



SATISFYING STINT

Actor Yami Gautam says her nine years in the film industry has been an incredible journey

LEISURE P2



RUSSIA WARNS US

President Putin warns the US of swift retaliation if it provokes Russia in any manner

INTERNATIONAL P10



MAIDEN VICTORY

Jonny Bairstow helps Sunrisers Hyderabad win their 1st game in the ongoing edition of IPL against Punjab Kings

SPORTS P12

They shut O₂ supply, 24 dead

PATIENTS WERE UNDERGOING TREATMENT AT A MUNICIPAL HOSPITAL IN NASHIK FOR CORONAVIRUS

AGENCIES

Nashik/Mumbai, April 21: Twenty-four COVID-19 patients, with at least 11 of them on ventilator support, suffocated to death Wednesday when their oxygen supply stopped suddenly because of a malfunction in the main storage at the Dr Zakir Husain Municipal Hospital in Nashik, officials said. The supply was disrupted due to leakage of the gas from a storage plant, they informed. A senior civic official said of the 150 patients admitted to the hospital, 23 were on ventilators while the rest were on oxygen support. Twenty two of the patients died in the morning while two others succumbed in the evening.

"As per the current information, 24 people have died due to the interrupted supply of oxygen. The patients were on ventilators as well as on oxygen support, which got disrupted after the leakage in supply tank," District Collector Suraj Mandhare told reporters. He informed that the municipal corporation immediately shifted dura cylinders from other facilities in Nashik to help other patients at the hospital.

According to local officials, oxygen leakage was noticed around 12.30pm,

A SOCKET IN THE OXYGEN TANK BROKE WHICH CAUSED THE LEAKAGE LEADING TO THE TRAGEDY

MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES ₹5 LAKH RELIEF FOR FAMILIES OF THE DECEASED

150 PATIENTS IN THE HOSPITAL WERE ON OXYGEN SUPPORT



FIGHTING AGAINST ALL ODDS: Technicians trying to repair the oxygen storage plant at the hospital in Nashik

PTI PHOTO

following which hospital authorities were alerted. They in turn contacted municipal commissioner Kailash

Jadhav seeking technical help. Mandhare said a private company looks after the maintenance of the

oxygen storage tank located on the premises of the hospital. "We have given all information to the govern-

ment. As far as oxygen supply is concerned, the NMC received dura cylinders from places where the consumption is less. Oxygen will be supplied to the patients from these cylinders. Currently, all others undergoing treatment are stable," he said.

Divisional Revenue Commissioner Radhakrishna Game said a 13 KL (kilolitre) oxygen tank was set up on the premises of the hospital.

"Around 10 am, a socket of the oxygen storage tank broke and leakage started. When the hospital staff came to know about it, they deployed jumbo cylinders to supply oxygen to the patients and started shifting some of them," Game said. He added that the leakage has stopped, the tank repaired and oxygen supply is being normalised.

Expressing grief, Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said in Mumbai that all the 24 deceased were infected by the COVID-19 virus. He said a probe has been ordered into the tragedy.

Leela Shelar, who lost her 60-year-old mother in the tragedy was inconsolable. "My mother was admitted in the hospital Tuesday and was put on ventilator support. I didn't admit my mother to the hospital to die in this manner. I feel so helpless," she lamented.

STUDENTS' DEMAND FULFILLED

GOVT CANCELS MATRIC EXAMS



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: A day after hundreds of matric students marched towards Naveen Niwas demanding cancellation of Class X exams, their wishes were fulfilled. The Odisha government announced Wednesday that the matriculation exams scheduled to start May 3 stands cancelled. Along with it, all examinations of the Odisha State Board of Madrasa Education scheduled to start May 19 have also been called off.

"Keeping in mind the surging number of cases due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the matriculation examination for the year 2021 has been cancelled," School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash said.

"As per the directions of Hon'ble Chief Minister on 15.04.2021, discussions were held with all the stakeholders of School and Mass Education department and keeping in view of the upsurge of the pandemic situation of COVID-19, the

Class X examinations conducted by BSE, scheduled to be held from 03.05.2021 and all examinations of Odisha State Board of Madrasa Education scheduled to be held from 19.05.2021 are hereby cancelled," a notification issued by the S&ME department in this regard read.

"The results of Class X exams will be prepared on the basis of an objective criterion to be developed by the board. Any candidate, who will not be satisfied with the marks awarded to him/her on this basis, will be given an opportunity to sit in an examination as and when the conditions are conducive to hold it," the notification further said.

The Odisha government April 15 postponed all state board examinations including the Class X and XII tests in the wake of spiraling Covid-19 cases. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik made the announcement after reviewing the coronavirus situation in Odisha where active cases have surpassed the 14,000-mark.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Situation is grim but why can't you show some more patience? After all you've 75 years' experience of showing patience!

SHORT TAKES

Even vaccine fails to protect Tharoor

New Delhi: Congress leaders Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and Shashi Tharoor tested positive Wednesday for the novel coronavirus infection. Tharoor, MP from Thiruvananthapuram tweeted that along with him, his mother and sister have also tested positive for the virus. Tharoor informed that he has already taken the vaccine jabs. Meanwhile Chowdhury said he will continue to campaign in virtual mode for the West Bengal polls.

Padma Bhushan poet Shankha Ghosh dies

Kolkata: Noted Bengali poet and academician Shankha Ghosh, a Padma Bhushan awardee, died Wednesday morning while he was in isolation at his residence here after testing positive for COVID-19, his family said. He was found Covid positive April 14 and was stable in home isolation, but his condition deteriorated late Tuesday evening and he passed away at 8.30am Wednesday, his relatives informed.

Covishield at ₹400 for states

SERUM INSTITUTE OF INDIA SAYS PRIVATE HOSPITALS TO PAY ₹600 PER DOSE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 21: Serum Institute of India (SII), the world's largest vaccine maker, announced Wednesday a price of ₹400 per dose for its COVID-19 vaccine 'Covishield' for state governments and ₹600 per dose for private hospitals. The company also said for the next two months, it will address the issue of limited capacity by scaling up vaccine production.

"Going ahead, 50 per cent of our capacities will be served to the Government of India's vaccination programme, and the remaining 50 per cent of the capacity will be for the state governments and private hospitals," SII said in a statement.

Considering the global vaccine prices, 'we are ensuring that our vaccines are affordable in comparison to any other vaccine in the world', it said. The American vac-



Covishield vaccine vials

... Owing to the complexity and urgency of the situation it is challenging to supply the vaccine independently to each corporate entity. We would urge all corporate and private individuals to access the vaccines through the state-facilitated machinery and private health systems. After 4-5 months, the vaccines will be made available in retail and free trade," SII added.

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21K TEST POSITIVE AFTER VACCINE JAB

NEW DELHI: Approximately 21,000 people have tested positive for COVID-19 after taking the first dose of either Covishield or Covaxin, while over 5,500 contracted the infection after taking the second dose, the Centre said Wednesday. Addressing a press conference, ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava said 0.04 per cent of 17,37,178 individuals, who received the second dose of Covaxin, were found positive for COVID-19, while 0.03 per cent of 1,57,32,754 people, who took the second dose of Covishield, contracted the infection. "After vaccination if one gets infection then it is known as breakthrough infection," he said.

'Covishield' comprises over 90 per cent of the over 13 crore vaccines administered across India so far, according to government data released Wednesday.

Chauvin pronounced guilty on 3 counts in Floyd murder case



GEORGE FLOYD

WASHINGTON: A federal grand jury has found Derek Chauvin, a former Minneapolis police officer, guilty on all three counts of murder of African-American George Floyd May 25, last year. Floyd (46), was killed in a brutal abuse of police force during an arrest after a store clerk alleged, he had passed a counterfeit USD 20 bill in Minneapolis. Chauvin (45), pinned down Floyd with his knee on the pavement of a south Minneapolis intersection for more than nine minutes. "I can't breathe. I can't breathe," were his last words. The 12-member federal jury Tuesday in Minneapolis found Chauvin guilty on all three counts: second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. He was immediately led away and could be sent to prison for decades. "Today (Tuesday), we are able to breathe again," Floyd's younger brother Philonise said at a family news conference in Minneapolis. Immediately after the verdict, US President Joe Biden and VP Kamala Harris spoke with Floyd's family members expressing solidarity.

2nd Covid peak to hit Odisha soon: DMET

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: The chief of Directorate of Medical Education and Training (DMET), CBK Mohanty said Wednesday that the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic might hit the peak between end of April and first week of May this year.

"The peak has already started in Maharashtra while Delhi and other states might see the climax by last week of April. In some states it will extend to May. In Odisha too, the peak might come between the end of April and first week of May. After that, cases will decrease naturally at the same pace it is increasing now," Mohanty informed.

The Odisha government is prepared to the fullest possible extent to meet the eventualities that may happen due COVID-19 second wave. There is no shortage of oxygen stock for the infected in Odisha so far, Mohanty assured.

"Among the available beds at 70 dedicated COVID-care hospitals in the state, only 26 per cent general beds have been used. Similarly, 14.18 per cent intensive care units (ICUs) and 10 per cent ventilators, are in use now," the DMET director stated.

AIIMS SUSPENDS OPD FROM APR 25

BHUBANESWAR: With the rapid spike in COVID-19 cases in the state, AIIMS Bhubaneswar decided Wednesday to suspend its walk-in OPD (out-patient department) from April 25 for a temporary period. OPD patients can avail of the telemedicine facility or use the 'Swasthya App' created by the hospital for doctor consultation. "There has been a rapid rise in the number of COVID cases. Some of our own staff have contracted the disease or are in quarantine. So in this circumstance, we have been forced to suspend work at the OPD," the institute said in a statement.

"Last time during the first wave, the consumption of oxygen was 28 to 30 metric tonne per day. The state has adequate medical oxygen suppliers who can meet the requirement easily. "We do not see any shortage of oxygen supply till date," Mohanty added.

Cluster level temporary medical camps (TMC) have been created in blocks of districts for isolation of migrant workers who are returning back home.

Quarantine centres reactivated

ISOLATION FOR MIGRANT WORKERS AT ZILLA PARISHAD LEVEL



Migrant workers returning to their native places in Odisha when lockdown was implemented last year

OP FILE PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: With lockdown being implemented in Maharashtra and Delhi, migrant workers have again started returning to Odisha. In a bid to prevent them from spreading Covid-19 in the state, the government is once more reactivating the quarantine centres.

"The government is once again setting up quarantine centres at Zilla Parishad (ZIP) level in every block for migrant workers returning home. If the number of returnees increase, such centres will

be set up at panchayat level also," Labour Minister Sushant Singh said Wednesday. The district administrations have been given power to open quarantine centres and increase the number of beds, the minister added.

About 10 lakh migrants returned to Odisha from different states when lockdown was implemented last year. "Many of them have not gone back to their workplaces since restrictions were eased. So we are expecting lesser number of returnees this year," Singh pointed out. The government has asked the

municipality, NAC and block administrations to closely monitor the return of the migrant workers. All returnees will have to spend in isolation at the quarantine centres before they can go back home.

Last year, the Odisha government had paid ₹2,000 to each migrant worker as an initial relief from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF).

Commenting on enforcement of lockdown in some states, Singh said, "Due to it, the situation was under control last year. But, now, it has gone out of control as some states are reporting more than 1,00,000 active cases."

Vax for Puri servitors to begin from May 1

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, April 21: Servitors at the Jagannath Temple in Puri will get their COVID-19 vaccine jabs May 1 onwards. All servitors above 18 years of age and the family members will be eligible for vaccination, informed Wednesday, the chief administrator of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA), Krishna Kumar.

"Each servitor's family will be tracked so as to ensure that all of them are vaccinated," Kumar said. He informed that those servitors who will be involved in construction of the chariot for the Rath Yatra will be vaccinated on a priority basis along with their families.

"The servitors, who will be engaged in the chariot construction work from next month, will be vaccinated on priority basis," Kumar said.

Kumar informed that so far 32 servitors have returned from Kumbh Mela and one has tested positive for Covid-19.

It is pertinent to mention here that elaborate arrangements are in place to prevent Covid-19 spread at the temple. Already RT-PCR negative report has been made mandatory for outstation devotees coming to the temple.

| WEATHER | | |
|----------|-------------------|--------|
| | BHUB | CTK |
| MAX | 39.2°C | 37.6°C |
| MIN | 27.6°C | 26.4°C |
| Humidity | 89% | 79% |
| Rainfall | Nil | Nil |
| Forecast | Partly cloudy sky | |



CLARKE IN FINAL TALKS TO JOIN MARVEL'S SECRET INVASION

Game Of Thrones star Emilia Clarke is in final stages of talks to join the upcoming series *Secret Invasion*. The assignment marks her entry into the Marvel universe, though details of her role are yet to be revealed.

OLIVIA COLMAN SAYS SHE WOULD WORK IN THE FATHER FOR FREE

Olivia Colman, who has been nominated at the Oscars in the Best Supporting Actress category for her role in the Anthony Hopkins-starrer *The Father*, says working on the film was a dream come true, so much so she would do it for free.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
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ARIES
If you're away from home, you might get a bit misty-eyed. And while you're calling your family, says Ganesh, it's a good idea to call friends you're hardly in touch with. It's a different high, to know you're loved.

TAURUS
There are chances of you embarking on a frivolous shopping spree today, foretells Ganesh. Putting two and two together, you may end up spending a (not so) small fortune in the afternoon. You will be the last person to tolerate if some one tries to dominate you. Your sweetheart will sugar your soul today.

GEMINI
Today, you will be extra careful about hygiene and cleanliness, predicts Ganesh. You may plan to wash your car, clean your yard, and arrange household items, only to be followed by a liberal spray of disinfectants in the afternoon. You will diffuse all your tensions with a light-hearted approach.

CANCER
Today, you are likely to be a force to reckon with in every sport you take part in, predicts Ganesh. There may be some speed breakers in the second half of the day, but nothing that you can't overtake. At work, support from your seniors may help you finish long-pending projects.

LEO
It's just good business to be on the move and avoid complacency. In fact, it is one of the secrets to success in business. Keep this in mind as today, you might have to be on the move constantly, foresees Ganesh. Monetary situations will be a matter of concern and anxiety in the afternoon, but you are of invaluable support to your peers.

VIRGO
You will be a lot more selfless and giving today than most people have known you to be, feels Ganesh. Later in the day, you will reap the profits of the work you may have done with a partner or a friend.

LIBRA
There are chances that you will be in a great mood to organise things your own way. You will make a favourable impression on your superiors at work through your problem-solving abilities. Do not discount a scrumptious dinner with your loved one, which will go a long way in intensifying your senses, hints Ganesh.

SCORPIO
In all probability, today you will work on improving your personal relations, foresees Ganesh. On the family front, your kids may force you to make hasty choices, after all, that is what tantrums are for. It is highly likely that family feuds with siblings may erupt today.

SAGITTARIUS
Various things will play on your mind today. From metaphysics to philosophy, from weight loss to diet plans – your thoughts may find it hard to stay steady. Your hands may also have some trouble keeping a check on the outflow of money during a shopping excursion with a loved one.

CAPRICORN
Your sweetheart may seem to be difficult to fathom, but he/she will appear a little more readable today, says Ganesh. If you have any plans to make the day special for your love, taking him/her out for shopping; buying presents will be just the thing to do.

AQUARIUS
Spirituality takes over you today! You will surely make your way to a temple, mosque or church later in the day, says Ganesh. That, or you may simply meditate in seclusion. Shopping too is a good prospect, and you get your penny's worth if you shop for clothes.

PISCES
It is time to socialise, says Ganesh. Though it is unlikely that you will hit the casinos at Las Vegas today, what could be on the agenda is meeting up with long-lost school friends, or exchanging pleasantries with relatives so distant you are unsure if they are related to you. There are chances of a romance blooming, so it just might be a good day to turn to your god and ask for it.



YAMI shares her surreal feelings

Mumbai: Actress Yami Gautam, who debuted in Hindi films with the 2012 hit *Vicky Donor*, looks back proudly at her nine years in Hindi film industry, calling the time surreal. "The feeling is surreal and it can't really be articulated in words. It was an incredible journey. I have had the best of opportunities to work with some phenomenal directors, actors and of being a part of some amazing projects. It was a dream to tell stories that I believe, to entertain people, and I just wish to continue doing that," says the actress, who recently finished the shoot of her upcoming film *Dasvi*. Earlier she said, "I will always have respect for all the films I have done because at that point of time that was what gave me work. I will never be disrespectful to anybody or any film, even the ones that didn't do well or weren't good films. In your heart you know that it's not going to be a good film. Knowing that and still signing it comes from a sense of fear. Now I am back to being the same Yami who does not have fear." Last week, Yami had posted a picture on Instagram stories, where she is seen wearing a hair mask and urged her fans to go natural. "Homemade pack for hair -- Kinda day #gonatural," Yami wrote on the image. Yami, who made a mark with film roles such as *Uri, Bala, Badlapur* and *Kaabil*, has a long line-up of films over the next months. Her upcoming projects include *A Thursday, Bhoot Police*, and *Lapata*.



'We arrogantly call Earth our planet'

Mumbai: Filmmaker Shekhar Kapur feels we should not arrogantly call the Earth 'our planet' because it does not belong to us. Kapur tweeted his opinion Wednesday, a day before Earth Day. "Lessons of Life: All that exists is nature. Nature loves all equally. We arrogantly call Earth 'Our Planet'. It does not belong to us. And Nature will survive whatever we do. Planet Earth will survive. We may not. #EarthDay," Kapur wrote. The filmmaker also shared a beautiful photograph of Khajuraho temple on Instagram and stressed that we need to nurture the idea that we are one with nature. "Earth Day and the Feminine. Beautiful sculpture after sculpture. Temples after temples... walls adorned with the most beautiful sculptures dedicated to the worship of the Divine feminine. Of the ultimate union between the masculine and the feminine within all of us," he added.

EARTH DAY TODAY

Young climate enthusiasts to brainstorm at RSC

BHUBANESWAR: In order to create awareness on the challenges faced by Mother Earth, Regional Science Centre (RSC), Bhubaneswar, in association with State Council of Science and Technology, Government of Odisha, will undertake several activities digitally on the occasion of Earth Day, Thursday. The event titled *Restore Our Earth* will be celebrated over the next four days. The activities include Young Climate Summit and contest, Earth Art Contest, Virtual Educational Workshop and Artists of the Earth. In the climate summit students of different schools and colleges across the state from Class V to graduate level will discuss different climate related topics and share their view points. The students will be divided into three different groups and their views will be judged by the experts. The topics to be talked about include e-Waste Management, Plastic Pollution, Remarkable Earth System and Speak Up for the Earth. The experts who will speak and judge the young climate summit participants are Jaya Khanna of School of Earth & Planetary Sciences, NISER, Bhubaneswar, Prof. BK Parida, Retired HoD Dept of Physics, Regional Institute of Education, NCERT Bhubaneswar, VB Konkimala, School of Biological Sciences NISER, Bhubaneswar. "We are expecting more than 1200 students to participate in these events. Our objective is to create awareness on the challenges faced by the Earth and to find their possible solutions," said Somen Ghosh, project coordinator of Regional Science Centre.

Transform your home into a summer-friendly abode

If heat prevents one from going outside, nature can be brought into home by decorating it with plants and flowers -- real, painted, or printed, suggests designer Bhawana Bhatnagar



Keep it light with white
If you want your home to look cool, clean, and classy, you cannot go wrong with white. From walls to windows to furniture, paint everything in white.

Go natural
There are few things more comforting than the lap of Mother Nature, and if summer heat is preventing you from going outside, you can bring nature inside your

home. Decorate your abode with plants and flowers -- real, painted, or printed. Add some funk with colours. Mix and match different colours from a colour palette to create a vibrant, funky scheme. It gives you an energy boost every time you enter through the door.

Change the curtains
Gauzy panels not only add privacy and shield you from the sun, but they also keep away mosquitoes

and other insects that breed during the summer season.

