

## GO VEGETARIAN

Former beauty queen Manushi Chiller has encouraged everyone to embrace vegan food from Earth Day

LEISURE P2

## SHOW OF STRENGTH

Russian military conducts Thursday massive drills in Crimea with navy ships, warplanes and thousands of troops

INTERNATIONAL P10

## ODISHA FC RETAIN JERRY

Odisha FC extends contract with winger Jerry Mawimhingthanga on a long-term basis and wishes him well

SPORTS P12

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



How can we run out of oxygen? Our govts are full of gas!

# SC salvo at Centre

APEX COURT UNHAPPY WITH THE WAY COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS BEING HANDLED, WANTS 'NATIONAL PLAN'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 22: As India grapples with the current wave of COVID-19 pandemic, the Supreme Court told Thursday the Centre that it wants a 'national plan' on issues including supply of oxygen and essential drugs for treatment of infected patients.

Taking suo motu cognisance of the prevailing grim situation across India, a bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde said it would also consider the matter pertaining to the method and manner of COVID-19 vaccination in India. The bench, also comprising Justices LN Rao and SR Bhat, said it would examine the aspect relating to judicial power of the high courts to declare lockdown amid the pandemic.

Overall the apex court indicated that it was unhappy the way the pandemic situation was being handled by the Centre. It said at least six high courts are hearing COVID-19 related matters. The apex court appointed senior advocate Harish Salve as an amicus curiae to assist it in the suo motu proceedings. The matter will be heard again Friday.

"We, as a bench and as a court, wish to take suo motu cognisance of certain issues," the bench told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta.

The top court said six high courts - Delhi, Bombay, Sikkim, Madhya Pradesh, Calcutta and Allahabad - are dealing with issues pertaining to the prevailing situation. It said these high courts are exercising their jurisdiction



HOPING FOR THE BEST: Relatives of Covid-19 patients wait Thursday outside an oxygen plant to fill up the cylinders, Thursday

## CALCUTTA HIGH COURT SLAMS ECI

KOLKATA: The Calcutta High Court expressed dissatisfaction Thursday with the Election Commission of India (ECI) over enforcement of Covid-19 health safety norms during the ongoing West Bengal Assembly elections. A division bench presided by Chief Justice TBN Radhakrishnan said issuance of circulars and holding meetings on Covid-19 safety was not enough. It sought an affidavit by Friday on steps taken to enforce the norms. "We are not satisfied with the materials on record to state that the Election Commission of India and its officers on ground in West Bengal have enforced their circulars," the bench also comprising of Justice Arijit Banerjee said. It added that it was the responsibility of the ECI to enforce the protocols.

in bona fide and in the best interest.

"What is happening is that it is creating some kind of confusion and diversion of resources," the SC bench ob-

served. "We want to know with regard to four issues - supply of oxygen and essential drugs, method and manner of vaccination. We want to keep the power

to declare lockdown to the State and this should not be by judicial decision. We want to see a national plan on these four issues," the bench asserted.

Earlier, in an extra-ordinary hearing late Wednesday night, which was a public holiday, the Delhi High Court had ordered the Centre to 'forthwith' provide oxygen by whatever means to hospitals. It slammed the Centre stating it 'seems human life is not important for the state'.

"You are not exploring all avenues to augment oxygen supply. Beg, borrow or steal," the Delhi High Court had told the Centre.

## NEW RULE FOR NEIGHBOURING STATE

# Mandatory quarantine for all Bengal returnees

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 22: The Odisha government ordered Thursday mandatory institutional quarantine of 14 days for the people coming to Odisha from West Bengal. This rule will come into effect from Friday.

Chief Secretary Suresh Mohapatra while making the announcement said the rule will be implemented due to the rise of

ones urban areas. "COVID cases in Odisha are rising. Earlier the rise was due to the influx of people from Chhattisgarh. Now West Bengal is a new threat because it is reporting more than 10,000 cases daily and the numbers are swelling," Mohapatra said.

"Odisha has also detected a triple mutant variety of the virus. It may be that the Bengal returnees will have this variant. This new variant is indeed dangerous and spreads



A third new mutant variant of the virus has been found in some of the infected persons. This variant is very dangerous and spreads rapidly

SURESH MOHAPATRA | CHIEF SECRETARY

COVID-19 cases in Odisha and detection of a third mutant variety in the neighbouring state. He said all those coming from West Bengal by any mode of transport will have to undergo quarantine. Persons who will produce RT-PCR negative reports obtained in the last 48 hours and those who have taken both doses of vaccine will have to undergo home quarantine.

West Bengal returnees can opt for quarantine at the Temporary Medical Centre (TMC) set up by Odisha government or opt for paid

very quickly. So the decision to order mandatory quarantine for people from West Bengal has been taken," informed Mohapatra.

Mohapatra said that collectors of all districts that share boundaries with West Bengal have been alerted and asked to take actions accordingly. "All vehicles will be checked and then allowed to enter," he said.

The chief secretary said airport officials in the state capital and Jharsuguda have also been informed about the new rule and all passengers will be screened.

## TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT



New arrivals to the city queue up for registration without proper social distancing at tables set up by the BMC at Bhubaneswar Railway Station

# Naveen assures Modi of all help

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 22: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had a telephonic discussion Thursday with Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding the COVID-19 situation in India.

Naveen assured Modi of all possible help and cooperation including the supply of medical oxygen. "It is a war-like situation and Odisha will extend all cooperation in the fight against Covid-19

and expressed his gratitude. "Out of the increased quota of oxygen for Delhi, we have received the maximum from Odisha. We are trying to airlift the same from Odisha to save time at this critical juncture," Kejriwal said. The Delhi CM also said that Patnaik has engaged a special officer to look into the needs of the Delhi government.

Similarly, Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray also thanked Naveen for the steps taken to supply oxygen to Maharashtra.

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# Stray incidents of violence mark 6th phase

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 22: Stray incidents of violence marked the sixth stage of Assembly elections in West Bengal with close to 80 per cent voter turnout recorded Thursday. Polling was held at 14,480 polling stations in 17 Assembly constituencies in North 24 Parganas district, nine each in Nadia and Uttar Dinajpur districts and eight in Purba Bardhaman district.

"Polling was by and large peaceful, apart from a few incidents of violence," a senior official of the CEO's office here said.



EXERCISING THEIR RIGHTS: Voters queue up to cast their votes at a polling booth in West Bengal's Nadia district

Among the four districts, Nadia registered the highest voter turnout of 82.67 per cent (till 6.00pm), followed

by Purba Bardhaman (82.15 per cent), Uttar Dinajpur (77.76 per cent) and North 24 Parganas (75.94 per

cent) informed, CEO Aariz Aftab. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) alleged that two activists were injured in firing allegedly by the central forces outside booth number 79 in Ashoknagar's Tangra area after a few party members protested against BJP candidate Tanuja Chakraborty's visit to the area. However, the EC said it did not have any report of firing. "This is a baseless allegation," a senior EC official said.

In Raiganj, TMC said one of its activists sustained serious injuries after BJP workers allegedly stabbed him. The saffron party however, denied the allegations.

## MAMATA CANCELS ALL HER MEETINGS

KOLKATA: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee cancelled Thursday all pre-scheduled poll meetings. Her announcement came after the EC banned roadshows and vehicle rallies for the remaining phases of the ongoing Assembly polls. Banerjee said she will address people virtually. "I am cancelling all my pre-scheduled meetings and we will reach out to the people virtually," the TMC said on Twitter.

## COVID-19 SITUATION TURNING VERY GRIM

# India registers world record spike of 3.14L new infections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 22: India registered over 3.14 lakh new coronavirus cases in a day. It is the highest-ever single-day count recorded in any country. The new infections took India's total tally of COVID-19 affected patients to 1,59,30,965. Earlier January 2, the US had reported 3,00,310 new infections. Till Thursday, it was the highest single-day spike reported by any country in the world.

According to the Union Health Ministry data updated Thursday, a total of 3,14,835 fresh infections were registered in a span of 24 hours. The death toll increased to 1,84,657 with a record 2,104 new fatalities. The national COVID-19 recovery rate fell below 85 per cent.

Registering a huge increase for the 43rd day in a row, the active cases have increased to 22,91,428 comprising 14.38% of the total infections. The national Covid-19 recovery rate has dropped to 84.46 per cent.

India's COVID-19 tally crossed the 20-lakh mark August 7, 50 lakh September 16 and went past the one-crore mark December 19. It crossed the grim milestone of 1.50 crore April 19.

According to the ICMR, 27,27,05,103 samples have been tested up to April 21 with 16,51,711 samples being tested Wednesday.

Maharashtra with 568 deaths topped the list of fatalities. Other states that reported substantial deaths were Delhi (249), Chhattisgarh (193), Uttar Pradesh (187), Gujarat (122) and Karnataka (116). A total of 1,84,657 deaths have been reported so far in India with 61,911 of these occurring in Maharashtra. The Health Ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)," the ministry said on its website.

### MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	48080.67 ↑ 374.87
NIFTY	14406.20 ↑ 109.80
DOLLAR	75.63 ↓ ₹0.08
EURO	90.42 ↓ ₹0.04
GOLD	₹47,863 ↓ ₹365
SILVER	₹69,612 ↓ ₹726

### WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	34.0°C	34.8°C
TEMP. MIN	27.4°C	26.6°C
Humidity	75%	68%
Rainfall	0.5mm	2mm
Forecast	Partly cloudy sky	



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
Your ability to let go things will reflect in your personal as well as your professional life. Today could be a significant day for you, and Ganesh advises you not to forget your special abilities. Make good use of them so that others too can benefit.

**TAURUS**  
Professionals in all spheres of work are due for a field day today. The day will be particularly outstanding for Administrators and executives are likely to get richer by the end of the day. Even if you are engaged in some other work, you will stand out and get noticed for your overall excellence.

**GEMINI**  
You need to break free from the shackles of your daily routine. Trying to finish all your tasks as per your schedule will give rise to unnecessary worry. To manage your time creatively is the best way to beat the stress. Talking to your elders is a good way to calm your shot nerves, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Your social prestige will go up. People will praise your personality traits and try to emulate you. You will be a role model, too. Ganesh feels that this will be highly profitable day for you.

**LEO**  
You will try to take up new projects to the best of your abilities today. You will be able to successfully tackle all your tasks today. You will face a little instability in your personal relationships, but will be able to solve all issues successfully, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Opening up to your beloved about your whims and fancies as well as your goals shall be the key today. And, why not, urges Ganesh. Your intimate relations should be built on trust and mutual compatibility. Your energy levels will hit the sky. Make the most of this spurt by finishing in leftover mundane chores.

**LIBRA**  
Lady Luck offers you a mixed bag today, so expect anything and everything. You may also develop a knack for pointing out others' mistakes, while turning a blind eye to your own shortcomings. Ganesh disapproves of this.

**SCORPIO**  
Be vigilant; keep your eyes and ears open for all the events happening around you, says Ganesh. Your intuition is trying to tell you something, trust it. Think and act positively, the rest would fall in place.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Work is likely to keep you on toes. At work place, you and your opinions will be in demand. Those who are associated with stock exchange and shares will be happy to gain profits during the afternoon. Wait and watch the end result in the evening.

**CAPRICORN**  
Opportunities don't knock on the door twice. Today, you'll answer the door and utilise the opportunity to the most, predicts Ganesh. Positive results will be visible and you'll stand a chance to overtake your competitors. Even if the competition is fierce and opponents try everything to pull you down, you'll not let them win the battle. Socially, you will be very popular today.

**AQUARIUS**  
Spirituality is your new passion and Calvin Klein matters less today! Mysticism attracts you, says Ganesh. This may lead you to seek solace in holy books and religious places. It's going to take some time for you to understand that spiritual attainment can be had in the flesh-and-blood world as well.

**PISCES**  
You are ceaselessly driven to find room for improvement. A part-time course to enhance your skills or to increase your efficiency is what you will likely be pursuing today, says Ganesh.



## MORTAL KOMBAT RETAINS ESSENCE OF GAME: HAN

Actor Chin Han, who plays the sorcerer Shang Tsung in *Mortal Kombat*, said the film retains the spirit of the popular game as well as the original film that released in 1995.

## 'WAS LOVELY TO HAVE FAMILY AT HOME AMID PANDEMIC'

Actress Catherine Zeta-Jones found it lovely to have her family at home amid the Covid-19 pandemic, because she found it comforting to be with her closed ones. She said: "I must say, personally, it was lovely when we were in a vulnerable and unknowing time to have my peeps, my loved ones around."



## EARTH DAY

# Manushi bats for vegetarianism

**Mumbai:** Former beauty queen Manushi Chhillar features in a new campaign for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), India, that encourages everyone to ditch meat on the occasion of Earth Day Thursday. She says, for her, staying vegetarian was a personal choice that she made long back.

In the campaign, Manushi wears a crown made of broccoli, asparagus, and tomatoes.

"For me, staying vegetarian was a personal choice that I made long back. I also wanted to concentrate on how that impacts my overall fitness. Food is a personal choice and we must eat what we feel is best for us, but my friends at PETA India and I encourage everyone to give being vegetarian a try for Earth Day and beyond if they so choose," Manushi said.

She added that meat-free meals are kinder to the planet and animals, and better for health. "I encourage everyone to give them a try for Earth Day and beyond," Manushi concluded.

**Mumbai:** Actress Rakul Preet Singh took to steering a truck on the set of the upcoming film *Sardar Ka Grandson*, and she was quite in the driver's seat doing the job. "I personally like driving a lot and the entire process was a lot more fun than one could have imagined. Driving the truck is not easy, but I was able to take it on confidently," said Rakul.

She added: "We had a truck driver on set to train us how to manoeuvre the big truck, which helped me pull it off. On set, people were surprised with my driving skills! It was like a once in a lifetime experience for me."

The film revolves around a relationship between Amreek Singh (Arjun Kapoor) and his grandmother Rupinder Kaur (Neena Gupta), whose idiosyncratic behaviour drives everyone crazy Rakul plays a sensible girl.

*Sardar Ka Grandson* is directed by Kaashvi Nair, and also features John Abraham and Aditi Rao Hydari and Kanwajit Singh. **IANS**

## Rakul Preet shares her 'once in a lifetime experience'

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## Music director Shravan dies of COVID-19

Nadeem-Shravan was among the most popular music composers in the 90s, giving chartbuster soundtracks in many films

**Mumbai:** Composer Shravan Rathod, of popular music director duo Nadeem-Shravan, passed away Thursday due to COVID-19 related complications, his son said. Rathod was 66.

The composer was admitted to SL Raheja hospital in a 'critical' condition after testing positive for COVID-19. He breathed his last in the hospital.

"He passed away around 10:15 pm tonight. Please pray for his soul," his son, musician Sanjeev Rathod, told PTI.

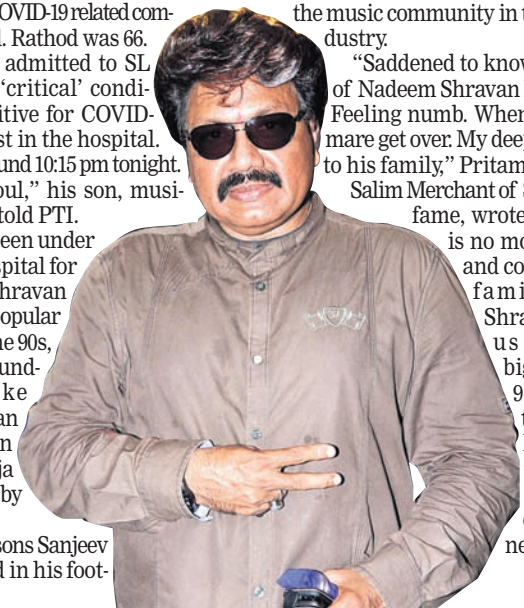
The musician had been under observation at the hospital for a few days. Nadeem-Shravan were among the most popular music composers in the 90s, giving chartbuster soundtracks in films like *Aashiqui* (1990), *Saajan* (1991), *Shah Rukh Khan* starrer *Pardes* and *Raja Hindustani*, headlined by *Aamir Khan*.

