Amit Shah brought in thousands of outsiders with them for poll campaigns. They checked into hotels and guest houses and left after contaminating those places."

"The situation here, however, is not as alarming as in places like

Delhi, UP or Gujarat. In Delhi, lockdown has been imposed. In UP, walls have been erected to hide bodies from view. In Bengal, we have to be alert," she said.

The CM further said that she and other leaders of her party would not hold any rally in congested areas. Banerjee lambasted the Narendra Modi government for "not taking adequate measures over the past six months to avert vaccine crisis".

The TMC boss, while addressing people in Kaliyaganj, justified her decision to skip the chief ministers video conference with Modi. "I have attended 10 meetings convened by the PM on Covid-19. This time, I skipped the meeting. So what? Did anything fruitful come out of my earlier meetings with the PM? In the last meeting that I attended, I had urged him to help us provide vaccines free of cost to the people of the state. We are yet to get his reply."

Earlier that day, an 18-year-old first-time voter was shot dead by miscreants. The TMC supremo had, on several occasions in the past, claimed that central forces were working under the instructions of "home ministry run by Amit Shah". She had also said that the CAPF personnel were "assaulting voters" in some places, asking them to vote for the BJP.

Meanwhile, the BJP Monday said it has decided against holding any big rally or public meeting, including by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other party leaders, in the ongoing West Bengal assembly poll campaign.

BREAKING COVID NORMS



Devotees on the bank of Ganga River during Chaiti Chhath puja in Patna

PTI PHOTO

RESETTLEMENT OF MIZORAM'S TRIBALS IN TRIPURA BEGINS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agartala, April 19: The resettlement of Reang tribal refugees, sheltered in seven relief camps in northern Tripura after they fled from Mizoram 24 years ago following ethnic strife in the adjoining state, started Monday, more than 15 months after an agreement was signed in Delhi, officials said.

Officials of Tripura government's Revenue and Relief Department said that according to the agreement signed in January last year by the Chief

Secretaries of Mizoram, Tripura, MHA Joint Secretary Satyendra Garg and the representatives of the refugees in presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, around 35,000 tribal refugees from 5,400 families of the Reang tribal community would be resettled in different districts of Tripura.

District officials of North Tripura and Dhalai districts said that in the first batch of around 650 tribals would be rehabilitated in two villages under the two sub-divisions - Ambassa and Longtharai Valley in Dhalai district.

NAVY SEIZES DRUGS WORTH ₹3K CR FROM PAK BOAT



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, April 19: The Indian Navy has busted an international smuggling racket operating through Arabian sea, seizing narcotics worth ₹3,000 crore from a Sri Lankan fishing vessel which originated from Pakistan, a Defence spokesman said here Monday.

Personnel on the Indian Naval Ship "Suvarna", which was on surveillance patrol in the Arabian Sea, also arrested five Sri Lankan nationals on board the vessel, he said. "This is a major catch, not only in terms of the quantity and cost, but also from the perspective of disruption of the illegal narcotics smuggling routes, which emanate from the Makran coast in Pakistan and flow towards the Indian, Maldivian and Sri Lankan destinations," the spokesman said. Navy sources said the fishing vessel was brought to Kochi Monday morning. The crew are being jointly interrogated by officials from various agencies, including the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), at the Southern Naval Command (SNC), sources told PTI. They will be handed over to the NCB for further investigation, they said.

Earlier, the spokesman said INS "Suvarna" encountered the fishing vessel moving around in a suspicious manner in the Arabian sea.

"To investigate the vessel, the ship's team conducted a boarding and search operation, which led to the seizure of more than 300 kg of narcotics substances", he said.

SHORT TAKES

'Free 3-month ration for poor'

Bhopal: In the wake of a surge in COVID-19 cases in Madhya Pradesh and the subsequent curbs, the state government Monday announced to provide free ration to all eligible beneficiaries for the next three months. The government also asked officials to invoke the stringent National Security Act (NSA) against those involved in the black marketing of life-saving drugs. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan made the announcement at a video conferencing meeting with district collectors.

Two die in fire mishap

Patna: Two persons including a child were charred to death in a residential flat of a high rise building in Patna after fire broke out Monday morning. The reason for the outbreak of fire is yet to be ascertained but sources have said that there were some inflammable articles and paints kept in the flat which caught fire. It intensified after an LPG cylinder exploded in the flat. The residential apartment named Sushila Anand Tower is located at RK Puram under Danapur police station.

Manipur postpones board exams

Imphal: Board exams for classes 10 and 12 were postponed in Manipur schools in view of the surge in COVID-19 cases, an official said Monday. Class 12 board exams were scheduled to begin on May 5, while class 10 exams were supposed to start the next day, he said. The exams were postponed considering the seriousness of the ever-increasing positive cases of COVID-19 and the impending threat caused by it, said an order issued by Commissioner (Education-S) T Ranjit Singh.

2 militants killed in J&K

Srinagar: Two unidentified militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, police said. The security forces had launched a cordon and search operation in the Zeipora area of Shopian district after getting information about presence of militants there, a police official said.

National security jeopardised: Rahul



Rahul Gandhi @RahulGandhi-2h
Chinese occupation of Gogra-Hot Springs & Depsang plains is a direct threat to India's strategic interests including the DBO airstrip.

National security massively jeopardised by GOI's wasteful talks.

Our nation deserves better.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 19: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Monday attacked the Centre and said 'India deserved better as national security massively jeopardised by wasteful talks with China'.

He said in a tweet, "Chinese occupation of Gogra, Hot Springs and Depsang Plains is a direct threat to India's strategic interests including the DBO airstrip."

"National security massively jeopardised by GOI's wasteful talks. Our nation deserves better," added Rahul.

Congress Sunday had accused the Narendra Modi government of "surrendering" India's strategic interests to China and "woefully compromising" national security, citing reports that China has refused to pull back its troops from Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang Plains during the last round of Corps

Commander-level talks held April 9. "How does the Modi government plan to ensure the status quo ante as April 2020? After the failure of the military talks with China and compromising our territorial integrity, what plan does the Modi Government have to take back our territory from China? PM Modi must answer," party General Secretary Ajay Maken asked in a statement.

Maken had said that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had told Parliament February 13 that the "remaining friction points, including the strategic Depsang Plains, would be taken up for discussion in the next round of military talks", but now China has "gone back on its assurances and reportedly asserted that 'India should be happy of what it has achieved'". This is nothing, but an attack on India's territorial integrity, he said.

'SELF-PRESCRIPTION COULD BE DANGEROUS TO LIVER'

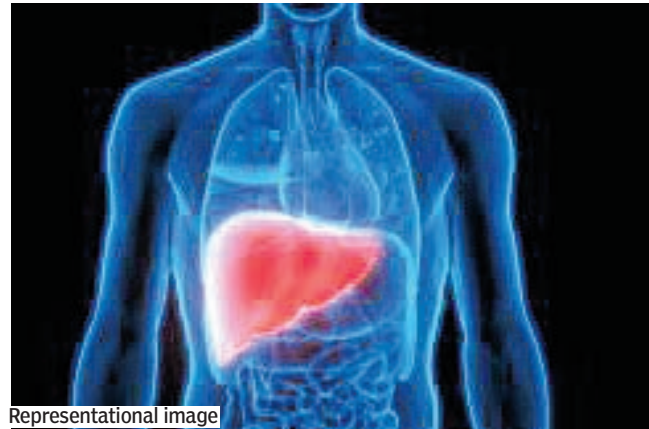
LIVER, ONE OF THE MOST VITAL ORGANS OF THE HUMAN BODY COULD GET IMPACTED DUE TO SELF-ADMINISTERED MEDICATIONS, WARNED DOCTORS ON THE WORLD LIVER DAY APRIL 19

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, April 19: The Covid-19 surge across the country has not just led to a scramble for hospital beds but has also resulted in people opting for self-prescribed treatment models which could prove dangerous.

"Use of self-prescribed antibiotics is a common practice by many individuals, especially in India, to fight ailments like fever, cough, cold, which are also considered common symptoms of Covid-19. However, it is important to note that antibiotics do not work against viruses; and they only work on bacterial infections," said Dr NY Prashanth Chandra, Consultant - Internal Medicine, Gleneagles Global Hospitals.

According to Dr Anusha Karra, Internal Medicine, Western Plains Hospital, Dodge City the US, physicians at hospitals might sometimes use antibiotics to prevent or



Representational image

treat secondary bacterial infections which can be a complication of Covid-19, and that too among severely ill patients.