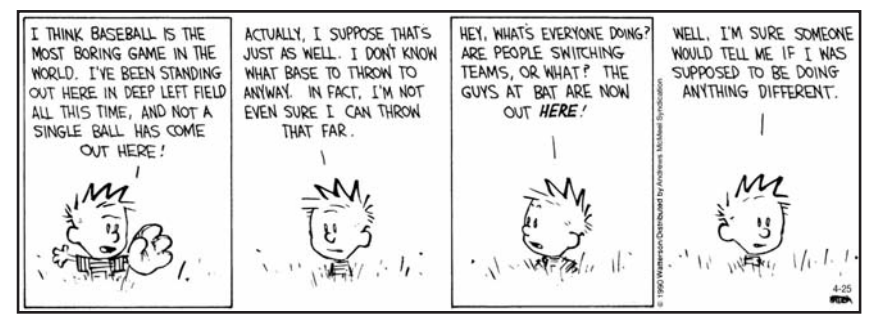
Paint your furniture
Summertime means that you'll be sitting outside a lot -- maybe on a porch or a terrace or a verandah. If your patio furniture looks worn out, don't worry. Just grab a brush and a bucket of paint -- and voila! Make sure to pick out light, cool colours to enjoy the authentic summer vibe.

Use mirrors to create space
If you live in a metropolitan area and are running short of space, try hanging a mirror or two on your walls. Mirrors create an illusion of space and can make the surroundings feel more open and welcoming. You can either use these tips as guidelines or you can embark on an adventure by letting loose your creativity. Sky is the limit.

PEANUTS



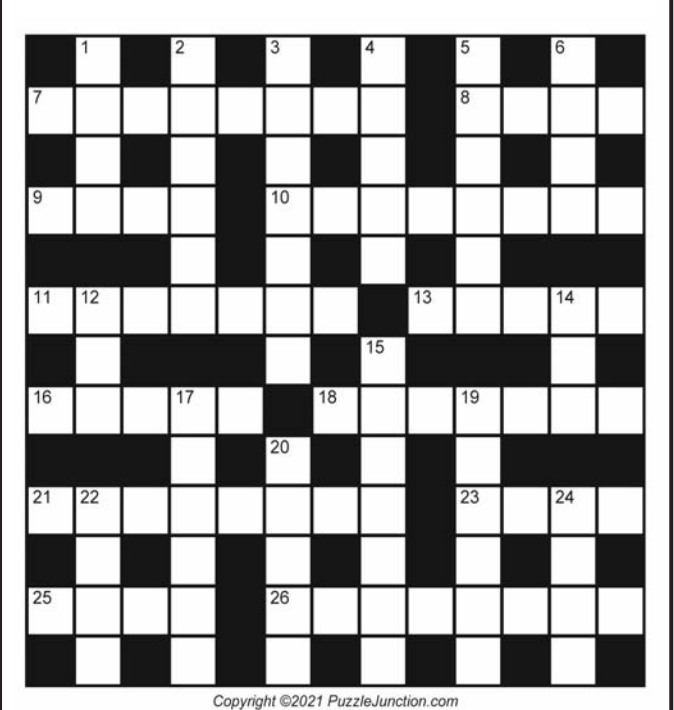
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



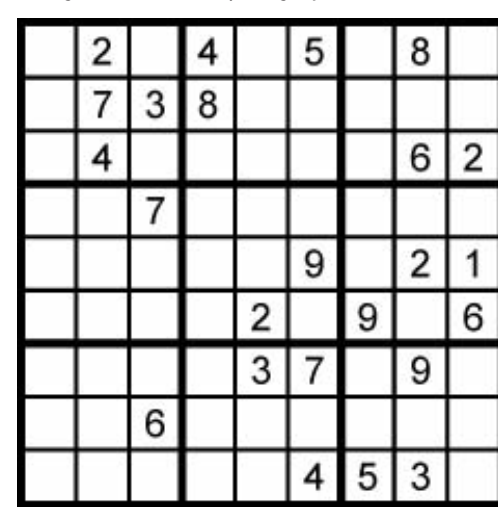
FUN post CROSSWORD



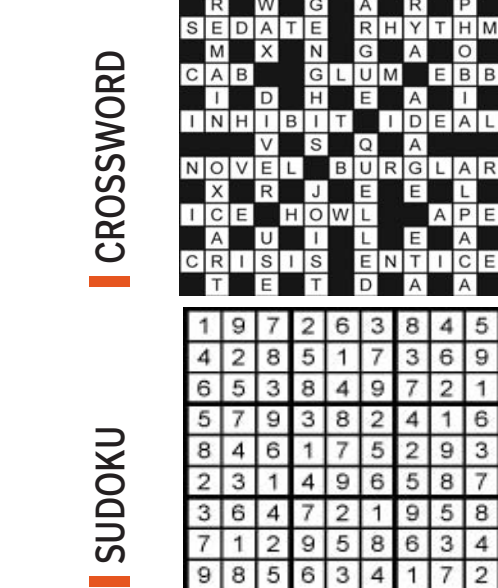
- Across**
- 7 Anteater
 - 8 Mini-whirlpool
 - 9 Sloughs
 - 10 Musical events
 - 11 Old World monkey
 - 13 Kitchen appliance
 - 16 Coffee order
 - 18 Ritzy
 - 21 Hawaiian volcano (5,3)
 - 23 Narrow margin of victory
 - 25 Harbinger
 - 26 Fish tank
- Down**
- 1 Make cookies
 - 2 Ukrainian port
 - 3 Enmity
 - 4 Tropical lizard
 - 5 Echo
 - 6 Mine entrance
 - 12 Lumberjack's tool
 - 14 Delivery vehicle
 - 15 Express an opinion (5,2)
 - 17 Shade provider
 - 19 Introverts
 - 20 Loose outer garment
 - 22 Zenith
 - 24 Knock for a loop

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



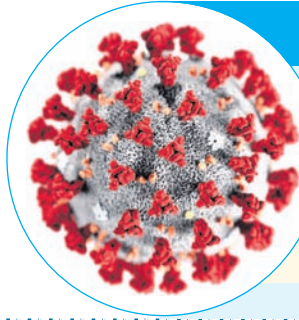
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



SUMMER-SAULT

Children enjoying a bath at Bindusagar tank in Bhubaneswar as the city witnesses scorching heat, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

| | INFECTED | RECOVERED | DEAD |
|--------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| World | 14,38,89,269 | 12,21,77,845 | 30,62,707 |
| India | 1,56,16,130 | 1,32,76,039 | 1,82,553 |
| Odisha | 3,82,315 | 3,51,386 | 1,958 |

10-fold jump in Covid cases since April 1

ODISHA REPORTS 4,851 NEW CASES OF CORONAVIRUS, 5 MORE FATALITIES

PNN/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 21: Odisha recorded 4,851 new Covid-19 cases Wednesday, the highest one-day count so far, a Health department official said.

Since April 1, there has been an over 10-fold jump in the number of daily coronavirus cases in the eastern state, he said.

On April 1, the coastal state registered 461 new Covid-19 cases.

The coronavirus caseload in the state now stands at 3,82,315 while the death toll has risen to 1,958 with five fresh fatalities.



ported from Nuapada, and one each from Cuttack, Mayurbhanj and Sundargarh districts.

The number of active Covid-19 cases in the state is 30,927, and 3,49,377 patients have recovered so far.

The state has tested over 97.06 lakh samples for Covid-19, including 33,548 Tuesday, while Odisha's positivity rate stands at 3.94 per cent.

Meanwhile, Directorate of Medical Education & Training (DMET) chief CBK Mohanty indicated that the second wave of the pandemic might hit the peak between the end of April and first

week of May in Odisha.

Mohanty said that the state government is fully prepared to meet any health exigencies and clarified that there is no shortage of oxygen stock for Covid-19 patients so far in the state.

The state government, he said, is gradually increasing beds for Covid-19 patients. "Temporary Medical Camps (TMC) have been created at block level to keep the migrants who are returning to the state in isolation. Covid Care Homes (CCH) and dedicated Covid Hospitals have also become operational in almost all the districts," official sources said.

DGP REVIEWS ENFORCEMENT

Director general of police (DGP) Abhay reviewed the ongoing enforcement drive and implementation of night curfew, weekend shutdown, functioning of border check posts and preparedness to ramp up police assistance further to tackle Covid-19. Abhay also reviewed the border sealing arrangement at Sindhi Kaliari Chaka on Chhattisgarh border. Two platoons force have been deployed for Covid enforcement duty in the district. The border check point at Sindhi Kaliari Chaka has been established to check interstate movement between Odisha and Chhattisgarh. Two border check points at Jonk Bridge and Kusum Jore have also been established to check interstate movement between Odisha and Chhattisgarh.



SWEEPING SECOND WAVE

KHURDA DISTRICT RECORDED THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF FRESH CASES AT 703, FOLLOWED BY SUNDARGARH (516) AND NUAPADA (486)

OF THE FIVE FATALITIES, 2 WERE REPORTED FROM NUAPADA, AND 1 EACH FROM CUTTACK, MAYURBHANJ AND SUNDARGARH DISTRICTS

THE STATE HAS TESTED OVER 97.06 LAKH SAMPLES FOR COVID-19, INCLUDING 38,548 TUESDAY

Of the new cases detected in all the 30 districts of the state, 2,814 were reported from quarantine centres and the remaining during contact tracing.

The coastal state Tuesday had registered 4,761 new cases.

Khurda district recorded the maximum number of fresh cases at 703, followed by Sundargarh (516) and Nuapada (486).

Ten other districts reported more than 100 new cases. They are Bargarh (318), Cuttack (304), Puri (223), Jharsuguda (290), Bolangir (227), Nabarangpur (194), Sambalpur (171), Keonjhar (166), Ganjam (151) and Angul (111).

Khurda has so far registered a record number of over 60,000 Covid positive cases while Cuttack reported over 31,000 cases followed by both Ganjam and Sundargarh district registering more than 22,000 cases.

"Regret to inform the demise of five numbers of Covid positive patients while under treatment in hospitals," the Health and Family Welfare department tweeted.

Of the five fatalities, two were re-

Flying squad inspects drug houses, hosps

BHUBANESWAR: The flying squad comprising drug inspectors, officials of Crime Branch, Special Task Force and local police conducted inspections at four medicine stores of Baripada in Mayurbhanj district, one drug firm at Old College Lane, Nimchoudi in Cuttack and two hospitals in Bhubaneswar Wednesday.

Inspection was also carried out in Puri, Jajpur, Angul and other places. They verified the records and stocks of entry and supply of Covid-19 medicines and related items. They collected the distribution details and directed the medical firms/hospitals to submit daily updates on the distribution of Covid-19 drugs.



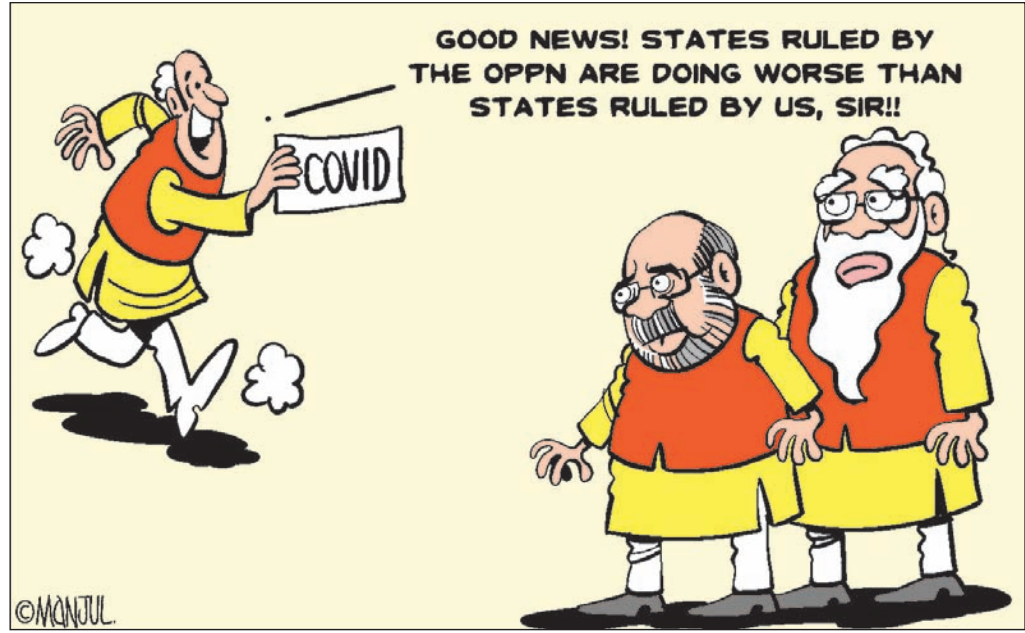
Inspection was carried out in Puri, Jajpur, Angul and other places. They verified the records and stocks of entry and supply of Covid-19 medicines

To prevent hoarding and black marketing of Covid medicines in the state, the state level committee comprising ADGP, Crime as Chairman and Joint Secretary, Health department and Drugs Controller as members, has been formed by the state government. The committee has constituted seven flying squads in Cuttack-

Bhubaneswar and 15 in remaining parts of the state.

ADGP, Crime reviewed the enforcement drive. A sharp vigil has been mounted on the supply chain of essential medical supplies and strong action under criminal laws will be taken against anyone indulging in hoarding, black marketing or any illegal acts.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



GOOD NEWS! STATES RULED BY THE OPPN ARE DOING WORSE THAN STATES RULED BY US, SIR!!

BMC set to discourage dine-ins at restaurants

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: With the Covid-19 situation worsening in the state capital, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), as per the state government's order, is all set to discourage dine-ins at city restaurants and hotels to avoid congregations and further spread of the virus.

Announcing the weekend shutdowns for all urban areas of Odisha April 19, the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) had mentioned that hotels, restaurants will not allow outside persons (other than their in-house resident guests) to dine-in as part of the Covid-19 protocol. Accordingly, the civic authorities have decided to enforce the guideline from this week, sources said.

"Enforcement squads will be formed and raids will be conducted on hotels and restaurants who continue providing dine-in services. However, they can serve takeaways to customers, buyers and clients. The hotels can take online orders and deliver takeaway food to the customers," said a senior BMC official.

Though the civic body is yet to issue any official order in this regard, the officials of the BMC will hold discussions with the owners of popular hotels and restaurants and intimate them about the same, said the official.

It can be mentioned here that



Enforcement squads will be formed and raids will be conducted on hotels and restaurants who would continue the dine-in services

the state government had earlier allowed restaurants to operate at 50 per cent capacity.

Meanwhile, detailing the hospital bed strength in the state capital, BMC Commissioner, Prem Chandra Chaudhary said the city has 1,317 beds now. "SUM hospital is functioning with 771 beds, Hi-tech hospital with 246, Aditya Aswini hospital with 200 and Nilachal hospital with 100 beds. Health institutes like Blue Wheel, KIIMS, KIDS and SPARSH are expected to add more beds to meet the requirements," he added.

SJTA opens Covid Care Centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, April 21: The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) Wednesday opened a 120-bed Covid Care Centre (CCC) here for treatment of coronavirus patients as 50 people, including 22 servants of the temple, have tested positive for the infection, an official said.

The CCC is being operated from Nilachal Bhakta Niwas campus on Grand Road here and each bed is having oxygen support, SJTA chief Krishan Kumar said.

To start with, 50 infected persons linked to the temple have been admitted to the CCC. They comprise 22 servants and their family members, 19 staff of shoe stand and nine staff of SJTA.

Kumar said an ambulance is kept ready at the CCC to shift any patient to the referral Covid-19 hospital in case of exigency. This apart, the CCC is stocked with all medicines and other logistics to treat the patients.

The SJTA chief also said that apart from the servants, arrangements have been made to vaccinate the carpenters, painters, tailors and others to be engaged in making the wooden chariots of the Lords for the annual Rath Yatra.

Join nCoV duty or face music, govt warns docs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: The state government Wednesday warned the doctors, who are reluctant to join Covid duty, of disciplinary action if they fail to comply with the orders of their posting at Covid facilities.

Issued by the Directorate of Medical Education and Training (DMET), a notification in this regard said that "erring" doctors could be punished under the provisions of Disaster Management Act, 2005 and the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002.



"It is seen that in the present Covid-19 pandemic, which has been declared as a national disaster, a number of doctors who have been temporarily posted for management of Covid-19 in different districts are not joining their places of posting, putting hardship on the part of district administration in the latter's preparedness and fight against the Covid-19," the DMET order read.

The notification further read, "Under the circumstances, all doctors who have been issued deployment order under different CDMOs and PHOs are directed to join their places of deployment immediately in public interest, failing which action as deemed proper under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and Section 7 of Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002 will be taken."

53.59 lakh inoculated against deadly virus

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: The coverage of Covid-19 vaccine in the state Wednesday crossed the 53 lakh mark with the ongoing inoculation drive expanding across the state.

The state government claimed that till date a total of 53,59,794 people of Odisha have been vaccinated against the pandemic.

The Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department was able to vaccinate a total of 1,02,407 persons Wednesday.

The drive was undertaken through 889 active vaccine sites across the state. The state has around 1,500 vaccination centres.

The government said the state was left with a stock of 2,63,600 Covishield and 1,96,050 Covaxin doses by 8pm, Wednesday. According to the government's announcement

for Thursday's vaccination drive, the exercise will be carried out at 714 centres across the state which is around 47 per cent of the total capacity of vaccination centres.

According to the Health department data, till now altogether 69,663 persons above the age of 45 years have received their first dose while 29,669 persons have taken their second dose.

In the vaccination drive undertaken Wednesday, the state government administered a total of 94,780 Covishield and 7,627 Covaxin shots.

According to the government, a total of 93.9 per cent of the health care workers in the state have received their first dose and 95.9 per cent got their second dose.

Similarly, 96 per cent of frontline workers have received their first dose and 88.8 per cent received their second dosage.

LIFE IS PRECIOUS



Security personnel stand guard in front of the Ram Mandir in Bhubaneswar to prevent devotees' entry into the shrine on the occasion of Ram Navami, Wednesday. The temple has been shut for people as per Covid-19 guidelines

BJP URGES GOVT TO RAMP UP TESTING IN STATE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: Criticising the state government over Covid-19 management, the state unit of BJP Wednesday urged the state government to enhance the daily testing to identify positive cases in early stage.

Speaking to media persons here, senior BJP leader Prithviraj Harichandan said, "Covid infection rate is rapidly increasing in many parts of the country and also in Odisha. While many states have substantially increased the tests, state government is in deep slum-

ber. The rate of testing in Odisha has not gone up as compared to the last year."

Due to less testing in rural areas, people remain untreated and the infection is spreading, he said, adding that people are visiting hospitals in critical condition and facing trouble.

Measures similar to the first wave need to be undertaken at PHC, CHC and other facilities, the BJP leader suggested.

"We hope that the state government would realise the gravity of the situation and ramp up testing. If the government adopts a



The saffron party seeks clarification about use of 567 ventilators the Centre had provided to Odisha last year

trivial approach on Covid management, people of the state will

suffer," he warned. On the availability of medical

oxygen, Harichandan said though the state government claims that there is adequate stock, it should come up with the details of the stock at present.

Stating that the Centre had provided 567 ventilators to Odisha last year; he asked the state government to clarify whether these ventilators are in use or not.

On opening of isolation facilities for Covid patients, the saffron party leader said the state government, unlike last year, has not opened many temporary medical centres (TMCs). The state government still advises people to remain

in home isolation which is not possible for a poor family as they do not have adequate rooms, he added.

BJD spokesperson Sulata Deo, in her reaction, said, "The Prime Minister and Chief Minister are willing to work together to contain the spread of the virus. However, the state BJP leaders are indulged in petty politics."

Instead of giving proper suggestions to the state government and engaging themselves in the fight against the pandemic, the BJP leaders are criticising the government which is grossly unfortunate, she said.

Check entry of paddy from other states, DMs told

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: Learning a lesson from the last kharif procurement season, the state government has directed the Collectors of various bordering districts to check entry of paddy from Chhattisgarh and other neighbouring states into Odisha.

Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare (FS&CW) secretary VV Yadav has recently written to the Collectors of 17 districts, where paddy procurement for rabi season would begin from first week of May. The districts are: Balasore, Bargarh, Bolangir, Boudh, Cuttack, Jajpur, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Khurda, Koraput, Mayurbhanj, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Puri, Rayagada, Sambalpur and Sonepur. The Collectors were asked to conduct patrolling in the bordering areas regularly so that paddy from Chhattisgarh and other neighbouring states does not enter Odisha.

Paddy procurement activities will be conducted through 830 societies in the 17 districts. The paddy will be procured from 7am to 1pm every day while lifting of paddy will be done in the second half.