Shravan's children, sons Sanjeev and Darshan, followed in his foot-

steps and turned music composers. The composer's death came as a shock to the music community in the Hindi film industry.

"Saddened to know that Shravanji of Nadeem Shravan has passed away. Feeling numb. When will this nightmare get over. My deepest condolences to his family," Pritam wrote.

Salim Merchant of Salim-Sulaiman fame, wrote, "Shravan bhai is no more. My respects and condolences to his family. Nadeem-Shravan have given us some of the biggest hits in the 90s. Covid has taken so many lives. Don't know when will this end...Really saddened by this news."



# Indian working millennials key drivers behind co-living trends

About 66 per cent of married couples in any new city prefer the ease of finding a co-living apartment than a secluded independent house, reveals a study.

A new pan-India study has showcased that the preferences of the young urban population have changed dramatically as they opt for homes that are beyond just a decent place to stay.

The report by Colive, a technology-powered fully-managed co-living homes provider, details insights into the demographics of Indian millennials and how they want to live.

It reveals that 81 per cent of the urban population below the age of 27 are the key drivers of the co-living industry.

India is home to the largest millennial population globally, comprising 34 per cent of the country's total population who are looking for better careers and lifestyle, says Colive.



A REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

The study gathered responses from singles, married and unmarried couples, working professionals and small nuclear families majorly. The era of moderate acquaintance, friendship and close togetherness indicates that about 76 per cent of the young population choose to live in a single accommodation over the 26 per cent who wish combined living with their partners.

About 66 per cent of married couples in any new city feel the new environment can be daunting when things around them feel and look unfamiliar; yet some bits of know-hows are important. Hence, they prefer the ease of finding a co-living apartment than a secluded independent house. About 82 per cent select 1 bhk homes due to the affordability. The average cost that one is ready to pay has been noted as below Rs 10,000 per month, says

65 per cent of the working population.

"Co-living culture is growing at a very fast pace. The nature of the ecosystem ensures comfort, affordability, safety, and privacy. Our research report shows how this is the most preferred way of living in today's era. The concept of phygital meets drives the mindset of the youngsters. They want to have a mobile living experience looking for an urban lifestyle when migrating to new cities to pursue jobs and education. And co-living spaces like ours meet their expectations by offering fully managed service and affordable luxury that meets their style and preferences. All this signals to great times for co-living which offers fully managed rental homes to upwardly mobile urban dwellers," says Suresh Rangarajan, Founder & CEO, Colive.

## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

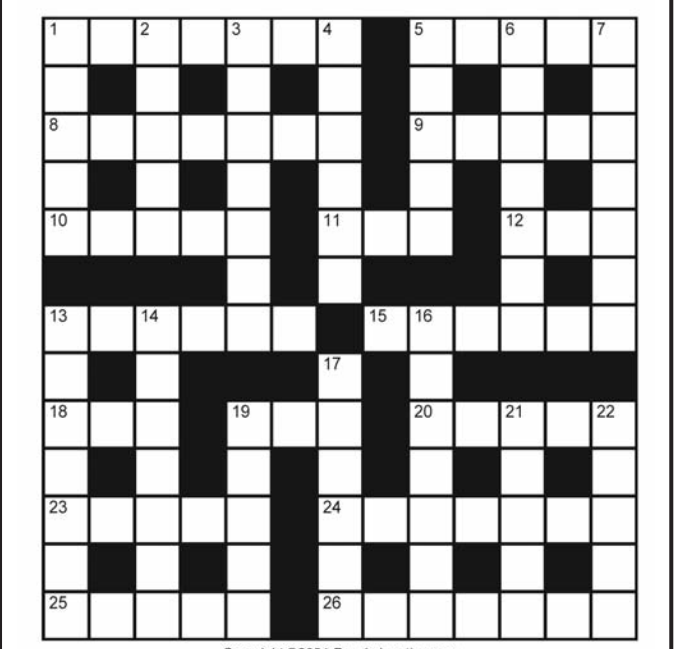


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Winter wear
  - 5 Grocery section
  - 8 Boat race
  - 9 Poppy product
  - 10 Underground worker
  - 11 Shack
  - 12 Infomercials, e.g.
  - 13 Shrewdness
  - 15 Ebb
  - 18 Egyptian boy king
  - 19 Pastoral setting
  - 20 Speck in the ocean
  - 23 Swagger
  - 24 Theatre companies
  - 25 Marsh plant
  - 26 Top-notch
  - 3 Bitter hickory, e.g. (3,4)
  - 4 Despise
  - 5 Up in the air
  - 6 Chinese black mushroom
  - 7 In one group (2,5)
  - 13 Illustrators
  - 14 Pronounced
  - 16 TV installment
  - 17 "Praying" insect
  - 19 Strong espresso
  - 21 Place for a pin
  - 22 Stun gun
- Down**
- 1 Assembly
  - 2 Vacuum tube filler

## 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

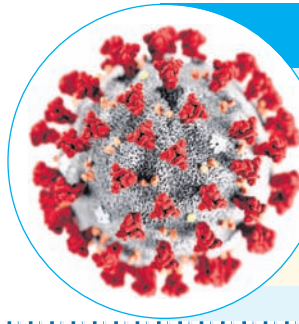


# downtown



## THRUST ON AWARENESS

RPF personnel create awareness on Covid-19 norms among railway passengers at Khurda Road, Thursday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	14,50,08,183	12,30,89,827	30,78,280
India	1,59,30,965	1,34,54,880	1,84,657
Odisha	3,88,479	3,53,551	1,965

# Covid cases up 30% in 24 hrs; 7 fresh deaths

THE STATE REPORTED ITS HIGHEST SINGLE-DAY SPIKE OF 6,164 CASES THURSDAY

PNN/AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** Odisha's Covid-19 tally soared to 3,88,479 as the state reported its highest single-day spike of 6,164 new cases Thursday, while seven fresh fatalities pushed the coronavirus death toll to 1,965, a Health department official said.

The state recorded a 30 per cent rise in new cases in the last 24 hours. It had registered 4,851 infections Wednesday.

As many as 3,575 new cases were registered in quarantine centres, while 2,589 fresh infections were detected during contact tracing, he said.

Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls, reported the highest number of new cases at 1,132, followed by Nuapada (459) and Kalahandi (452).

Two Covid-19 patients each died in Ganjam and Rayagada districts, while one fresh fatality each was registered in Khurda, Kandhamal



People queuing up for RT-PCR tests at Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

Khurda district reported the highest number of new cases at 1,132, followed by Nuapada (459) and Kalahandi (452)

Two Covid-19 patients each died in Ganjam and Rayagada districts, while one fresh fatality each was registered in Khurda, Kandhamal and Kalahandi.

and Kalahandi.

Fifty-three coronavirus patients have died due to comorbidities to date. Odisha now has 35,075 active cases, while 2,009 more people were

cured of the disease, taking the total number of recoveries in the state to 3,51,386.

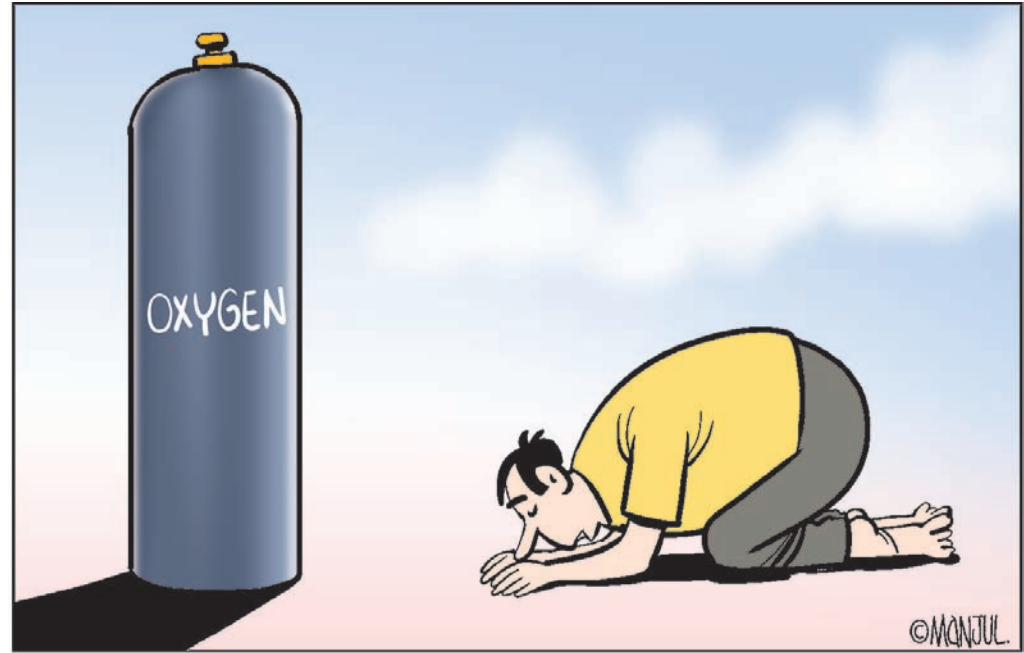
The state has thus far tested over 97.49 lakh samples for Covid-19, in-

cluding 44,983 Wednesday. The state's positivity rate stands at 3.98 per cent. Meanwhile, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) P K Jena has issued a clarification regarding the timings of weekend shutdowns in the urban areas of the state in view of the grave Covid-19 situation.

"In response to some media queries, it is hereby clarified that the Friday's night curfew continues till 5am of Saturday and then weekend shutdown continues from Saturday till Monday morning in all urban areas of the state. No one should interpret in any other way. In effect, restrictions continue from Friday evening till Monday morning 5am," the SRC said in a statement.

Keeping in view the surge of Covid-19 cases in the state capital, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has constituted more rapid response teams (RRTs) for the smooth management of the crisis. There are 39 RRTs for 67 wards of BMC, a senior official said.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# Beds at major private hosps in Capital city fully occupied

MANISH KUMAR, OP

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** The burgeoning cases of Covid-19 in the state have started having the repercussions on healthcare setups across the state even as many prominent private hospitals in the Capital city showing full occupancy.

Representatives from Apollo Hospital, AMRI Hospital, CARE Hospital and others claimed that their beds dedicated to Covid patients are full and there is no space for fresh admissions.

Apollo Hospital in the state capital has a total of 32 beds for Covid-19 patients while three ICU beds for Covid patients have been kept ready. However, all of these beds are fully occupied by Covid patients, the hospital administration said. The hospital is now mulling to expand its beds for Covid patients and might double the beds to cater to the rising needs of Covid infected.

Similarly, AMRI Hospital has a total of 75 dedicated beds for Covid patients but all of them are occupied by the patients and there is no space for new patients unless beds are vacated by existing patients.

The situation at CARE Hospital in the city is no different as around 78 beds for Covid patients have been fully occupied as on Thursday night.

With the current figures, now



All the beds for Covid patients at Apollo Hospital, AMRI Hospital, CARE Hospital and others in Capital city are fully occupied

With the current figures, now the stress on government hospitals has increased manifold

However, data given by Health dept Thursday night claimed that out of 4,847 hospital beds available for Covid patients in private hospitals, only 637 are filled

the stress on government hospitals has increased manifold. The state government has recently expanded the bed capacity for Covid patients at SUM Hospital, Blue Wheel Hospital, Hi-Tech Hospital and others to cater to the needs of serious Covid patients who need critical care.

However, the state government has been denying full occupancy of hospital beds or ICUs for Covid patients.

Niranjan Mishra of state Public Health department did not respond to queries on the matter when approached by this reporter.

Significantly, the data given by the Health department Thursday night claimed that out of 4,847 hospital beds in private hospitals, only 637 are filled - an occupancy rate of 13.14 per cent only.

Similarly, the data for government hospitals said that out of 4,174 beds, only 1,145 beds are occupied - occupancy rate of 27.43 per cent. The government data also claimed that there was no issue of shortage of ICU beds.

However, ground reality in Bhubaneswar private hospitals brings to the fore a different picture altogether.

## Drive against drug hoarding

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, April 22:** Continuing their drive against hoarding/black marketing of essential drugs and medical goods for treatment of Covid patients, the joint flying squads of the state government Thursday conducted inspections at several pharmaceutical firms and hospitals across Odisha.

The flying squads comprising drug inspectors, officials of Crime Branch, Special Task Force and local police conducted verifications at several pharmaceutical firms at College Square in Cuttack and one hospital in Bhubaneswar, said a press note of Odisha police Thursday. Verification was also carried out at various medical stores/stockist/deposits/oxygen filling centres at Sonepur, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Bolangir, Nuapada, Kalahandi and a few other places in the state, added the press note.

The records and stocks of entry and supply of Covid medicines and related items were verified. Distribution details were collected and the medical firms/hospitals were directed to submit daily updates on the distribution of Covid drugs.

## Vaccinate people for free: Oppn to govt

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** Opposition parties Thursday urged the state government to provide Covid-19 vaccines to people above 18 years of age for free and demanded an early announcement to this effect to allay fears about the pandemic among the people.

BJP leader Prithviraj Harichandan said, "Several states like Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh

and Assam have declared free vaccination for the people of their states but the state government is still mum on the issue for the people above the age of 18 years."

He also added, "Uttar Pradesh has also made the same announcement. I believe this is high time that the government acted on this and cleared the doubts on the issue. It should provide the vaccination for free and must declare the same."

Congress leader Pradip Majhi also raised the issue and demanded an early announcement. He said, "This is a natural disaster and the Prime Minister had announced free vaccination. In India, the vaccination is given in the minimum prices and it must be given to the state people at free as the state is a poor state. This is a time when such announcements should be made in the welfare of the people."



Police personnel enforcing Covid norms at Unit-IV market in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

OP PHOTO

## Nod to alignment of Capital Ring Road



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** With a view to ensuring seamless traffic movement, the state government has finalised the much waited alignment of the Capital Region Ring Road (CRRR) which would bypass Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has approved the alignment of the ring road, Works department sources said here Thursday. The department has set a target to complete the project within 30 months.

The project will be implemented by National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) and the state government has decided to provide Rs 600 crore to the NHAI towards the cost of land acquisition for taking up this project, the source said.

"The alignment for CRRR has been approved by state government. The estimated land acquisition cost for the project is Rs 1,200 crore of which the state would provide 50 per cent. The civil work

cost of the project will be around Rs 2,500 crore," said NHAI chief general manager, Odisha, RK Panda.

The ring road that would originate from near Rameswar will be built bypassing Khurda town, Bhubaneswar, Athagarh town, Cuttack town and Choudwar town. It will be a 112.2km long 6-lane carriageway. The department has set a target to complete the project within 30 months.

Once the project is completed, heavy vehicles and other traffic can directly move towards Angul-Sambalpur route and also Bhadrak-Balasore line bypassing major towns like Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, Panda said. CRRR alignment will provide an impetus to socio-economic growth of capital region while ensuring minimal impact on forest areas and eco-sensitive zones. The proposed ring road is expected to improve road condition between the twin cities and lessen the number of accidents and travel time.

## Pvt hosps asked to reserve 50% beds for nCoV patients

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** With the steep rise in coronavirus cases, the state government Thursday asked all the private hospitals to reserve 50 per cent of general as well as ICU beds for treatment of Covid-19 patients.

The order will be applicable to the registered private hospitals having 30 beds or more. The provision for reservation of beds may go upto 100 per cent when need arises, Additional Chief Secretary of Health department Pradipta Mohapatra said in a letter to all the district Collectors, municipal commissioners and chief district medical & public health officers.

Mohapatra asked the private hospitals to refrain from referring Covid patients to other



hospitals when positive cases are detected. "It is observed that private hospitals are treating the non-Covid cases, but when they find such patients Covid-19 positive during the treatment they immediately request the government machinery to shift the case to a government Covid facility," he stated in the letter.