Dr Anitha Reddy, a gastroenterologist at SLG Hospitals, says even consumption of good foods in excessive quantities is bad and could lead to health complications at most critical times.

Dr Suresh Kumar, Head of Medical Services, Aware Gleneagles Global Hospitals, advised people to reach out to a healthcare provider or available Covid-19 hotline for instructions on symptoms and find out when and where to get a test, stay at home for 14 days away from others and monitor health.

'1 in 2 Indian adults victim of hacking in last 12 months'

More than 27 mn Indian adults experienced identity theft in the past 12 months and 52 % of Indian adults admitted they don't know how to protect themselves from cybercrime, according to the '2021 Norton Cyber Safety Insights Report,' by NortonLifeLock

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 19: More than one in two Indian adults (59 per cent) experienced cybercrime in the last 12 months, as seven in 10 Indian adults (among those surveyed) believed that remote work has made it much easier for hackers and cybercriminals to take advantage of them, a new report revealed Monday.

More than 27 million Indian adults experienced identity theft in the past 12 months and 52 per cent of Indian adults admitted they don't know how to protect themselves from cybercrime, according to the

'2021 Norton Cyber Safety Insights Report,' by NortonLifeLock.

"In a year of lockdowns and restrictions, cybercriminals have not been deterred. More Indian adults fell victim to identity theft in the past 12 months and most are concerned about data privacy," said Ritesh Chopra, Director Sales and Field Marketing, India and SAARC Countries, NortonLifeLock, a consumer security company.

While many Indian consumers (90 per cent) are taking proactive steps to safeguard their data, two in five still feel it is impossible to protect their privacy (42 per cent) "in this age or say they



Representational image

don't know how to do so".

"It is, therefore, crucial for consumers to seek expert advice and take active measures to safeguard their online privacy," Chopra added.

The report, conducted online in partnership with The Harris Poll, surveyed more than 10,000 adults in 10 countries including 1,000 adults in India.

About two-thirds (66 per cent) of Indian adults said that they are more worried than ever before of being a victim of a cybercrime.

While 52 per cent turned to their friends for help, 47 per cent contacted the company that the account was hacked from for help re-

solving the issue.

"Similarly, 63 per cent of Indian adults reported that they feel more vulnerable to cybercrime than they did before the Covid-19 pandemic began," the report said.

Most Indian adults are concerned about data privacy (75 per cent) and want to do more to protect it (77 per cent), it added.

Over two in five Indian consumers (45 per cent) have experienced identity theft, with 14 per cent impacted in the past year alone (up from 10 per cent in 2019), which means over 27 million Indian adults experienced identity theft in the past 12 months.



Why should I not discuss political issues with Pawar saheb? He is such a big political leader. We are in politics. So, discussions were held on political developments

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA MP

MANMOHAN TESTS COVID+ve

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh tested positive for COVID-19 and was admitted to AIIMS with a mild fever Monday afternoon. Singh, 88, has been admitted to the AIIMS trauma centre, which is a dedicated COVID facility, sources said, adding his condition is stable



of the day quote

Let us put up a combined fight against this pandemic. I urge @CMOMaharashtra not to single out states as 'Places of Sensitive Origin' and withdraw the said order in the public interest

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

I am glad to note that the Navy has maintained high levels of operational readiness during these crises and remained in a combat-ready posture, thus ensuring security and stability in our maritime domain

SHRIPAD NAIK | UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

Spoke to my US counterpart Secretary of State @SecBlinken this evening. Conversation covered recent developments in India's immediate and extended neighbourhood. Exchanged views on the UNSC agenda. Also discussed issues pertaining to our health cooperation

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

Encourage patients to get vax: PM to docs

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday called the vaccine as the biggest weapon in the fight against COVID-19 and urged doctors to encourage more and more patients to get the jab.

In a virtual interaction with the country's leading doctors on the pandemic situation and vaccination progress, he also noted that COVID-19 is spreading rapidly in tier-2 and tier-3 cities this time, and asked them to connect with their colleagues working there and give them online consultations to ensure that all protocols are followed correctly. Urging doctors to educate people against "rumours" on COVID treatment and prevention, Modi said it is very important in these difficult times to not become a victim of panic, an official statement said.

For this, Modi said, along with proper treatment, emphasis must also be on counselling of patients admitted in hospitals. He also encouraged doctors to use tele-medicine for the treatment of other diseases, in case there is no emergency. The central government has recently taken many important decisions related to the supply of essential medicines, injections and sufficient availability of oxygen, he said, adding that states have



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with doctors across the country via video conferencing, in New Delhi

been given necessary guidelines about these. Amid a massive surge in coronavirus cases across the country, some chief ministers have complained of a shortage of essentials like oxygen supply and medicines like Remdesivir, and sought the Centre's intervention. Modi said it was due to our doctors' hard work and the nation's strategy that India was able to control the infectious disease, and now that it is facing the second wave, all the doctors and our frontline workers are confronting the pandemic with full force and are saving the lives of millions of people. He also called for accelerating efforts to upgrade resources in smaller cities. The statement said doctors shared their experiences in dealing with the pandemic and congratulated Modi on his leadership in dealing with the crisis. They also spoke about how they are augmenting the health-care infrastructure and reiterated the importance of people wearing a mask & maintaining social distancing. They also stressed the need for maintaining health infrastructure for non-Covid patients and

Older population still more 'vulnerable'

Asserting that the older population continues to remain more vulnerable to coronavirus infection, top medical experts in the government on Monday said over 70 per cent of the patients in both the waves have been above 40 years and there is no difference in deaths among hospitalised patients in the two waves. Addressing the media, ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava said oxygen requirement is higher in the second wave, while ventilator requirement is not higher. Prevalence of shortness of breath was slightly higher in the second wave of COVID-19 but symptoms like sore throat and dry cough were higher in the first wave, he said.

said they have been sensitising patients against improper use of medicines, it said. The meeting was also attended by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, his deputy Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Union Minister of Chemical and Fertilizer D V Sadananda Gowda, his deputy Mansukh Mandaviya, V K Paul Member of NITI Aayog, and senior bureaucrats. Union Fertiliser Minister D V Sadananda Gowda on Monday urged urea manufacturers to set up medical oxygen plants at their premises to ramp up the supply of the gas amid surging cases of COVID-19 in the country. The minister also hailed cooperative major IFFCO for dedicating four of its plants for the production of medical oxygen.

There have been reports of shortage of medical oxygen for COVID-19 patients in different parts of the country in the last few days due to an exponential rise in coronavirus cases. The Centre on Monday had also called a meeting of chief secretaries and senior officials of 10 states and Delhi to discuss the issue of medical oxygen. Gowda in a series of tweets said that the government is taking all measures to ramp up production and availability of medical oxygen.

Legacy issues need to be resolved through talks, says Army Chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: In a veiled reference to the border standoff with China, Army Chief Gen MM Naravane Monday said legacy issues and differences need to be resolved through mutual consent and dialogue, and not by unilateral actions.

In his address at a symposium, Gen MM Naravane, however, noted that there were positive developments with China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) that led to disengagement of troops in Pangong lake areas in eastern Ladakh. The Army Chief also said that the recent comments of Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong "to avoid relapse and jointly safeguard peace and tranquillity in border areas" augurs well for the future of India-China relations.

Talking about regional developments, he referred to the renewed commitment by the armies of India and Pakistan to follow the 2003 ceasefire on the Line of Control (LoC), saying it bodes well for the future.

"We have recently entered into a ceasefire understanding with Pakistan Army in February this year, and since then there has been no exchange of fire on an otherwise active LoC. This bodes well for the

future," he said. "With China too, there have been positive developments along the LAC, an area where both countries have differing perceptions on the alignment of the land borders. This has led to disengagement of troops in eastern Ladakh," he added.

Gen Naravane also mentioned about the 11th round of Corps commander-level talks between the armies of India and China, and hoped to "settle other border" issues through further negotiations.

The military standoff between India and China that erupted on May 5 last at multiple friction points in eastern Ladakh has significantly strained bilateral ties. As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, India and China completed withdrawal of troops and weapons from the North and South banks of Pangong lake in February.

The two sides are now engaged in talks to extend the disengagement process to the remaining friction points.

Talking about new challenges being thrown up by the changing character of war, he said "our own region" is also witnessing that wars are no longer confined to the customary hard core kinetics but being increasingly contested in the ambiguous grey zone.