In view of the prevailing Covid-19 situation, the Collectors were asked to take steps to ensure staggered procurement, opening of adequate procurement centres to disperse the procurement operations, social distancing, and maintaining hygiene at procurement centres.

The web-based SMS system, which was already implemented in previous procurement seasons, will continue during the Rabi season too.

The government has asked the officials concerned to disallow more than 35 farmers to the premises of paddy procurement centres (PPCs) in a day. The farmers will be han-

PROCUREMENT BLUES



FS&CW secretary VV Yadav has recently written to the Collectors of 17 districts, where paddy procurement for rabi season would begin from first week of May

The districts are: Balasore, Bargarh, Bolangir, Boudh, Cuttack, Jajpur, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Khurda, Koraput, Mayurbhanj, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Puri, Rayagada, Sambalpur and Sonepur

The Collectors were asked to conduct patrolling in the bordering areas regularly so that paddy from Chhattisgarh and other neighbouring states does not enter Odisha

bled in a lot of 10-12 each and time frame will be given accordingly. In case of more number of farmers coming to the mandis, more number of PPCs will be opened.

The Collectors were asked to maintain social distancing, proper hygiene and enforcement of all Covid-19 norms at the mandis.

During kharif season, the state government faced severe criticisms and was blamed for failing to procure the entire paddy from the mandis. The issue dominated the last Budget session of the Assembly. Even, a BJP member tried to drink sanitiser in the House over the issue.

Rudra starts door-to-door campaign for Pipli byelection

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pipli, April 21: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) candidate for Pipli bypoll, Rudra Pratap Maharathy, Wednesday carried out door-to-door campaign at several villages of the Assembly segment.

The BJD nominee carried out the campaign in strict adherence to Covid-19 norms. Earlier, BJD supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had announced that the regional party would not hold any mega public meeting or rally for the bypoll in the wake of recent surge in Covid-19 cases in state.

The BJD nominee carried out door-to-door campaign at Baulachowka, Gandasahi, Kajisahi, Chakasolan, Jopana and a few other villages of Pipli.



“The Chief Minister has said that every life is precious for us. We cannot organise public meetings and rallies by putting the lives of people in danger. Today, I carried out door-to-door campaign by maintaining social distance and other Covid norms. I also urged people to follow the guidelines laid down by the government to defeat the deadly virus,” Rudra said.

It is worth mentioning here that Pipli Assembly seat has been lying vacant after the death of BJD MLA Pradeep Maharathy last year. The BJD has fielded Pradeep's son Rudra for the bypoll.

The byelection was scheduled to be held April 17. However, it was rescheduled for May 13 following the death of Congress nominee Ajit Mangaraj due to Covid-19.

NARASINGHA TESTS POSITIVE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: Days after the Leader of Opposition Pradipta Naik tested positive for Covid-19, senior Congress leader Narasingha Mishra was Wednesday tested positive for the virus.

Taking to Twitter, the former Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly Wednesday said that he tested positive for the virus and asked persons who came in his contact to get themselves tested.

“Tested positive for COVID-19 today. Anyone in close contact in the past few days please get tested,” he said on Twitter.

Earlier, his party senior leader Rahul Gandhi tested positive whom Mishra had wished speedy recovery. The party's Pipli candidate Ajit Mangaraj had also tested positive for the deadly virus and succumbed to the infection recently.

None from Mangaraj family keen to fight bypoll: Sura

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: Congress leader Suresh Routray Wednesday told the media persons that the family members of late Congress leader Ajit Mangaraj have decided not to contest the Pipli bypoll citing the recent deaths of their kin.

“We had hoped that the wife of Ajit could have been a good candidate for the Pipli bypoll. But his bereaved family has informed that they do not want any of his family members nominated for the byelection. We are now thinking about the candidature of other persons. We also do not want them to force them,” he said.

The Congress leader said that Mangaraj's wife was not meeting people. “His brother has told us about the decision of the family. There were high chances of the

After proper scrutiny, a candidate will be given the party ticket and the nomination will be filed by Monday, says Jatni MLA Sura Routray

Congress party winning the election if she could have fought the election. But now there will not be any looking back and the new candidate interested to fight the poll would get the ticket,” he said.

“Moreover, nomination is also not an easy process and the Congress ticket is available very easily for any candidate. After proper scrutiny another candidate will be given the party ticket and the nomination will be filed by Monday,” the Jatni legislator added.

RATH YATRA AHEAD



A priest consecrates three logs meant for construction of chariots ahead of the world-famous Rath Yatra in Puri at the state-run sawmill in Cuttack's Khapurja, Wednesday

Central University felicitates CAG

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: The Central University of Odisha (CUO) felicitated the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India and former first Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Girish Chandra Murmu at his New Delhi office Wednesday.

Central University of Odisha officials—assistant engineer Padmalochan Swain and PS to VC Jitendra Panda, on behalf university Vice-Chancellor I Ramabrahmam—visited the office of the CAG and felicitated him

CUO officials Asst. Engineer Padmalochan Swain and PS to VC Jitendra Panda, on behalf university Vice-Chancellor I Ramabrahmam, visited the office of the CAG and felicitated him. During the visit, they highlighted various development activities of the university. The CAG, while appreciating the academic endeavors of the university, assured all-round support to the development of the CUO.

The government had appointed Murmu as the new CAG a day after he resigned as the Lt Governor of Jammu and Kashmir.

Murmu succeeded Rajiv Mehrishi, a 1978-batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre who completed his term August 7, 2020.

Murmu was recently given honorary doctorate degree (honoris causa) at the 50th convocation ceremony of Utkla University by Vice President Venkaiah Naidu. Murmu, who is also the chairman of the panel of external auditors of the United Nations, has completed his post-graduation in political science from Utkal University

DCPOs asked to prevent child marriages

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: The Women and Child Development (W&CD) department has directed all district child protection officers (DCPOs) to sensitise people about protection of child rights by preventing child marriages.

In a letter, W&CD joint secretary Geetanjali Patnaik said that the department has recently received a letter from National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) saying that this year Akshaya Tritiya will be celebrated May 14, 2021. “They have requested us to prevent the occurrence of child marriages on this day and protect the child rights in a proactive manner,” said Patnaik.

The department directed the DCPOs to organise meetings and conferences in compliance with Covid-19 norms at village levels

The W&CD dept directed the DCPOs to organise meetings and conferences in compliance with Covid-19 norms at village levels from May 1 to 15 to spread awareness about prevention of child marriages

The DCPOs should utilise funds received under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) and Biju Kanya Ratna (BKR) schemes for this purpose to safeguard rights of the children and submit utilisation certificates to the department

from May 1 to 15 to spread awareness about prevention of child marriages.

The child welfare committees may be kept vigilant during this period.

The DCPOs should utilise funds received under Beti Bachao Beti



Padhao (BBBP) and Biju Kanya Ratna (BKR) schemes for this purpose to safeguard rights of the children and submit utilisation certificates to the department.

The NCPCR is a statutory body constituted under the provisions

Solemnisation of child marriages and mass marriages on a large scale on auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya has been a common practice in past years. It is a matter of concern that despite strict legal provisions in place, child marriages are being solemnised on Akshaya Tritiya every year

NCPCR OBSERVATION

of the Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005 for the protection of child rights and other related matters.

The NCPCR had observed that Akshaya Tritiya is celebrated in various parts of India as a day of good fortune to establish new businesses, new partnerships and new marriages. “Solemnisation of child marriages and mass marriages on a large scale on auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya has been a common practice in past years. It is a matter of concern that despite strict legal provisions in place, child marriages are being solemnised on Akshaya Tritiya every year,” the apex child rights body observed.

The commission requested the state government to direct all District Magistrates or Collectors, Deputy Inspectors General/SPs, sarpanches, civil society organisations and child marriage prohibition officers and child welfare committee of the respective states/UTs to take proactive steps and preventive measures to stop child marriages.

FIR lodged against IAS officer over pet walking in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: A case has been registered against an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer for allegedly abusing and thrashing a pet owner in Bhubaneswar following a quarrel over dog walking Wednesday.

The incident reportedly took place at Anandbazar lane of Sahid Nagar area here. Victim Kalucharan Parida lodged an FIR in this regard against IAS officer VV Yadav at Sahid Nagar police station, sources said.

He unleashed his pet dog at me when I questioned if my pet had caused any loss to him. As I struggled to protect myself from the dog attack, Yadav kicked me and I fell down and sustained injuries

KALUCHARAN PARIDA | COMPLAINANT

In his complaint, Parida, a Class IV employee in the Public Health department, alleged that the IAS officer lost his cool when the former was taking his pet for a walk in front of the latter's residence in the morning.

“I always take my pet for a walk on that route. Today, when I was walking with my pet, all of a sudden Yadav yelled at me. He told me not to walk my pet in front of his gate,” Parida alleged.

“He unleashed his pet dog at me when I questioned if my pet had caused any loss to him. As I struggled to protect myself from the dog attack, Yadav kicked me and I fell down and sustained injuries,” Parida added.

Bhubaneswar DCP Umashankar Dash said, “We are looking into the matter.” The IAS officer was unavailable for comments on the allegations against him.

Boudh hottest dist with 42 degrees C

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: Recording a maximum temperature of 42 degrees Celsius, Boudh town in western Odisha became the hottest place of the state Wednesday.

As per data provided by the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre, at least six places including Boudh witnessed a maximum day temperature of 40 degrees or above.

The other places which recorded 40 degrees or above are: Angul (41.7 degrees), Sonepur (41 degrees), Talcher (40.1 degrees), Titlagarh (40 degrees) and Baripada (40 degrees).

Twin city of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack recorded 39.2 degrees and 37.6 degrees respectively

The Met Centre said the prevailing weather condition will con-



At least six places including Boudh witnessed a maximum day temperature of 40 degrees or above

tinue in the state for next four to five days. Light to moderate rain may occur at a few places till April 26, said the weatherman.



The Rukuna Rath of Lord Lingaraj being pulled to the Mausi Maa temple in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday. The chariot pulling was halted midway, Tuesday, as the night set in

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IRREGULARITIES IN PMAY AND MGNREGS

Six officials including BDO served show-cause notices



FILE PHOTO

During the probe, it was learnt that Shergad-Budulibahal road has been included in Pradhan Mantri Sadak Yojana, but the project has been included in MGNREGS. Villagers pointed out that funds sanctioned for the road project under MGNREGS have been misappropriated through false bills twice

A group of job card holders such as Premananda Mahakur, Babaji Mahakur, Harihar Gaigaria, Duryodhan Mahakur and Netrananda Pradhan alleged that they had worked in MGNREGS projects for 59 days, but their wages have not been cleared

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, April 21: Large-scale irregularities are being allegedly committed in rural housing and MGNREGS projects in Birmaharajpur block of Subarnapur district thanks to lack of administrative monitoring. Officials at the grassroots level are involved in the irregularities, leading to failure in successful implementation of welfare and developmental schemes. Owing to irregularities in PMAY (Rural) and MGNREGS, the district administration has served notices on six officials including

the BDO. According to reports, PD (DRDA) Dolamani Patel got evidence of irregularities in the PMAY and MGNREGS at Sangrampur village. Patel has issued show cause notices to the Birmaharajpur BDO, the block executive engineer, APO, panchayat executive officer, GPDA and GRS. These officials have been asked to clarify within seven days. The PD has warned of stern action if replies are not sent within a week. Some villagers had drawn attention towards irregularities in the PMAY and the MGNREGS.

2 held in crusher unit blast deaths

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 21: Two days after a blast at a crusher unit claimed the lives of two persons and rendered three critical in Kukudakhandi in Ganjam district, police arrested its proprietor and the manager, Wednesday. The accused was identified as proprietor Susant Kumar Rout of Daluasahi under Sadar police limits and manager Amitabachchan Bisoyi of Raghunathpur under Badagad police limits. The two were produced in court which remanded them to judicial custody, SI Jyoti Prakash Behera, the investigating officer from Sadar police station said. Rout was running the unit in the name of wife Anupama Rout. Anupama and two explosive suppliers Rama Krushna and Shankar Prasad Sahu, both siblings, are absconding. Earlier, police had registered a case over a complaint filed by Kukudakhandi tehsildar Ipsita Priyadarshini Mishra.

IN DEEP WATER



A large tract of farmlands and houses of some locals inundated following a breach in the Tamasa left canal embankment under Poteru irrigation project in MV-2 village of Malkangiri district, Wednesday OP PHOTO

Fake certificates: 5 more teachers sacked

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, April 21: Cases of teachers having got jobs on the basis of forged documents are being increasingly detected in Kalahandi district. Following a High Court order, five teachers have been dismissed from jobs. Following a directive from Collector D Gavali Parag Harsad, district education officer Sushant Chopdar had earlier dismissed 25

CERTIFICATES OF 121 TEACHERS SENT TO EDUCATION DEPARTMENT FOR VERIFICATION

teachers who had grabbed jobs on the basis of fake documents and certificates. "Again five more teachers were caught with forged certificates. They were sacked from service," said the DEO. It may be noted here that teachers were recruited in the district

in 2003-04. However, many of them had furnished fake certificates. The jobs of three of the five teachers (who were sacked from jobs now) had been regularized while two were on contractual basis. The education department has filed FIRs against the five teachers. It is said that more teachers are

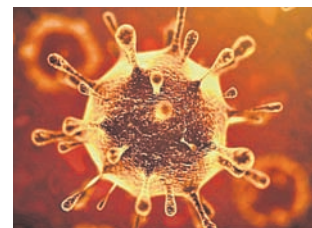
likely to be caught with fake certificates as certificates of 121 teachers have been sent to the education department for verification. Various outfits have demanded an impartial into illegalities in teachers' recruitment. A few days ago, 25 physical education instructors and arts instructors were caught with forged certificates. Nine of the fake teachers were detected in Junagarh block amid allegations about illegalities in the recruitment.

Covid-19 playing havoc in Kalahandi

5 die in as many days; rate of infection is fast increasing

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, April 21: The second wave of Covid-19 has been playing havoc in Kalahandi district. As infection cases due to the second strain have been spiraling, five people have reportedly died in five days in the district. A spurt in Covid cases and casualties has left people and the administration worried. According to reports, from March 18 to April 18, the district has recorded deaths of 17 Covid-infected people. However, unofficial sources said the number of Covid casualties as officially shown could be more. Various outfits have demanded that there is a need for a special investigation in the Covid casualties that have happened in various Covid hospitals and in home isolations. On the other hand, violation of Covid safety guidelines by people has hastened the rate of infections in some areas. A dozen of people died due to



Covid-19 April 14 while a 49-year old resident of Laxmipur under this block died April 15. Two people died April 17 at Junagarh Covid hospital. A 45-year old of Kamathana village succumbed to Covid. In the last three days, the district has lost four people in different areas. However, CDMO Pratap Behera said seven people have died due to the second wave at Kalahandi Covid hospital. Reports said, people are panicked in the areas where Covid deaths have been reported. The administration has intensified steps to enforce Covid safety guidelines amid imposition of night curfew in urban areas.

4 killed in jumbo attacks

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh/Bolangir, April 21: At least four persons were killed Wednesday in separate incidents of jumbo attacks in the state. All were trampled to death by wild tuskers, a source said. In the first incident, three persons including an elderly man were killed by the pachyderms while the former were attending the call of nature in the wee hours of Wednesday at Umarad village under Gaisilet block of Bargarh district. According to forest department sources, the deceased were identified as Mala Seth, 50, Biranchi Kumbhar, 60, and Natha Pali, 70, all of whom belonged to Umarad village. On being informed by local villagers, a team of police and forest officials immediately rushed to the spot. Police have registered a case in this connection and launched a



probe, a police official said. "Tension has gripped the village following the three tragic incidents. Local villagers have demanded adequate compensation for the kin of the deceased persons. In the second incident, a local farmer was trampled to death at Darlipali village under Loisingha police limits in Bolangir district. The deceased was identified as Biranchi Sahu, 42. Biranchi had gone to his farmland early in the morning. As he was watching a herd of elephants who were wandering in the area, he was attacked and trampled to death.

■ Tension flared up at Umarad village under Gaisilet block following the three tragic incidents. Villagers demanded adequate compensation for the kin of the deceased persons
■ In the second incident, a local farmer was trampled to death at Darlipali village under Loisingha police limits in Bolangir district. The deceased was identified as Biranchi Sahu, 42.

DGP reviews anti-Mao op in W Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir/Bhawanipatna, April 21: DGP Abhay visited various parts of Bolangir and Kalahandi districts Wednesday. Apart from taking stock of the ongoing anti-Maoist operations, the DGP reviewed various measures and arrangements made for strict enforcement of Covid-19 norms in the region amid a spurt in the pandemic in western Odisha districts. He held a review meeting with SP Shrivani Vivek M, Collector Gavali Parag Harshad and senior police officials at Bhawanipatna reserve police. Talking to reporters, the DGP said he held a discussion with the



district SP and other senior police officials over enforcement of the norms with the cooperation of the public. Besides, there were discussions about Maoists and other law and order situations in the two districts. "Police are reinforcing the night

curfew and weekend curfew for the safety of the public. It is the responsibility of the police and they are receiving cooperation from the public throughout Odisha," he added. The DGP urged people to follow safety guidelines, maintain social

DGP also urged people to follow safety guidelines, maintain social distance, wear masks and cooperate with local administration to check the spread of Covid-19

distance, wear masks and cooperate with the government and local administration to check the spread of Covid-19. He also said that Maoists have no future. He urged the ultras to surrender themselves and return to the social mainstream.

Door-to-door screening begins in Ganjam

Chhatrapur: As Covid-19 cases are fast increasing in Ganjam, the administration has lunched door-to-door screening of people, a report said. A total of 112 teams, comprising ANM, Anganwadi and ASHA workers have been formed for the screening. They have started visiting houses to carry out thermal screening, check oxygen level in body and other symptoms of the virus. "The screening will continue for 10 days. We are also preparing a database of migrants and keeping a check on their health," said an official. The district administration has sought cooperation of people for smooth conduct of the drive. The administration also requested people not to hide if they have symptoms and follow all Covid-19 norms. Notably, the district administration had conducted door-to-door screening of residents in Berhampur seven times during the first wave of the pandemic.

Honey harvesting hums threat to Bhitarkanika forest land

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, April 21: Illegal honey business in Bhitarkanika National Park has resulted in forest fire and destruction of hundreds of acres of forest land, casuarina and mangrove forests in last four years, a report said. Forest fires have been reported from 11 places in Bhitarkanika over last four years. The matter came to the fore after extinguished fire brands, sacks and match boxes were recovered by officials while they were carrying out investigation. Destruction of four acre of forest land in Barunei jungle in April 2018 is a case in point. Even as this area is a completely deserted land, match boxes, fire brands and sacks were lying in the forest. Locals alleged that two forest fires that occurred in parts of the



forests under Mahakalapara block are due to illegal honey harvesting. Moreover, use of fire brands in honey harvesting has led to a decline in honeybee population which if not checked might spell danger for the eco-system.

Reports said people engaged in illegal honey business regularly visit jungles in Bhitarkanika and harvest honey by showing fire brands near beehives. The collection takes place between April and May when hun-

Dense forest spread over 145 sqkm in Bhitarkanika is famous for wild honey and boasts of a record 480 quintals of honey collection in a year. The craze for honey harvesting is the reason behind destruction of forest land

dreds of honey traders flock the forest for honey harvesting. Environmentalists Hemant Kumar Rout, Ashok Kumar Swain, Prabhu Prasad Mohapatra and Sk Chand claimed that the leftover fire brands are used by these traders in honey

harvesting. The Bhitarkanika National Park is spread over 672 sqkm and is known worldwide for its rich biodiversity. Out of this, 145 sqkm is covered by dense forest which is a prohibited zone for common people. This dense forest is filled with natural bounties. The area is famous for wild honey and boasts of a record 480 quintals of honey in a single year. The craze for honey harvesting among traders is the reason behind destruction of large tracts of forest in Bhitarkanika. These traders engage local people who without abiding by norms enter the forest to collect honey. They use fire brands to drive away bees. The smoke and the razing fire frighten the bees driving them to fly away. Later, they pull down the hives and collect the honey. They leave the

fire brands and other inflammables in the forest which later destroys the forest land. This has been going on for several years without the knowledge of the forest department. Locals claimed that the forest department should train interested residents in honey harvesting and protection of honey bees. This will help people get wild honey of Bhitarkanika at a reasonable price while the forest department will receive revenue. Over 5000 residents can become self-reliant through honey harvesting, they claimed. When contacted, DFO Bikash Ranjan Dash said no one has been given permission for honey harvesting in the prohibitory zone. He, however, said he would examine the proposal to train people in honey collection.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/21-22/E-Tender/07 Dt. 15.04.2021

(1) Tender No. e-Tender - HQ - KUR - 18 - 2021, Dt. 13.04.2021
DESCRIPTION : PROPOSED REPAIRS TO LEAKY ROOF OF STAFF QUARTERS AND SERVICE BUILDINGS OF ACCOUNTS, TRAFFIC, LOCO AND RETANG COLONY UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF SENIOR DIVISIONAL ENGINEER (HEAD QUARTER), KHURDA ROAD.
Approx Cost of the Work (₹): 156.83 Lakhs, Completion Period : 08 (Eight) Months.