**A pvt hospital can charge ₹1,200 to ₹3,000 per day for a general bed and ₹1,750 for consumables**

The government has also observed that private hospitals are not admitting the Covid positive patients with a plea that they do not have Covid beds.

Many private hospitals have designated very few beds for Covid patients. Therefore, load on government Covid facilities has increased, the ACS said.

"The hospital shall charge reasonable fees from patients and refrain from collecting exorbitant fees, failing which action as deemed fit will be taken against the hospital," Mohapatra warned.

The Health department also prescribed

fee structure for the private hospitals. As per the price chart, a private hospital can charge Rs 1,200 to Rs 3,000 per day for a general bed and Rs 1,750 for consumables. For patients in ICU without ventilator support, they will be paid Rs 10,000 to Rs 17,000 while the hospitals can raise bill ranging from Rs 12,000 to Rs 18,000 for ICU with ventilator.

Mohapatra further instructed the private hospitals to charge additional costs for the medical or surgical emergencies during treatment of Covid patients as per Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) package.

The private hospitals were directed to open help desks accessible both physically and telephonically for counselling of relatives of patients and share information on status of patients' health with the attendants regularly.

# 7 bear cubs rescued from Khurda area

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khurda, April 22:** Forest department officials Thursday rescued seven bear cubs from two places near the district headquarters town here.

Five of the rescued bear cubs were taken to Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP), sources said.

In the first incident, some commuters spotted five bear cubs roaming on Pitapalli-Gangapada road in the afternoon. Soon, many people gathered at the spot and a few of them treated the cubs with fruits, sources said. Some villagers informed this to police following which four Forest department officials reached the spot and rescued the bear cubs. "The bear cubs might have strayed out of Chandaka forests. However, there is no trace of the mother bear. The rescued bear cubs have been shifted to NZP," said a Forest department official.



The bear cubs rescued from Pitapalli-Gangapada road near Khurda



OP PHOTOS

The rescued bear cubs have been kept in the quarantine and their condition is being monitored by the veterinarians, said NZP deputy director Bimala Prasanna Acharya.

In the second incident, the Forest department officials rescued two

bear cubs from Gadakhurda area in the evening. The cubs were spotted near the backyard of a villager. "The bear cubs would be sent to NZP soon," said a Forest department official. Many wildlife lovers and environmentalists, meanwhile,

claimed that deforestation at Chandaka has put the lives of many wild animals in danger. "The area of Chandaka forests is shrinking day-by-day. Acute food shortage at the forest is forcing the wild animals to stray into human settlements," said

SOME COMMUTERS SPOTTED THE BEAR CUBS ROAMING ON THE PITAPALLI-GANGAPADA ROAD IN THE AFTERNOON

INFORMED, FOUR FOREST DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS REACHED THE SPOT AND RESCUED THE BEAR CUBS

THE RESCUED BEAR CUBS HAVE BEEN SHIFTED TO NZP

a wildlife lover. On the other hand, some locals suspect the incidents as cases of wild animal smuggling. "Poachers are killing wild animals at Chandaka forests. We suspect that the bear cubs were being smuggled out from Chandaka. The police and the Forest department should look into the smuggling angle to the incidents," said environmentalist Dhaneswar Bidhar.



## Railways to run Oxygen Express

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 22: The railways has decided to cancel the Rourkela-Bhubaneswar-Rourkela and Sambalpur-Puri-Sambalpur Special for two days due to modernisation work at Rajatgarh Station under Khurda Road Division ahead of commissioning of the third and fourth lines between Salegaon and Rajatgarh.

The Rourkela-Bhubaneswar-Rourkela and Sambalpur-Puri-Sambalpur Special will remain cancelled on 27th and 28th April, 2021 from both the directions. Meanwhile, the railways has geared up to run Oxygen Express to supply the life-saving gas from steel plants to different parts of the country as part of the fight against Covid-19.

# Plus II students seek cancellation of exams

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 22: A day after the state government cancelled the annual HSC Examination in the wake of the rising Covid-19 cases in the state, students of various Plus II colleges Thursday demonstrated at Lower PMG here demanding cancellation of their annual examination as well.

The agitating students argued that if the state government could cancel the Class X examination then why not theirs.

They demanded that the government cancel the Plus II examination scheduled to begin May 18 next as it would 'help the students take a decision on their career'.

Reacting to this, School and Mass Education (S&ME) Minister



Samir Ranjan Dash advised students to keep studying till the government takes a final call on the issue.

"Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has already announced to take a decision on the issue in June after reviewing the situation. The government would take a decision at the right time," Dash said, urging

students to continue their studies till then.

According to sources, the state government's announcement on cancellation of the Class X examination as well as examinations conducted by the Odisha State Board of Madrasa Education had come barely a day after hundreds of students held demon-

## BJP alleges violation of Model Code of Conduct

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 22: The state leadership of the BJP Thursday moved the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) citing alleged violation of the model code of conduct (MCC).

Party leader Satyabrata Panda, in his interaction with the Media, said that in Laxminarayanpur Gram Panchayat of Pipili Block there is a violation of MCC.

"In 2018, the Orissa High Court had ordered that the public distribution system (PDS) of the area will be done by respective panchayats. While the MCC is in process, the authorities have allotted the work of Tigaria village in the panchayat to a Self Help



Group (SHG). The payment of the same is going to the bank account of an outsider who has political links," he said.

He also added, "This comes when the MCC is in place and the election rallies are going on. This is a blatant violation of the election norms and done to woo the voters of the area. We came here Thursday to raise the issue before the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and sought his intervention into the matter."

## Sports bike passion proves fatal for youth

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 22: A passion for sports bikes Thursday turned fatal for a youth in the city. The locals at Andharua in Chandaka Thursday morning spotted the disintegrated body of the youth.

The deceased was identified as Lalita Aditya Parida of Patia area under Infocity police limits here. Parida's father is a banker posted outside Odisha. Some locals during morning walk spotted Parida's body along Andharua-Kalinga Studio Road Thursday. Police reached the spot and recovered his parts. Parida was reportedly going towards Kalinga Studio Square when he lost balance over the bike due to over speed. Subsequently, Parida's sports bike (800cc) rammed into a tree.

# Identification of new market areas begins in Capital



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 22: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Thursday began identification and allotment of new and temporary areas for the fruit and vegetable market vendors of prominent places in a bid to promote social distancing in state capital.

The BMC had earlier decided to decentralize the market areas after it observed constant violation of social distancing and lack of mask wearing among people. As per sources, the decentralization plan has been formulated on identifying the market areas under three zones and allotting an alternate space for the vendors where social distancing can be exercised.

Under the South-West Zone, markets at Siripur, Dumduma, ID Market and Ruchika Hats were identified. While Dumduma market was shifted to Phase II area, Ruchikia Haat was shifted to Nayapalli Durga Mandap. Similarly, under the North Zone, Damana VSS Nagar, Palasuni and Tarini Hata were identified. While VSS Nagar vendors were asked to shift to road side, Palasuni traders were allowed to operate in same place while observing social distancing.

Meanwhile, under the South

East Zone eight haats were identified for shifting which included the most crowded markets such as those at Unit-I and Unit-IV. While the Unit-I market was made to shift to a nearby high school, the Unit-IV's vegetable and fish vendors were asked to move to the road connecting Red Cross to Shastri Nagar via AG Colony.

Similarly, Lingaraj Haat was shifted to a nearby parking area; Sundar Pada market to road to Ekamra College; Brahmeswar haat to nearby Melana Padia, Nageswar Tangi haat to the road connecting to Ravi Talkies. Furthermore, Sahid Nagar Haat will be shifted to Sahid Nagar Durgapuja Ground.

"We are allotting new places with larger areas to vendors to promote social distancing. We request coordination from both the traders as well as the customers. However, if still Covid-appropriate behaviour is not followed, we have instructed the Zonal Deputy Commissioners to shut down markets and take strict action against those flouting norms," said BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary.

It can be mentioned that the civic authority had earlier sealed the Unit IV market in July last year after several vendors had tested positive for Covid.

# KIIT ranks 201+ globally in THE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 22: Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) has been placed among the top universities of the world in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings-2021 announced April 21, 2021.

On the yardsticks of community-based university and impact of university, every year the Times Higher Education conducts rankings of higher education institutions across the globe. As KIIT has been fulfilling all criteria of United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, THE has given 201+ rank to KIIT in the overall impact ranking.

The Impact Rankings of the Times Higher Education evaluates the social responsibility of universities across the world. Also, it has been ranked 86th in 'Reduced Inequalities' of SDG. For this, it has been ranked within 100 universities of the world, at least in a single parameter. KIIT has got the

86 <sup>th</sup> Reduced Inequalities	101-200 Partnership for the Goals	101-200 Quality Education & Peace	101-200 Justice & Strong Institutions
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THE IMPACT RANKINGS 2021

Achyuta Samanta

rank 101+ in 'Partnership for the Goals' and 201+ in 'Quality Education & Peace and Justice & Strong Institutions' etc. It is the only university in eastern India to achieve such an impressive rank.

In 2020, KIIT was ranked in 501+. KIIT was also the winner of 'Awards of Asia 2020' in the category of 'Workplace of the Year' by the Times Higher Education (THE). The Times Higher

Education Impact Rankings are the only global performance tables that assess universities against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. A very comprehensive and balanced comparison across four broad areas like research, stewardship, outreach and teaching was done by the THE. KIIT has been progressing with impressive ranks in quality teaching, research, and publication. Achyuta

Samanta, Founder, KIIT & KISS said that a few institutions and universities are getting featured in the world rankings, which itself is a matter of pride for the state. "We are happy that KIIT Deemed to be University is among the top in the Impact Rankings of the Times Higher Education (THE) as it has tried to maintain excellence in social responsibility," Samanta added.

## Jharpada jail feted

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 22: The state minister of home, Captain Divya Shankar Mishra, Thursday visited Jharpada special jail here and handed over ISO-9001 certificate to the superintendent of the jail.

The Jharpada jail has been awarded by the auditing agency Threat SYS Technologies Pvt Ltd. The ISO certificate has been issued to special jail, Bhubaneswar for maintaining excellence in skill development, stress management for the prisoners, managing occupational abilities of prisoners, food processing units and cleanliness and hygiene of jail.

# Man wishes to buy plot in City, ends up losing ₹46L

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 22: A 43-year-old man Wednesday approached the Khandagiri police alleging that two fraudsters duped him to the tune of ₹46 lakh on the pretext of providing him a piece of land in the Capital city here.

In his complaint, Santosh Kumar Panda, who hails from Badamba in Cuttack and stays at AIMS Nagar under Khandagiri police limits here, informed the police that all began with his desire to buy a 'suitable' plot in the Temple City.

Panda stumbled upon Tarun Mohanty in the City who promised him to help provide a plot. "Mohanty introduced Panda to Prasant Sahoo, another accused, who convinced the desperate Panda to buy his flat at Baramunda Housing Board Colony here at ₹46



lakh," said the police complaint.

Panda gave ₹4.80 lakh as an advance amount for the flat April 8, 2019. The accused, however, later informed Panda that they couldn't proceed with the deal owing to some legal issues with the flat.

"Instead of returning the advance money, they [the accused] promised Panda to provide him a piece of land at Pandara under Sahid Nagar police limits here. Accordingly, the plot registration was done at the tehsil office here

May 29, 2019 and Panda gave the remaining ₹41 lakh to the accused by way of cash and account transfers," it pointed out.

The world came crashing down for Panda a few months later when he was performing the ground breaking ceremony when another person claimed ownership over the plot. With no way out, a hapless Panda asked the duo to return the money. But to no avail. Khandagiri police registered a case and claimed to have initiated a probe, sources said.

## Web portal in soup

Bhubaneswar: A woman doctor here has lodged a complaint against a web portal for publishing objectionable posts using her image. Baliaanta police registered a case on a complaint of the lady. According to sources, the lady is well-known for her health-related programme on YouTube and various social media sites. The owners of the web portal allegedly took the images of the doctor from her YouTube videos and used the images as medical expert in various objectionable posts related to sexual health tips. The victim has accused the portal owners of deliberately tarnishing her image.

## WASSUP TODAY

**CUTTACK**

Platinum jubilee foundation day of National Rice Research Institute, NRRI premises, Nuabazar, 10 am

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

# Awareness prog at UU on Covid

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 22: The National Service Scheme (NSS) of the PG Unit of Utkal University Thursday organised an awareness rally for coronavirus pandemic on university premises. As part of the awareness, members of the NSS led by program officer Kirti Ranjan Mallik distributed masks and sanitizers to cleaning personnel of the university, hostel staff and shopkeepers of the Gobind Sahu market complex situated on the university premises.

They also create awareness about the importance of social distancing, wearing masks, maintaining and hygiene. The members also took oath that they would follow Covid 19 guidelines. Utkal University PG Council Chairman Basant Kumar Mallik participated as chief guest and distributed masks to security staff of the university at the new



Dignitaries, including Bhubaneswar (Central) MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, at an awareness programme on Covid-19 hosted by Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation in the City, Thursday



administrative building and gave them an update about how to stay safe from Covid 19 while on duty.

On the occasion, Vice Chancellor Sabita Acharya appreciates the awareness rally organised by the NSS. Meanwhile, the Utkal University April 16 postponed all ongoing examinations with immediate effect after government issued fresh Covid-19 guidelines.

Mallik said offline examinations of the university have been postponed till further order. "Mid semester examinations of pharmacy and rural management streams were underway in the university in physical mode. But we stopped it. These examinations will be conducted after normalcy returns," he added. He said there is no plan for holding online examination so far. "The scheduled offline mid-semester examinations which are yet to be held are postponed too," he added.

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# Finally, Jajpur police unravel Jharaphula murder mystery

THIRD ACCUSED ARRESTED; BOYFRIEND HAD KILLED THE RD COLLEGE STUDENT WHEN SHE WANTED HER ₹30K BACK



The third accused



File photo of Jharaphula

While two accused including the prime accused Rakesh Swain were arrested earlier, the third accused Shaktisekhar Swain, who was absconding since the incident, was arrested Thursday

The third accused has been identified as Shakti Shekhar Swain, a resident of Bhubaneswar. It was Shakti who rode the scooter with Rakesh, the prime accused, riding pillion holding Jharaphula's body between them, to Jajpur

"The accused forced Jharaphula to drink alcohol and later killed her by smothering her. We had sent her viscera for tests which confirmed the presence of liquor in her body," said Rahul PR.

While two accused including the prime accused Rakesh Swain were arrested earlier, the third accused Shaktisekhar Swain, who was absconding since the incident, was arrested Thursday.

The third accused has been identified as Shakti Shekhar Swain, a resident of Bhubaneswar. It was Shakti who rode the scooter with Rakesh, the prime accused, riding pillion holding Jharaphula's body between them, to Jajpur. Jharaphula, a resident of Marundeipasi in Mayurbhanj district, was a Ramadevi Women's University Plus-III 2nd-year student.

turned sour after the latter started asking him to return the money.

The deceased had visited Bhubaneswar to attend a birthday party January 24, and insisted Rakesh to return the money.

Jharaphula even threatened Rakesh to reveal the matter before his parents if he did not return her the borrowed money, the SP said.

"We suspect the exact amount would be over ₹30,000. Rakesh murdered Jharaphula by smothering her," said the SP.

On January 26, the accused had invited Jharaphula on the pretext of returning the money. He had asked her to wait at an OYO hotel in Bhubaneswar.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rasulpur, April 22:** Three months after Jharaphula's death, Jajpur police arrested the third accused Thursday in connection with the murder case and claimed to have cracked the murder mystery.

Addressing a presser here Thursday, Jajpur SP, Rahul PR said the third year Plus III student had been done to death by her boyfriend Rakesh Swain following a quarrel over ₹30,000. The SP said Rakesh had borrowed more than ₹30,000 from the deceased to purchase a motorcycle.

However, the relationship between Rakesh and Jharaphula



As part of a training camp and field trial of agriculture implements, a woman farmer operating a tilling machine in Lanjigarh area of Kalahandi

OP PHOTO

## Transgenders tasked with garbage collection

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, April 22:** The Baripada Municipality has assigned door-to-door garbage collection work to transgenders in an attempt to empower them and keep the town clean as well.