Italy yet to transfer ₹10cr compensation: SC

New Delhi: The Centre Monday informed the Supreme Court that it is awaiting the receipt of ₹10 crore compensation for the kin of two Indian fishermen killed by Italian Marines off the Kerala coast in February 2012. A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde, at the outset, asked Centre's advocate Rajat Nair, whether the amount has been deposited? Nair responded, "We are awaiting the receipt of money." The bench told Centre's counsel "you were in a hurry last time, but we also know how ministries work." The Centre's counsel submitted before the top court that as soon as the money is received, it will deposit the compensation with the apex court as per the April 9 direction.

LIFE AMID PANDEMIC



Labourers on relaxed mood during weekend lockdown imposed by the state government in Jabalpur

SHORT TAKES

Punjab imposes stricter curbs

Chandigarh: As Covid-19 cases continue to rise rapidly in Punjab, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Monday ordered stricter restrictions beginning Tuesday, including extension of night curfew timings from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m., closure of all bars, cinema halls, gyms, spas, coaching centres with restaurants and hotels to be open only for takeaway and home delivery. Rates for RT-PCR and rapid antigen testing (RAT) by private labs have been reduced to ₹450 and ₹300, respectively, with additional charges for home collection of the samples, in a bid to promote increased testing.

AIIMS to shut OPD services

New Delhi: Amid the surge in Covid-19, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Monday announced it was shutting its physical OPD services from April 22 and postponing routine admissions of patients in view to augment resources for treatment of Covid-19 patients.

Two bar girls raped

Patna: Two bar girls including a minor were allegedly raped by an orchestra organiser in Patna Sunday, an official said. The accused has been arrested. The victims were brought from Chhattisgarh for a dance performance in an orchestra event.

T'gana CM tests Covid positive

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu tested positive for COVID-19 Monday, Chief Secretary Suresh Kumar said.

NIA team meets Mansukh's kin

Mumbai: A team of the NIA Monday met family members of Mansukh Hiran, who was allegedly murdered days after an explosives-laden SUV was found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence in Mumbai, at their residence in Thane, a police official said. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) sleuths reached Hiran's residence at Vikas Palms society after 2 pm and left around 5:30 pm, he said. This is the second time that senior NIA officials have visited Hiran's residence.

DELHI LIQUOR SHOPS WITNESS LONG QUEUES

In the wake of the unabated resurgence of new Covid-19 cases in the national capital, Kejriwal declared a six-day lockdown starting from 10 pm Monday till 6 am April 26

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 19: Long queues were witnessed at Delhi liquor shops Monday after the Delhi government announced a week long lockdown in the national capital due to the rising Covid cases. Social distancing went for a toss as people queued up to get their stock for the week.

Some were seen buying liquor boxes, while some bought only two to three bottles. It looked as if there is no coronavirus in the city. A customer standing in the queue at a liquor store told IANS,



"I will buy the most expensive wine bottle and drink two bottles

for 6 days." Delhi government has announced a week long lockdown till next Monday at 5 a.m. amid unprecedented rise in Covid-19 cases in the state.

Delhi is witnessing record number of cases with over 25,000 cases registered Sunday alone. The positivity rate shot up to 30 per cent, almost one third of the samples turning positive. After this, the Delhi government announced lockdown in the city. Delhi chief minister Kejriwal said, he will use this time to ramp up the health-care facilities to cope up with the rising cases.

'Remdesivir not magic bullet, does not reduce mortality'

AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria said remdesivir should only be given to patients hospitalised with moderate illness



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: Amid a steep spike in COVID-19 cases leading to increased demand for medicines for treating coronavirus, top health experts in the government Monday said antiviral drug remdesivir is "not a magic bullet" and does not reduce mortality.

"Remdesivir is not a magic bullet and this is not a drug that reduces mortality. We may use it as we don't have a very good antiviral drug. It has a limited role and we should be very careful in its usage," he said.

"In major studies, remdesivir was shown to be useful only in those hospitalised patients with falling oxygen saturation and having infiltrates on chest X-ray or CT-scan. It was of no use if given early in mild and asymptomatic

patients and also if administered too late," Dr Guleria said.

NITI Aayog member (Health) V K Paul said that remdesivir is not to be used in home settings and not to be procured from chemist shops. Data from studies so far have shown that remdesivir does not have any effect in reducing the mortality in COVID-19, he said in support of Dr Guleria's remark. "The health ministry in its 'Clinical Management Protocols for COVID-19' has recommended the use of remdesivir on COVID-19 patients in a moderate stage of the illness. The drug has been included as an 'investigational therapy' and recommended only for restricted emergency," Paul said.

Guleria also said studies have shown that plasma therapy has a limited role in COVID-19 treatment and is of not much use. About the drug tocilizumab, he

said the drug is required in less than 2 per cent of COVID-19 patients because it is only for cytokine storm. "It is to be given in the later stage of illness among those who have very high inflammatory markers and whose condition is worsening despite steroids, remdesivir and anti-coagulants." A majority of patients who have a mild COVID-19 or are asymptomatic will improve with just symptomatic treatment," Guleria asserted, adding the one drug that did show any benefit was steroids, but when to administer it is very important.

"Recovery trial showed that steroid has a harmful effect if given in an early stage of the disease before there is a fall in oxygen saturation." As for antiviral drug favipiravir, Guleria said the data for its utility in treating COVID-19 is not very strong. It

has no effect on mortality and there is not much evidence to show that it is useful. It is not recommended for use in the National Clinical Management Protocol for COVID-19, he said. "So, it is important to understand that by giving treatment when it is not required you may be doing more harm. I appeal to everyone to please follow protocols and give treatment in a rational manner," Guleria said.

Paul, over new research findings that COVID-19 spreads through air and not through droplets, said, "It is a dynamic situation for new learning." About precautions to be followed in the backdrop of the emerging information, he said masks play an important role in preventing COVID-19 spread and emphasised the need for good cross ventilation indoors, besides maintaining a physical distance.

First 'Oxygen Express' with 7 empty tankers leaves for Vizag



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 19: The first "Oxygen Express" carrying seven empty tankers left for Visakhapatnam, where they will be loaded with liquid oxygen for transportation to Maharashtra, from near here Monday, the Central Railway (CR) said.

According to a Central Railway release, the Ro-RO (roll-on-roll-off) train with seven empty tankers left for the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant from Kalamboli goods yard, about 40km from here in Navi Mumbai, at 8.05 pm.

The release said at the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, the tankers will be loaded with liquid medical oxygen and brought to Maharashtra, which is facing a shortage of the life-saving gas needed for treatment of critical COVID-19 patients.

"Railways is running its first Oxygen Express in its fight against COVID-19. The Ro-Ro service with 7 empty tankers departed from Kalamboli, Maharashtra for Vizag today. "Oxygen Express will move via a green corridor for loading with Liquid Medical Oxygen," Railway Minister Piyush Goyal tweeted.

The CR's Mumbai Division built a ramp within 24 hours at Kalamboli goods yard to facilitate loading/unloading of tankers in/from flat wagons, the release said. According to sources, Maharashtra Transport Minister Anil Parab was present when the train left for the port city in Andhra Pradesh.

international



We think that enhanced cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations will be an important factor in successfully addressing contemporary challenges and conflicts. Contemporary security challenges are not limited to territorial or political disputes, but transcend physical or political boundaries
S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER, INDIA

CHINA TO ANNOUNCE NAME OF ITS 1ST MARS ROVER
Beijing will announce the name of its first Mars rover on the Space Day of China, which falls April 24, according to authorities Monday. Nanjing, capital city of Jiangsu province, will host the main events



of the day quote

What we're dealing with right now is we see the number of presentations increasing, the demand for veteran support increasing — of course it's a function of the deployments over the last 20 years and that is the challenge that the government is dealing with now and I think we're dealing with it very positively
SCOTT MORRISON | PRIME MINISTER, AUSTRALIA

We think the U.S. Administration knows better than anyone that Iran's actions are within the framework of the nuclear deal and they will be halted when the U.S. Lifts sanctions and we can verify that
SAEED KHATIBZADEH | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN, IRAN

Bangladesh is facing a second wave of the pandemic like other countries of the world, and almost all hospitals in the country are filled with Covid-19 patients as both infections and fatalities are gradually increasing. It is urgent to extend healthcare facilities to treat Covid-19 patients
ZAHID MALEQUE | HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE MINISTER, BANGLADESH