(2) Tender No. e-Tender - HQ - KUR - 19 - 2021, Dt. 13.04.2021
DESCRIPTION : MISC. REPAIRS TO THE FLOORS, PLASTER, COLORING, PAINTING, SEWERAGE LINES, WASTE WATER DRAINS, KITCHEN, TOILET, DOORS & WINDOWS OF STAFF QUARTERS AT RETANG COLONY UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF SENIOR DIVISIONAL ENGINEER (HEAD QUARTER), KHURDA ROAD.
Approx Cost of the Work (₹): 158.27 Lakhs, Completion Period : 08 (Eight) Months.

(3) Tender No. e-Tender - CENT - KUR - 23 - 2021, Dt. 14.04.2021
DESCRIPTION : PROVISION OF LIMITED HEIGHT SUBWAY IN LIEU OF THE EXISTING MANNED LEVEL CROSSING NUMBER CT (34), CT (49) AND CT (60) IN BETWEEN RA JATHGARH TO MERAMANDALI STATIONS OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approx Cost of the Work (₹): 997.03 Lakhs, Completion Period : 10 (Ten) Months.

(4) Tender No. e-Tender - HQ - KUR - 20 - 2021, Dt. 13.04.2021
DESCRIPTION : PROPOSED MISC. REPAIRS TO MULTISTORIED STAFF QUARTERS AT ACCOUNTS COLONY UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF SENIOR DIVISIONAL ENGINEER (HEAD QUARTER), KHURDA ROAD.
Approx Cost of the Work (₹): 193.35 Lakhs, Completion Period : 11 (Eleven) Months.
Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1500 Hrs. of 05.05.2021 (For all the Tenders.)
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website <https://www.irps.gov.in>
Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / Corrigendum issued for this tender.
Divisional Railway Manager (Engg) / PR-35/M/21-22 Khurda Road

True knowledge is not attained by thinking. It is what you are; it is what you become.
SRI AUROBINDO



Our Unhappy Schools

There is a school for 400 children in Solan, Himachal, called Southvale: The World School. The school is run by young MBAs. The owner is Rishabh Chopra and the technical operations are under Snigdha Parihar. It emphasises on education, but more than that, a moral social code with compassion towards all. “We believe in raising a league of future generations that is socially, morally and intellectually awake.”

During the Covid lockdown they experimented by asking each one of their children to feed and foster street animals. Now they have made it mandatory for each child and staff member in the school to foster a stray animal, be it a dog, cow, cat or even birds. Their debates, elocution, research-station projects are centred around animals. The children are taught to save a little from their food and kitchen waste and keep the fostered animal fed. “To make this act sustainable and institutionalised, we have developed the ‘Log Book’ activity which is drawn from Charles Duhigg’s book ‘The Power of Habit’. It works on the basic principle of cue, routine and reward. The cue is a stray animal, the routine is feeding and logging the activity in a book. The reward is a mention of the student in the circular for parents, and a Facebook post with the picture of the child carrying out the deed.” The aim is to add love and compassion in society, to add meaning to human life and to pass on virtue to the kids who become the flag bearers of kindness.

The Yellow Train School in Coimbatore teaches organic farming and how to coexist with wild animals. Situated among green fields, orchard groves, cows and peacocks, the focus is more on the development of a child as part of a natural world, rather than on textbook lessons. The Marudam Farm School in Thiruvannamalai, founded in 2009, has the same approach. The students are involved in afforestation, organic farming, and in building an intimate relationship with nature. A lot of importance is given to arts and crafts, and sports as well. An education to bring about sensitive and intelligent human beings.

The Chirag School is in the village of Simayal in the Nainital district, Uttarakhand. Founded in 2006 by Kanai Lal, the teachers are college graduates from local communities, and the emphasis is on how to preserve the local culture and heritage of the Himalayas. Sumit Arora, the principal, takes children on field trips to understand nature, and importance of natural springs in the Himalayas. The children learn how to dispose of waste without burning it.

SECMOL was founded in 1988 near the village of Phey in the Indus Valley by Sonam Wangchuk, (on whom the film Three Idiots’ character, played by Aamir Khan, is based) with an entirely new education system. The SECMOL Campus is an eco-village where students, staff, and volunteers live, work and learn practical, environmental, social and traditional knowledge, values, and skills together. The campus is solar powered and solar heated; students learn ancient Ladakhi songs, dance and history, alongside modern academic knowledge.

In June 2016, Parmira Sarma and Mazin Mukhtar founded the Akshar School in Pamohi, Guwahati. From gardening skills, taking care of animals, understanding renewable energy, to utilising the power of technology this school shows us the kind of education we need now. Akshar School believes in the complete development of an individual, so that they can be citizens the world needs now. The school has a unique system of payment: those parents that have a problem with the fees can hand over plastic polythene bags and plastic waste as an equivalent. The school makes students pledge that they will not burn plastic.

Normal schools are now producing children that have lost all ties with nature. That means unhappy children who seek their whole lives for something that might make them happy – jobs, promotion, bigger cars and houses – only to realise that nothing works. We are producing children that are afraid of all other species, that rely on violence to get their way, that believe that the only good tree is the one that makes tooth picks. That is why our country is so unhappy, and each generation is getting unhappier.

If we could just emulate these schools and teach children that the meaning of happiness is to coexist and harmonise with nature, that happiness comes from not wanting but giving, that compassion is what makes the world go around, we might survive. We have all the technology we need to make children understand the world. Left to me I would make these things compulsory: 1) No leather in shoes or bags; 2) Each child has to plant 7 trees a year and look after them; 3) Each child has to show evidence that they look after animals in their area; 4) One hour every day watching National Geographic, and a new idea by a student in the school assembly every day on how to save the planet; 5) Very judicious use of paper, and certainly no plastic; 6) Common sharing of food without anyone knowing who brought it, so that there is no shaming of any child; 7) An organic garden in every school: if there is lack of space it could be in pots on the terrace. The children should bring in the seeds of all the fruit they eat, and a nursery could be made in the school; 8) An insistence on vegetarianism and giving the reasons why; 9) One hour a week on reading all the main religious texts of every religion, so that every child is familiar with the Puranas/Vedas/the Mahabharata/Ramayana/the Quran and the Bible, the books of the Jains and Buddhists; 10) No exams except the 10th and the 12th.

We teach Biology, but do we teach children to respect animals? Until I stopped it, Biology included killing frogs and mice in class. We teach Physics and Natural Sciences, but do we teach children how to protect the planet? Isn’t it more common to hear, ‘Stay away from the dog, it will bite’ rather than, ‘It’s hot, let’s keep a bowl of water for stray animals and birds?’

How many principals have the sense to adopt stray animals in the campus? Very few. Most of them have Indian dogs picked up by local municipalities and thrown away. So children learn that animals can be throwaways – like old clothes. All we teach children is how to be afraid, how to compete in an ugly manner, how to succeed at others’ expense, how to be the same as everyone else, how to get their way with brute strength. How to want, want and want, and take, take and take. Few children even understand the beauty of a starry sky, and practically no child has ever wondered where the stars went.

I was brought up with hours of moral science and that included respecting the world around me. My school had no exams, so I never learnt or wanted to compete, we never had any pocket money so money is something to be given to help others. I was taught to be innovative and independent and happy, and no matter what life has brought, my education has stood me in good stead. We should all send our children to Southvale.

To join the animal welfare movement contact gandhim@nic.in, www.peopleforanimalsindia.org

WORDSWORTH

Mooreffoc

This word is rare and is almost never used in its ostensible sense – relating to things suddenly seen in a new and different way – but only as a keyword to initiate discussion. But it has been keeping illustrious company, since its few appearances in print have been in works by GK Chesterton, JRR Tolkien and Charles Dickens. Dickens invented it, if that’s the right word. He mentions it in a fragment of his abandoned autobiography, when he describes his poverty-stricken youth: In the door there was an oval glass plate, with COFFEE-ROOM painted on it, addressed towards the street. If I ever find myself in a very different kind of coffee-room now, but where there is such an inscription on glass, and read it backward on the wrong side MOOR-EFFOC a shock goes through my blood.

ECONOMICS OF BIODIVERSITY

FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY



Dhanada K Mishra

TOLSTOY, RUSKIN AND ESPECIALLY GANDHI AMONG OTHERS SHOWED A PATH WELL BEFORE THE AGE OF THE ANTHROPOCENE WHICH HOLDS THE KEY TO THE FUTURE SURVIVAL OF MANKIND

In 2019, the treasury department of the UK government commissioned Prof. Sir Partha Dasgupta of Cambridge University to carry out a comprehensive global review of the economics of biodiversity. Coming on the heels of the IPCC’s ‘Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C’ and the onset of the global pandemic, the review couldn’t have been timed any better. With the delayed UN Biodiversity conference scheduled for later this year, the report assumes even greater significance. It was important that the scope of the review was global and the mandate was for an economic review commissioned by the treasury rather than the environment department. What ecologists and environmentalists have been saying since the 1970s finally had a willing ear among the economists mandated by policymakers in power worried about the future risks for global finance. It couldn’t have come any sooner!

Eminent persons from diverse domains have praised the report for its depth, vision, lucidity and courage to prescribe some tough yet much-needed action. The great naturalist Sir David Attenborough captured the crisis well in his foreword – “Today, we ourselves, together with the livestock we rear for food, constitute 96% of the mass of all mammals on the planet. Only 4% is everything else – from elephants to badgers, from moose to monkeys. We are destroying biodiversity the very characteristic that until recently enabled the natural world to flourish so abundantly. If we continue this damage, whole ecosystems will collapse. That is now a real risk.” The enormity of the crisis is established beyond doubt diligently and elaborately with a mountain of evidence drawn from the best of recent research in the Dasgupta review.

Among the almost near universal appreciation for the report, there were some voices of concern – particularly regarding the idea of treating nature as capital. It can be argued that this very idea of treating nature as an asset to be exploited was fundamentally the basis of wealth as defined by Adam

We currently need 1.6 earths to support the prevailing consumerist economy notwithstanding the abject disparity that exists among regions

Smith, who had conceptualised it without coining the term as such. Natural capital is defined as the idea of natural resource production independent of human intervention. It has been the source for extraction as well as the sink for dumping all of our waste to create much of our ‘produced’ and ‘human’ capital without ever its depreciation accounted for in the ledger. This free ride has been hailed and indeed the efficiency with which humans could exploit the natural capital was considered the hallmark of progress and civilization. Therefore, treating nature as ‘capital’ at par with other forms of ‘capital’ does raise the concern that fundamentally it would not help address the crux of the existential crisis faced by humanity.

The Dasgupta review is broadly divided into two major parts. The first part of the review is about establishing in rigorous yet accessible terms the journey to the precipice, particularly in the period starting 1970. The last 50 years have been epoch-making in human history in the way exponential change has taken place in a very short period. Global GDP per capita has increased about four times, average life expectancy from 49 to 76 years, absolute poverty has fallen from 60% to around 10% and so on. The list of human achievements is endless in the period we have come to know as the ‘Anthropocene’ – an age where the homo sapiens

have come to dominate nature in a way unprecedented in the history of life on earth. So much so that the ratio of our impact to the supply we take from nature in terms of ecosystem services has gone from about 1.0 to 1.6 over the same period. In other words, we currently need 1.6 earths to support the prevailing consumerist economy notwithstanding the abject disparity that exists among regions.

Articulating ecosystem services as natural capital, whose depreciation to be accounted for in the calculation of an alternative ‘green GDP or as some have started terming it Gross Ecosystem Product or GEP’ measurement is certainly an important idea. Any prudent portfolio manager would do so in order to mitigate the future risk of investment and clearly, the mandarins of global capitals are seriously concerned both on account of climate change and biodiversity loss. However, this is by no means an original or first of its kind proposition. The second part of the report consists of wide-ranging recommendations to arrest the rapid slide in the stock of natural capital. From the inequality between the human impact on the demand side and ecosystem services on the supply side, it is clear that all steps must be taken to reduce demand and increase supply. Enforcing new standards for reuse, recycling and disposal, imposing new taxes on unsustain-

able activity, and mandating global supply chains to adhere to environmental norms would be important to reduce demand. So also by boosting investment in women’s education and empowerment which has proven to reduce fertility rate to reduce population pressures. Given that it is far less expensive to conserve rather than restore natural ecosystems, substantial financial incentives must be put in place for communities to preserve life-giving forests, watersheds and mangroves and the like. Given that the poor are more directly dependent on nature, this will go a long way in addressing the economic disparity between the global north and south.

The world has a very poor record in meeting self-imposed targets, for example the 20 Aichi biodiversity targets agreed in Japan in 2010 to protect coral reefs, remove government subsidies that damage nature, and tackle pollution. It was the second consecutive decade that governments failed to meet targets. The Kunming summit may be humanity’s last chance to set ambitious goals. The Covid pandemic has shown that unimaginable action such as the complete shutdown of economies is possible in the face of imminent calamity as humanity responded with great alacrity. Hopefully, the Dasgupta review may be a key driver for such a massive response as warranted to ward off the biodiversity loss disaster.

Tolstoy, Ruskin and especially Gandhi among others showed a path well before the age of the Anthropocene which holds the key to the future survival of mankind. The natural next step for humanity is to consider a spiritual approach towards our treatment of nature. Our treatment of nature must transcend an asset-centric mindset to realise the true sanctity as the source of our very being, all life, living, consumption and well being. **The author, a Civil Engineer, academician and technologist, is currently serving as Technical Director in RaSpect Intelligence Inspection Limited, Hong Kong.**

SPECTRUM EARTH

Getting to zero deforestation in the Amazon



Ilona Szabó

DIEBACK IN THE AMAZON BASIN COULD RELEASE THE EQUIVALENT OF A DECADRE’S WORTH OF GLOBAL GREENHOUSE-GAS EMISSIONS

The Amazon Basin is fast approaching an irreversible tipping point. That should concern everyone, because what happens in the Amazon has planetary implications.

Spanning eight South American countries and French Guiana, the Amazon contains over 60 per cent of the world’s tropical forests, 20 per cent of its fresh water, and about 10 per cent of biodiversity. As a result of land speculation and insatiable global demand for meat, soy, gold, and other commodities, roughly 20 per cent of the world’s largest tropical forest has already been razed. A further 5 per cent rise in deforestation levels could trigger catastrophic dieback, essentially dooming the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

Some fear this process may already have started. The current prognosis is not good: Amazon deforestation in Brazil reached a 12-year high in 2020, and over 95 per cent of it is illegal. Unless governments and markets radically revalue the rainforest’s natural services, this nightmare scenario may be unavoidable.

Dieback in the Amazon Basin could release the equivalent of a decade’s worth of global greenhouse-gas emissions. The forest would also lose its ability to absorb

billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide, disrupting hydrological cycles, evapotranspiration, and ocean currents. The agro-industrial sector could collapse, and the loss of biodiversity could be staggering. Hydroelectric facilities would be shuttered, declining water tables would make cities unlivable, and fisheries would become unviable.

Preventing this outcome requires achieving zero deforestation in the Amazon by 2030. And that, in turn, requires a clearheaded scientific assessment and science-based targets. The Science Panel for the Amazon, a coalition of about 200 leading scientists from the region, should become permanent. And, given the extraordinary wealth potential of preserving the forest’s biodiversity, the best way to protect this resource is by stimulating the emergence of a green economy.

For starters, this will require a crackdown on illegal deforestation and the networks that sustain it. Brazil’s environmental enforcement agency, Ibama, handed out 20 per cent fewer fines in 2020 than in 2019, owing to funding cuts and reduced sanctions – and less than 3 per cent of fines are paid. Reinforcing Ibama, a federal agency, is essential, as is bolstering state-level institutions on the frontlines

of environmental crime, such as police, firefighters, and land registration offices.

Currently, two-thirds of global supply chains have no policies on illegal deforestation. Massive investment in high-resolution remote sensing and artificial intelligence-based alert systems is essential, as is tracking illegally extracted commodities in global supply chains and strengthening investigation and prosecution.

The Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation initiative could accelerate funding for such efforts. International financing from the Amazon Fund, US President Joe Biden’s administration, and tools such as green bonds would help, while local financing could also play a significant role. So, too, could initiatives such as the Global Commons Alliance and It.org, along with investor activism, including from sovereign wealth and pension funds. In 2019, some 230 global investors, managing a total of more than \$16 trillion in assets, called on companies to meet their deforestation commitments or risk adverse economic consequences.

Most important are innovations to bolster the green economy and support the communities that are

the custodians of the Amazon Basin. Such initiatives could be accelerated by a Brazilian equivalent to US government’s Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency to ramp up R&D, as well as related regulatory frameworks to enable an inclusive bioeconomy in the Amazon. This approach would include applied research to collect and map Amazon biodiversity – with scientists studying fruits, nuts, plant extracts, and fibers, and using drones to sample biodiversity in hard-to-reach areas – along with digital platforms to secure biological assets for public good.

To ensure that indigenous and local populations are included and benefit, clear and enforceable data-sharing rules and safeguards to promote local value creation and retention must accompany these efforts.

Concerted international and regional efforts – such as the Leticia Pact – combined with national and subnational interventions could create a brighter future for the Amazon. The health of the planet depends on it.

The writer is Co-Founder and President of the Igarapé Institute.
@PROJECTSYNDICATE

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
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Disaster management

Sir, The recent avalanche borne disaster in the river Dhauri Ganga, a branch of the Ganga, led to a huge loss to lives and property. The cause behind the accident may be the sudden surge of melting water due to rise in temperature in post-winter season. In addition, the factors such as cloud-burst during the monsoon are also evident in the Himalayan region that cause flash floods. Another incident of 2013 at Chorabari lake in northern India too was catastrophic which had brought a tragic end to more than 5000 lives. However tracing these sudden incidents become difficult. Therefore, at the latest, the Ministry of Science and Technology, Govt. of India along with IIT Kanpur has ventured for a satellite-based real time monitoring of glacial activities in the Himalayan region. The aim is to recognise and understand the nature of disaster in advance and ensure alarm for any threat that can cause catastrophe. The difficult terrain in the Himalayas and lack of communication networks had left many incidents unresolved in the past. But the innovative approach of satellite-linked communication and surveillance system of the scientists in the region would certainly help in avoiding threats. **Santosh Kumar Satapathy, PARALAKHEMUNDI**

Compensate migrants

Sir, Migrant workers, specifically from the unorganised sector, are fleeing metro cities due to curfews and lockdowns. Insecurity, stemmed from anxiety created confusion in the minds of the migrants. Admittedly, there is no gush of outward flow as it was last time but the movement has begun. This time around the curbs are imposed by specific states whereas in 2020 the entire nation was locked down by the Centre. It may safely be said that everyone, including labourers in the unorganised sector, know something about Covid now as compared to last year when it was truly ‘novel’. Why do migrants rush back to their places? Is the situation better at their native places? Unlikely, but the poor migrants do not want to suffer elsewhere but their roots. A democratically elected government should be pro-poor. Transparency, accountability and the ability to learn lessons from the past are not commodities that can be compromised. In 2020, the Centre and the States woke up late; hopefully, they will do better this time with the possibility of total lockdown looming large in many states. The key is perfect coordination without animosity and bitterness. Out of work migrants should be compensated. Things are likely to turn worse in the coming days and the interests of the migrants should be taken care of. **Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA (MAHARASHTRA)**

Bureaucratic barriers leave patients begging for beds

To get a bed in Lucknow, families say they need to show the result of an RT-PCR test, which are already in short supply

Patients are required to register with the CMO's office, which then forwards request to the Integrated Command Control Centre that makes the final bed allocation

REUTERS

Lucknow, April 21: As Sushil Kumar Srivastava's breathlessness worsened, his family bundled the 70-year-old into a car and drove him to a hospital in the capital of Uttar Pradesh, where he tested positive for the coronavirus.