According to sources, the civic body was supported in this regard by the state housing and urban development department. The department has provided 10 battery-operated three-wheelers to the municipal authorities for the purpose,

### BARIPADA MUNICIPALITY



A group of transgenders in

cluding SHG members will move door-to-door and collect garbage through the vehicles. The drive will help the members become self-sufficient financially.

At least five women and five transgender members are being trained accordingly for last one week, Baripada Sub-Collector and Executive Officer of the civic body P Anvesha Reddy said.

Notably the door-to-door garbage collection service will be inaugurated by Mayurbhanj Collector Vineet Bhardwaj Friday.

## Jaleswar, Bhograi roads to Bengal sealed

**BHOGRAI:** As part of its strategy to contain the spread of coronavirus, Balasore district administration has sealed roads connecting Jaleswar and Bhograi blocks in the district with West Bengal.

Meanwhile, the Balasore district administration has also deployed police to intensify checking. Police forces are deployed at Laxmannath Toll Plaza in Jaleswar and at Sahabajipur border in Bhograi. Similarly, Digha police are also cooperating in carrying out checking. Yet, some observe that the ongoing checking would not get the desired result because there are about 52 routes which run to West Bengal from these two blocks and most of the routes are yet to be sealed.

# Drug trafficking still on in north Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhadrak/Baripada/Balasore, April 22:** Despite continuous raids on dens, the drug mafia still carries out illegal business in parts of north Odisha. In last three weeks, police and excise officials have seized drugs worth nearly ₹1 crore in Bhadrak, Balasore and Mayurbhanj, reports said.

Reports said, despite raids by excise officials and police, there has been no let-up in drug peddling in the region.

According to reports, Bhadrak rural police, while carrying out night patrolling seized 320 gm of brown sugar worth ₹31 lakh and arrested two drug peddlers at Ranital Wednesday.



The kingpin of the racket has, however, escaped. All the three drug peddlers were carrying drug from Jaleswar to Bhadrak.

Those who were arrested were identified as Srikant Das of Manipur under Bansada police limits and Sanjay Mallick of Tihidi. They were produced in court. Police said the

In the last three weeks, police and excise officials have seized drugs worth nearly ₹1 crore in Bhadrak, Balasore and Mayurbhanj, but mafia still carry on their illegal trade

kingpin will be arrested soon.

It was alleged that Jaleswar has turned a hub of drug peddling in North Odisha. Drugs are supplied from various parts of West Bengal.

Similarly, Baripada town police had seized 417 gm of brown sugar

during a raid in the town April 13. The seized brown sugar was valued at ₹40 lakh.

The accused was identified as Gobinda Chandra Pala. He had earlier been arrested by a special police squad. He was part of an inter-state drug racket.

It was alleged that the mafia had been supplying drugs from West Bengal to Baripada via Jaleswar.

April 3, Balasore Silpanchal police arrested a third gender and seized 72 gm of brown sugar. The accused, identified as Rakhi Kinnar, is a resident of Balugan in Khurda district.

Excise officials and police have been seizing drugs in parts of Balasore at regular intervals.

## Baby with 'Harlequin ichthyosis' born at MKCG

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, April 22:** A baby with a rare genetic disorder called 'Harlequin ichthyosis' was born at MKCG Medical College and Hospital (MKCGMCH) here in Ganjam district Wednesday.

According to studies, this rare severe skin disorder occurs once in five to 10 lakh births approximately. A newborn with this rare skin disease has thick hardened, diamond shaped or triangular plates all over the

body separated by deep fissures. Studies further say that the disease is caused by mutations in the ABCA12 gene protein.

The chances of survival of these babies are slender. The first recorded case of 'Harlequin ichthyosis' child birth in India was at Lata Mangeshkar Medical College and Hospital in Nagpur June 11, 2016. However, the baby passed away within days June 13. The infant born at MKCGMCH left everyone including the family members and doctors stunned.

## Mafia uses 'fake permits' to smuggle minor minerals

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, April 22:** Smuggling of minor minerals has been going on at a large scale in Badasahi tehsil of Mayurbhanj district, locals have alleged. Several residents of the locality have taken up the issue with Mayurbhanj Collector Vineet Bhardwaj.

According to locals, mafia gangs have been using fake permits to transport the minerals to various parts within and outside the district. They are earning substantial amounts through smuggling and yet the Badasahi tehsil administration has closed its eyes to the issue, it was alleged.

Some residents alleged that the local administration has been tacitly encouraging the illegal activity by collecting nominal fines when lakhs of rupees could have collected as per the state government norms. The Arapata sand quarry on Budhabalanga riverbed is situated two kilometres away

from the Badasahi tehsil office. Some villagers had informed the tehsil administration that mafia gangs have hoarded minor minerals 200 metres away from the existing quarry.

### BATTLE AGAINST COVID

# Sundargarh: e-Sanjivani easing patient-crowding at hospitals

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sundargarh/Baragoan, April 22:** Keeping in view the fast rising of Covid-19 positive cases in Sundargarh, the National Health Mission has launched e-Sanjivani Seva, through which patients need not come out to hospitals to seek medical consultancy. Staying at homes, patients can consult doctors/expert advice about their disease at this time of pandemic.

Reports said, at this time of the pandemic, this service system has been able to ward off crowding of patients at the district headquarters hospital. Patients are drawing benefits of medical consultancy staying near their homes.

As per the system, patients go to nearby hospitals in their localities and from there they avail of tele-consultation with doctors stationed at the



district headquarters hospital and a few other major healthcare centres.

The authorities of the National Health Mission have put in place necessary facilities for e-Sanjivani at the district headquarters hospital, Rourkela Government Hospital, Rourkela additional district urban primary health centre, Kunarmunda CHC, Badagaon CHC, Sargipalli CHC, Majhapada CHC, Birkeria CHC, Mangaspur CHC and Kutra CHC. These hospitals have been tagged as sub-hubs of e-Sanjivani service.

All nearby health centres have been equipped with internet facilities,

computers, web cameras, microphones, speakers and printers. As a result, people directly contact health experts and doctors at the sub-hubs about their ailments. Doctors at local health centres have to work as nodal officers.

Patients get medicines at Niramaya Kendras, said Medical Superintendent Dr Purna Chandra Sahu. With the launch of the tele-consultation service, the administration has managed to control crowding at the district headquarters hospital.

This tele-consultation is available for three days a week with specialists in medicines, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology providing services.

At this time when Covid-19 has been spreading its tentacles across the district, this service has proved much beneficial for patients, doctors and the administration.

## Animals, birds sacrificed in Koraput to get rid of Covid

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jeypore, April 22:** Tribal people in Jeypore area of Koraput district Thursday reportedly sacrificed animals and birds to save themselves from Covid-19.

At a time when both the central and state governments are trying their best to protect people from falling prey to the pandemic, resorting to superstition has indeed shocked many.

According to sources, residents of a hamlet near Parabada in Jeypore town thronged the shrine of their village deity 'Hundi Maa'.

The priest along with the villagers invoked the deity asking for her mercy. Later, besides performing other rituals, they, to appease the deity, reportedly offered her goats and hens in sacrifice. Such an act based on pure superstition has drawn flak from various sections. The district Thursday reported 45 fresh Covid-19 cases, taking the caseload to 8,245. Now, 267 patients are still undergoing treatment.

## 3-day shutdown in Boinda

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Boinda, April 22:** Acting on a direction of the district administration, Nunkapasi panchayat authorities here in Angul district announced a three-day shutdown of Boinda market from Friday. This follows a surge in Covid infections in the area, Thursday.

All shops and business establishments in Boinda will remain closed till Sunday. Reports said Covid infections are rapidly spreading in Boinda under Kishorenagar police limits and Handapa police limits in Angul district.

Panchayat authorities took this decision after some traders of the town tested positive for the disease.

## 11K migrants return to Ganjam

2 more Covid-19 hospitals, 11 CCCs to be set up soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, April 22:** Covid is spreading fast in Ganjam district amid arrivals of migrants. The administration has decided to open two more Covid-19 hospitals and 11 Covid care hospitals in the district.

According to a report, over 11,000 migrant workers have returned to the district from other states by Wednesday.

After their registrations, they have gone through Covid tests. Some of them are under treatment while others are in home isolation.

Medical teams regularly check health of those migrants in home isolation, said Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange Thursday. However, he said like previous year, not a large number of migrants

have come to the district.

"If more migrants return home, we are ready to deal with the situation. Temporary medical centres with 100 seats each have been set up in each block. Infrastructure and beds have been increased," he added.

There are already two Covid-19 hospitals – one is at MKCG Medical College and Hospital and another is Aswini Hospital. The third hospital will be run on MKCG premises while High Tech has taken steps to run the Tata Covid hospital.

There are already five Covid care centres at Berhampur City hospital, Bhanjanagar, Hinjili, Aska and Nilakanthnagar.

The Collector said that 11 more Covid care centres will be started and people should follow Covid guidelines.

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, P.H. DIVISION, ANGUL**  
Ph. (06764) 230431 E-mail: eephangul@yahoo.in  
No. C-136 GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
**e-Procurement Notice for PH Works**  
Bid Identification No. SE PH Division Angul - 04/2021-22 Dt.22.04.2021

1. Name of the Work	: P.H. Works
2. Nos. of Work	: 03 (three) Nos. Single & Double Bid System
3. Estimated Cost	: Rs. 37.96 lakhs to Rs. 88.18 lakhs
4. Period of Completion	: 2 (two) to 4 (four) calendar months
5. Date & time of availability of bid document	: From 11.00 A.M. of 29.04.2021 to 5.00 P.M. of 10.05.2021
6. Last date/time of receipt of bids in the portal	: 5.00 P.M. of 10.05.2021
7. Date & time of opening of bid	: 11.00 A.M. of 11.05.2021
8. Name & address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Angul
9.	: The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: <a href="https://tendersodisha.gov.in">https://tendersodisha.gov.in</a> . In Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer  
P.H. Division, Angul  
OIPR-13056/11/0002/2122

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PARALAKHEMUNDI IRRIGATION DIVISION, PARALAKHEMUNDI (GAJAPATI)**  
Phone/Fax: 06815-223249  
e-mail: eepkhemundi@odisha.gov.in  
**CORRIGENDUM NOTICE TO TENDER CALL NOTICE No. EE-PKID-01/2021-22**  
No. A-57: The percentage rate tender invited vide this office Tender Call Notice No. 562 Dt.16.04.21 (Bid ID No. EE-PKID-01/2021-22) and published in A-44 reference may be read with the following stipulations.  
1. As per OM No. 8943/F dated 18.03.2021 of Finance Dept. Govt of Odisha, the bidder has to furnish the Bid Security Declaration in the prescribed format instead of submission of EMD.  
The other terms and conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged.  
Sd./- Executive Engineer  
Paralakhemundi Irrigation Division,  
Paralakhemundi  
OIPR-32358/11/0002/2122

Government of Odisha No. B-36  
**"e" Procurement Notice**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER DHENKANAL (R&B) DIVISION, DHENKANAL**  
Bid Identification No. 02 of 2021-2022

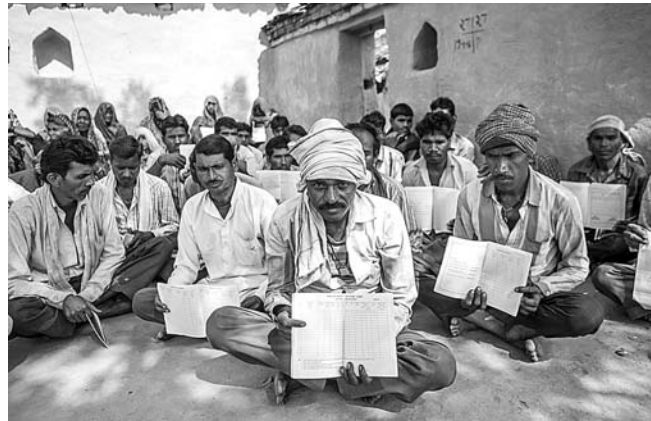
1. Name of the Work	: Road Work - 2 Nos.
2. Estimate Cost	: Rs.20,51,475.00 to Rs.21,24,092.00
3. Period of Completion	: 04 (Four Calendar Months)
4. Date & time of availability of the Bid documents in the portal	: 10.00 A.M. of 27.04.2021 to 5.00 P.M. of 11.05.2021
5. Last date/time of receipt of the bid in portal	: 11.05.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
6. Date of Opening	: 12.05.2021 at 11.00 A.M.
7. Name and address of the Office	: Office of the Executive Engineer, Dhenkanal (R&B) Division, Dhenkanal

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>".  
Sd./- Executive Engineer  
Dhenkanal (R&B) Division  
OIPR-34016/11/0002/2122



FOCUS EMPLOYMENT

# PLAN JOB PROTOCOLS



The second largest populated country having a capacity to grow fast has to change its policies. It cannot force repeated closures of social and economic activities for an unconfirmed fear of a disease

for maximum worker utilisation cannot be a permanent mode. The online mode in a poor country like India with critical cash flow in rural areas increases hardship and is devastating the education sector, largely private as income-deprived parents are unable to pay the tuition fees leading to closure of several lakh budget schools in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and many other states. They can neither afford increasing data costs nor they have connectivity nor even smart phones or laptops. The new generation feels not only deprived but also discriminated leading to a severe social divide.

The situation remains alarming as the factory activity grew at its weakest in March 2021. The Nikkei manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) declined to a seven-month low of 55.4 from 57.5 in February on demand squeeze. A Reuters survey says that Asia's third largest economy despite some recent improvements is heading for the biggest risk to the outlook. The rupee is already taking a hit for national, international situations as well as severe price hike and income squeeze. The country cannot also relax fiscal deficit norms as suggested by Home Minister Amit Shah. Rising government debts may have many dangers.

The second largest populated country having a capacity to grow fast has to change its policies. It cannot force repeated closures of social and economic activities for an unconfirmed fear of a disease. Some health sector people link the new supposed surge to intense vaccination. However, it calls for the nation and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to reconsider whether every now and then the country should impose jittery closures. A protocol must be developed so that it continues its work as during war time with least of disruption during any future epidemic. Diseases surge and go but a nation has to sprint to success without closing down for a day.

INFA

India has to learn to be in the working mode and not shut or lock itself down repeatedly. After loss of productivity, jobs and severe thaw in the economy for a year, it should have evolved a protocol to restore normal working conditions. The hits come at a time when the International Monetary Fund just predicts a possible 12.5 growth in 2022 and forecasts India as the fastest-growing economy. The second erratic closure may throw a spanner.

During the last 100 years it has suffered many epidemics but never closed down the establishments. During those difficult times all individuals and organisations came together to strive and restore normalcy. The mid-1990s Surat plague was also combated like that and the dirty city re-emerged as a beautiful clean destination but it did not shut down its business activities.

Even after nine months after the unlocking process most industries, including education, tourism, travel and even government offices have not bounced back to the usual mode. Direct and indirect job losses are hitting not only the economy but social and family lives. The minus 23.9 per cent fall in GDP during the lockdown and still speculations by national and international organisations about the growth and another bout of widespread closures and uncertainties are hitting all activities.

The country remembers that the nationwide sudden lockdown on March 25, 2020 at a four-hour notice led to 1.1 crore jobs being lost and termed the worst-ever year for the job market. It does not include the trek back of at least another 10 crore migrant workers, of a supposed 18 crore, to their homes impacting MNREGA expenses.

There is no centralised data available for how many jobs were created during July-December 2020, a volatile period. In total, Human Resources consultants estimate ten lakh jobs were added during this period. Now many of these jobs, most in irregular em-

ployment, are threatened to be lost again.