EU sets out Indo-Pacific plan

Led by France, Germany and the Netherlands, which first set out ways to deepen ties with countries such as India, Japan and Australia, the 27-member bloc wants to use the nascent plan to show Beijing that it is against the spread of authoritarianism



REUTERS

Brussels, April 19: The European Union resolved Monday to step up its influence in the Indo-Pacific region, using areas from security to health to protect its interests and counter China's rising power, although the bloc insists its strategy is not against Beijing.
The bloc "considers that the EU should reinforce its strategic focus, presence and actions in the Indo-Pacific ... based on the promotion of democracy, rule of law, human rights and international law," EU foreign ministers said in a statement. Diplomats said the plan was not "anti-China".
The 10-page document will now be followed by a more detailed strategy in September, foreign ministers agreed at a video conference, saying they would seek to work with "like-minded partners" to up-

hold basic rights in the Indo-Pacific region.
The plan could mean a higher EU diplomatic profile on Indo-Pacific issues, more EU personnel and investment in the region and possibly a greater security presence such as dispatching ships through the South China Sea, or putting Europeans on Australian patrols, though all details have yet to be agreed.
While not mentioning China in detail, the language in the EU statement is code for support of the United States under President Joe Biden in his approach to China, amid concern that Beijing is pursuing technological and military modernisation that threatens the West and its trading partners in Asia.
EU diplomats say countries in the Indo-Pacific want the EU to be active in the region to keep trade

open and to ensure they are not left facing a choice between Beijing and Washington, whose relations are turning confrontational.
The EU statement, which follows similar plans by ex-EU member Britain, comes as European attitudes harden against China over its security crackdown in Hong Kong, treatment of Uighur Muslims, and the COVID-19 pandemic, first identified in China.
"The EU will further develop partnerships and strengthen synergies with likeminded partners and relevant organisations in security and defence," the EU statement said.
"This will include responding to challenges to international security, including maritime security."
It is unclear how far the EU is willing to go on security. The bloc is hungry for new trade and sees the Indo-Pacific as offering potential.
It listed a commitment to seek free trade deals with Australia, Indonesia and New Zealand. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has warned of the EU missing out, after China and other Asia-Pacific economies signed what could become the world's largest free trade agreement from 2022.
The EU document also said the bloc wanted to sign an investment treaty with China that both sides agreed in principle late in 2020.

PRAYER & PANDEMIC



Worshippers pray on the first Friday of the holy fasting month of Ramadan, amid the coronavirus pandemic, at Ayasofya-i Kebir Camii or Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey
REUTERS

Boris cancels India visit due to COVID

London, April 19: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has cancelled his planned visit to India next week due to the coronavirus situation in the country, Downing Street said Monday.
Johnson will instead speak to Prime Minister Narendra Modi later this month to launch their plans for the future UK-India partnership, with their physical meeting expected later in the year.
"In the light of the current coronavirus situation, Prime Minister Boris Johnson will not be able to travel to India next week," Downing Street said in a joint statement on behalf of the British and Indian governments.
"Instead, Prime Ministers Modi and Johnson will speak later this month to agree and launch their ambitious plans for the future partnership between the UK and India. They will remain in regular contact beyond this, and look forward to meeting in person later this year," the statement said.
Pressure had been mounting on Johnson to call off the visit amid growing concerns of a new variant of COVID-19 detected in the country. Over the weekend, UK Opposition Labour Party



Egypt train derailment

Cairo, April 19: At least 11 people were killed and 98 others were wounded in a train derailment Sunday in the Delta city of Toukh, north of the Egyptian capital Cairo, the Egyptian Health Ministry said.
A total of 60 ambulances have been sent to the scene and the wounded have been transferred to three public hospitals, the ministry said in a statement.



The accident happened after four carriages of the train, coming from Cairo to the Delta city of Mansoura derailed, the Egyptian Ministry of Transportation said.
President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi has ordered the formation of a committee to present a report about the reasons for the accident. An investigation into the accident is underway with the train driver and his assistant, as well as eight other officials at the Toukh train station, the office of the Public Prosecutor said.

SHORT TAKES

Typhoon terror: 100,000 evacuated

Manila: An approaching typhoon has left at least one person dead, another missing and prompted the evacuation of more than 100,000 people as a precaution in the eastern and central Philippines, although the unusual summer storm is not expected to blow into land, officials said Monday. Typhoon Surigae was about 500 kilometers (310 miles) east of Infanta town in Quezon province Monday afternoon.

UK adds India to 'red list'

London: Britain Monday added India to its COVID-19 travel "red list", which effectively bans all travel from the country and makes 10-day hotel quarantine compulsory for UK residents arriving back to the country. Health Secretary Matt Hancock confirmed the move in the House of Commons as he revealed that 103 cases of the so-called Indian variant had been identified in the UK, of which the "vast majority have links to international travel".

Fire erupts in Table Mountain

Cape Town: South Africa's iconic tourist destination and biodiversity hotspot Table Mountain is on fire, which led to the evacuation of visitors and students of the nearby University of Cape Town, sources said. The fire and rescue service of Cape Town, where Table Mountain is located, was alerted to a vegetation fire above Philip Kgosana Drive, eastern flank of the mountain, at about 8.45 a.m. Sunday and fire crews were immediately dispatched to the scene, the city municipality said.

B'desh extends lockdown

Dhaka: Bangladesh has decided to extend the nationwide lockdown for yet another week to counter the spike in coronavirus infections, an official said Monday. "The restrictions will continue for one more week from Thursday," the government's Chief Information Officer Surodh Kumar Sarker told reporters, referring to a senior officials' meeting that reviewed the latest Covid-19 situation.

UK HUMAN CHALLENGE TRIAL

Adults to be reinfected to study immune response

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 19: Healthy young adults who have previously contracted Covid-19 will be recruited to take part in a new human challenge trial to study how the body's immune system reacts to the deadly coronavirus, for a better understanding to protect against the virus and also for more accurate tests.
The Oxford University led human challenge trial will look at what kind of immune response can stop people from becoming re-infected and also how the immune system reacts second time round.
People aged between 18 and 30 who have previously been naturally infected will be recruited and re-exposed to the virus in a safe, controlled environment and paid around 5,000 pounds to be quarantined for 17 days at a hospital.
"Challenge studies tell us things that other studies cannot because, unlike natural infection, they are tightly controlled. When we re-infect these participants, we will know exactly how their immune system has reacted to the first Covid infection, exactly when the second infection occurs, and exactly how much virus they got," said Helen McShane, Professor of Vaccinology at the Department of Paediatrics, University of Oxford and Chief Investigator

on the study. The study will take place in two phases with different participants in each phase.
The first phase, which will start this month, will establish the lowest dose of virus which approximately 50 per cent of people who have previously been naturally infected can take hold and start replicating but produce little or no symptoms.
In the second phase of the study, expected to start later this year, all participants will be infected with the standardised dose of virus which was established in phase one. Prof McShane said her team would begin with defining very carefully the baseline immune response in the volunteers, before infecting them.
They will then infect them with the dose of virus chosen from the first study and measure how much virus we can detect after infection. It will also measure the immune response at several time points after infection to understand what immune response the virus generates.
"A challenge study allows us to make these measurements very precisely because we know exactly when someone is infected. The information from this work will allow us to design better vaccines and treatments, and also to understand if people are protected after having Covid, and for how long," said McShane.

150k Russian troops near Ukraine's borders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Brussels, April 19: The European Union is estimating that 150,000 Russian troops have already amassed for the biggest military buildup ever near Ukraine's borders and that it will only take "a spark" to set off a confrontation.
At the same time, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said that the condition of imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was "critical" and that the 27-nation group would hold the Kremlin accountable for his health and safety.
Despite the worrisome developments, Borrell said after a virtual meeting of the EU foreign ministers that, "for the time being, there is no move in the field of more sanctions" to be slapped on Russia. He also said there wasn't a request for a synchronized EU diplomatic move of expulsions in the standoff between EU member state the Czech Republic and Russia following Prague's accusation that Moscow was involved in a 2014 ammunition depot explosion. More dangerous at this time, Borrell said, was the massing of Russian troops, including military field hospitals, and "all kinds of warfare."
"It is the highest military deployment of the Russian army on the Ukrainian borders ever. It's clear that it's a matter of concern when you deploy a lot of troops," Borrell said. "Well, a spark can jump here or there." Borrell declined to say where he got the 150,000 Russian troop figure from. But it is bigger than the 110,000 estimate provided by Ukrainian Defense Minister Andriy Taran Wednesday.