After the private hospital turned the retired government official away because it didn't have any vacant beds, his son Ashish brought two oxygen cylinders and drove his father on a hunt for a hospital that could admit him.

"All the hospitals asked for a referral letter from the chief medical officer's (CMO) office," Ashish said, referring to the top healthcare official of the city of some 3.5 million people.

At the office, Ashish said nobody helped him. "I was shooed away by the police," he said, when he tried to meet the CMO.

Three days later, Ashish said someone from the government called him offering a bed for his father - a day after Srivastava had passed away at a private clinic.

The family's ordeal reflects the



worsening crisis in UP, where people are battling bureaucracy along with the disease.

To get a COVID-19 bed in Lucknow, families say they need to show the result of an RT-PCR test, which are already in short supply.

Next, patients are required to register with the CMO's office, which then forwards the request

to the Integrated Command Control Centre for COVID management that makes the final bed allocation, a government official said.

A state government spokesman Wednesday told Reuters that authorities were planning to end the CMO referral system this week, and instead appoint officials at every COVID-19 hospital to assess whether a patient needed

to be admitted.

The cumbersome process has come under criticism, including from the state's Human Rights Commission that has asked the government to ditch the referral rule.

"There are expert doctors in hospitals who can decide if the patient needs to be admitted or not," the commission said Tuesday. "This referral letter system is not required."

In UP, home to 200 million people, infections are rising by more than 22,000 cases daily, severely straining its creaky healthcare system.

The state government has said it is turning several hospitals into COVID-only facilities and adding more beds. It did not respond to questions from Reuters.

BEGGING FOR HELP

At Lucknow's CMO office, adjacent to two large hospitals, dozens of people line up daily, requesting, begging and sometimes crying for a referral letter required for hospital admissions.

This week, local TV news channels aired footage of a young man lying on the road to block the CMO's car in his desperation to get a let-

ter for an ailing relative.

Patients need to show an RT-PCR test confirming infection before being given a referral letter.

But these tests are increasingly hard to access for most patients, with long queues outside hospitals and clinics overburdened due to the surge in infections.

"Getting an RT-PCR done in UP is next to impossible," said journalist Shreya Jai, whose family members had to wait for a week to get a rapid antigen test.

Many Lucknow labs are working with less than half their staff, the rest sickened by the virus, a lab worker said, asking not to be named. The state government has said that nearly 230 private and state-run labs were being used for coronavirus testing.

Monday, the state government led by Yogi Adityanath, who himself is currently down with COVID-19, was pilloried for its handling of the crisis by a regional court.

"It is a shame that while the government knew of the magnitude of the second wave it never planned things in advance," the state's Allahabad High Court said.

TN reported highest wastage of vaccines



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 21: While several states claimed a shortage of Covid vaccine, it has been learnt that many states have wasted huge quantities of it. Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Punjab are three top states that reported the highest wastage of vaccines. While Kerala, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh were the states which reported zero wastage of Covid vaccine.

As data shared by the union government in an RTI reply, till April 11, Tamil Nadu reported highest vaccine wastage at 12.10 per cent, followed by Haryana (9.74 per cent), Punjab (8.12 per cent), Manipur (7.80 per cent) and Telangana (7.55 per cent). Assam has reported 7.69 per cent wastage, Bihar (6.99 per cent), Chandigarh (6.93 per cent), Delhi (6.15 per cent) and Rajasthan (six per cent). Eight states that have reported 'zero wastage' of vaccine are Kerala, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Goa, Daman and Diu, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. Over 10 crore doses of Covid vaccine have been administered by states and union territories till April 11.

Tamil Nadu, which is seeing Covid cases mounting, is now hit by a shortage of vaccines. Several people who have taken their first shots are being sent back from hospitals when they reach for their second shot after four weeks.

C. Rajeev, Director, of Chennai think tank Centre for Policy and Development Studies, told IANS: "I had taken the first shot of the vaccine and was planning to take the second shot this week... when I enquired at the hospitals, they said that

I had taken a first shot of Covaxin and was asked to come today but unfortunately the Government Rajaji hospital turned me down, stating that there is no vaccine stock

MANIMEGHALAI | A HOMEMAKER

there is no vaccine in stock and hence I have to wait further. I don't know what is happening as far as shortage of vaccine is concerned."

The second wave of Covid has created a situation of panic with the people worried over the lack of vaccines in the state. In Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Trichy and other parts of the state, there is a shortage of vaccine.

In Coimbatore, representatives of private hospitals, who reached the Regional Vaccine Centre, had to return empty-handed as the officials pleaded helplessness.

Shanmuganathan, a representative of a private hospital at Coimbatore who reached the RVC on Tuesday, told IANS: "The officials told us to come back after two days as fresh stocks would arrive soon. However we are not sure whether this will happen... there is an acute shortage for the people."

In Madurai also, the situation is bleak, with the health officials totally unsure of the possibility of providing vaccine stock to private hospitals. Manimeghalai, a homemaker at Madurai, told IANS: "I had taken a first shot of Covaxin and was asked to come today but unfortunately the Government Rajaji hospital turned me down, stating that there is no vaccine stock."

Probe panel's 'clean chit' to UP cops in Dubey encounter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 21: The three-member inquiry commission probing the encounter killings of gangster Vikas Dubey and five of his alleged associates has given a clean chit to Uttar Pradesh Police because of lack of evidence, sources said Wednesday.



the contents of the report. Asked about it, Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Awanish Kumar Awasthi said, "I would not like to comment on it."

According to the sources, the inquiry commission has found no evidence of wrongdoing by the state police.

Speaking to PTI, a senior police official said, "No witnesses came forward to challenge the police claims even after advertisements in newspapers and media. Also, no one from the media came forward to get their versions recorded."

There were, however, witnesses supporting the police version, he added. July 3 last year, eight policemen were killed in an ambush in Bikru village in Chaubeypur area of Kanpur when they were going to arrest Vikas Dubey.

Police later killed Prem Prakash Pandey (55) and Atul Dubey (35) in an encounter in Kanpur July 3.

July 8, Amar Dubey (30), who carried a reward of Rs 50,000 on him, was killed in an encounter in Maudaha village in Hamirpur district.

July 9, Praveen Dubey, alias Bauwa (48), and Prabhat, alias Kartikeya (28), were killed in separate encounters in Etawah and Kanpur districts.

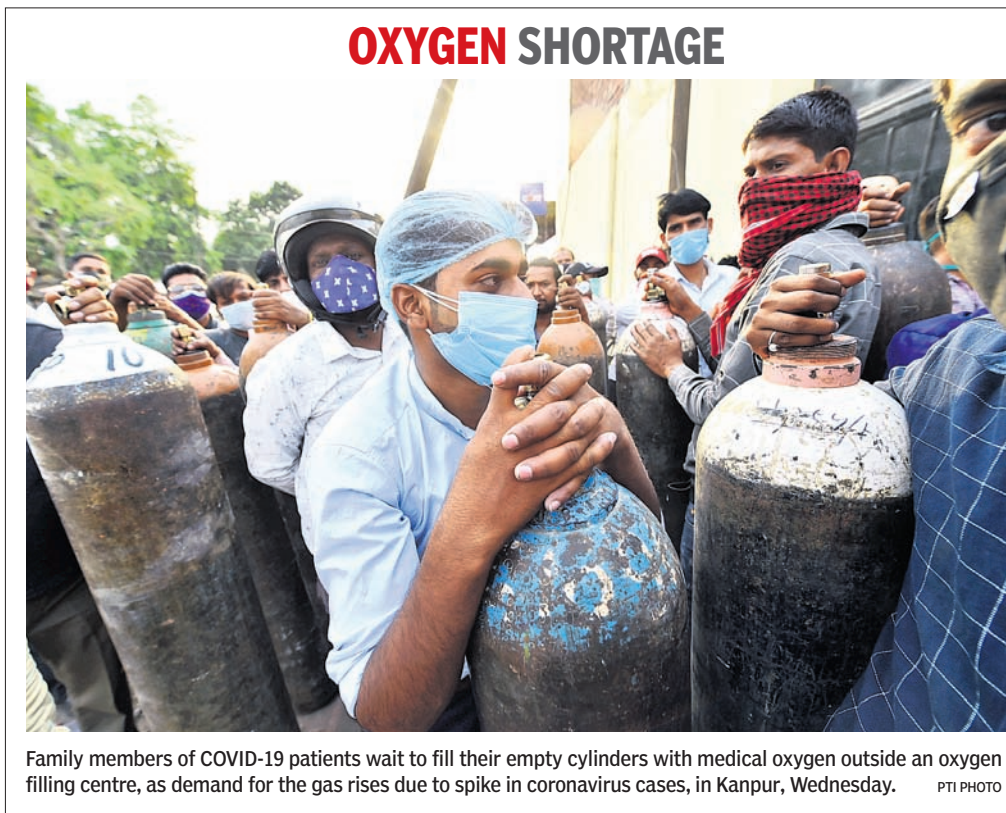
Six PILs were filed in the Supreme Court after this to seek a court-monitored probe into the encounter killings.

The apex court had then on July 22, 2020 approved the Uttar Pradesh government's decision to institute the inquiry commission.

The commission is headed by former Supreme Court judge BS Chauhan. The other two members are former Allahabad High Court judge Sashi Kant Agrawal and former UP Director General of Police KL Gupta.

The panel submitted its reported to the state government Monday, eight months after it was set up. "Yes the commission has submitted its report to the state government Monday. A copy of the report will be submitted in the Supreme court also," Gupta told PTI.

He, however, did not elaborate on



Family members of COVID-19 patients wait to fill their empty cylinders with medical oxygen outside an oxygen filling centre, as demand for the gas rises due to spike in coronavirus cases, in Kanpur, Wednesday. PTI PHOTO

Book those black-marketing medicines under NSA: Yogi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 21: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Wednesday directed officials to conduct raids on those involved in black-marketing of medicines like remdesivir and Fabiflu. NSA and Gangster Act should be invoked against those involved in such practice," the chief minister said, according to an official spokesperson.

"At all oxygen plants/refilling centres, officers should be deployed, and it should be ensured that oxygen is given in a transparent manner," he said.

Adityanath said producers of remdesivir drug should be effectively monitored to ensure a continuous supply of the medicine. The

"The director general of police should constitute special teams to conduct raids on those involved in black-marketing of medicines like remdesivir and Fabiflu. NSA and Gangster Act should be invoked against those involved in such practice," the chief minister said, according to an official spokesperson.

"At all oxygen plants/refilling centres, officers should be deployed, and it should be ensured that oxygen is given in a transparent manner," he said.

Adityanath said producers of remdesivir drug should be effectively monitored to ensure a continuous supply of the medicine. The



chief minister said it was good to note that over 14,000 patients have recovered from the disease in the state since Tuesday, and appealed to people to take all precautions.

"There is no shortage of medicines and oxygen in the state," he

asserted. Adityanath said hospitals should put information of available beds in the public domain and update it regularly. They should also audit their medical oxygen stock, he added.

"There should be a backup of at least 36 hours of oxygen in hospitals. The state will get 10,000 remdesivir vials by Thursday and demand of 50,000 more vials per day should be sent," he said.

The chief minister directed the officials to increase the number of beds in every district by at least 200 and asked them to quarantine migrants coming from other states for two weeks.

TN to take up oxygen diversion issue with Centre: Health Secy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Apr 21: The Tamil Nadu government Wednesday said it would take up with the Centre, diversion of about 45 metric tonnes of medical oxygen from a city plant to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, while asserting that the state had adequate stocks of oxygen.

Wondering what the need was for the central government to divert the oxygen manufactured by a supplier at nearby Sriperumbudur, Health Secretary Dr J Radhakrishnan said that even during the pandemic times, the state has been supplying oxygen to others.

"Even now the state is providing oxygen to its neighboring states who are in deficit for medical oxygen. We have not imposed any restrictions," he told PTI.

"The availability situation is currently adequate, but this diversion has been done by the Government of India.

While Tamil Nadu can always supply to others, this mandatory diversion should not create problems in the future and we are taking up the issue to ensure that our situation is comfortable in the future too," he added.

Tamil Nadu's liquid medical oxygen manufacturing capacity is around 400 metric tonnes a day and the state has a storage capacity of around 1,200 tonnes.

Currently, the daily medical consumption is around 240 tonnes per day, the health secretary said and asserted that the state is in a comfortable position now.

The private manufacturer in the city, who has a pan India presence, contributes to about 50 per cent of the medical oxygen market in India, sources said and added that there is no supply-side bottleneck in the state.

Night curfew chokes Tamil Nadu's hotel business

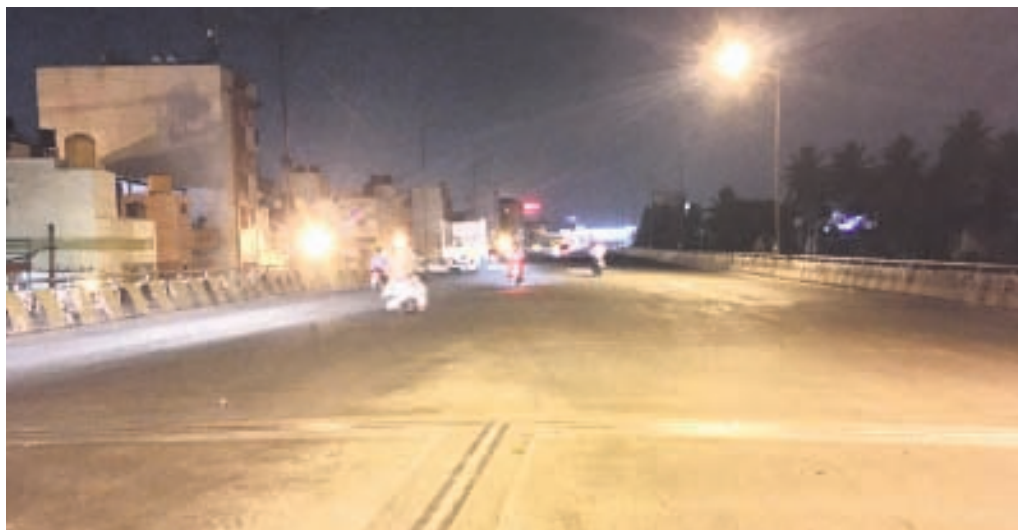
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, April 21: With nearly 50 per cent of the business gone since the outbreak of coronavirus and the lockdown last year, the night curfew and ban on tourists visiting hill stations will further wipe out the restaurant business, said hoteliers in Tamil Nadu.

They also said the migrant labour going back to their homes is not a major problem as many of them who had left last year have not returned and further business has not improved.

"Normally business in vegetarian hotels pick up from 7.30 p.m. and in non-vegetarian outlets at 8 p.m. The night curfew between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. announced by the Tamil Nadu government from April 20 will hit the business hard. Already restaurants are near empty after 7.30 p.m.," R. Srinivasan, Secretary, Tamil Nadu Hotels Association told IANS.

With Covid-19 second wave hitting Tamil Nadu and increasing the number of active patients, the state government recently tightened the restrictions like night curfew, restaurants to operate with 50 per cent



capacity, ban on tourists visiting hill stations and others.

"Already business is down by 50 per cent since last year Covid-19 lockdown. The ban on tourists visiting hill stations during the summer season sounds the death knell for the hoteliers there. The business done during the four months sustains them for the remaining part of the year," M. Venkadasubbu,

President told IANS.

Continuing further, Subbu said nearly 25 per cent restaurants on the highways and 10 per cent of the city outlets have shut down business since the first lockdown.

The highway hotels may see some brisk business as long distance business that usually run at night are now operated during the day due to night curfew.

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FH&RAI) had earlier written to the Tamil Nadu government stating the prevailing restrictions and work from home arrangements, restaurants have no significant business during the day time and the imposition of night curfews is tantamount to closure of business for the sector.



On the call of the SKM, farmers in large numbers have started coming towards Delhi. The farmers are coming back after harvesting, to strengthen the protest at Singhu, Tikri, Ghazipur and Shahjahanpur borders
DARSHAN PAL | SKM LEADER

NOBLE STEP

After Nagaland, another Northeastern state Arunachal Pradesh is determined to provide protection and sanctuary to the birds and wild animals even as the tribals traditionally hunt them for centuries



of the day quote

It is our commitment to ensure with all the resources at our disposal that people don't suffer any inconvenience at this moment of crisis

TIRATH SINGH RAWAT | UTTARAKHAND CHIEF MINISTER

There is no scarcity of Remdesivir in the state. More vaccination centres will be set up if the need arises

E RAJENDER | TELANGANA HEALTH MINISTER

I am distressed to hear the news of the accident of oxygen leak in a hospital in Nashik. I express my deepest condolences to those who have lost their loved ones in this accident. I pray to God for the speedy recovery of all the other patients

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Nishank tests Covid positive

New Delhi: Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank Wednesday tested positive for coronavirus. At present, he is in home quarantine and following the Covid protocols. After testing positive, Nishank appealed to all those people who had come in contact with him in the last few days to get themselves tested.

Two priests beheaded

Madhubani: The bodies of two priests were found in Dharohar Mahadev temple in Khirhar police station area of Madhubani district, the police said Wednesday. Both the priests were beheaded by unidentified criminals and the motive for the crime could not be ascertained so far. The incident took place Tuesday night. Khirhar police station in-charge Anjesh Kumar said that the priests were killed with a sharp object and their heads were separated from the bodies.

Fresh Covid curbs in Maha

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government Wednesday imposed several new restrictions including a ban on inter-city and inter-district travel and curbs on office attendance in an attempt to bring the spiralling coronavirus infections under control.

Five killed in road mishap

Yadgir (Karnataka): Five women were killed when a tummy (a long autorickshaw) collided head-on with a truck at Shahapur Taluk Wednesday, police said. The number of the injured in the mishap was not known immediately.

Remdesivir vials stolen from hosp

Indore: Over 130 vials of remdesivir, an anti-viral drug used in the treatment of COVID-19, were allegedly stolen from a private hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city, police said Wednesday.

Naxals kidnap SI

Bijapur: Naxals Wednesday kidnaped a police sub-inspector in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh, a senior official said. Murli Tati had come to his home at Palnar when he was kidnaped, Bijapur Superintendent of Police Kamlochan Kashyap told PTI.

Mamata dubs second wave of Covid a 'Modi-made disaster'

AGENCIES

Chanchal/Harirampur/Balurghat (WB), April 21: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Wednesday sharpened her attack on the Prime Minister over the resurgence of Covid-19, terming it a "Modi-made disaster" and demanded that he quit if unable to provide adequate medical supplies to combat the disease.

She also ruled out the possibility of a lockdown in the state amid spurring COVID-19 cases and said a universal vaccination drive for people aged 18 years and above will start from May 5. She alleged that 65 per cent of the drugs manufactured in the country for tackling the pandemic have already been exported.

"The Covid-19 pandemic had subsided in the country but has surged in a second wave owing to the monumental failure of the central government and negligence and total incompetence on its part," she said addressing public meetings at Chanchal in Malda and at Harirampur in Dakshin Dinajpur districts. As the Election Commission did not accede to Trinamool Congress' request to hold the last three of the eight-



phase election in West Bengal on a single day, Banerjee said she is forced to combat the sharp rise in infections in the state as its chief minister as well campaign for Trinamool Congress, her party.

Later, addressing a press conference in Malda, she said a lockdown will not be imposed but underscored the need for following COVID-appropriate behaviour.

"We are not in favour of a lockdown. We want everyone to adhere to COVID norms such as wearing

masks, social distancing and using sanitisers. We don't want people to go back to those days of staying back at home. Lockdown is not a solution as it takes a heavy toll on people, jobs and economy," she said. She also said she will write a "strong letter" to Modi over "discriminatory" prices of COVID vaccines to be supplied by manufacturers to the Centre and states.

The Chief Minister said around one crore people have so far been vaccinated against COVID in the state. Hitting out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi at her election rallies, Banerjee said, "The country is facing a Modi-made disaster. Modi Babu will have to take responsibility. Why medicines to treat COVID-19 are not available? You have to provide medicines or leave the chair. Either you control Corona or move out."