Many companies like Parle Products, Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Ceat and Axis Bank have largely gone back to WFH format for corporate employees. Many others like ITC, Samsung, RPG, Dabur, Haier, Vedanta, Vivo and Panasonic have issued new guidelines to the workers. Aditya Birla group Global HR Director S Misra says that office attendance may come down to 30 per cent against the present 50 to 60 per cent. While this reduces companies' productivity or not it does affect travel and transport, restaurant, entertainment and allied sectors.

According to CMIE, since January 2021 about 12 million additional people got jobs, the highest since March 2020. But the April lockdowns can make many of them lose it again.

The stock market is again rocked with both BSE and Nifty slipping every day banks fretting over another spike in defaults and credit quality, and the manufacturing activity at its lowest pace in seven months restricted by COVID-19 panic. The curbs, imposed almost

all over the country and beginning of a second wave of exodus of migrant workers back to their home, could dent manufacturing, core sector activities, supply of goods & services and the overall demand.

The rating agency ICRA says that bad loans of Indian banks could rise to 9.7 per cent in 2021 and 10.2 per cent in 2022 from gross bad loans at 9.6 per cent in March 2020 and 8.3 per cent in December 2020. The December decline is due to writing off of ₹1.1 lakh crore of such loans.

A nation trying to recover is being hit hard again. Retailers Association of India estimates retailers will lose about \$5 billion in Maharashtra alone in April. It says that this State alone accounts for 10 per cent of \$85 billion of India's annual retail sales. It says that sales of automobiles, consumer durables, smart phones and apparels, which have just started recovering, will be adversely affected. Even partial lockdowns in different parts hit sales. Kirana stores across the country report that there are no major increase or customer walk-ins.

Work from home occasionally

Shivaji Sarkar

THE COUNTRY REMEMBERS THAT THE NATIONWIDE SUDDEN LOCKDOWN ON MARCH 25, 2020 AT A FOUR-HOUR NOTICE LED TO 1.1 CRORE JOBS BEING LOST AND TERMED THE WORST-EVER YEAR FOR THE JOB MARKET

The path is long, but self-surrender makes it short; the way is difficult, but perfect trust makes it easy.

THE MOTHER



## Green consumer taxes

Many governments, aiming to foster a green and inclusive post-pandemic recovery, have embraced the slogan "Build Back Better." So far, policymakers have focused on increasing public spending in ways that address climate and environmental challenges while also creating jobs for the disadvantaged. But fiscal conservatives worry that the rising tide of red ink will drown economies in debt and lead to a financial-market backlash.

With the pandemic not yet over, politicians are unsurprisingly loath to dampen spirits further with talk of tax increases. But the socially sustainable shift that they profess to seek will require revenue reforms.

For now, the current tax debate is more about the mix of taxes than their level. It's about smarter rather than higher taxes. The key here is to shift from taxing labour to taxing the use of resources. Policymakers should therefore consider introducing progressive consumer taxes on resource-intensive goods.

One efficient way to mitigate global warming would be to increase the price of carbon dioxide emissions by imposing carbon taxes or limiting the supply of tradable emissions permits, while phasing out long-standing fossil-fuel subsidies. This will be much discussed in the run-up to the United Nations' COP26 climate summit in Glasgow in November.

But the broader environmental and social challenges confronting the "build back better" agenda go beyond the need to accelerate the switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy. This is where green consumer taxes come in.

Although carbon pricing would feed through supply chains to push up the prices of resource-intensive goods, the impact on production, usage, and disposal of non-energy resources would be muted and indirect. From a consumer perspective, CO2 emissions are an invisible enemy. Direct consumer taxes that are clearly linked to the harms related to the goods people are buying, using, and dumping would be more transparent and understandable.

Relating green taxes to the weight and size of goods could draw a clearer link with non-renewable resource use, and would help to shift social norms. People using bigger cars or living in bigger homes would thus pay more, making smaller options more attractive. This would also encourage producers to innovate, adopt less resource-intensive "circular" methods, and offer services allowing consumers to share rather than own assets.

Naturally, like any tax increase, these higher goods taxes would face strong opposition. But the rationale for the taxes would be clear and, crucially, fair: And their progressive nature implies that the burden would be borne disproportionately by the higher-income households that consume larger, resource-intensive goods.

According to one estimate, in 2015 the richest 10% of the world's population were responsible for 52% of cumulative CO2 emissions, with the top 1% alone accounting for 15%. Heavily taxing the materials and energy they consume could be sold to the rich as a more palatable option than higher income or wealth taxes.

The pandemic and the associated lockdowns have given us a sense of the dangers of excessive consumption and mobility. Although people will drop some of their new forced habits once the pandemic is over, many will recognise that their happiness and well-being are better served by interacting with others than by accumulating more stuff.

An even more powerful way for governments to secure support for new consumer taxes would be to strike a "Green Grand Bargain" with the public to use the proceeds to accelerate the Build Back Better agenda. Revenue from such taxes could, for example, finance a decrease in taxes on labour, particularly for the lower paid. This would make the package doubly progressive.

One option would be a "carbon dividend," whereby households would receive a flat-rate income financed by the green tax proceeds. This would disproportionately benefit poorer households.

Another possibility would be to use the new revenue to cut taxes or increase subsidies for services and green products. Pandemic lockdowns have severely damaged local businesses and services, particularly in the restaurant, leisure, and hospitality sectors.

In a similar vein, governments could use some of the tax proceeds to fund green investments, including by supporting households investing in electric vehicles (especially small ones) and home energy systems. Funding could also be directed to business and government investment in necessary infrastructure and research and development.

Moreover, fiscal policy in the world's leading economies remains expansionary for the time being. This means that green consumption taxes could be phased in over a number of years, with the spending of the proceeds potentially front-loaded as a down payment on the Green Grand Bargain.

This would add to near-term government deficits, but help to kick-start a more sustainable recovery. With politicians more focused than ever on addressing the needs of people and the planet, the time is right for a more ambitious agenda to green the tax system.

The writer is a former chief economist of the ING Group.

PROJECT SYNDICATE



Mark Cliffe

Relating green taxes to the weight and size of goods could draw a clearer link with non-renewable resource use, and would help to shift social norms. People using bigger cars or living in bigger homes would thus pay more, making smaller options more attractive

SPECTRUM RIGHT TO LIFE

## Manual scavenging in modern era



Dr Siddhartha Sahu

DEATH OF SANITATION WORKERS IN THE LINE OF DUTY SHOCKS HUMANITY. IMAGINE A HUMAN BEING ENTERING SEPTIC TANKS AND SEWER LINES TO CLEAN THEM

With the recent deaths of sanitation workers in Cuttack hitting headlines, the Orissa High Court took suo moto cognizance of the matter. The High Court observed that manual scavenging is a shameful practice that shocks the judicial and collective conscience, and sought details of the number of deaths of manual scavengers in the last 28 years as well as rehabilitation measures from the state government.

A few days ago, Odisha Chief Minister announced compensation for the families of two sanitation workers who lost their lives in Cuttack. The two unfortunate sanitation workers lost their lives while entering and cleaning sewerage line in the CDA locality of Cuttack. The Chief Minister's office also ordered transfer of the concerned engineers, and registration of an FIR against the service provider. The families of the deceased were to be paid a sum of ₹10 lakh each.

Death of sanitation workers in the line of duty shocks humanity. Imagine a human being entering septic tanks and sewer lines to clean them. These sewer lines and septic tanks contain toxins like human excreta and urine mixed with soiled water. The resulting toxic gases formed on decomposition of human waste are the main reasons for sanitation workers en-

tering these closed chambers losing their lives. Drowning in human waste is another way they can lose their life.

It is encouraging to note the swift action taken by the Chief Minister's Office in this case. Unfortunately, such deaths are not uncommon. Just last month, two sanitation workers died in Bhubaneswar too. The plight of their families was overlooked. Hence, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) sought an Action Taken Report from the Odisha government on April 12. The NHRC enquired about whether the minimum legally mandated compensation of ₹10 lakh had been paid to the families. It was also concerned about whether the people responsible had been booked.

The condition across India is equally gloomy. In a recent article, Radhika Bordia and Yogesh Pawar noted that there were at least 400 such death all over India since 2013. In 2013, the Parliament passed a new law - "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act". The Act improved the previous Act of 1993, by expanding the definition of manual scavenging to include all those involved in manually cleaning, handling or disposing undecomposed human excreta. The law also codified previous court judgments of paying a compensation of

₹10 lakh per death. The responsibility of compensation is vested with the state government regardless of the employment status of the victim. The laws also require action to be taken as per criminal laws against those responsible.

As sewer lines and septic tanks contain decomposed excreta, manually handling them is not considered manual scavenging under existing laws. Hence people entering and cleaning septic tanks and sewers at risk of their health, life and dignity is perfectly legal. In fact, such workers are legally called "safai karmacharis" and not Manual Scavengers. The Asian Human Rights Commission considers manual cleaning of sewer lines and septic tanks as manual scavenging too. While we may argue on the name, there should be no argument on the fact that such an occupation goes against human dignity. Multiple Indian court judgments have upheld that Article 21 of the Indian Constitution includes the Right to Life with dignity in our fundamental rights.

The existing laws only suggest that protective gear be given to people entering and cleaning sewers. In practice, a survey conducted in 2015 by Dr Shailesh Darokar of Tata Institute of Social Sciences noted that septic tanks and sewers continue to be designed only for manual cleaning. He also noted that protective equipment was

rarely used, in the absence of clear specifications in existing laws.

On March 2021, Union Minister Ram Das Athavale informed Parliament that there was no proposal to make mechanised cleaning of sewer lines mandatory. Most houses in India lack access to government sanitary services and depend on their own septic tanks. Change is thus quite literally in our hands. It is the civic duty of all Indians to help phase out this inhuman occupation. By simply remodelling the septic tank of one's house to allow mechanised cleaning, lives can be saved. Where legislation and executive action may be wanting, it is the common man who can usher change. For, it is when the people of India find such "sanitation work" intolerable and feel the need to improve the existing system, will real change occur.

In September 2020, the Chief Minister of Odisha launched the "Garima" scheme to rehabilitate manual scavengers. He dedicated a corpus fund of ₹50 crore for this purpose. Good intentions need to translate to good actions. It is equally important that all state governments and civic bodies work together with sanitary service providers and workers to phase out this occupation and rehabilitate them in other fields.

The writer is an orthopedic surgeon.

WISDOM CORNER

When something is important enough, you do it even if the odds are not in your favor.

ELON MUSK

I really believe that everyone has a talent, ability, or skill that he can mine to support himself and to succeed in life.

DEAN KOONTZ

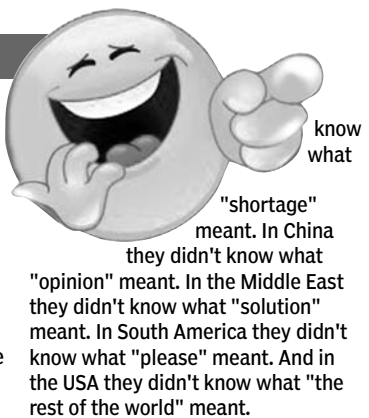
Decide what you want, decide what you are willing to exchange for it. Establish your priorities and go to work.

H. L. HUNT

LOL

HONEST OPINION

A worldwide survey was conducted by the UN. The only question asked was: "Would you please give your honest opinion about solutions to the food shortage in the rest of the world?" The survey was a huge failure. In Africa they didn't know what "food" meant. In Eastern Europe they didn't know what "honest" meant. In Western Europe they didn't



## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Misappropriation of funds

Sir, The entire nation is moving towards maximum decentralisation and minimum bureaucracy in Panchayati Raj Institution (PSI) following the footprint of Gandhian principles of Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) to promote and empower PSI. But a piece of discouraging news seen published in Orissa POST (April 19) on misappropriation of funds in the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) and Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY) discredits our innovative structure of democracy at the national level. Unfortunately, Odisha has to bear such a burden of embarrassment due to some unscrupulous officials and corrupt elected representatives who are authorised with a duty to inform immediately after the death of the pensioner. Such wrongdoing is only possible because of the nexus among corrupt minds of distributing official and elected representatives who provide fake continuation of a pensioner in paper and receive the money themselves. Such dishonest work is being practiced in an insidious way that not even the relatives of the dead pensioners come to know of even after withdrawing pension amount for years. The Government of Odisha is trying to imbibe guidelines of the 5Ts in every stage of bureaucracy in the state for good governance through transparency. Therefore, as soon as possible, state government should use the Direct Benefit Transfer Method (DBT) as recommended by the Ministry of Rural Development in order to get cured of such disease.

Hemsagar Barik, JNU, NEW DELHI

Aadhaar card issues

Sir, While the Aadhaar card is easy to obtain, there are a lot of problems related to it. Those who need it are excluded due to biometric exceptions. For instance, with eye disabilities cannot provide scans and individuals with physical disabilities may not provide finger prints. It is unfortunate that most people with physical disabilities are excluded from the obtaining an Aadhaar card though they need it most. On the other hand, there is high inclusion i.e. around 100 crore or more Aadhaar cards have been issued so far. Some illegal migrants have received Aadhaar cards, while fake Aadhaar cards are also illegally issued to many. It is unfortunate that no efforts whatsoever are being made to check this malady. With some changes in the Aadhaar Act and building awareness among people the government can fix such issues.

Jaspreet Kaur, CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF PUNJAB





NASHIK TRAGEDY

# HC seeks report from Maha govt

THE MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT WEDNESDAY ANNOUNCED A PROBE INTO THE INCIDENT BY A SEVEN-MEMBER COMMITTEE AND CM UDDHAV THACKERAY SAID FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OF ₹ 5 LAKH WOULD BE PROVIDED TO THE FAMILIES OF EACH VICTIM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 22:** The Bombay High Court Thursday took suo motu cognisance of the oxygen leak incident at a civic-run hospital in Nashik that led to the death of 22 Covid-19 patients, and sought a report from the Maharashtra government.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni directed Advocate General (AG) Ashutosh Kumbhakar to file an affidavit by May 4, explaining how the incident had occurred.

During the hearing, Kumbhakar gave an oral summary of the incident that took place on Wednesday at Dr Zakir Hussain Hospital. He told the court that as per the preliminary report sent to state Chief Secretary by the Nashik civic authorities, the oxygen tank was installed based on a contract with private company Taiyo Nippon Sanso Corporation. The firm was also responsible for maintaining and filling the tank.

"The oxygen was flowing, but the pressure was less. The same day, oxygen was refilled into these tanks. They inspected and found leakage in the valve," the AG said, adding that engineers had been called in to attend to the fault.



Health Minister Rajesh Tope and Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat at Zakir Hussain Municipal Hospital

"Meanwhile, the oxygen pressure dropped to such a level that the supply almost stopped. This resulted in a cut off of oxygen and the

situation continued till about an hour and 20 minutes," he said.

The court remarked that the situation was tragic, as 22 Covid-19

## O<sub>2</sub> tank was activated 3 weeks ago

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 22:** The tank from which liquid oxygen had leaked at Dr Zakir Hussain Hospital in Nashik, killing 22 patients, was operationalised just 21 days before the incident, an official said Thursday.

The police registered an FIR Thursday against unidentified persons under Indian Penal Code Section 304-A (causing death by negligence) following a complaint by a senior inspector of Bhadrakali police station, Nashik Police Commissioner Deepak Pandey said.

"The oxygen tank, having a storage capacity of 13 KL, was operationalised on March 31," another police official said quoting information provided by the

hospital's superintendent.

He said the police also found out that the oxygen tank belonged to Vadodara-based company Inoxcva and was taken on rent for 10 years from Taiyo Nippon Sanso Corporation, a Japanese company which supplies industrial gases like oxygen and nitrogen to a wide range of industries.

He said the oxygen leakage started around 12.20 pm. An employee managing the tanker present at the spot and the hospital staff tried to stop the leakage. Later, the hospital called an engineer who rectified the malfunctioning and the leakage was stopped between 1.45 pm and 2 pm.

It happened because of "negligence and carelessness" on part of some people who were yet to be identified, he said.

patients died due to the leak.

Kumbhakar said the authorities had managed to repair the tank and restore the supply eventually.