Russia expels 20 Czech diplomats in retaliation

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Moscow, April 19: The Russian Foreign Ministry has announced the expulsion of 20 staffers of the Czech Embassy in Moscow as a retaliatory move against the removal of 18 Russian diplomats from Prague, allegedly being "identified as members of the Russian secret services".
The Ministry said in a statement Sunday that it summoned the Czech Ambassador to Russia Vitezslav Pivonka and strongly protested against the unfriendly act of the authorities in Prague.
Pivonka was informed that these 20 people from the Czech Embassy must leave Russia by the end of



Monday. The Ministry also required the Czech Embassy to reduce the number of locally hired staffers to the same level as that of the Russian mission in Prague.
It added that the Czech authorities used "unfounded and far-fetched pretexts" to continue their anti-Russian tirade in recent years

and to please the US following the recent American sanctions against Moscow.
In a statement Saturday, Czech Foreign Minister Jan Hamacek said: "I decided to expel all the employees of the Russian embassy in Prague who have been clearly identified by our special services as officers of the Russian intelligence agencies SVR and GRU. Within 48 hours, 18 staff members of the Russian embassy must leave the Czech Republic."
Prime Minister Andrej Babis said the 18 staffers were also allegedly involved in the 2014 twin ammunition depot explosions in the Czech Republic that claimed the lives of two people.

NASA's Mars helicopter Ingenuity takes flight

APPLAUSE, CHEERS AND LAUGHTER ERUPTED IN THE OPERATIONS CENTRE WHEN THE FIRST BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO APPEARED ON THE SCREENS, SHOWING INGENUITY'S SHADOW AS IT HOVERED ABOVE THE SURFACE OF MARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cape Canaveral (US), April 19: NASA's experimental Mars helicopter rose from the dusty red surface into the thin air Monday, achieving the first powered, controlled flight on another planet.
The triumph was hailed as a Wright Brothers moment. The mini 4-pound (1.8-kg) copter named Ingenuity in fact, carried a bit of wing fabric from the 1903 Wright Flyer, which made similar history at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.
"We can now say that human beings have flown a rotorcraft on another planet," project manager MiMi Aung announced to her team. Flight controllers in California

confirmed Ingenuity's brief hop after receiving data via the Perseverance rover, which stood watch more than 200 feet (65 metres) away. Ingenuity hitched a ride to Mars on Perseverance, clinging to the rover's belly upon their arrival in an ancient river delta in February.
The \$85 million helicopter demo was considered high risk, yet high reward.
"Each world gets only one first flight," project manager MiMi Aung noted earlier this month. Speaking on a NASA webcast early Monday, she called it the "ultimate dream."
Aung and her team had to wait more than three excruciating hours before learning whether the pre-programmed flight had succeeded

178 million miles (287 million kilometres) away. Adding to their anxiety: A software error prevented the helicopter from lifting off a week earlier and had engineers scrambling to come up with a fix.
Details were initially sparse, but NASA had been aiming for a 40-second flight. The helicopter was supposed to rise 10 feet (3 metres), hover for up to 30 seconds, and then pivot toward the rover and land close to where it took off.
To accomplish all that, the helicopter's twin, counter-rotating rotor blades needed to spin at 2,500 revolutions per minute — five times faster than on Earth. With an atmosphere just 1 per cent the thickness of Earth's, engineers had to



build a helicopter light enough with blades spinning fast enough to generate this otherworldly lift. At the same time, it had to be sturdy enough to withstand the Martian wind and extreme cold.
More than six years in the mak-

ing, Ingenuity is a barebones 1.6 feet (0.5 metres) tall, a spindly four-legged chopper. Its fuselage, containing all the batteries, heaters and sensors, is the size of a tissue box. The carbon-fibre, foam-filled rotors are the biggest pieces: Each pair stretches 4 feet (1.2 metres) tip to tip. The helicopter is topped with a solar panel for recharging the batteries, crucial for its survival during the minus-130 degree Fahrenheit (minus-90 degree Celsius) Martian nights.
NASA chose a flat, relatively rock-free patch for Ingenuity's airfield, measuring 33 feet by 33 feet. It turned out to be less than 100 feet from the original landing site in Jezero Crater.

The helicopter was released from the rover onto the airfield April 3. Flight commands were sent Sunday, after controllers sent up a software correction for the rotor blade spin-up. Ingenuity's team has until the beginning of May to complete the test flights. That's because the rover needs to get on with its main mission: collecting rock samples that could hold evidence of past Martian life, for return to Earth a decade from now.
Until then, Perseverance will keep watch over Ingenuity. Flight engineers affectionately call them Percy and Ginny. "Big sister's watching," said Malin Space Science System's Elsa Jensen, the rover's lead camera operator.

business

of the day quote

WFH processes backed by enabling policies, the digital nature of functioning of the IT sector helped companies to continue their operations and sustain services they were rendering, while greater digital initiatives by clients drove demand and growth

OMKAR RAI | DIRECTOR GENERAL, STPI

Though we are not part of the problem, we want to be part of the solution. Even today's current emissions of the world, we are only 7% of the world emissions. Our programmes for self-reliant India, for development growth are based on sustainability, energy transition and industrial transition

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR | ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

India needs to get as many different Covid vaccine licences as possible and replicate multiple factories on a war footing to ramp up production in order to meet the requirements as the country reels under the devastating second wave of the pandemic

N CHANDRASEKHARAN | CHAIRMAN, TATA SONS

SHORT TAKES

IOC, BPCL to supply oxygen to hosps

New Delhi: After Reliance Industries Ltd, state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) have begun diverting oxygen produced at their refineries to supplement the availability of medical oxygen in states worst hit by Covid-19. In a statement, IOC said it has "begun the supply of 150 tonnes of oxygen at no cost to various hospitals in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab," it said.

'Fresh curbs to hit sales'

New Delhi: Housing sales are likely to be affected in the short-term due to fresh restrictions imposed in many states to control the current wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, industry players said, but hoped that digital platforms will limit the impact. Real estate industry was hoping housing sales in the current calendar year will reach the 2019 levels, driven by gradual recovery in demand from July 2020 onwards, they said.

GJC seeks postponement

Mumbai: The All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC) has urged the government to extend the deadline for implementation of mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery to June 2022 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lack of infrastructure. In a letter written to the Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ministry, GJC pitched for extending the deadline to June 2022 instead of June 2021 due to the Covid-19 situation.

Strong growth for Coca Cola

New Delhi: Global soft drink major Coca-Cola Co. Monday said its India business witnessed "strong growth" in the first quarter, helped by its sparkling soft drinks portfolio and fruit drink brand Maaza. The Coca-Cola Company, in its global earnings released Monday, said sparkling soft drinks grew 4%. "Strong growth in developing and emerging markets, led by China and India, was offset by pressure in developed markets, primarily the US and Western Europe," it said.



This is the most unfortunate situation; we could have ever witnessed. The sudden second surge of Covid has brought us to square one; the same place we were standing aimlessly a year ago at the peak of the pandemic

ANURAG KATRIAR | PRESIDENT, NRI

CENTRE NOD FOR CREDIT SUPPORT

In a bid to boost vaccine production amid rising Covid cases, the Centre has given in-principle approval for credit to vaccine-makers, the Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech, it was announced Monday



Govt working to save lives, livelihood: FM tells India Inc

SITHARAMAN SOUGHT FEEDBACK FROM BUSINESSES TO DEAL WITH THE IMPACT OF THE SECOND COVID-19 WAVE ON THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 19: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday said she has taken inputs from various industry chambers on concerns of India Inc as regards the management of the Covid-19 pandemic and stressed that the Centre will continue to work with state governments to save lives and livelihood. She sought feedback from businesses to deal with the impact of the second Covid-19 wave on the country's economy.

It is to be noted that the economy contracted by a whopping 23.9% in the first quarter (April-June) of the previous financial year due to the coronavirus outbreak.

"Spoke on telephone with each of the following business/Chamber leaders. Took their inputs on industry/Association related matters. Informed them that GoI at various levels from @PMOIndia is responding to #Covid management. Working together with states for lives and livelihoods," she said in a tweet.

The finance minister had interactions with heads of industry chambers including CII President Uday Kotak, Ficci President Uday Shankar and Assocham President Vineet Agarwal.