"The second Covid wave is more intense. There are no injections or oxygen. Vaccines and medicines are being shipped abroad even as there is a scarcity of these items in the country," she earlier told a rally at Balurghat in Dakshin Dinajpur district. "It is not a man-made disaster, it is Modi made," she added.

'Covaxin neutralises double mutant strain'

The double mutant strain - labelled B.1.617 - is a possibly more infectious variety that was first detected in Maharashtra late last year, and which experts have linked to the spike in Covid cases

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 21: Indigenously developed COVID-19 vaccine, Covaxin, neutralises multiple variants of SARS-CoV-2 and effectively works against the double mutant strain as well, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said Wednesday.

ICMR cited the findings of a study carried out by them. Covaxin is developed locally by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International Ltd. in collaboration with the ICMR - the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research. ICMR - National Institute of Virology has successfully isolated and cultured multiple variants of concern of SARS-CoV-2 virus: B.1.1.7 (the UK variant), B.1.1.28 (Brazil variant) and B.1.351 (South Africa variant), said the apex health research body.

"ICMR study shows Covaxin

neutralises against multiple variants of SARS-CoV-2 and effectively neutralises the double mutant strain as well," the ICMR said in a tweet. They have also demonstrated the neutralisation potential of Covaxin against the UK variant and Brazil variant.

"Covaxin has been found to effectively neutralise the double mutant strain as well," it said. The study was published in the Journal for Travel Medicine in March where it highlighted that Covaxin is effective against the UK variants as well as other strains of Covid-19. "It was

reassuring from the PRNT50 data generated in our laboratory that the indigenous BBV152/ COVAXIN, following its roll out in vaccination program, could be expected to work against the new UK-variant," the study said.



BSF DEMANDS FIR AGAINST PAK PIGEON

A small piece of paper with a 'contact number' was wrapped around the pigeon's leg, an official said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amritsar, April 21: The BSF has sought registration of an FIR against an intruder from Pakistan that happens to be a pigeon.

The Punjab Police are seeking legal opinion on this. The pigeon perched itself on the shoulder of a Border Security Force jawan at the Rorawala post here last Saturday, apparently after flying across the border, an official said. The BSF personnel



handed over the bird to the police with a demand in writing for taking legal action.

Senior Superintendent of Police Dhruv Dahiya said the BSF demanded registration of an FIR against the pigeon. "As the pigeon is a bird, I don't think an FIR can be registered against it. But we have referred the matter to our legal experts for their opinion," he said Wednesday.

DEVOTION AMID PANDEMIC



Hindu devotees immerse 'Saakh', in the Tawi River on the occasion of Ram Navami in Jammu

SII BORROWS FROM BANKS TO SCALE UP VAX PRODUCTION

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 21: To scale up production of its Covishield vaccine, the Serum Institute of India (SII) had borrowed money from banks instead of waiting for the government's aid to arrive.

The company assumed that the funding from the government will reach them very soon, probably by this week.

Covishield has been developed by the Oxford University and AstraZeneca, and manufactured by the Pune-based SII.

To boost India's vaccine production in wake of the huge surge in Covid-19 caseload, the government on Monday announced that it has given in-principle approval for credit to vaccine manufacturers, SII and Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech.

Bhima-Koregaon case: More signs of planted evidence

New Delhi: A new report from a US-based digital forensics company has said a hacker planted 22 "incriminating" files in activist Rona Wilson's computer, days after violence in the Maharashtra town of Bhima-Koregaon in January 2018.

These files have, since 15 November 2018, been cited, initially by the Pune Police and then by the NIA, as key evidence. This evidence led to Wilson and 15 others—including lawyers, academics and artists—being arrested and jailed without bail (except poet Varavara Rao who is now on bail) or trial for more than two years on charges of conspiring against the State.

The files were never created, opened or used by anyone who directly handled Wilson's computer; but the hacker used software to plant them, said the new report from Arsenal Consulting. They analysed an electronic copy of Wilson's computer on a request from his lawyers, who got it from the police in November 2019 after court orders.

The new report is a follow-up of Arsenal's first report in February 2021. That report concluded the computer was hacked using malicious software to plant 10 files, mostly "incriminating" letters, and it faced sustained electronic spying.

The second report, yet to be made public, but reviewed by Article 14, states: "There is no evidence of legitimate interaction with the additional files of interest on Mr. Wilson's computer; and that 22 of the 24 files are directly connected to the attacker identified in Report I."

The additional 24 files largely contain purported correspondence between members of the banned CPI (Maoist), discussions on fund transfers, how to improve women's representation in organisations, difficulties party members face in



communicating with each other; concerns over state crackdown and some photographs of Maoist guerrillas.

Article 14 emailed detailed queries to Jaya Roy, NIA spokesperson and SP. The queries included specific questions related to Arsenal's findings and reports submitted by government's forensic labs.

Roy did not reply to the email. But, speaking to Article 14 on the phone, she said, "We do not take cognisance of reports from private labs."

The case against the 16 activists centres around Elgaar Parishad, an event held December 31, 2017 in Bhima-Koregaon, a town of roughly 9,000 inhabitants, 28 km northeast of Pune, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the victory of a largely Dalit-staffed British army over the upper-caste Peshwa army. Violence and arson followed the event, as Dalits clashed with Hindu right-wingers irked by the celebration of a valorous Dalit past.

Soon, a Pune police investiga-

tion into the violence changed tack to a Maoist conspiracy and focused on "urban naxals", a term popularised around the same time by right-wing supporters and leaders to deride urban intellectuals and activists. Police raided activists and organisers of the event and seized laptops, hard disks and other devices. According to the chargesheet, the police raided the premises of Rona Wilson and advocate Surendra Gadling because of their alleged communication with Sudhir Dhawale, one of the main organisers of Bhima Koregaon event.

The files found on Wilson's computer were among the evidence submitted against him, lawyer-activist Sudha Bharadwaj, poet Rao and others.

After the NIA took over the probe from the state police, they filed an additional chargesheet, naming Jesuit priest Stan Swamy, Hanyababu Tarayil, a professor of linguistics at the Department of English at

Delhi University, Anand Telumbde, a professor of the Goa Institute of Management and journalist Gautam Navlakha. They were accused of conspiring with a banned Maoist group against the Indian government and face charges under UAPA.

The new report traced a chain of electronic actions - known as a "process tree" - used to plant incriminating documents and tracked the digital footprints to the same hacker who had planted the 10 files. Arsenal found instances where the hacker renamed files and, in one case, even made a mistake that was later corrected.

Arsenal's president Mark Spencer explained to Article 14 the significance of the new report: "The process tree involving 'mohila meeting jan.pdf' is the most compelling finding in Report II. While there are many 'smoking guns' related to the attacker's activity in Reports I and II, this process tree is one of the most significant".

The mohila meeting file that Spencer referred to contains the minutes of a purported mohila (women) meeting on January 2, 2018. It lists other co-accused activists—Bharadwaj, Susan Abraham, Shoma Sen—and others as members of mass organisations.

The process tree that Spencer referred to tracks how and when the attacker hacked and planted files on a victim's computer. The report said these 22 files were planted using NetWire, malicious software that opens the door to the device for hackers. The hacker then remotely changed, added or deleted contents and viewed computer activity. The second report detailed how this remote-access electronic Trojan horse was used to deliver multiple files to Wilson's laptop, in addition to those mentioned in the first report, later used by investigators to incriminate him and others.

The process tree for the 'mohila meeting document' showed NetWire being launched automatically January 11, 2018, 11 days after the Bhima-Koregaon violence, at 5:04 pm after a login.

The attacker opened a command prompt and unpacked three files between 5:10 and 5:12 pm - one of which contained "mohila meeting jan.pdf". These files were then unpacked into a hidden folder using a temporarily deployed UnRAR, a file archiver like WinZip, renamed to "Adobe.exe". The report explained how the attacker erred while writing the command to plant a file, and subsequently corrected it.

Besides laptop, files in hard disks and pen drives too, were helpful in tightening the screws on Wilson and others. The attacker ensured that files were automatically transferred from Wilson's computer to the external hard drive when hooked up.

"Please keep in mind that ultimately you do not need to take our word for anything we have shared in Reports I or II, as our findings can be replicated by competent digital forensics practitioners with access to the same electronic evidence," said Spencer.

"The process tree has effectively caught the attacker red-handed," said Spencer. "It very clearly demonstrates how the attacker delivered incriminating files to Rona Wilson's computer."

"It's the kind of finding that should make technical people lean back in their chairs and say, whoa," said Spencer, who has examined computers related to the 2013 bombing of the Boston Marathon and a Turkish journalist falsely framed for terrorism in 2014.

The NIA, in a special court, in response to a bail plea moved by Anand Telumbde's lawyers based on the first report by Arsenal said that the findings cannot be relied upon since it's "not authenticated". Multiple chargesheets filed by the state police and NIA running into hundreds of pages hinge on the evidence recovered from the electronic devices of Wilson and others, the credibility of which has now been debunked by the independent forensic expert.

In a statement February 10, the NIA had indirectly discredited Arsenal's first report.

"The forensics reports that are cited in the chargesheet filed in the court are from an accredited lab, accepted by the Indian courts. In this case, it was done by the Regional Forensic Science Laboratory in Pune. According to their report no such malware was found," NIA spokesperson Roy said. "Rest all (sic) is distortion of facts."

The Reporters' Collective

national

of the day quote

Why didn't the government prioritise Indians first? Why did the prime minister place self-promotion above the nation? In a state like UP with a 22 crore population, only 1 crore doses have been administered

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

An election is to hold the government accountable. The BJP is solely responsible for the medical catastrophe that has fallen on the country. The hopes of the entire nation are in the hands of the voters of West Bengal

P CHIDAMBARAM | SENIOR CONG LEADER

The director general of police should constitute special teams to conduct raids on those involved in black-marketing of medicines like remdesivir and Fabiflu. NSA and Gangster Act should be invoked against those involved in such practice

YOGI ADITYANATH | CM, UTTAR PRADESH

SHORT TAKES

Rhino poached in Kaziranga NP

Golaghat (Assam): The carcass of an adult male rhino with its horn missing was found near a waterbody inside the Kaziranga National Park in Assam, officials said Wednesday. Poachers shot the animal dead three to four days ago but the carcass was noticed Tuesday. A bullet mark was found on the body during post-mortem examination, pointing towards poaching, the officials said. This is the first poaching incident of the current year in the Kaziranga National Park, known for its population of one-horned rhinoceros.

Cops attacked; 10 arrested

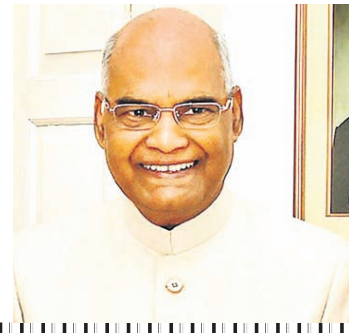
Mathura: Five police personnel, including an SHO, were injured in an attack by supporters of a panchayat poll candidate when they tried to stop a party which was organised in Mudaliya village in this district to seek the favour of voters, officials said Wednesday. Ten people have been arrested in connection with the incident that occurred Tuesday, said Superintendent of Police (City) Srish Chandra. A police team, led by Inspector Lokesh Bhati, was attacked when it tried to stop the party hosted by supporters of a panchayat poll candidate in violation of the poll code and COVID protocol, he said.

5 undertrials escape prison

Bikaner: Five undertrials escaped from the Nokha sub jail in Rajasthan's Bikaner district in the early hours of Wednesday, officials said. This is the second such incident of jail break in the state this month. DG, Prisons, Rajiv Dasot, told PTI that the five escaped after making a hole in the wall of the barrack near a window. Prima facie, the inmates managed to escape due to laxity of the jail staff, he said, adding action against the guilty will be taken after inquiry.

Tigress poisoned to death; 2 held

Udhagamandalam(TN): Two persons were arrested Wednesday and a search is on for their two accomplices for allegedly poisoning a tigress to death a few months ago in Singara forest range in Nilgiris district. Acting on tip-off, forest department officials arrested the duo for poisoning the tigress in Singara range coming under Masinagudi in Mudumal Tiger Reserve November 20 last year, police said.



On civil services day, my greetings to civil servants past and present! Our bureaucracy is rightly called the Steel Frame, and you've been the backbone of our fight against COVID-19. You've raised the bar of professional excellence and dedication in public service. All the best!

RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT OF INDIA

INDIA FASTEST COUNTRY TO ADMINISTER 13 CR DOSES

India took only 95 days to administer 13 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccine, the fastest country to do so, the Union Health Ministry said Wednesday. The US took 101 days, while China took 109 days to cross the same number



COVID RESURGE

'Demography and severity of victims same as 1st wave'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 21: The health ministry Wednesday released a slew of comparative data, showing that the severity, virulence and demography of the victims in the ongoing second wave of COVID-19 are about the same as the first wave.

Addressing a press conference, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said 146 districts reported COVID-19 positivity rate of more than 15 per cent, while 274 districts reported case positivity between 5 and 15 per cent.

The release of the statistics follows growing panic in the country over concerns that the second wave is somehow more powerful and could cause greater havoc.

According to the figures shared by Bhushan, 4.03 per cent COVID-19 cases were reported in the first wave in those below 10 years, while 2.97 per cent cases were registered in the second wave.

"In the age group 10-20 years, 8.07 per cent COVID-19 cases were reported in the first wave, while 8.50 per cent cases were registered in the second wave. In the age group 20-30 years, 20.41 per cent cases were reported in the first wave, while 19.35 per cent cases were registered in the second wave," he said.

On being asked "how did we miss such a huge impending second wave and why it has caught us unawares", Bhushan said, "Today is not the time to go into why did we miss or did we miss, did we prepare. Today is the time to jointly face

the pandemic and once we emerge from it successfully, then probably with the advantage of hindsight sitting with you and other experts we would be able to deliberate on this." "Today all the energies of the Union and the state government are focused in a collaborative manner to tackle this, save precious lives and to ensure our health system is strengthened," he added.

In the age group 30-40 years, 21.05 per cent COVID-19 cases were reported in the first wave, while 21.15 per cent cases were registered in the second wave. While 17.16 per cent cases were reported in the first wave in the 40-50 years age group, 17.50 per cent cases were registered in the second wave. In the age group 50-60 years, 14.80 per cent cases were reported in the first wave and 15.07 per cent cases in the second wave. In the 60-70 years age group, 9.01 per cent cases were reported in the first wave and 9.99 per cent cases in the second.

At least 4.17 per cent cases were reported in the 70-80 years age group in the first wave, while 4.19 per cent cases were registered in the second wave. In the age group of above 80 years, 1.31 per cent cases were reported in the first wave, while 1.28 per cent cases were registered in the second wave. Age-wise comparison of deaths in 2020 and 2021 showed that 0.27 per cent COVID-19 deaths were reported in the first wave in those below 10 years, while 0.34 per cent fatalities were registered in the second wave.

6,600 MT O₂ allocated to states daily: Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Chandigarh, April 21: Amid reports of oxygen shortage in the country, the Centre Wednesday said of the total 7,500 metric tonnes of oxygen being produced in India per day, 6,600 metric tonnes, as on date, is being allocated to states for medical use and assured that efforts are being made to increase its supplies in the coming days.

At a press conference, NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr V K Paul appealed to the states, hospitals and nursing homes to ensure rational use of oxygen as it was a "life-saving" drug for coronavirus infected patients.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said, "We are producing 7,500 metric tonnes of oxygen per day of which 6,600 metric tonnes is being allocated to the states for medical purposes." "Presently, we have



issued instructions that, leaving a few industries, the supply to industries will be restricted so that more and more oxygen can be made available for medical use," he said.

Bhushan further said that a 24x7 control room has been set up where state governments can raise the problems faced by them like if their truck is stuck somewhere or the if movement is being hindered. "When you deal with such a huge

We are producing 7,500 metric tonnes of oxygen per day of which 6,600 metric tonnes is being allocated to the states for medical purposes

RAJESH BHUSHAN | UNION HEALTH SECY

challenge, such a big pandemic and multiple stakeholders, then at times there is panic and confusion, and the

₹100 crore up in Bengal poll air

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, April 21: West Bengal is reeling under an acute shortage of Covid-19 vaccines amidst a dreary long eight-phase assembly election, but leaders campaigning here have already spent ₹100 crore to fly around to pitch for votes.

At least 90 per cent of this spending can be traced to BJP because their star campaigners like PM Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president J P Nadda and minister Smriti Irani are from outside the state.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and a select few in Trinamool Congress have flown around, specially to North Bengal.

"But this is mainly because Didi is injured and long travels by road impacts on her leg. We don't have the kind of funds the BJP has mobilised, so we have used helicopters sparingly," said Trinamool MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar.

BJP leaders justify the expenses on air travel as 'unavoidable' in a fierce election battle like West Bengal.

"Tagra larai me goli jyada lagta hai", (you need more ammunition in a fierce battle) said a BJP state unit office bearer on condition of anonymity as he was not authorised to speak to media.



Social worker Ashok Kurmi, dressed as fictional superhero Spider-Man, sanitizes the area around Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, during a COVID-induced lockdown to curb the spread of coronavirus, in Mumbai, Wednesday

RAM DEVOTEES TAKE UP SENSITISATION DRIVE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



Bengaluru, April 21: In the wake of Bengaluru witnessing an unprecedented surge in Covid cases since the last one month, devotees of Lord Rama wore costumes of Ram, Lakshman and Hanuman with the message of maintaining social distancing and wearing a mask as part of the Ram Navami celebrations across Bengaluru Wednesday.

Several temple trusts and Sri Ram Seva Mandalis in Bengaluru hit upon this idea after it became amply clear that Karnataka will certainly ban religious congregations.

As part of this plan, several devotees wore costumes of Lord Ram, Lakshman and his chief devotee, Lord Hanuman requesting people to wear masks

and use hand sanitisers. Ram Navami celebrates the birth of Lord Rama on the ninth day of the Chaitra Masa month (April). Generally Ram Navami is celebrated with much pomp in several parts of Bengaluru.

The celebrations in Karnataka begin with a ceremonial marriage of Lord Ram and Sita known as Kalyanam. It is the temple priest who performs this ceremony with the idols of the God and Goddess. In the evening, there is a procession with the idols for the people to see who gather around and sing, dance and make merry. But for the last two years, Rama Navami celebrations have been restricted to temple premises due to the pandemic since March 2020 in Karnataka.

Punjab to reward informants leading to drugs recovery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 21: Punjab Wednesday announced a policy of rewarding those who provide information that lead to the recovery of drugs, with Chief Minister Amarinder Singh saying it will motivate people to play a proactive role in helping the government crackdown on smugglers.

The policy will recognise government servants, informers and sources for their role in providing inputs leading to the recovery of a substantial quantity of drugs and in the successful implementation of various provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, said the state police chief Dinkar Gupta.

The quantum of reward for successful investigation, prosecution, forfeiture of illegally acquired property, preventive detention and other significant anti-drug work shall be decided on a case-to-case basis, he was quoted as said in an official statement.

Underlining his government's zero-tolerance policy towards drugs, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, who gave a go-ahead to the policy, said it is an important step towards motivating people to play a proactive role in helping the government in cracking down on drug smugglers and traffickers.

Cong wants '1 nation, 1 price' for vax

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 21: The Congress Wednesday slammed the Centre over the differential pricing for COVID vaccines, saying it was discriminatory and will benefit only a "few big industrialists" while common people will suffer.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi took to Twitter to alleged injustice on the part of the central government and compared the new vaccine policy to demonetisation. "Disaster of the country, opportunity for friends of Modi. Injustice of the central government," he said in a tweet with the hashtag "#VaccineDiscrimination" and shared the statement of Serum Institute announcing a price of ₹400 per vaccine dose to states and ₹600 to private hospitals," he said.

"The central government's vaccine strategy is no less than the demonetisation. The common people will stand in queues, will suffer loss of wealth, health and life and in the end only a few big industrialists will ben-



efit," Gandhi said in another tweet.

Earlier in the day, Serum Institute of India announced a price of ₹400 per dose for its COVID-19 vaccine 'Covishield' for state governments and ₹600 per dose for private hospitals. The Centre had Monday made all adults above 18 years of age eligible for getting vaccination from May 1.