The court then asked the AG to place all submissions in an affidavit. A detailed order on the same will be made public later in the

evening, the high court said.

The Maharashtra government Wednesday announced a probe into the incident by a seven-member committee and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said financial assistance of ₹5 lakh would be provided to the families of each victim.

# Registration for Amarnath yatra suspended



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, April 22:** Registration of pilgrims for the upcoming annual pilgrimage to the cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir Himalayas has been temporarily suspended Thursday due to Covid-19 situation, officials said.

The offline and online registration for the annual Amarnath Yatra through Baltal and Chandanwari routes had begun from April 1 and April 15 respectively.

The 56-day yatra to the 3,880-metre-high shrine is scheduled to start from the twin routes of Pahalgam and Baltal June 28 and culminate on August 22.

"In view of the evolving Covid situation in the country and the need to take all necessary precautionary measures, registration for

Shri Amarnath ji Yatra is being temporarily suspended," the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) announced on its Twitter handle Thursday.

It further said that the situation is being constantly monitored and the registration would be reopened once the situation improves.

Registration had started from April 1 for both the routes through 446 designated bank branches i.e. Punjab National Bank (316), Jammu and Kashmir Bank (90) and YES Bank (40) from all over the country.

Nitishwar Kumar, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SASB confirmed the development and said that the situation is being constantly monitored and the registration would be reopened once the situation improves.

# Param Bir in trouble again

Probe ordered over his alleged demand of ₹ 2 crore from a police inspector



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 22:** The Maharashtra Home Department has ordered an inquiry against former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh in connection with the allegations of corruption leveled against him, sources said Thursday.

As per the orders, Maharashtra DGP Sanjay Pandey has been asked to probe the allegations against Singh.

The allegations were made by

police inspector Anup Dange, who was suspended last year and reinstated in the force recently.

As per Dange's claims, Singh had demanded ₹ two crore from him to revoke his suspension. The inspector had written a letter to the Additional Chief Secretary (Home) about Singh's demand.

Singh had, however, denied the allegations leveled by the inspector.

Based on the complaint, the Home department ordered an inquiry into the charges against Singh, the sources said.

Maharashtra DGP was not available for his comment on the issue.

This is a second inquiry that the state government has ordered against Singh. The home department had earlier asked the DGP to conduct an inquiry against Singh for alleged dereliction of duty in connection with the probe into the recovery of an explosives-laden vehicle near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence in Mumbai February 25.

Param Bir Singh, who was under flak for the handling of the case, was unceremoniously transferred from the prestigious post of Mumbai police chief March 17.

Singh had written a letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray March 20 alleging that the then Home Minister Anil Deshmukh had indulged in "malpractices" and asked suspended police officer Sachin Waze to collect ₹ 100 crore every month from bars and hotels.

Deshmukh later resigned as a minister after the Bombay High Court ordered a CBI probe into the allegations made by Singh.

## COMPARTMENTALISING CARE



RPF personnel create a specific passage for commuters involved in essential services, after government imposed restrictions in view of the rising Covid-19 cases in Mumbai, Thursday

# Administration's decision on STF arbitrary, draconian: Tarigami



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, April 22:** CPI(M) leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami Thursday said there was no need for the Jammu and Kashmir administration to constitute a Special Task Force (STF) to deal with government employees allegedly involved in "anti-national activities" as there were already enough provisions in the law to act against such people.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration had set up STF for identifying and scrutinising cases of government employees involved in "suspected activities" against the government Wednesday.

"The Jammu and Kashmir administration's latest order to constitute a Special Task Force to dismiss or take other punitive action against government employees allegedly found in anti-national activities without holding any inquiry is arbitrary, draconian and is against the interests of the lakhs of employees working in the re-

gion," he said in a statement.

He said there are already enough provisions in the law to take action against those employees who are found violating service rules and there was no need to issue new orders.

"The latest order can serve as a tool for the government and bureaucrats to suppress their subordinates. A sword of uncertainty has been kept over the heads of employees which can also be exploited by their superiors," he added.

Dismissing an employee or taking punitive action against him without holding any inquiry is against the principles of justice and basic rights, Tarigami added.

"An employee is first a citizen and has all the constitutional rights. The need of the hour is to safeguard these constitutional rights," he added.

Demanding a review of the order, he said such measures deepen anger and discontentment among the ranks of employees.

# FRESH SNOWFALL IN HIGHER REACHES OF KASHMIR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, April 22:** Several areas in the higher reaches of Kashmir received fresh snowfall Thursday while the plains were lashed by rains, officials said.

The wet spell has brought down the temperature in the valley. The world-famous ski-resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district also received fresh snowfall Thursday, the officials added.

It was snowing in Sonamarg resort in Ganderbal and Machil area in Kupwara till last reports came in, they said.

The Meteorological (MeT) office predicted widespread light to mod-



erate rains and snowfall in Jammu and Kashmir Thursday and said there is a possibility of rains at isolated places Friday as well.

The current wet spell is likely to continue till Friday after which the weather is expected to improve, the MeT office said, adding that it is likely to stay mainly dry till the month-end.

# Search ops conducted in Samba, ammo found

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, April 22:** Security forces conducted search operations at two places in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district and recovered a rusted grenade and ammunition, officials said Thursday.

A CRPF and police party launched a search operation in Khidya village in Bari Brahmana area and recovered one rusted grenade, 191 rounds of ammunition and 20 charger clips Wednesday night, they said. In another operation, a joint team of security forces launched a search operation in the border belt of Chak Mangu area on the inputs of suspected movement, officials said, adding that drones were also used in the operation.

# Maharashtra may look for vaccines in global market

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, April 22:** Amid shortages and uncertainties over availability and delivery of Covid-19 vaccines, the Maharashtra government plans to form a committee to scout for vaccines from the international markets, said Minority Affairs Minister Nawab Malik here Thursday.

The state is also in touch with the top honchos of Bharat Biotech which is producing Covaxin, even as it gears up for the next phase of vaccination for all people aged above 18 from May 1.

Health Minister Rajesh Tope said that the Serum Institute of India (SII), Pune has conveyed to the

state government that it would not be able to deliver its consignments directly till May 25 as it has prior commitment with the Centre. The government will also make efforts to import vaccines from Sputnik V, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna and Tope said there would be no dearth of funds if the doses are available.

Under the new policy, the manufacturers would supply 50 per cent of their production to the Centre and the rest to states and 'other than Government of India channel'. The SII's move to supply the Covishield vaccines at ₹400 for the states compared with the ₹150 to the Centre, has not gone down well with the Maha Vikas Aghadi government.

# Can't leave old people to die: Bombay HC to Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 22:** The Bombay High Court Thursday asked the Union Government to reconsider its stand that door-to-door Covid-19 vaccination was not feasible, saying it must consider the plight of old people and the disabled.

A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni said the government cannot just "leave old people to die".

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had Wednesday informed the court that door-to-door vaccination was not possible due to various reasons including the



possibility of contamination and wastage of vaccine.

The Centre's reply came in response to a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by lawyers Dhruvi Kapadia and Kunal Tiwari.

The PIL sought door-to-door vaccination programme for senior citizens above the age of 75, the specially ailed and those who are bed-ridden or wheelchair-bound.

"The policy needs a relook by experts. You cannot leave old people to die," Chief Justice Datta said.

The court also cited the example of Israel where the majority of population has been vaccinated, and Los Angeles in the United States where

people are being vaccinated while sitting in their cars.

"They do not even have to go into the vaccine centre. We also need to advance ourselves," Justice Kulkarni said.

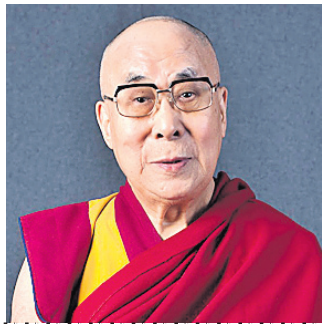
Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh argued that many senior citizens suffer from serious ailments and they must be kept under medical observation for half an hour after they get the jab.

This was not possible in a door-to-door drive, he said.

The court said some middle way must be found, as people with comorbidities need the vaccine all the more.



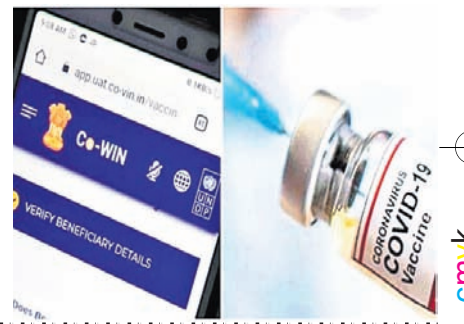
# national



**On this Earth Day let us all commit ourselves to doing our part to help make a positive difference to the environment of our only common home, this beautiful earth**  
DALAI LAMA | SPIRITUAL LEADER, TIBET

## CoWIN REGISTRATION OF 18+ TO BEGIN APRIL 28

Registration for vaccination against COVID-19 for all those aged above 18 will begin on the CoWIN platform and Aarogya Setu app from April 28. The inoculation process and documents to be submitted to get the jab remains the same as before



### of the day quote

Delhi is facing oxygen shortage despite the Centre increasing its oxygen quota Wednesday. Moreover, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana governments are not allowing trucks to supply oxygen to Delhi



MANISH SISODIA | DEPUTY CM, DELHI

Nobody understood that the Gujarat model means only publicity, good headlines and PR management. In the last six years, what the PM has done is replicate the Gujarat model in the country



RAJEEV SATAV | AICC IN-CHARGE, GUJARAT

India is one of the largest countries producing oxygen, medicine and vaccines. Yet deaths due to lack of oxygen and medicines here are unfortunate. There have never been deaths due to this in other countries of the world



ASHOK GEHLOT | CM, RAJASTHAN

### SHORT TAKES

#### BSF thwarts Pak infiltration bid

**Chandigarh:** The BSF thwarted an infiltration attempt by three Pakistani intruders along the India-Pakistan international border in Punjab's Pathankot district, officials said Thursday. Border Security Force personnel opened fire when they noticed suspicious movement of three people trying to enter into the Indian Territory around 10:15 pm Wednesday, a BSF official said. He said the three went back after the BSF troops posted at the Paharpur border outpost fired gunshots to stop them. A joint search operation was being conducted in the area by the BSF and the Punjab Police, a police official said.

#### 100 Pak returnee Sikhs test +ve

**Chandigarh:** At least 100 Sikh devotees mainly from Punjab, who returned from Pakistan after visiting several shrines on the occasion of Baisakhi, Thursday tested positive for coronavirus on their return to India through the Wagah border near Amritsar, officials said. A 'jatha' of 815 pilgrims reached Pakistan's Lahore April 12 to celebrate Khalsa Sajna Diwas and Baisakhi at the religiously significant Sikh shrines.

#### Militants attack guard, loot bank

**Srinagar:** A security guard was injured on Thursday as armed militants looted a bank branch in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said. The militants armed with pistol looted the Jammu and Kashmir Bank at Khore Sherabad in Pattan area.

## PM Modi to address virtual rallies in WB

**Tomorrow, will be chairing high-level meetings to review the prevailing COVID-19 situation. Due to that, I would not be going to West Bengal**  
NARENDRA MODI | PM OF INDIA



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 22:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually address the people of West Bengal April 23 after cancelling his visit for reviewing the prevailing Covid situation, a BJP leader said.

In a statement, West Bengal BJP chief Dilip Ghosh said The Prime Minister has had to cancel his visit to Bengal April 23, in which he was scheduled to address four rallies across four districts and 56 Assembly constituencies.

BJP Bengal unit and the voters of West Bengal were looking forward to his visit but we realise the gravity of the situation and the rationale for him not being able to make it in person. We have since requested the Prime Minister to address the entire constituency at one time through a virtual address and we are pleased to confirm that he has agreed to do so.

According to Ghosh, the Prime

Minister will be addressing voters, particularly of Malda, Murshidabad, Birbhum and Kolkata, through a virtual medium at 5 pm April 23.

On behalf of the voters of West Bengal, we extend our gratitude to the Honourable Prime Minister for acceding to our request and look forward to his inspiring address, Ghosh said.

Earlier, announcing cancellation his visit to poll battleground West Bengal, Modi tweeted, "Tomorrow, will be chairing high-level meetings to review the prevailing COVID-19 situation. Due to that, I would not be going to West Bengal." As per the plan, Modi was supposed to address four rallies in West Bengal.

As per the original schedule, two of these rallies were supposed to take place, at Malda and Murshidabad April 22 and the next two rallies

#### EC bans roadshows, vehicle rallies in WB

**New Delhi:** Noting that COVID safety norms were being flouted in West Bengal during campaigning, the Election Commission Thursday banned road shows and vehicle rallies in the state with immediate effect and said no public meeting having more than 500 people would be allowed. The order said the commission has noted "with anguish" that many political parties and candidates are still not adhering to the prescribed safety norms during the public gatherings. The orders will come into force from 7 pm Thursday.

in Bolpur and Kolkata April 24. In view of the prevailing Covid situation, all four rallies of Modi were rescheduled April 23. Now, he will address these rallies virtually, a West Bengal BJP leader said.

## HC dismisses Facebook, WhatsApp pleas against CCI's privacy policy probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 22:** The Delhi High Court Thursday dismissed pleas by social media platforms, Facebook and WhatsApp, challenging India's competition regulator CCI's order directing a probe into WhatsApp's new privacy policy.

Justice Navin Chawla said though it would have been prudent for the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to await the outcome of petitions in the Supreme Court and the Delhi HC against WhatsApp's new privacy policy, but not doing so would not make the regulator's order perverse or wanting of jurisdiction.

The court said it saw no merit in the petitions of Facebook and WhatsApp to interdict the investigation directed by the CCI.

The CCI had contended that it was not examining the alleged violation of individuals' privacy which was being looked into by the Supreme Court.

It had argued before the court that the new privacy policy of WhatsApp would lead to excessive data col-

lection and stalking of consumers for targeted advertising to bring in more users and is therefore an alleged abuse of dominant position. There is no question of jurisdictional error; it had contended and added that WhatsApp and Facebook's pleas challenging its decision were incompetent and misconceived.

WhatsApp and Facebook had challenged the CCI's March 24 order directing a probe into the new privacy policy.

CCI had also told the court that only after the investigation can it be determined whether the data collection by WhatsApp and sharing it with Facebook would amount to an anti-competitive practice or abuse of dominant position.

It had also contended that the data collected, which would include an individual's location, the kind of device used, their internet service provider and whom they are conversing with, would lead to creation of a customer profile and preference which would be monetised by way of targeted advertising and all this amounts to stalking.



### CLEAN & GREEN

Replica of Earth being cleaned by a worker on the banks of Upper Lake in Bhopal, Thursday. Earth Day is being observed to demonstrate support to environmental protection for the theme 'Restore Our Earth'

PTI PHOTO

## Newborn daughter brought by chopper

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, April 22:** A new born daughter was accorded rather an unusual welcome in a Rajasthan village and brought home in a helicopter with bands walking along her side after she landed and roses were spread throughout the way till the time she reached her sweet home.

The celebration was grand as she is the first daughter to have been born in this family after 35 years. Hence the father spent Rs 4.5



lakh to hire this copter and make the celebration grand.

Village folks of Nimbdi Chandawata in Nagaur district turned up in large numbers to see the chopper landing in their village and catch a glimpse of the baby girl. The daughter was born at her maternal grandfather's home two

months ago. She landed in her paternal village on the auspicious occasion of Rammavami, when villagers sang bhajans and showered flowers on the baby and her mother.

The little girl's grandfather Madan Lal Kumhar decided to bring the girl home in a helicopter and took permission from the district collector for the same as well as to build helipads both in her maternal and paternal villages.

The 30 km distance between the two villages was covered in about 20 minutes via copter.