She also spoke to many business leaders like Tata Steel Managing Director TV Narendran, L&T Chairman AM Naik, TCS Managing Director Rajesh Gopinathan, Maruti Suzuki Chairman RC Bhargava,



TVS Group Chairman Venu Srinivasan and Hero Moto Corp MD Pawan Munjal to take their feedback on situation arising out of surging Covid-19 cases and local containments.

Talking about telephonic conversation with the finance minister April 18, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) President Sanjay Aggarwal said that she assured the government is taking all necessary steps to ensure adequate availability of hospital beds, medicines, oxygen, etc, across the nation.

The finance minister also mentioned that urgent efforts are being made to increase Covid-19 vaccine production in the country and to arrange for imports also to vaccinate nation's population in the shortest time possible, Aggarwal said.

"The Union government emphasised that it is not going to impose any national lockdown which may harm the economy and that the states may impose lockdowns locally as needed," he said quoting the finance minister.

Last week, the finance minister made it clear that the government would not go for lockdowns in a big way and only resort to local containment to break the Covid-19 chain. "Even with the second wave, we are very clear that we are not going in for lockdowns in a big way. We don't want to totally arrest the economy. The local level isolation of patients, or households which have people in quarantines are the methods through which the crisis will be handled, the second wave will be handled," Sitharaman had said.

'Seed fund scheme to support domestic entrepreneurs'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal Monday expressed hope that the Startup India seed fund scheme would support domestic entrepreneurs and their business ideas that often cannot take off due to the absence of critical capital at an early stage. The scheme was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January to support startups and help budding entrepreneurs pursue innovative ideas.

Goyal said good ideas often get bought out by international venture capitalists at throwaway prices.

"The idea behind the scheme is to ensure adequate availability of funds, particularly to startups with good ideas in different fields. I do hope that this scheme will support our domestic entrepreneurs and their business ideas that often cannot take off due to the absence of critical capital at an early stage," Goyal said while launching the scheme.



He also exuded confidence that the scheme will secure seed funding, inspire innovation, support transformative ideas, and facilitate implementation of those ideas.

He added that smaller towns are often deprived of adequate funding and this scheme will create a robust startup ecosystem in Tier 2 and Tier 3 regions of India.

'National lockdown can dent GDP growth by 2%'

AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 19: A month's national lockdown can hurt GDP growth by 2 percentage points, an American brokerage warned Monday while expecting governments to continue with localised restrictions to arrest the Covid spread.

Stating that there has been a 7x jump in the new cases to 2.61 lakh a day from a month ago's 35,000 cases, analysts at BofA Securities said they have grown "even more concerned that rising Covid-19 cases pose a risk to our still shallow recovery".

In its base case, the brokerage said it sees a 9% growth in the gross value added growth in FY22 after a 6.4% contraction on a GVA basis.

"It remains to be seen if this second wave of Covid-19 cases subsides without a serious national level lockdown. A month of nationwide lockdown costs 1-2% of GDP. Given the high economic cost, we expect the Centre and state governments to try to contain the spread with the tightening of Covid-19 regulations, night curfews and localised lockdowns," it said.

It can be noted that already, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has assured that a national lockdown will not be implemented.

The brokerage said more than three-fourths of the cases are coming from 10 of the 29 states, and also noted that many states have followed Maharashtra's lead in announcing stringent restrictions.

It said only 1.2% of the population has been vaccinated with both the doses as of now, while 7.8% has received the first dose. It noted that in the week to April 16, there was a 12% decline in the jobs given



Stating that there has been a 7x jump in the new cases to 2.61L a day from a month ago's 35,000 cases, analysts said they are more concerned that rising Covid cases pose a risk to economy's 'shallow recovery'

A month of nationwide lockdown costs 1-2% of GDP

due to vaccine shortages.

By the end of 2021, it expects 34% of the population to get vaccinated, which it called as the bear scenario. A strong uptake of the newly cleared Sputnik vaccine of Russia can take up the vaccinations to 40% or the middle scenario.

The current production is about 75 million doses per month of two vaccines combined, it said, adding that Serum Institute of India expects to ramp up production from June to over 100 million doses a month, while Bharat Biotech will take it to 12 million doses a month from July.

It has accounted for an import of 100 million doses of Sputnik by Dr Reddy in its bear scenario. Even though the government has opened up the doors for more vaccines, it said there will be a minimal contribution from Johnson & Johnson's job in the bear scenario because of it facing clot issues in many countries, and none from Pfizer which needs very low temperatures storage.

'Resurgent Covid-19 to heavily dent 2W sales'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 19: Resurgence of Covid-19 cases is expected to drag the two-wheeler (2W) sectors' off-take lower by 30-50% in April, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd (MOFSL) said in a report. "This is despite the mini festival seasons across the country and the rationale of drop in sales volume is attributed to the onset of the second wave of Covid-19," the report said.

"Smaller cities are seeing the impact of the second wave (unlike the first wave) - cases reported in the second week of April 2021 surpassed the peak of September 2020. April 2021 MTD saw significant decline in demand in 2W retails."

According to the report, if 2W de-

mand fails to recover amid the mini festive and wedding season, then the recovery may be deferred up to October 2021. "Dealers commenced Apr'21 with high inventory owing to the year-end push and high sales expectations from the festive season (Navratri, Gudi Padwa, etc.) and wedding season (northern and central India) and rural demand from the Rabi harvest." However, sales have come out to be much lower.

As per the report, the financial services firm interacted with 2W dealers to gauge the demand and impact of the second wave on 2W sales, especially considering the mini festive seasons in many parts of the country as well as the wedding season.



NEW COVID SURGE MAY UPEND FUEL DEMAND RECOVERY



AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 19: Rising coronavirus infections, prompting a slew of local lockdowns across the country, are threatening to slow recovery in fuel demand as stronger containment measures will hit economic activity, officials said Monday.

After Maharashtra, Delhi and Rajasthan have imposed limited period lockdowns, which will impact travel and business activity. Other states have implemented curfews at different times of the day and of varying durations. "The first casualty of such measures is mobility and a resultant fuel consumption," a senior official at a public sector oil marketing company said.

A record 2,73,810 coronavirus infections on Monday pushed over-all cases to more than 1.5 crore, making India the second-worst affected nation after the US, which has reported more than 3.1 crore infections. India's deaths from Covid-19 rose by a record 1,619 to nearly 1.8 lakh.

ROUNDTABLE MEET

'POSCO planning largest FDI in India with \$12bn plant in state'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: Steel-maker POSCO is planning to make one of the single largest FDI in the history of India with an investment of \$12 billion to set up an integrated steel plant in Odisha, said Shin Bongkil, Ambassador of South Korea to India.

"About 66 new Korean companies have entered India in last one year. Korean companies have made an investment of \$17 million in 2020 as compared to \$21.15 million which is a pretty good figure, keeping in view the pandemic situation. POSCO has plans to make one of the single largest FDI in the history of India with an investment of \$12 billion to set up an integrated steel plant in the state of Odisha," said Bongkil.

He informed regarding this during the Roundtable Meet on South Korea & Odisha: Promoting Bilateral Business Opportunities, organised by The Indian Chamber of Commerce in association with IPI-COL, Monday.

On the other hand, Director of KOTRA (state-funded trade and investment promotion organisation), Young Seon Park told that the Korean companies are very eager to work in the areas of renewable



Mishra said that Odisha is in the process of implementing a strategy document, Vision 2030 which aims to ensure that 50% of the primary metal produced in the State value added with Odisha

energy, water treatment and smart city projects. B2B meetings will be organised in September 2021 for

exploring opportunities in 'Smart City Projects', said Park.

MSME minister Divya Shankar Mishra said that Odisha and Korea have many possibilities to collaborate across the identified focus sectors of the state. Mishra also said that Odisha is in the process of implementing a strategy document, Vision 2030 which aims to ensure that 50% of the primary metal produced in the State value added with Odisha.

IPICOL Managing Director Nitin B.Jawalealso informed that Odisha is expecting an investment of ₹2 lakh crore.

User-generated content to fuel remote work, learning

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 19: As India grapples with the second Covid wave amid seismic shift in the way people work and learn, this year and beyond will be a major inflection point for the user-generated content on smartphones in the country, a new report said Monday.

From the growth of 5G-capable devices to evolving consumer trends around OTT, gaming and the whole app ecosystem, the pandemic has given a significant thrust to India's digital-first economy, with many new Internet users from rural India joining the digital economy, according to the '4Ps Mobile Plus Economy Report 2021' by market intelligence firm CMR.