Addressing a press conference, Congress's senior spokesperson Ajay Maken said it is unfortunate that the Centre is getting the vaccine at ₹150, but it is not being made available at the same price to states. "This is very unfortunate and we have asked for one nation, one price for vaccine. There should be same price for vaccines to

central and state governments," he said noting that state governments would be put under huge financial burden due to this differential pricing. "This is something that is going to put our youth and poor in a disadvantageous position. This is discriminatory. The Centre should ensure that vaccine manufacturers are adequately compensated," Maken said. He feared there would be chaos in the country from May 1, in the wake of non planning on the part of the Centre for providing vaccines to the youth and poor.

Citing examples, he said if Rajasthan has to vaccinate half its population of 4 crore people, it will have to shell out ₹ 3,200 crore. "How will states bring the finances," he asked. Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh criticised the government saying the Centre getting the vaccine at ₹150 per dose and states at ₹400 is not cooperative federalism. He demanded the Centre and state governments pay the same price for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Twitter: Platform of hope amid the despair of COVID crisis

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 21: After spending hours fruitlessly calling government helplines in a search for a hospital bed for a critically ill COVID-19 patient, Indian lawyer Jeevika Shiv posted an SOS request on Twitter.

"Serious #covid19 patient in #Delhi with oxygen level 62 needs immediate hospital bed," Shiv, part of a 350-member COVID-19 volunteer Medical Support Group, said on Twitter late last week.

Help came quickly. The patient found a bed and was soon showing signs of recovery.

"Finally, it was help online that worked as people responded with information," Shiv said.



India is reporting more than 250,000 new COVID-19 cases a day in its worst phase of the pandemic. Hospitals are turning away patients and supplies of oxygen and

medication are running short.

In response, people are bypassing the conventional lines of communication and turning to Twitter to crowdsource help for oxygen

cylinders, hospital beds and other requirements.

People in need and those with information or resources share telephone numbers of volunteers, vendors who have oxygen cylinders or drugs, and details of which medical facility can take patients using hashtags like #COVIDSOS.

Some users have offered to help with home-cooked meals for COVID patients quarantining at home and to meet a host of other needs like arranging to feed pets.

"Twitter is having to do what the government helpline numbers should be doing," wrote Twitter user Karanbir Singh.

"We are on our own folks." Twitter is not as widely used in India as Facebook or WhatsApp but

it is proving a more valuable tool to get pleas for help out in the coronavirus crisis, largely because of its "re-tweet" function that can quickly amplify a message through users' networks of contacts.

A Google spreadsheet drawn up by a volunteer group that collates information on hospital beds, oxygen supplies, blood plasma and ambulance helplines in various states is being rapidly shared on Twitter and runs into dozens of pages.

Bengaluru-based software developer Umang Galaiya, 25, has created a website that allows users to select the name of the city and the requirement - be it oxygen or the antiviral drug remdesivir - and then directs them to results on Twitter using its advance search

feature.

His website has received more than 110,000 hits.

"Every other tweet on my feed has been about COVID," Galaiya said.

"I'm glad people are finding this helpful." But for some, help comes too late.

Monday, journalist Sweta Dash posted a plea for help on Twitter to find bed with a ventilator for a pregnant woman in New Delhi. Her message spread quickly through more than 100 retweets and a Delhi government official soon suggested a hospital.

But a few hours later, Dash posted another message. "The patient passed away".

international



President (Joe) Biden, Secretary (of State Tony) Blinken, they are deeply focused on the issue of expanding global vaccination, manufacturing, and delivery - all of which will be critical to ending the pandemic

MRS IRELAND NAMED NEW MRS WORLD AFTER FRACAS

Kate Schneider from Ireland has been named the new Mrs. World after the reigning titleholder resigned following an on-stage fracas in which she pulled the crown off the head of the winner of the Mrs. Sri Lanka beauty pageant



of the day quote

It is essential we position Australia to succeed by investing now in the technologies that will support our industries into the future, with lower emissions energy that can support Australian jobs

Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognise the month of April as 'Sikh appreciation and awareness month' in my home state of Illinois

Our political commitment to becoming the first climate neutral continent by 2050 is now also a legal commitment. The Climate Law sets the EU on a green path for a generation

SHORT TAKES

Chad rebels threaten to depose prez's son

N'djamena (Chad): Rebels in Chad threatened to depose the son of the country's slain president after he was named interim leader of the central African nation, raising the specter Wednesday of a potentially violent power struggle.

Sub missing with 53 on board

Jakarta: Indonesia's military says a navy submarine is missing near the resort island of Bali with 53 people on board.

Xi to participate in Biden's summit

Beijing: Chinese President Xi Jinping will take part in President Joe Biden's climate summit this week, the government announced Wednesday.

Cargo ship runs aground; 4 dead

Philippines: Four crew members from a cargo ship that ran aground off the southern Philippines have died, while seven have been rescued and a search is continuing for nine others.

Kremlin warns West of harsh response

Moscow has rejected Ukrainian and Western concerns about the troop buildup, saying it doesn't threaten anyone and Russia is free to deploy its forces on its territory



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Moscow, April 21: President Vladimir Putin Wednesday sternly warned the West against further encroachment on Russia's security interests, saying Moscow's response will be "quick and tough."

Putin's warning during his annual state-of-the-nation address came amid a massive Russian military buildup near Ukraine, where cease-fire violations in the seven-year conflict between Russia-backed separatists and Ukrainian forces have escalated in recent weeks.

"I hope that no one dares to cross the red line in respect to Russia, and we will determine where it is in each specific case. Those who organise any provocations threatening the core security interests of Russia will feel sorry for their deeds as never before."

I hope that no one dares to cross the red line in respect to Russia, and we will determine where it is in each specific case. Those who organise any provocations threatening the core security interests of Russia will feel sorry for their deeds as never before.

VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

The Kremlin also has warned Ukrainian authorities against trying to use force to retake control of the rebel-held east, saying that Russia could be forced to intervene to protect civilians in the region.

"We really don't want to burn the bridges," Putin said. "But if some mistake our good intentions for indifference or weakness and intend to burn or even blow up those bridges themselves, Russia's re-

sponse will be asymmetrical, quick and tough."

Putin pointed to Russia's moves to modernise its nuclear arsenals and said the military would continue to procure a growing number of state-of-the-art hypersonic missiles and other new weapons. He added that development of the nuclear-armed Poseidon underwater drone and the Burevestnik nuclear-powered cruise missile is continuing successfully.

Without singling out a specific country, the Russian leader denounced, a foreign government that imposes "unlawful, politically motivated economic sanctions and crude attempts to enforce its will on others."

He said Russia has shown restraint and often refrained from responding to "openly boorish" actions by others.

The Biden administration last week imposed an array of new sanctions on Russia for interfering in the 2020 US presidential election and for involvement in the SolarWind hack of federal agencies - activities Moscow has denied. The US ordered 10 Russian diplomats expelled, targeted dozens of companies and individuals, and imposed new curbs on Russia's ability to borrow money.

Russia retaliated by ordering 10 US diplomats to leave, blacklisting eight current and former US officials, and tightening requirements for U.S. Embassy operations.

NZ to consolidate health care into national service

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Wellington, April 21: New Zealand announced Wednesday it will consolidate its fragmented healthcare system into a national service similar to the one revered by many in Britain.

New Zealand's government-run system is currently divided into 20 district health boards, each with their own budget. Some describe the system as a "post-code lottery" of different treatment depending on where people live.

Health Minister Andrew Little said that over three years, the district boards will be replaced by a single new body called Health New Zealand. He promised an increased focus on public health and treating people early so they don't end up in hospitals.

He said the coronavirus pandemic had forced the system into a rare and welcomed collaboration but it wasn't how it usually worked.

The overhaul also includes a new Indigenous Maori Health Authority. "Our system has become overly



complex. It is far too complicated for a small nation," Little said. "We simply do not need 20 different sets of decision-makers."

The extent of the overhaul came as a surprise to many and went beyond the recommendations of a review panel. It was cautiously welcomed by several groups representing doctors and healthcare workers.

But opposition health spokesman Dr. Shane Reti said the restructuring was "reckless" and would see regions and small communities lose their voices.

He said the government had an ideology of centralised control. "Health New Zealand will likely end up as just another bureaucracy that governments will have to fund, instead of investing the money where it's needed most," Reti said.

KEEP BORDER ISSUE AT ITS POSITION: CHINA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, April 21: China said Wednesday that it was committed to maintain peace and stability along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) as it urged India to put the boundary issue at an "appropriate position" and meet it "halfway" for the long-term development of the bilateral ties.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said this at his media briefing as he parried questions on India's assertion that consensus reached by the leaders on maintaining peace along the border cannot be swept under the carpet.

Indian Ambassador to China, Vikram Misri in his recent address to the India-China dialogue forum, said that the significance of the consensus reached between leaders of the two countries to maintain peace along the LAC cannot be "swept under the carpet" and called for the complete disengagement of troops in Eastern Ladakh to rebuild bilateral ties strained by the "serious incidents".

Asked for his reaction, Wang said that both sides held in-depth and can-



LAC DISENGAGEMENT

did talks on resolving the disengagement from the remaining areas of Eastern Ladakh after the withdrawal from Pangong Tso lake area.

"On the issue of China-India boundary situation, China's position is consistent and clear. We are committed to maintaining peace and stability in the border areas and we are firmly determined to safeguard our territorial sovereignty and security," Wang said.

"Recently, the two sides have maintained communications through diplomatic and military channels. On the basis of disengagement in the Galwan Valley and the Pangong Tso regions, the two sides exchanged in depth and in a candid manner, opinions on resolving the remaining issue in the Western section of the boundary," he said.



China's position is consistent and clear. We are committed to maintaining peace and stability in the border areas and we are firmly determined to safeguard our territorial sovereignty and security

WANG WENBIN | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN, CHINA

"We hope India will meet China halfway and will focus on the bigger picture of long term development of bilateral relations, put the boundary at an appropriate position and work to bring relations back to the track of steady and sound development," he said.

Italy starts J&J vax for those over 60

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rome, April 21: Italy is distributing 184,000 doses of Johnson & Johnson coronavirus shots to regional vaccination centres and recommending it for people aged over 60 following the latest evaluation from the European drug regulatory agency.

Italy's health ministry and pharmaceutical agency gave the green light for the shot after a pre-cautional suspension following reports the shot might be linked to very rare blood clots.

The EMA Tuesday found a possible link between the vaccines and very rare blood clots but said the benefits outweighed the risks.

After the ruling, the Italian government decided to recommend the shot for people over 60, a similar recommendation it made for AstraZeneca shots that also were linked to possible clots.

Italy's virus commissioner said in a statement that starting Wednesday, the initial 184,000 doses of J&J shots that were waiting in storage pending the EMA review will be distributed to Italy regions.

While López Obrador sought to set an example with the vaccine, he has expressed disdain for masks. He's refused to make them mandatory in public spaces.

Queen marks 95th birthday with thanks for 'support and kindness'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 21: Britain's Queen Elizabeth II thanked people around the world for their messages of "support and kindness" as she marked a low-key 95th birthday on Wednesday, days after husband Prince Philip's funeral Saturday.

The monarch reflected on the "great sadness" she and the royal family has been coping with and said that the tributes paid to her late husband from across the UK and Commonwealth were a "comfort" to the entire family.

"I have, on the occasion of my 95th birthday today, received many messages of good wishes, which I very much appreciate," said the Queen, in a message released by the official Buckingham Palace social media account.

"While as a family we are in a period of great sadness, it has been a comfort to us all to see and to hear the tributes paid to my husband,



from those within the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and around the world," she said.

"My family and I would like to thank you for all the support and kindness shown to us in recent days. We have been deeply touched, and continue to be reminded that Philip had such an extraordinary impact

on countless people throughout his life," she added. While the national mourning period in memory of the Duke of Edinburgh officially concluded Sunday, the monarch remains in mourning until Friday and there is unlikely to be any of the usual birthday markers such as the release of an official photograph



by Buckingham Palace. The Queen is expected to spend the day privately at Windsor Castle, where she will be joined by some close members of the royal family.

"I would like to send my warm wishes to Her Majesty The Queen on her 95th birthday," UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in a Twitter statement.

"I have always had the highest admiration for Her Majesty and her service to this country and the

Commonwealth. I am proud to serve as her Prime Minister," he said.

Prince Philip, the longest-serving consort to a British monarch, died April 9, just under two months away from his 100th birthday, which was due to be the focus of royal celebrations this year - with the Queen's 95th already set to be a lower-key affair.

Thousands of well-wishers usually fill central London to watch the Queen and members of the royal family for the event, which stems from the traditional preparations for battle, when colours (or flags) were carried ("trooped") down the rank to be seen and recognised by the soldiers.

The full ceremony traditionally takes place at Horse Guards Parade in London and involves more than 1,400 soldiers and 200 horses. The event attracts thousands of spectators - largely friends and family of the soldiers taking part in the military spectacle.

business



We invest in businesses that offer scalable and commercially viable products focused on solutions for the planet and people
LEENA DANDEKAR | FOUNDER, RAIN TREE

INDIA REMOVES IMPORT DUTY ON REMDESIVIR

India has removed import duty on Remdesivir, an anti-viral drug which is currently used to treat Covid-19 patients. The Ministry of Finance, in a notification issued late Tuesday night, removed the duty on import of pharmaceutical ingredients used to manufacture of the drug



of the day quote

The stay-at-home economy is a new experience for all demographics. It has served as a wake-up call for many millennials to think about investing in the stock market. Millennials realised that getting started in the stock market is not that difficult in this digital era

RAVI KUMAR | CO-FOUNDER, UPSTOX

Most of the mine owners have surface right also and if the government wants to convert the leases into corporation, it has to purchase the surface rights. How much will it cost? According to Supreme Court judgement it is more than four times of the market rate...Can the government do this?

PUTI GAONKAR | PRESIDENT, GOA MINING PEOPLE'S FRONT

It (wind turbine) is a landmark project that demonstrates what we can achieve with new economic models, and we are thrilled and thankful to have formed a new relationship with CleanMax

GILAN SABATIER | REGIONAL LEADER, ONSHORE WIND BIZ (SOUTH ASIA & ASEAN), GE RENEWABLE ENERGY

FMCG cos see spike in demand of essential goods

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 21: As the devastating second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic sweeps across India, leading FMCG companies are witnessing a strong surge in demand for their health and hygiene products, including hand sanitiser, hand wash, disinfectant spray and germ protection wipes.

Companies such as ITC, Himalaya Drug Company and Patanjali said they have ramped up their production capacity to address spurt in demand, assuring that their hygiene products are available to the consumers.

The companies had witnessed a slowdown in the consumption pattern of these items in the past 2-3 months. Now, they have reviewed their production plans as per the current situation and are rapidly scaling up and have streamlined their production capacities.

"We are witnessing a strong uptick



in demand for our hygiene portfolio across some geographies. The robustness and agility of our supply chains provide the flexibility and enable us to address the emerging demand trends," ITC Divisional CEO (Personal Care Products) Sameer Satpathy said.

Similarly, Himalaya Drug Company Business Director (Consumer Products Division) Rajesh Krishnamurthy said, "We have shored up our logistics, sales priorities and capabilities to cater to the COVID-19-induced business environment."

We are witnessing a strong uptick in demand for our hygiene portfolio across some geographies. The robustness and agility of our supply chains provide the flexibility and enable us to address the emerging demand trends

SAMEER SATPATHY | DIVISIONAL CEO (PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS), ITC

Krishnamurthy further said, "We will continue to ensure that product categories like hand wash, hygiene category, home care and sanitisers are made available to the consumers."

Haridwar-based Patanjali Ayurved also said a sudden spike in demand has created supply constraints but it is temporary and the company has streamlined its production capacities. "We are gearing up and soon everywhere these products will be available," Patanjali spokesperson SK Tjjarawala said.

The second wave is so spontaneous that none thought of such massive and mass spread with speed, he added.

"We have focused and streamlined all our production capacities to cater the demand of cononil, Shwasari Vati, Anu Tel, Giloy Ghan Vati, Tulsi Ghanvati, Chavyanprash and Immunogrit, etc, immunity booster, sanitisers, handwash and medications," Tjjarawala added.

Edelweiss Financial Services Executive Vice-President Abneesh Roy said that due to the second wave of the pandemic, the home hygiene category will witness enhanced demand.

CM UNVEILS 4-STAR LEMON TREE PREMIER IN CITY



Lemon Tree Premier has a banquet area of 22,000 sq ft on its 6th floor. The hotel also possesses a bar, swimming pool, two restaurants (Thai & Chinese) and 5,000 sq ft of decked area on the 7th floor. It also provides spa and gym services on the 8th floor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday inaugurated an iconic 4-star hotel 'Lemon Tree Premier' in the City. The inauguration ceremony took place via virtual mode.

OTDC Chairperson Shreemayee Mishra, Director Tourism & Culture Department Sachin Ramachandra Jadhav, Bhubaneswar North MLA Susant Kumar Rout and Vice President (Operation), Lemon Tree Mahesh S Aiyer were present at the inaugural ceremony. The founder Rashmi Ranjan Routray, Hardhik Routray and Umang Routray were also present. The hotel is replete with ultimate luxury, comfort and ambience.

Lemon Tree Premier has a banquet area of 22,000 sq ft on its 6th floor. The hotel also possesses a swimming pool, a bar, two restaurants (Thai & Chinese) and 5,000 sq ft of decked area on the 7th floor. It also provides spa and gym services on the 8th floor.

Moreover, Lemon Tree's 9th to 12th floor guest areas exhibit 76 deluxe rooms and suites designed to offer unparalleled hospitality and unmatched service and economy to its valued guests, visiting the heritage city (Bhubaneswar).

It was said that the hotel will provide an opportunity of employment to over 150 skilled and unskilled youth of Odisha. The hotel authorities said, "We share the vision of our Hon'ble Chief Minister to make Bhubaneswar a city of dreams."

Care Ratings revises GDP growth forecast to 10.2% for FY'22



AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 21: With economic activities getting affected across the country due to curbs imposed by states amid surge in Covid-19 cases, Care Ratings has revised down its forecast for GDP growth to 10.2% in 2021-22 from earlier projection of 10.7-10.9%.

This is the third revision by the rating agency in the last one month. "We have revised our forecast for GDP growth for FY22 as the underlying conditions have changed rapidly in the last 30 days or so. It stands now at 10.2%," Care Ratings said in a report.

On March 24, 2021, the agency had projected GDP growth between 11-11.2% based on GVA (gross value added) growth of 10.2%.

The spread of the virus in Maharashtra had led to the announcement of a "lockdown" by the state government which began in a less stringent manner from the first week of April, it said.

Factoring the potential loss of economic output due to the restrictions in the state, the agency, April 5, lowered its GDP forecast for the current fiscal year to 10.7-10.9%.

But the "lockdown" was made more obtrusive to business activity by April 20, with more stringency expected for the forthcoming fortnight, it added.

Further, the spread of the virus to other states has caused similar actions by governments which have ranged from night curfews and weekend lockdowns to full lockdowns.

The report said two events in

DENTED NUMBERS

The agency, in March had projected GDP growth between 11-11.2% based on gross value added growth of 10.2%

Factoring the potential loss of economic output due to the restrictions in the state, the agency, April 5, lowered its GDP forecast for the current fiscal year to 10.7-10.9%

the country -- state elections and Kumbh Mela -- have seen millions of people coming together with social distancing norms not being followed.

This has potential to spread the virus at an exponential rate throughout the country and several states have announced measures to test people returning from the pilgrimage, it said.

The agency said the post-election lockdowns in five states/UT -- Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry -- can be expected once polling is completed and more people are tested for Covid-19.

The rating agency had projected GVA (gross value added) to increase from ₹124.11 lakh crore (FY21) to ₹136.82 lakh crore (FY22) which was an increase of 10.2%.

With a potential fall in output of ₹1.13 lakh crore, GVA will be ₹135.69 lakh crore and growth will be 9.3%. As tax collections too would be affected, there would be an impact on GDP growth which is now placed at 10.2%.

India records 22 IPOs worth over \$2.5bn in Jan-Mar period

As per the report, the IPO pipeline has over 20 companies that have filed their Draft Red Herring Prospectus and more than 30 PE-backed companies are planning exits

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 21: India witnessed 22 initial public offers (IPOs) worth over \$2.5 billion in the first three months of 2021 amid "high momentum" in the country's capital markets and the trend is likely to stay bullish in the current quarter also, according to a report.

Leading consultancy EY India's IPO report released Wednesday showed that consumer products and retail, diversified industrial products, automotive and transportation were the most active sectors in terms of the number of IPOs in the 2021 first quarter. The IPOs include both in the main as well as SME (Small and Medium Enterprise) markets.