## Indian Navy rescuers search for missing Indonesian submarine

**IN THE SOUTH EAST ASIAN REGION, ONLY INDIA HAS DEEP SUBMERGENCE RESCUE CAPABILITIES AND THE DSRV CAN CARRY OUT RESCUE OPERATIONS IN DEEP WATERS**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 22:** Indian Navy rescuers Thursday started searching for an Indonesian submarine that went missing with 53 people on board in waters north

of the island of Bali. The Indian Navy's Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel (DSRV) departed from Visakhapatnam to support the Indonesian Navy in Search and Rescue efforts for KRI Nanggala Thursday.

April 21, an alert was received by the Indian Navy through the International Submarine Escape and Rescue Liaison Office (ISMERLO), regarding the missing Indonesian submarine. The submarine was exercising in a location 25 miles North of Bali with a crew of 53 personnel.

In the South East Asian region, only India has deep submergence rescue capabilities and the DSRV can carry out rescue operations in deep waters. The DSRV can recover submarine crews from depths up to

1000 m and it is equipped with sonar and a Remotely Operated Vehicle to clear the underwater obstructions for the rescue operations. The DSRV can be transported to the area of operations by air or sea routes.

This system has a side scan sonar for locating the position of the submarine in distress at sea, providing immediate relief by way of posting Emergency Life Support Containers with the help of Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) and thereafter rescuing the crew of the submarine using the DSRV.

In a submarine accident, rapidity of response is most crucial to safety of life. To ensure early mobilisation, the System has been procured in a flyaway configuration which permits rapid transportation of the Rescue System from the



base to the exact location of the distressed submarine by transportation using air/landsea vessels, the Indian Navy stated.

The DSRV is the latest in terms

of technology and capabilities. Live undersea matings with different types of submarines along with transfer of personnel from submarine to DSRV has also been

achieved.

The Indonesian Defence Ministry had sought assistance Wednesday from Australia, Singapore and India in the search and rescue operation of the 44-year-old submarine, KRI Nanggala-402.

The submarine was conducting a torpedo drill when it went missing. Contact with the vessel was lost at 4.30 am Wednesday, the Indonesia military said. The submarine was built to sustain pressure at a maximum depth of around 250 metres.

The Indonesian Navy in a statement said, "It is possible that during static diving, a blackout occurred so control was lost and emergency procedures cannot be carried out and the ship falls to a depth of 600-700 metres."

Meanwhile, India is set to roll out its Phase 3 vaccination drive, wherein everyone above the age of 18 will be eligible to get a vaccine against Covid-19 from May 1.

The government claimed that pricing, procurement, eligibility and administration of vaccines are being made flexible in Phase 3 of the world's largest vaccination drive.

Further, the National Vaccine Strategy aims at liberalised vaccine pricing and scaling up of vaccine coverage. This would augment vaccine production as well as availability, incentivising vaccine manufacturers to rapidly ramp up production as well as attract new vaccine manufacturers, domestic and international, said an official statement from the Health Ministry.



## Pfizer offers jobs at 'not-for-profit' price

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 22:** US pharma major Pfizer Thursday offered to supply the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at a not-for-profit price, media reports have cited.

The company had earlier said that it will supply the messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine only through government contracts.

Pfizer shared that it aims to provide equitable and affordable access to vaccines for people around the world. The company charges \$19.5 per dose from the US government to supply the vaccine.

The European Union is under talks with PfizerBioNTech for a new contract for 1.8 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines to be delivered in 2022 and 2023.

In the EU, Pfizer has significantly increased prices of its vaccine over the last few months -- from 12 euros to 15.5 euros and then 19.5 euros (\$23) per dose for orders in 2022-23.

Earlier this month, Pfizer's said its mRNA-based vaccine was more than 91 per cent effective at protecting against the coronavirus, and more than 95 per cent effective against severe disease up to six months after the second dose. Last week, Chief Executive Officer Albert Bourla, proposed the need for a third dose of the PfizerBioNTech Covid-19 vaccine within 12 months of getting fully inoculated.



## of the day quote

I was born in this country and will be cremated on this holy land after my demise. But, your vote bank of illegal immigrants are the outsiders on whose support you want to rule Bengal



AMIT SHAH | HOME MINISTER

I am quarantined at home and sad news is constantly coming in. The crisis in India is not just due to Corona, but due to the anti-people policies of the central government. Don't give false celebrations and hollow speeches, give the country a solution



RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

The Maharashtra government needs to have one week's stock of COVID-19 vaccines at one go so that it can vaccinate up to eight lakh people on a daily basis



RAJESH TOPE | MAHA HEALTH MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### 5 killed as train rams into truck

**Shahjahanpur (Uttar Pradesh):** Five persons were killed and several injured when the Lucknow-Chandigarh express ramed into a truck, a DCM trailer and two motorbikes on the railway track Thursday morning. The incident took place in Katra police circle early Thursday morning and the gateman did not close the railway crossing gate. The train driver tried to apply the emergency brakes but could not prevent the collision. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed grief over the deaths and has directed the district officials to ensure proper treatment of the injured. He has announced a compensation of ₹2 lakh each for the kin of the deceased.

### Ex-Delhi minister succumbs to nCoV

**New Delhi:** Senior Congress leader and former Delhi government minister A K Wallia died of COVID-19 in the early hours of Thursday, party leaders said. He was 72. Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal among others condoled his demise. Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar expressed grief over the former MLA's death.

### ICG rescues 8 fishermen

**Chennai:** Indian Coast Guard rescued eight fishermen, whose fishing boat was drifting away from the shore off Karaikal after engine failure, an official statement said Thursday. According to the statement, Coast Guard ship Ameya, patrolling off the Karaikal coast received a distress message on radio from the fishing boat, stranded approximately 15 nautical miles due to machinery breakdown.

### 31 Covid-19 patients flee

**Agartala:** At least 31 COVID-19 patients, who were being treated in a temporary care centre here, have escaped from the facility, following which the Tripura Police launched a massive search operation, an official said Thursday. All the coronavirus-positive patients, who fled the COVID care centre at Panchayat Raj Training Institute (PRTI) in Arundhatinagar area Wednesday night, are residents of other states, Sadar Subdivisional Police Officer Anirban Das said.



The Centre has a lot of money in PM Cares Fund but it wouldn't provide vaccines free of cost

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

## JAIL IS NOT SAFE IN KERALA

Jail authorities Thursday morning at the Kannur high security prison got a rude shock after it was found that ₹1.92 lakh kept at a food stall in the prison were stolen



# Centre directs 'uninterrupted' supply of oxygen

In its order, the Centre said the district magistrate and superintendent of police of the district concerned will be held responsible if there is any violation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 22:** The Centre Thursday directed states to ensure uninterrupted production and supply of medical oxygen and its transport along inter-state borders and said the district magistrate and superintendent of police of the district concerned will be held responsible if there is any violation of its order.

The directive under the stringent Disaster Management Act 2005 was issued by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla in the wake of reports that some states blocked supply of medical oxygen to other states amid sudden spike in coronavirus cases and demand for it. Bhalla said the availability of adequate and uninterrupted supply of medical oxygen is an important pre-requisite for managing moderate and severe cases of COVID-19 and with the increasing cases, the medical oxygen supply will need to keep pace with the requirements of the states and union territories.

"Therefore, to ensure the uninterrupted supply of medical oxygen across the country for management of COVID-19 patients, in exercise of powers conferred under section of the DM Act, the undersigned, in the capacity as chairperson, National Executive Committee, hereby directs the state and Union Territory governments and state and Union Territory authorities to ensure the following measures within their areas of jurisdiction," the home secretary said. The order said there should be no restriction on the movement of medical oxygen between the states and transport authorities

shall be instructed to accordingly allow free inter-state movement of oxygen carrying vehicles.

No restrictions shall be imposed on oxygen manufacturers and suppliers to limit the oxygen supplies only to the hospitals of the state and the union territory in which they are located. There shall be free movement of oxygen carrying vehicles into the cities, without any restriction of timings, while also enabling inter-city supply without any restriction, it said.

No authority shall attach the oxygen carrying vehicles passing through the district or areas for making supplies specific to any particular district or area, it further said. Supply of oxygen for industrial purposes, except those (nine specified industries) exempted by the government, is prohibited from April 22, 2021 and till further orders, according to the directive.

The order said that the states and union territories shall strictly abide by the supply plan of medical oxygen prepared by Empowered Group-I and as revised from time-to-time. The DDMA appointed two senior bureaucrats as nodal officers to ensure smooth movement of tankers and facilitate oxygen supply to city hospitals, and directed the Delhi Police to provide security logistics from manufacturers' sites to various health facilities here. The move comes hours after Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia alleged that the police force in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana were blocking oxygen transport to the national capital, and urged the Centre to ensure normal supply even if that meant taking the help of paramilitary forces.



## CHILL RETURNS



A man walks with umbrella during fresh snowfall near Gangangir in Ganderbal district of central Kashmir PTI PHOTO

## Thieves 'return' Covid jabs with apology

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chandigarh, April 22:** Thieves in Haryana decamped with the entire stock of coronavirus vaccine from a government hospital storehouse, police said Thursday. However, coming to know that the stolen vials were coronavirus jabs, they left them at a roadside tea stall with an apology for the act.

The incident was reported in Jind district Wednesday night. According to the police, the thieves took away 1,710 doses of Covishield



and Covaxin from the storeroom of the Civil Hospital.

Later, they left the vials at a tea stall outside a police station with a note of "regret over not knowing that it was Covid vaccine". The stolen vials comprise 1,270 of Covishield and 440 of Covaxin. After the theft, the hospital left with no vaccine.

Meanwhile, Coronavirus cases in Haryana have also witnessed a sharp increase during this month and demand for medical oxygen has also gone up.

# Delhi gasping for O<sub>2</sub>, hosps raise alarm

HEALTHCARE SYSTEM OF DELHI GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ON ITS TOES FOR LAST FEW DAYS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 22:** With an exponential surge in Covid-19 cases in the national capital, hospitals with Covid infected patients in need of oxygen support continued to raise the alarm over shortage of oxygen to draw the attention of the Delhi Government's healthcare system.

The Delhi government stated Wednesday that the city is gasping for oxygen for the last over 50 hours. The healthcare system of the Delhi government has been on its toes since the last few days with Delhi battling for beds to accommodate the increasing Covid infected patients daily.

Delhi's several private and government hospitals have informed the state government about the oxygen stock for Covid patients. Not only the hospitals but the state government too, including Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal have been raising the issue of



oxygen shortage. Lacking its own resources of oxygen, the state government amid a flood of complaints of oxygen shortage continued to knock on the Centre's door for beds and now for oxygen supply.

As per the Delhi Government, the Centre has increased Delhi's oxygen quota from 378 MT to 480 MT. However, Delhi Deputy Chief

Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday during a press conference said, "On Wednesday, hospitals in Delhi faced a crisis because out of the 378 MT oxygen sanctioned to Delhi by the Centre, only 177 MT was received. The UP government did not allow oxygen loaded trucks to enter an oxygen plant there, which resulted in an emergency situation

in many hospitals in Delhi." Sisodia, who also looks after Covid-19 management as the nodal minister, said on Thursday that the administration is getting calls from hospitals day and night regarding shortage of oxygen.

"At some points, the situation becomes critical when Medical Directors of hospitals say they have 150-200 Covid-19 patients who need support of oxygen and they have stock for only two hours. They say they can do nothing without oxygen support to patients. Delhi is not getting the full supply of its approved quota of oxygen by the Centre," said Sisodia.

As per the Delhi government's report, many government hospitals are also reaching the point of oxygen shortage for Covid-19 patients. On Wednesday night, oxygen shortage in GTB hospital put the entire Delhi Government on its toes, however, the crisis was averted with support from other hospitals.

## WAKE-UP CALL

# Green activists say Covid is Earth's angry revenge

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Agra, April 22:** The Taj city's green activists think Covid-19 is mother Earth's angry revenge against wanton exploitation of nature and mad civilisational craze for development without a human face.

At an interactive session early Thursday to mark Earth Day at the Yamuna bank, environmentalists blamed developed countries for the pandemic that has threatened life in an unprecedented way.

After the all-out war against pollution launched a little over three decades ago at the initiative of the Supreme Court, Agra should have been a model of planned urban expansion and a cleaner environment, but the city continues to struggle to contain both air and water pollution that has alarmed nature lovers. "More than a thousand crores have been spent but the results are a huge zero," lamented activist Shrawan Kumar Singh.

Environmentalists Devashish Bhattacharya said the lifeline of the city, the Yamuna river is highly

Earth Day is a reminder to the governments and the public to wake up and take appropriate measures to reduce pollutants



Representational image

This year's theme for Earth Day is 'Restore Our Earth'. In 2009, the UN designated April 22 as 'International Mother Earth Day'

polluted and virtually dead, while the ambient air carries a huge load of desert sand and dry river silt, further compounded by emissions from the rising number of vehicles on the roads.

Earth Day is a reminder to the governments and the public to wake up and taken appropriate measures to reduce pollutants and slow down on the exploitation of natural resources, said Surendra Sharma, president of the Braj

Mandal Heritage Conservation Society. Several citizens' groups joined the Earth Day celebrations, though at a low key due to the pandemic, to raise awareness about the challenges that Earth and its fragile environment face.

Ranjan Sharma of "Paryavaran Mitra" said that "the decreasing green cover in the eco-sensitive Taj Trapezium Zone, was a matter of deep concern". Speakers at a virtual meeting organised by the River

Connect Campaign said there was greater need for restoring balance among the five components of nature (the panch tattvas: water, sky, air, fire, and earth).

Rahul Raj said that "time has come to reduce wants, recycle products and discourage the western use and throw culture". Shahtosh Gautam said water had to be saved through judicious use.

While Deepak Rajput wanted water-harvesting made compulsory in all urban areas, Chaturbhuj Tiwari said that "municipalities were encouraging concretisation of pavements and wide use of interlocking cement tiles which prevented seepage and percolation of rainwater". This practice needed to be changed. Activists said all political parties should specifically commit themselves to measures that would restore a happy balance in nature and prevent further degradation of the environment.

Sri Nath ji Jal Sewa that runs a network of water huts in the city, asked people to conserve the fast depleting water resource.

# Crematorium data casts doubt on official Covid-19 death figure

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal, April 22:** If records of two crematoriums and a cemetery are to be believed, last rites of 137 COVID-19 victims were performed in Bhopal Wednesday, though the official death figure for the day was only five.

While the mismatch indicated massive under-reporting of COVID-19 fatalities, District Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr Prabhakar Tiwari was not available for comment despite repeated calls. Last rites of 187 persons, 137 of them coronavirus patients, were performed on Wednesday in the Madhya Pradesh capital, as per the managers of the three facilities. "As many as 111 people were cremated at our facility on Wednesday. 92 of them had died of coronavirus," Bhadbhada Vishram Ghat (crematorium) secretary Mamtesh Sharma told PTI. The bodies of coronavirus patients are brought in air-tight plastic bags to prevent the spread of the disease. Out of 92, 61 were from Bhopal while 31 were from other districts but were receiving treatment here, he added. Bhadbhada crematoriums and Zada



A Bhopal crematorium burns bodies in rows as the facilities get overwhelmed by the number of deaths PTI PHOTO

graveyard were initially authorised to perform the last rites of COVID-19 patients in the district. Due to rise in fatalities, another crematorium, Subhash Nagar Vishram Ghat, too has got the permission, Sharma said. "Last rites of 56 people were performed at our crematorium yesterday," said Subhash Nagar Vishram Ghat manager Sobhraj Sukhwani, adding that 31 of them had died due to the pandemic. Twenty of them were locals while 11 hailed from other districts, he said. Rehan Golden, president of Zada Graveyard Committee, Jahangirabad, claimed that 20 burials took place Wednesday.