"A whole new generation of

India's internet users joins the digital economy, which calls for new solutions and strategies to empower them. The foundation of the digital economy are the apps. The power and potential of apps to resolve India's challenges and generate economic benefits are immense," said Prabhuram, Head-Industry Intelligence Group (IIG), CMR.

According to the report, in 2021 and beyond, irrespective of the state of 5G roll-out, the OEM focus will be on bringing new 5G-ready smartphones with better AMOLED displays, high-refresh rates and leading flagship features, such as 108 MP cameras.

"The pandemic gave a strong thrust to enhanced, immersive audio experiences from consumers, operating in an everything-from-



home context," the findings showed. With more powerful smartphones available than before, and the persisting pandemic condi-

tions, user-generated content will gain traction.

"An enhanced app store ecosystem is key to innovate for the needs

and challenges of India's digital economy. In doing so, such an app ecosystem will enable not just content discovery in vernacular

An enhanced app store ecosystem is key to innovate for the needs and challenges of India's digital economy. In doing so, such an app ecosystem will enable not just content discovery in vernacular languages for users, but aid in maximising reach for app developers

RAKESH DESHMUKH | CEO AND CO-FOUNDER, INDUS OS

languages for users, but aid in maximising reach for app developers,"

said Rakesh Deshmukh, CEO and Co-Founder, Indus OS.

According to the report, India is poised as a major market, not just for app consumption, but for app development that meets the aspirations of these new consumers.

From a technology perspective, consumers will continue to seek 5G-capable phones, and devices with better camera, battery and audio features.

"5G will continue to be a key focus for OEMs in 2021, diffusing more powerful features across lower price tiers. Alongside, we see potential for the new affordable 4G smartphones to potentially push many 2G subscribers to embrace 4G," noted Shipra Sinha, Analyst, Industry Intelligence Group (IIG), CMR.

SPIN SCRIPTS CSK WIN

MI face DC in battle of equals



Moeen Ali (C) celebrates one of his three wickets against Rajasthan Royals with his teammates, Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 19: The spin duo of Ravindra Jadeja and Moeen Ali tormented the Rajasthan Royals batting line-up to ensure a second consecutive win for Chennai Super Kings in the IPL here Monday.

Cameos from Faf du Plessis (33, 17b, 4x4, 2x6), Dwayne Bravo (20 n o, 8b, 2x4, 1x6), Ambati Rayudu (27, 17b, 3x6) and Ali (26) helped CSK post 188/9 after being put in to bat.

Royals made a promising start in the run chase courtesy Jos Buttler (49, 35b, 5x4, 2x6) before the batsmen succumbed to the spinners on the Wankhede pitch which offered more turn than earlier games. CSK won the game by 45 runs after Royals' innings ended at 143/9.

Ali (3/7) picked up three wickets in quick succession to effectively seal the game for his team after Jadeja (2/28) provided the crucial breakthrough by casting Buttler with a classical away turning delivery.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

One of the best fielders around, Jadeja also took four catches.

It was another emphatic win for CSK after they outplayed Punjab Kings while Royals suffered their second loss in three games.

Earlier, CSK lost wickets towards the end with the batsmen going for big hits and also in the face of some good bowling by Royals. Bravo smashed a huge six off the last ball of the innings from Mustafizur Rahman (1/37) to ensure the Super Kings got close to 190.

Du Plessis top scored with 33 as the CSK batsmen got starts but couldn't capitalise on them after Young Chetan Sakariya (3/36) was the best bowler for Rajasthan while Chris Morris finished with 2/33 despite conceding 15 runs in his final over.

MS Dhoni, in his 200th match as CSK captain, came in to bat at No.7 but could not get going as quickly as he would have liked. He, however, managed two boundaries in his 17-

ball 18 before being beaten by an off-cutter by Sakariya only to give a



Ravindra Jadeja

catch to Buttler.

Rayudu and Suresh Raina (18) added 45 runs in quick time for the fourth wicket before the former perished going for an attacking shot on the off-side off Sakariya. He struck again a few balls later, getting Raina to hit one straight to Chris Morris at mid-off as CSK slipped to 125/5 in the 15th over. Rahul Tewatia had begun well by conceding only five runs in his opening over and got rid of Ali.

Opener Rituraj Gaikwad's struggles continued as his attempt to hit his way out saw him miscue a pull only to see it lob to Shivam Dube off Rahman. Du Plessis showed intent and waded into Jaydev Unadkat in the fifth over, hammering three fours and one six before an ambitious shot brought his downfall off Morris' bowling.

BRIEF SCORES
Chennai Super Kings 188/9 (Faf du Plessis 33, Ambati Rayudu 27, Moeen Ali 26, Dwayne Bravo 20 n o; Chetan Sakariya 3/36, Chris Morris 2/33)
beat Rajasthan Royals 143/9 (Jos Buttler 49, Jaydev Unadkat 24; Moeen Ali 3/7, Sam Curran 2/24, Ravindra Jadeja 2/28) by 45 runs.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 19: A battle royal is in the offing as heavyweights Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals cross swords, looking to outsmart each other in the IPL here Tuesday.

Up against a resurgent side, defending champions MI will need to address their middle-order woes if they are to go for a third consecutive win.

While Delhi come into the match after beating Punjab Kings by six wickets at the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai have recorded back-to-back victories by defending low totals, something a formidable opponents like DC may not offer.

Mumbai skipper Rohit Sharma has got starts and he would be keen to convert it into a big one and so would be Quinton de Kock.

MI have the likes of Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan, Kieron Pollard, Hardik Pandya and his brother Krunal, who can pummel any attack into submission on their day, but they are yet to fire on all cylinders.

After the last game, Rohit had conceded that his team "can bat a little better in the middle overs."

The Mumbai bowlers, led by pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, have been splendid in the last two games when they successfully defended low scores of 150 and 152 respectively. Strike bowlers Bumrah (3 wickets) and New Zealander Trent Boult (6 wickets) have been exceptional at the death.

Leg-spinner Rahul Chahar, whom bowling coach Shane Bond described as a "wicket-taking bowler", has grabbed seven wickets in last two games.

Another important cog in the wheel is left-arm spinner Krunal, who would be itching to give his team breakthroughs.

Mumbai played Adam Milne in the previous game but considering the nature of the pitch, they could be tempted to bring in off-spinner Jayant Yadav, who played the 2020 final against the same opposition.

Meanwhile, for Delhi Capitals, the biggest positive has been the form of Shikhar Dhawan, who is the leading scorer so far in the tournament with 186 runs.



THE SQUADS

MUMBAI INDIANS	DELHI CAPITALS
Rohit Sharma (C), Adam Milne, Aditya Tare, Anmolpreet Singh, Anukul Roy, Arjun Tendulkar, Chris Lynn, Dhawal Kulkarni, Hardik Pandya, Ishan Kishan, James Neesham, Jasprit Bumrah, Jayant Yadav, Kieron Pollard, Krunal Pandya, Marco Jansen, Mohsin Khan, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Piyush Chawla, Quinton de Kock (WK), Rahul Chahar, Saurabh Tiwary, Suryakumar Yadav, Trent Boult, Yuvraj Singh.	Shikhar Dhawan, Prithvi Shaw, Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant (C), Shimron Hetmyer, Marcus Stoinis, Chris Woakes, R Ashwin, Shams Mulani, Amit Mishra, Lalit Yadav, Pravin Dube, Kagiso Rabada, Anrich Nortje, Ishant Sharma, Avesh Khan, Steve Smith, Umesh Yadav, Ripal Patel, Vishnu Vinod, Lukman Meriwala, M Siddarth, Tom Curran, Sam Billings & Aniruddha Joshi.

Dhawan and young Prithvi Shaw form a lethal opening combination, but the Mumbaier needs to convert his starts into big scores.

Delhi opted for Australian Steve Smith Sunday but, as they are next playing on the slow Chepauk track, they might go back to Ajinkya Rahane, who is looking better suited for such tracks.

Skipper Rishabh Pant has the ability to take any attack to the cleaners. The DC team management would be hoping that the top order fires in unison against the defending champions, to whom they had lost in the final last year.

DC also possess quality all-rounders in Marcus Stoinis and Lalit Yadav, who would be keen to play their roles well.