"With a robust Q1, IPO market likely to stay bullish in Q2 2021," it said, adding that India ranks ninth globally in terms of the number of IPOs Year-To-Date (YTD) 2021.

There were 22 IPOs that mopped up \$2,570.44 million in the first quarter of this year, including five in the SME space.

During the first quarter, Indian Railway Finance Corp's IPO -- with an issue size of \$634 million -- was the largest.

"In the main markets (BSE and NSE), there were 17 IPOs in Q1 2021



versus 1 IPO in Q1 2020 and 10 IPOs in Q4 2020, representing an increase of 1,600% compared to Q1 2020 and an increase of 70% compared to Q4 2020," the report said.

In the SME segment, there were 5 IPOs in the first quarter of this year versus 11 and 9 IPOs in the first quarter of 2020 and fourth quarter of last year, respectively. This represents a decrease of 55% compared to Q1 2020 and a decline of 44% compared to Q4 2020.

"We are witnessing high momentum in the Indian capital markets. Significant amount of activity is driven by huge dry powder awaiting investment and companies exploring a listing in India or overseas.

"The markets continue to reward

companies with robust, scalable and technology-led business models," Sandip Khetan, Partner and National Leader of Financial Accounting Advisory Services (FAAS) at EY India said.

As per the report, the IPO pipeline has over 20 companies that have filed their Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHPs) and more than 30 PE-backed companies are planning exits. InvITs worth almost \$5 billion are in the pipeline.

However, the report also noted that there are reasons for caution in the near-term, given the slow start to vaccinations in India relative to the size of the population, renewed spike in Covid infections with the second wave and threats from new variants of the virus.

JSPL vows to provide O₂ to hospitals in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 21: Jindal Steel & Power Ltd (JSPL) assured Angul District Administration to supply medical oxygen for treatment of Covid-19 affected people in the state. JSPL's Executive Director and Angul Unit Head in a letter to Collector and District Magistrate Angul said, "JSPL is committed for the well-being of the people of Odisha, and always with the district administration to address the emergency situation arising due to the pandemic".

Responding to JSPL's noble gesture, Collector Angul has also thanked the company and its social arm JSPL Foundation in his tweet. JSPL's Chairman Naveen



JSPL has been always standing with the country and countrymen during calamities and emergencies and will continue to do so during this pandemic. I am sure, together, we shall defeat the pandemic

NAVEEN JINDAL | CHAIRMAN JSPL

Jindal already announced that JSPL will supply 50 to 100 tonnes of medical oxygen every day from its Odisha and Chhattisgarh Unit. Jindal said, "JSPL has been always standing with the country and countrymen during calamities and emergencies

and will continue to do so during this pandemic. I am sure, together, we shall defeat the pandemic."

"We can compromise steel production for a while to supply oxygen to the government to save precious lives. Our priority is people

first," JSPL's Managing Director VR Sharma on Twitter.

"We can compromise steel production for a while to supply oxygen to the government to save precious lives. Our priority is people first," Sharma said on twitter.

The company had supplied 725 tonnes of liquid oxygen in Odisha last year to save human lives from the clutches of the deadly Covid-19 pandemic. JSPL has also taken multi-pronged initiatives to fight the second wave of Covid-19 across all its operational locations, including Odisha. The company has instituted Covid Care Centres in each of its business locations and is taking every measure to provide a healthy environment in JSPL's workplace.

'Oxygen reallocation to impact small biz'

AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 21: Reallocating oxygen for medical purposes to take care of the rising Covid cases will have an adverse impact on small businesses in some sectors, domestic rating agency Crisil said Wednesday. It said the "hiccup" seems temporary for now, and it is unlikely to impact the credit quality of the affected businesses.

The impact will be greater for companies in Maharashtra, New Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, where medical oxygen demand has increased multiple times due to high Covid-19 case-loads, the agency added.

The central government has



barred industrial use of oxygen except in nine designated sectors from Thursday onwards to divert the available stocks for life-saving medicinal use.

Demand for medical oxygen is estimated to have rocketed five-fold in the second week of April versus pre-pandemic levels as Covid-19 in-

fections took off. Crisil Ratings said. "The disruption in the supply of oxygen for industrial use would temporarily impact the revenues of small and mid-sized companies into metal fabrication, automotive components, ship-breaking, paper, and engineering," its director Gautam Shahi said.

These sectors typically do not have captive oxygen plants and source their requirement through merchant suppliers for operations such as welding, cutting, cleaning and chemical processes, he added.

Setting up an air-separation plant or importing oxygen is not a viable option because it requires significant lead time and involves rel-

atively prohibitive costs, the agency said. Oxygen is consumed by industry in two ways -- on-site and merchant sales. On-site is through captive plants for process-driven industries (including the nine sectors exempted by the government), which account for 75-80% of oxygen manufactured in India, the rating agency said.

The balance 20-25% is supplied through merchant sales (called liquid oxygen) through cryogenic tanks and cylinders, it said, adding the healthcare sector consumes only 10% of merchant sales.

Its associate director Sushant Sarode said the disruption in oxygen supplies for industrial use will last for six to eight weeks as of now.

LIC collects highest-ever new premium of ₹1.84L cr

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 21: The country's largest life insurer LIC has said that it has collected the highest-ever new business premium of ₹1.84 lakh crore in the fiscal ended March 31, 2021. The state-run insurer said the number is provisional. Its market share stood at 81.04% in number of policies for March 2021 and 74.58% for the full year, LIC said in a release.

During the fiscal 2020-21, the insurer achieved first year premium income of ₹56,406 crore under individual assurance business, a growth of 10.11% over FY'20. It

procured 2.10 crore policies, out of which 46.72 lakh were procured in March alone, registering a growth of 298.82% over FY'20 for the corresponding month, the release said.

Its market share in the first year premium stood at 64.74% for March and 66.18% for the entire fiscal. The insurer's pension and group schemes vertical also created a new record by clocking its highest-ever new business premium income of ₹1.27 lakh crore over a huge base of ₹1.26 lakh crore in the previous year ended March 31, 2020.

The number of new schemes sold also saw a new record of 31,795, the release said.

CHENNAI PASS KKR TEST



Deepak Chahar (R) in jolly mood after dismissing a KKR batsman in Mumbai

Mumbai, April 21: Superb batting performances from Faf du Plessis (95 n o, 60b, 9x4, 4x6) and Ruturaj Gaikwad (64, 42b, 6x4, 4x6), as well as a splendid opening spell from Deepak Chahar (4/29) helped Chennai Super Kings beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 18 runs in a thrilling IPL match here, Wednesday.

Sent into bat, Du Plessis and Gaikwad knocked the daylight out of KKR bowlers, adding 115 for the opening wicket to lay the foundation. After Gaikwad was back in the hut, Du Plessis continued his rampage, while Moeen Ali (25) and MS Dhoni (17) also came up with useful cameos as CSK posted a big total of 220/3.

In response, KKR were reduced

to 31/5 in 5.2 overs, but they showed the 'never-say-die' attitude and came close to winning the game before being bowled out for 202 with five balls to spare.

Only three of the KKR batsmen could reach double-digit scores as Dinesh Karthik (40, 24b, 4x4, 2x6), Andre Russell (54, 22b, 3x4, 6x6) and Pat Cummins (66 n o, 34b, 4x4, 6x6) almost pulled off an incredible win for their side.

Despite losing half their side, Russell joined Karthik at the middle as the West Indian began counter-attacking. The duo added 81 runs in six overs for the sixth wicket before Sam Curran got rid of Russell in the 12th over. From 31/5, they reached 112/6 in 11.2 overs.

However, CSK could hardly breath



a sigh of relief as Karthik and Cummins carried the momentum set by Russell. KKR were reduced to 146/7 in the 15th over. Cummins tried his best and take KKR past 200-run mark, but eventually ran out of partners.

Earlier, it was Gaikwad who returned to form after a string of poor outings in his first three matches with a composed knock that set it up for CSK after KKR opted to field.

Du Plessis came on his own after Gaikwad's departure in the 13th over as he added 50 runs with Moeen Ali (25) off just 26 balls. CSK scored

76 runs in the final five overs with the South African at his attacking best in the final five overs. MS Dhoni promoted himself to No.4 and finally broke his jinx against Sunil Narine, hitting his first boundary after 64 balls against the mystery spinner.

BRIEF SCORES: Chennai Super Kings 220/3 (Faf du Plessis 95 n o, Ruturaj Gaikwad 64; Varun Chakravarthy 1/27, Andre Russell 1/27) beat Kolkata Knight Riders 202 (Pat Cummins 66 n o, Andre Russell 54, Dinesh Karthik 40; Deepak Chahar 4/29, Lungi Ngidi 3/28) by 18 runs.

Sunrisers maul Kings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 21: Fast bowler Khaleel Ahmed (3/21) led an impressive bowling effort before Jonny Bairstow (63 n o, 56b, 3x4, 3x6) smashed an unbeaten fifty as Sunrisers Hyderabad snapped their three-match losing streak with a convincing nine-wicket win over Punjab Kings in an IPL game here, Wednesday.

Asked to bowl first, Sunrisers Hyderabad's pace-spin duo of Khaleel (3/21) and Abhishek Sharma (2/24) did bulk of the damage to bundle out Punjab Kings for a below-par 120 in 19.4 overs.

Senior pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/16), star Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan (1/17) and Siddarth Kaul (1/27) also picked up a wicket each as Punjab never gained momentum.

Chasing the total, SRH openers Bairstow and David Warner (37, 37b, 3x4, 1x6) pummelled Punjab into submission, adding 73 runs off 60 balls to set the foundation. Bairstow and Kane Williamson (16 n o) then knocked off the remaining runs as SRH romped home with eight balls to spare.

Warner was holed out to Mayank Agarwal off Fabian Allen (1/22), who bowled a wicket maiden, as SRH were 73/1. Bairstow found an able ally in Williamson, who was playing his first match of the season, as they added an unbeaten 48 runs to help SRH log their first win of the season.

Earlier, Shahrux Khan (22) and Mayank (22) were the top scorers for Punjab Kings, who came into the match after two losses. In an innings when clearing the boundary seemed to be a tall task, Khan managed two sixes, while Agarwal, who was dropped on 0 in



MATCH-WINNING EFFORTS: Khaleel Ahmed (L) reacts after getting a wicket; Jonny Bairstow plays through the off-side during his innings, Wednesday

the very first over by Rashid, hit two fours.

Opting to bat in their first game at MA Chidambaram Stadium, Punjab lost their in-form skipper KL Rahul (4) early on. Agarwal and Chris Gayle (15) stitched 24-run partnership. However, at the end of the seventh over, Khaleel got rid of the Indian with Rashid making no mistakes this time at midwicket.

West Indian Nicholas Pooran (0) was out for a diamond duck as Sunrisers skipper Warner effected his run out in the eighth over. Gayle followed his compatriot in the next over as he was adjudged leg before.

Punjab was reeling at 53/4 at the halfway mark as wickets continued to tumble at regular intervals. Deepak Hooda (13) and

Australian all-rounder Moises Henriques (14) got starts but were unable to capitalised on them. Spin all-rounder Allen (6) also struggled on his debut.

Local star Khan tried to inject some hope into the Punjab camp but a slower ball by Khaleel ended his cameo. Murgan Ashwin (9) hit a boundary but Kaul accounted for the spinner in the last over which was followed by the dismissal of Shami (3), who was run out.

BRIEF SCORES: Punjab Kings 120 (Shahrux Khan 22, Mayank Agarwal 22; Khaleel Ahmed 3/21, Abhishek Sharma 2/24) lost to Sunrisers Hyderabad 121/1 (Jonny Bairstow 63 n o, David Warner 37; Fabian Allen 1/22) by 9 wickets.

RCB FACE RR IN ROYAL ENCOUNTER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 21: Off to the best possible start with three wins on the trot, a confident Royal Challengers Bangalore will hope to keep the juggernaut rolling when they take on Rajasthan Royals in an IPL match here, Thursday.

Both sides have endured contrasting campaigns so far. RCB head in to the game after three morale-boosting victories. The Virat Kohli-led side edged past defending champions Mumbai Indians in the tournament opener before getting the better of Sunrisers Hyderabad and Kolkata Knight Riders to jump to the top of the points table.

On the other hand, the Royals have managed to win only one of their three fixtures. They lost to Chennai Super Kings in their previous match to slip down to the sixth spot. Sanju Samson and

TODAY'S MATCH

RCB VS RR

TIME 7.30 PM

Telecast: Star Sports channels

his men will be eyeing a second win.

The Royals have struggled to perform as a cohesive batting unit. While Samson led the team to within touching distance of victory with his sensational century against Punjab Kings, it was the South African duo of David Miller and Chris Morris that pulled off a win against the Delhi Capitals.

Against CSK, opener Jos Buttler looked dangerous but the other batsmen failed to provide any valuable contributions. For the former champions to do well, the side must click as a batting unit with Samson and the Englishman playing key roles.

The Royals bowling unit has been underwhelming to say the least, apart from the game against Delhi Capitals, the bowlers have leaked runs. Pacer Jaydev Unadkat shone against the Rishabh Pant-led side, registering the impressive figures of 3/15, while young Chetan Sakariya has shown promise.

In the absence of Jofra Archer, more will be expected out of the likes of Morris and Bangladesh speedster Mustafizur Rahman.

For RCB, AB de Villiers and new-recruit Glenn Maxwell have been the stand-out players with the willow. While the

South African continues to deliver season after season, the Australian all-rounder is proving to be a valuable addition to the middle order.

Kohli has got decent starts in a couple of games but the talismanic skipper will be itching to play a big innings. Young Devdutt Padikkal, who impressed everyone last season, has also looked rusty and is yet to perform to his full potential. After two failures Rajat Patidar will, too, look to make amends.

The RCB bowling department has been impressive with pacers Harshal Patel and Mohammed Siraj boasting economy rate of 5.75 and 5.81 respectively. The former pulled the rabbit out of the hat with a five-wicket haul against MI while left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed (3/7) changed the complexion of the match in just one over against the Sunrisers.



6 ENGLISH CLUBS WITHDRAW; ATLETICO, ITALIAN CLUBS DROP OUT Super League plan collapses

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, April 21: Atletico Madrid, Inter Milan, AC Milan and Juventus all dropped out of the Super League Wednesday, leaving the new competition essentially extinct before it even started. Only Spanish clubs Real Madrid and Barcelona are still officially involved.

The moves by Atletico, Inter, AC Milan and Juventus came a day after the six Premier League clubs involved in the project gave up on the controversial breakaway competition.

English clubs Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester United, Manchester City and Tottenham deserted the plans for the largely-closed competition amid an escalating backlash from their supporters and warnings from the government that legislation could be introduced to thwart them.

The Super League project was overseen by Real Madrid president Florentino Perez, who promoted it as a way to "save soccer" and the clubs struggling financially amid the coronavirus pandemic.

UEFA threatened to ban players from the participating teams from playing in this year's European Championship and next year's World Cup. But a Madrid court later issued a preliminary ruling stopping UEFA, FIFA and its members from acting against the creation of the new league.

AC Milan signalled it was leaving a few hours after Atletico and Inter Milan made their announcements. Juventus followed moments later, but didn't completely abandon plans for a future Super League.

Atletico said the decision was made after its board of directors met



Wednesday. The Spanish club said it "decided to formally communicate the Super League and the rest of the founding clubs its decision not to formalize its participation in the project."

The English clubs heeded the appeals from UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin to remain part of the Champions League, which has a qualification criteria based on a team's performance in the domestic league.

As it became clear Chelsea and City were quitting the Super League Tuesday evening, Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson and his teammates posted a message advocating staying within the open European competitions.

Liverpool, which is owned by the Boston Red Sox investment group, eventually issued a statement thanking those inside and outside the club for "valuable contributions" be-

fore making the decision to stick within existing structures.

Manchester United defender Luke Shaw also went against his club by tweeting his backing of the existing Champions League minutes before his club's about-turn.

Tottenham also gave a detailed explanation for why it signed up before backing away. Chelsea, which is owned by Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich, said it only joined the Super League group last week.

The Premier League threatened to sanction the six rebel clubs and Prime Minister Boris Johnson considered introducing laws to stop them forming a new European competition he called a "cartel."

The Premier League had threatened the six clubs with expulsion if they tried to go it alone in Europe. The other 14 clubs met Tuesday and "unanimously and vigorously" rejected the Super League plans.

8 Indian boxers in Youth Worlds finals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 21: Eight Indian boxers, including seven women, stormed into the finals of the youth world championships in Kielce, Poland, an unprecedented achievement for the country in the marquee age group event.

Apart from the eight finalists, three others settled for bronze medals at the tournament, a performance which betters the 10 medals that India won in its best ever show not too long back in the 2018 edition in Hungary.

The ones who made the finals, to be held Thursday after a rest day

Wednesday, were Gitika (48kg), Babyrojisana Chanu (51kg), Vinka (60kg), Arundhati Choudhary (69kg), Poonam (57kg), Thokchom Sanamachu Chanu (75kg) and Alfiya Pathan (+81kg) among women. Among men, only Sachin (56kg) made the summit clash while three others signed off with bronze medals.

Gitika defeated Italy's Erika Prisciandaro 5-0 to set up a clash with Poland's Natalia Dominika, while Vinka prevailed 4-1 against Czech Republic's Veronika Gajdova. Vinka will next take on Kazakhstan's Zhuldyz Shayakhmetova.

Arundhati had little trouble get-

ting past Uzbekistan's Khadichabonu Abdullaeva in a unanimous 5-0 verdict and she will be up against Poland's Barbara Marcinkowska in her summit showdown. Babyrojisana also notched up a similar result against Italy's Elen Ayari. She has Russia's Valeriia Linkova to contend with in the finals. Manipur's Babyrojisana is the reigning Asian youth champion.

Poonam sailed past Uzbekistan's Sitora Turdibekova 5-0, and France's Stihelne Grosy awaits her in the gold medal bout. Sanamacha clinched a 4-1 triumph over Poland's Daria Parada. She will square off against Kazakhstan's Dana Diday in her

last bout of the event.

Alfiya had a tough one against Poland's Oliwia Toborek but the Indian did enough to prevail 3-2. Moldova's Daria Kozorez will be her final challenge.

In the evening session, Sachin was the lone Indian to triumph beating Italy's Michele Baldassi. He will fight it out with Kazakhstan's Yerbolat Sabyr for the top honours on Friday.

Asian youth silver-winner Ankita Narwal (64kg), Bishwamita Chongthom (49kg) and Vishal Gupta (91kg) ended their campaigns with third-place finishes following semi-final losses.

Quite remarkably, FC Goa grabbed the lead when Edu Bedia headed in to the bottom right corner from the centre of the box in the 14th minute. Bedia was assisted by Brandon Fernandes following a set piece situation.

But the Indian club's joy was short-lived as Persepolis FC fought back strongly to not just equalise but also go ahead in the high-octane contest. Persepolis FC, last season's runners-up in the Champions League, drew parity when Mahdi Torabi converted a penalty in the 18th minute.

Soon enough, from a cross by Torabi following a corner, Seyyed Jalal Hosseini unleashed a header from close range to put the fancied visitors ahead in the 24th minute at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

The Goans were forced to make an early substitution as Amarjit Singh replaced Adil Khan in the 29th minute because of an injury.

Rafa through at Barcelona Open

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, April 21: Rafa Nadal needed three sets to beat his 111th-ranked opponent in his first match at the Barcelona Open Wednesday, while Fabio Fognini was disqualified for alleged verbal abuse.

Nadal defeated Ilya Ivashka of Belarus 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 at the clay-court tournament.

Fognini was defaulted while trailing 0-6, 4-4 against qualifier Bernabe Zapata Miralles of Spain, after a line judge told the chair umpire that the ninth-seeded Italian had used foul language.

Fognini denied wrongdoing and was upset as he left the court, breaking his racket after hitting it at the net post on his way out.

Rublev advanced by defeating Federico Gaio 6-4, 6-3, while second-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas cruised past wild-card entry Jaume Munar of Spain 6-0, 6-2.

FC Goa go down to Persepolis



FC Goa's Edu Bedia celebrates his goal

Margao, April 20: FC Goa put up a spirited fight before going down

1-2 to Group E leaders Persepolis FC, bringing to an end the Indian club's unbeaten run in the AFC Champions League here, Tuesday.