Their pace attack is led by South African Kagiso Rabada and Chris Woakes, and the two have been impressive so far. They have an addi-

tional option in Anrich Nortje, who has also joined the squad.

Delhi played four pacers in the game against Punjab, but in Chennai, they could play more spinners as the track is conducive for the slower bowlers. They have options in the experienced Amit Mishra, Pravin Dube and new recruit Shams Mulani, who can complement Ravichandran Ashwin.

TODAY'S MATCH

MI VS DC

TIME 7.30 PM

Telecast: Star Sports channels

Team in good shape: Shilanand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 19: The recent performance against reigning Olympic champions Argentina shows that the Indian team is in good shape going into the Tokyo Games, feels young Odisha forward Shilanand Lakra.

India won both their FIH Pro League fixtures in Argentina and two of the four practice matches, with Shilanand finishing the tour with a goal in the final practice game.

"I think we played very good hockey against Olympic Champions Argentina. Our recent performances shows that we are in good shape going into a big event like the Olympics," he said in a release issued by Hockey India Monday.

"Right now, though, our focus is only on the FIH Pro League games against Great Britain next month."

Despite being one of the younger players in the Indian men's hockey team, Shilanand held his own in Argentina, and is happy to have contributed whenever opportuni-



ties came his way. "Having made my debut for the senior team three years ago, I'd have expected myself to play more but that is how competitive it is; there are so many amazing players in the core probable group," he said.

"My aim has always been to earn a place in the team through consistent performances in domestic tournaments, national camps and whenever I play for India - as a starter or a substitute."

The 21-year-old said the long break due to COVID-19 pandemic helped him and credited chief coach Graham Reid for improving his game.

"To be out of competitive action for so long...It gave me the time to re-think and analyse my performances, and also prepare for the highs and lows in the months ahead," he said.

"I am also constantly in touch with the coaching staff, especially chief coach Graham Reid, who has helped me improve on my game immensely."

Shilanand also hailed the contribution of Amit Rohidas and senior pro Birendra Lakra - who are also his teammates in the senior team.

"I think both of them have been exceptional and I get so much inspiration when I speak to them. They have always been given me sound advice," he said.

"I turned to them whenever my morale was low over the past two years and it helps a young player like me to see two other players from Odisha make it big in Indian hockey."

India will play Great Britain in the FIH Pro League May 8 and 9.

NEWS IN BRIEF

India Open badminton postponed

NEW DELHI: The India Open Super 500 badminton tournament, one of the last three qualifying events for the Tokyo Olympics, was Monday postponed due to the raging COVID-19 pandemic in the country. The USD 400,000 India Open was scheduled to be held behind closed doors in the national capital from May 11 to 16. "Considering the current challenges, BAI is left with no option but to announce the postponement of the tournament for the time being," Badminton Association of India (BAI) general secretary Ajay Singhania said at a virtual press conference. The 2020 edition of the India Open was cancelled after it was initially postponed from March to December.

No PSG, Bayern in Super League

DUSSELDORF: The new Super League football competition in Europe is, surprisingly, missing the names of Bayern Munich and Paris Saint-Germain. Last year's Champions League finalists were noted absentees from the elite clubs announced in the league's formation, Sunday. Bayern would face difficulties convincing their fans and members, who have a majority say in club business. PSG's Qatari owners could be wary of disrupting next year's World Cup - which will be played in Qatar - and a lucrative UEFA broadcast deal if there's a civil war in European football. The Super League has signed up 12 clubs from England (Manchester City, Manchester United, Liverpool, Chelsea, Spurs & Arsenal), Spain (Barcelona, Real Madrid & Atletico Madrid) and Italy (Juventus, Inter & AC Milan) and left open three more spots for founder members, who will get permanent places in the competition. Bayern, PSG and Borussia Dortmund have been linked with those founder places.

Tottenham sack coach Mourinho

LONDON: Tottenham fired Jose Mourinho Monday after only 17 months in charge, and just as he was preparing to coach the club in the League Cup final. Mourinho was hired in November 2019 to replace Mauricio Pochettino, who unexpectedly led the London club to the Champions League final before the team collapsed the following season.

Mourinho failed to get Tottenham back into the Champions League and has overseen another collapse this season. The team was in first place in December but a run of poor results has seen it fall to seventh place. It is Mourinho's shortest spell at a club since breaking into the big time with Porto in 2004.

India pugilists assure 4 medals at Youth Worlds



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: Asian champion Vinka and Alfiya Pathan were among the four Indian boxers who progressed to the semifinals of the youth world championships for men and women in Kielce, Poland.

Gitika and Poonam are the other two boxers to enter the last-four stage and have secured at least a bronze medal for the country. All the four boxers put up scintillating performances in their respective quarterfinals bouts.

Panipat boxer Vinka blanked her Colombian opponent Camilo Camela 5-0 in the 60kg category, while the 2019 Asian junior champion Alfiya (+81) also won by the same margin against Hungarian boxer Reka Hoffmann.

Playing in the 57kg category, Poonam notched up an easy 5-0 win against Nazerke Serik of Kazakhstan to progress to the semifinals.

Gitika (48kg) produced another strong show as she dominated her opponent, Romania's Elisabeth Ostan, from the word go with precise punches and swift movement that saw the referee stopping the contest after the first round and declaring the Haryana boxer as the winner. Another Indian woman in action, Khushi (81kg), lost her quarterfinal bout against Busra Isildar of Turkey.

In the men's section, Manish (75kg) and Sumit (69kg) made their way into the quarterfinals in their respective categories with identical 5-0 victories against Jordan's Abdallah Alaarg and Ladislav Horvath of Slovakia respectively.

Meanwhile, Akash Gorkha (60kg) and Vinit (81kg) couldn't progress further as they suffered defeats in their respective last 16 bouts.

MIXED FORTUNES FOR MADRID RIVALS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, April 19: After seeing rivals gradually cut into their lead, Atletico Madrid finally got some breathing room at the top of the Spanish league. Atletico ended their winless run by routing last-place Eibar 5-0, then saw city rival Real Madrid held 0-0 by Getafe.

Those results gave Atletico a three-point lead over second-place Madrid, and a five-point cushion over third-place Barcelona, which has a game in hand after winning the Copa del Rey final against Athletic Bilbao Saturday.

Madrid had moved within a point of the lead after beating Barcelona in the previous round. Atletico were coming off a loss to Sevilla and a 1-1 draw against Real Betis.

Angel Correa and Marcos Llorente scored two goals each and Yannick Carrasco added another as Atletico routed Eibar at the Wanda Metropolitano Stadium.

Someone's team easily won despite playing without Luis Suarez and Joao Felix because of injuries. Correa, one of the players who came in to replace the injured reg-



Atletico Madrid's Marcos Llorente points skywards in celebration after one of his goals, while another scorer Angel Correa smiles, Sunday

ATLETICO MADRID ROUT EIBAR 5-0, WHILE REAL MADRID WERE HELD TO A GOALLESS DRAW AGAINST GETAFE IN THEIR LA LIGA MATCHES

ular starters, broke the deadlock with a goal from close range in the 42nd minute, then quickly added to the lead after a nice turn to clear a defender inside the area in the 44th.

Carrasco scored the third goal in a breakaway in the 49th, then Llorente got the fourth from inside the box in the 53rd and the fifth from close range in the 68th.

Eibar's winless streak in the league reached 14 consecutive matches. The Basque Country club, which had no shots on target, is four points from safety.

Atletico's next match is Thursday against Huesca, another team fighting relegation. Huesca lost 0-1 at Alaves Sunday after conceding in the 85th. Real will visit Cadiz Wednesday.

Missing some of its top players, Real Madrid struggled against Madrid rival Getafe and needed a good performance by goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois to avoid an even more disappointing result.

After difficult games against Liverpool in the Champions League and against Barcelona in the Spanish league, Zidane rested some of his regular starters, including Toni Kroos and Karim Benzema, the team's leading scorer this season.

Zidane again had to deal with a depleted defense because of injuries and suspensions, having to use reserve-team player Victor Chust in central defense.

Madrid had a goal by forward Mariano Diaz disallowed for off-side less than 10 minutes into the match, and shortly after the Spanish powerhouse nearly conceded when Jaime Mata's header hit the post for hosts Getafe, which sit four points from the relegation zone.

Sevilla won 2-1 at Real Sociedad to move within a point of third-place Barcelona, practically securing the final Champions League spot. Sevilla has a 15-point gap over fifth-place Villarreal.