# international



**The Biden administration is taking a whole-of-government approach to aggressively tackle climate change. My goal, at Treasury, is to support this work with a whole-of-economy approach**  
JANET YELLEN | TREASURY SECRETARY, US

## NZ TO MOVE ITS ONLY 2 ELEPHANTS TO AUS

Auckland Zoo, the biggest zoo in New Zealand, Thursday decided to move the country's only two elephants to Australia to give them both the family herd they need for their long-term wellbeing



### of the day quote

We will also be limiting the departure exceptions for Australians travelling to high-risk countries ... to India. As time goes on, and the pandemic continues to rage, there are countries that are frankly of greater risk than others

SCOTT MORRISON | PM, AUSTRALIA

Summer is not so far away, and ... Making the decisive difference with vaccination. But for that, we need action now to break this wave (of infections), and this bill serves that end

JENS SPAHN | HEALTH MINISTER, GERMANY

It will not be easy. In order to achieve the target, we will firmly implement concrete measures, while aiming to create a positive cycle linking the economy and environment and achieve strong growth

YOSHIIDE SUGA | PM, JAPAN

### SHORT TAKES

#### 78 militants killed in Afghan

**Kabul:** At least 78 Taliban militants were killed in various operations conducted by Afghan government forces in the past 24 hours, the Ministry of Defence announced Thursday. "Forty-four Taliban militants were also wounded and eight others were arrested as a result of Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) operations in Ghazni, Zabul, Herat, Paktika, Balkh, Nimroz, Helmand and Kandahar provinces," the Ministry said in a statement.

#### Pak major cities in lockdown

**Islamabad:** A lockdown is likely to be imposed in major cities of Pakistan if the resurgence of new Covid-19 cases persists due to failure of the public to comply with the standard operating procedures (SOPs) set by the government, the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) said. The center's chief Asad Umar said Wednesday that the third wave of the disease is getting serious and the number of critical patients on ventilators rose to around 4,500, about 30 per cent higher than the peak time of the pandemic in June 2020, reports Xinhua news agency.

#### Aus ends China deals

**Canberra:** Australia has cancelled two Chinese "Belt and Road" infrastructure building initiative deals with a state government, provoking an angry response from Beijing. The bilateral deals with Victoria State were among four vetoed under new laws that give the federal government power to overrule international agreements by lower-level administrations that violate the national interest, Foreign Minister Marise Payne said late Wednesday.

#### Vanita Gupta scripts history

**Washington:** Prominent Indian-American civil rights lawyer Vanita Gupta has been confirmed by the US Senate as associate attorney general, making her the first person of colour to occupy the third highest position at the Department of Justice. Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski broke away from her party colleagues to support Gupta (46), giving the Democrats 51 votes to see her through the historic confirmation Wednesday.

## RUSSIA-UKRAINE TENSIONS

# Russia holds major drills in Crimea

The maneuvers were described largest since Russia annexed the Black Sea peninsula from Ukraine in 2014 and threw its weight behind separatist insurgents in eastern Ukraine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Moscow, April 22:** The Russian military Thursday conducted massive drills in Crimea involving dozens of navy ships, hundreds of warplanes and thousands of troops in a show of force amid tensions with Ukraine.

The maneuvers were described as the largest since Russia annexed the Black Sea peninsula from Ukraine in 2014 and threw its weight behind separatist insurgents in eastern Ukraine.

The exercise comes amid increasing violations of a cease-fire in Ukraine's east and a massive Russian troops buildup on the border with Ukraine that raised Western concerns.

The Russian Defense Ministry said the Crimean maneuvers involve more than 60 ships, over 10,000 troops, around 200 aircraft and about 1,200 military vehicles.

The exercise featured the landing of more than 2,000 paratroopers and 60 military vehicles Thursday. Fighter jets covered the airborne operation. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu flew in a helicopter over the Opuk firing range in Crimea to oversee the exercise.

Last week, Russia has announced that it would close broad areas of the



Black Sea near Crimea to foreign navy ships and state vessels until November, a move that drew Ukrainian protests and raised Western concerns. Russia also announced restrictions on flights near Crimea this week, arguing that they fully conform with the international law.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba warned Tuesday that the Russian buildup across the border is continuing and is "expected to reach a combined force of over 120,000 troops" in about a week and urged the West to beef up sanctions against Moscow.

Moscow has rejected Ukrainian and Western concerns about the buildup, arguing that it's free to

deploy its forces anywhere on the Russian territory and charging that they don't threaten anyone. But at the same time, the Kremlin sternly warned Ukrainian authorities against trying to use force to retake control of the rebel east, where seven years of fighting have killed more than 14,000, saying that Russia could be forced to intervene to protect civilians in the region.

Amid the tensions, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy Wednesday signed a law allowing the call-up of reservists for military service without announcing a mobilization. The new law will allow to quickly equipping the military with reservists, significantly increasing their combat ef-

### Troops return after drills

Russia's defense minister Thursday ordered troops back to their permanent bases following massive drills in Crimea that involved dozens of navy ships, hundreds of warplanes and thousands of troops in a show of force amid tensions with Ukraine. After watching the drills, Russian Defense Minister Shoigu declared the maneuvers over and ordered the military to pull the troops taking part in maneuvers in Crimea and western Russia back to their permanent bases. "I consider the goals of the snap check of readiness fulfilled," Shoigu said. "The troops have shown their defense capability and I decided to complete the drills in the South and Western military districts." Shoigu said the troops should return to their bases by May 1, but he also ordered to keep the heavy weapons deployed to western Russia as part of the drills for another massive military exercise later this year.

fectiveness during military aggression," Zelenskyy's office said in a statement.

## Disagreements between US, Iran in Vienna N-talks



### NEW ROUND OF TALKS

- To lift the sanctions by US
- To verify the lift of sanctions
- Iran implementing its own commitments under the deal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Washington, April 22:** A senior US State Department official said that the second round of the talks in Vienna over the 2015 Iran nuclear deal "made some progress", but important disagreements still existed between Washington and Tehran.

The senior official said Wednesday that the indirect talks between the US and Iran in Vienna "made some progress" in clarifying respective steps to revive the deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), reports Xinhua news agency. "But clarification doesn't necessarily mean consensus," said the official.

"There still are disagreements and, in some cases, pretty important ones on our respective views about what is required to - what is meant by a return to full compliance." The official said the US had provided Iran with examples of three categories of sanctions, including "sanctions that we believe we would need to lift in order to

come back into compliance, and the sanctions that we believe we would not need to lift."

The third category of sanctions was much more complicated with further assessment needed, according to the official, some of which were deliberately imposed by the previous Trump administration to hinder a successor administration from returning to the deal.

The official noted that Washington and Tehran had not discussed the sequencing issue, saying the two sides "are still in the process of describing and detailing the steps that each side is going to have to take". The official, however, emphasised that Washington had made it clear to Tehran that "a sequence that the US does everything before Iran does nothing is not an acceptable sequence".

"We've made some progress," National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan told CNN earlier in the day, referring to the Vienna talks.

"There is still distance to travel, but ultimately the US is committed to returning to the JCPOA on a compliance-for-compliance basis."

## US CLIMATE SUMMIT

# BIDEN PLEDGES TO SLASH GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, April 22:** US President Joe Biden Thursday announced a new target for his country to achieve a 50-52 per cent reduction from 2005 levels in economy-wide net greenhouse gas pollution in 2030, officials said.

President Biden will host the Leaders Summit on Climate April 22 and 23. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is among the 40 world leaders invited by Biden to address the first-ever summit on climate change by the US.

The announcement to be made during the virtual Leaders' Summit on Climate that Biden is holding to challenge the world on increased ambition in combating climate change. The focus will be on building back better in a way that will

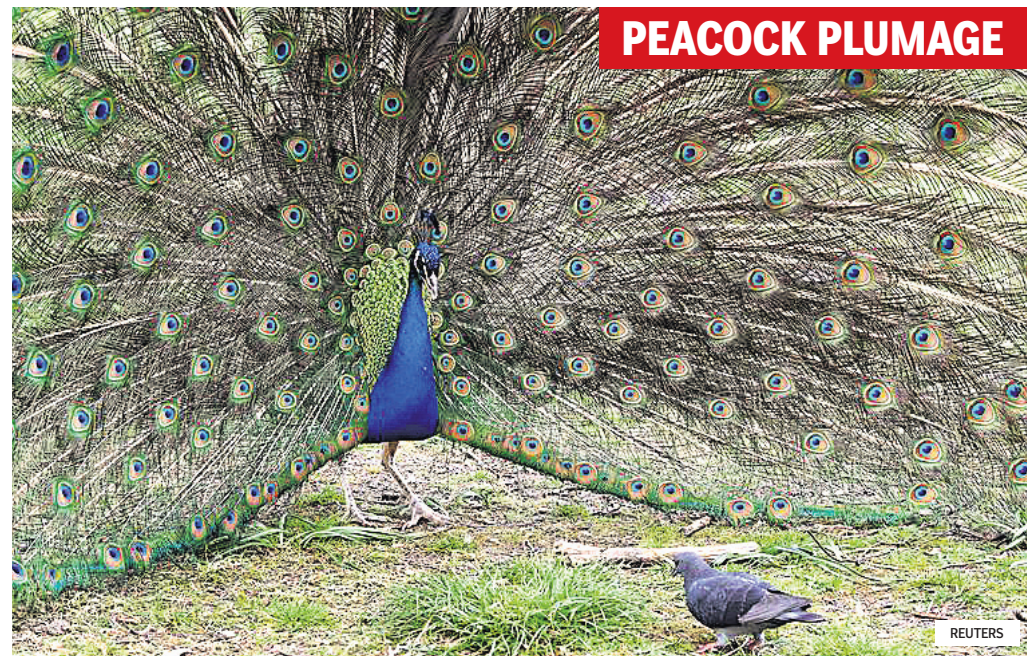
create millions of good-paying, union jobs, ensure economic competitiveness, advance environmental justice, and improve the health and security of communities across America, the White House said.

"America's 2030 target picks up the pace of emissions reductions in the United States, compared to historical levels, while supporting President Biden's existing goals to create a carbon pollution-free power sector by 2035 and net zero emissions economy by no later than 2050," it said.

According to the White House, the Biden administration has set a goal to reach 100 per cent carbon pollution-free electricity by 2035, which can be achieved through multiple cost-effective pathways each resulting in meaningful emissions reductions in this decade.

"The US must fuel an economic recovery that creates jobs. We have the opportunity to fuel an equitable recovery, expand supply chains and bolster manufacturing, create millions of good-paying, union jobs, and build a more sustainable, resilient future," they said.

The new target is consistent with the President's goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by no later than 2050 and of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as the science demands.



### PEACOCK PLUMAGE

A peacock shows its plumage as part of a courtship display while a pigeon feeds nearby at a park in London, Britain

## Over 1,700 Navalny supporters detained

REUTERS

**Moscow, April 22:** More than 1,700 people were detained by police at rallies in support of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny in dozens of cities across Russia, an independent monitor reported Thursday.

Thousands of people took to the streets Wednesday evening to demand freedom and proper medical attention for Navalny, who has been hunger strike for three weeks in a penal colony outside Moscow.

The opposition staged demonstrations in dozens of Russian cities, with the largest rallies taking place in Moscow.



The OVD-Info monitoring group, which tracks detentions at opposition protests, said that by Thursday morning police had detained "more than 1,783 people in 97 cities".

In Russia, participation in unauthorised demonstrations can lead to a fine or several days in jail.

The majority of detentions - 805 - took place in Saint Petersburg, where police violently dispersed crowds with shock sticks.

Navalny's press secretary Kira Yarmysh was among those detained. She was given a 10-day stint behind bars for calling on people to join unauthorised rallies.

Key Navalny aide Lyubov Sobol was also taken into police custody ahead of the rally in Moscow and is due to appear in court later Thursday. Wednesday's rallies did not match in size those held in the winter when Navalny was arrested after returning to Russia from Germany.

## Chad opposition decries Deby's son as interim leader

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**N'djamena (Chad), April 22:** Chad's political opposition is saying the country suffered a "coup d'etat" when power was handed to Mahamat Idriss Deby, arguing that the military did not follow constitutional rules for succession following the death of his father after more than three decades in power.

The mounting opposition to Chad's transitional government Thursday came as the international community also pressed for a democratic transfer of power following the killing of longtime President Idriss Deby Itno.

The military said Deby died while making a visit to the front lines of the battle against rebels now threatening to advance on the capital.

"The Chadian people tell us they do not want a dynastic transfer of power," one opposition leader, Succes Masra, said in a video message released online.

"The Chadian people do not want to continue with the same institutions that have created the current situation."

A military spokesman announced Idriss Deby Itno's death Tuesday and said in the same announcement that his 37-year-old son would serve as the head of an 18-month-long transitional government. However, the constitution calls for the National Assembly president to become the country's leader in the event a president dies in office.

# World is at risk of losing benefits from ocean: UN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New York, April 22:** The world is at risk of losing many of the benefits the ocean provides, warns the latest UN assessment on the state of the world's ocean.

The first World Ocean Assessment, released in 2015, had warned that many areas of the ocean had been seriously degraded, mostly due to the failure to deal with the pressures caused by human activities, including fishing, aquaculture, shipping, oil and gas exploitation, pollution and the release of greenhouse gases.

The latest assessment, released Wednesday, notes the situation has not improved - and that many of the benefits that the ocean provides to people such as oxygen, food, jobs, medicine and climate regulation are increasingly being undermined by human activities.

Considered the only comprehen-

sive global analysis that looks at social, environmental, demographic and economic trends affecting the state of the ocean, the assessment calls for an integrated sustainable management of coasts and the ocean, driven by science, technology and innovation.

"Better understanding of the ocean is essential," said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the launch.

"As the assessment makes clear, ocean sustainability depends on us all working together - including through joint research, capacity development and the sharing of data, information and technology."

Despite improvements in understanding of the state of the world's ocean and its marine life in recent years, there are still significant gaps in scientific knowledge and capacity needed to ensure responsive policies that can help restore and sustain ocean health.



"We have only seen about 10 per cent of the ocean. So much of the ocean is yet to be explored and understood," said Sylvia Earle, Marine Biologist and President of Mission Blue. "This is the time to step back and dive in to really look at the problem; look at the solutions to see how the interests of humankind are so connected to the

ocean. The ocean is in trouble. We need the ocean and the ocean now needs us to take care of the systems that make our existence possible," she added. The assessment points to the alarming pace of sea-level rise, combined with increasing storms and coastal urbanization, has led to coastal erosion and flooding in coastal cities.

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Rising carbon dioxide emissions have led to ocean acidification and together with warming and deoxygenation resulted in loss of biological diversity.

The ocean heat content has more than doubled since the 1990s, severely affecting marine life and ecosystems. The number of "dead zones" or areas with reduced oxygen in the ocean has increased from more than 400 globally in 2008 to about 700 in 2019. Around 90 per cent of mangrove, seagrass, and marsh plant species, as well as 31 per cent of species of seabirds, are now threatened with extinction.

Marine litter is present in all marine habitats, affecting the environment and marine organisms through entanglement, ingestion and rafting of invasive species.

Overfishing is estimated to have led to an annual loss of \$88.9 billion in net benefits.

Human-mediated movements have introduced about 2,000 marine non-indigenous invasive species, some of which pose significant biosecurity and biodiversity hazards.



# business



**Till the time corporates get Covid-19 vaccine supplies directly, they can support hospitals in setting up vaccination camps in open spaces to reduce the risk of infection at hospital venues**

ANAND MAHINDRA | CHAIRMAN, MAHINDRA GROUP

## PETROL, DIESEL PRICE REMAIN UNCHANGED

Fuel prices in the country remained unchanged Thursday as OMCs decided to go on a pause mode and analyse the global developments on oil prices before effecting a revision. Accordingly, pump price of petrol and diesel remained at ₹90.40 a litre and ₹80.73 a litre respectively, in Delhi



## of the day quote

At Vedanta, we have been at the forefront of the fight against Covid-19. Now that the country is facing an acute shortage of medical oxygen, our businesses are doing all that is possible to ramp up supplies

SUNIL DUGGAL | CEO, VEDANTA GROUP

Striking a fine balance between business objectives and employee mobility needs, Vi Business Plus provides a seamless digital experience of connecting, communicating and collaborating for today's hybrid workplaces

ABHIJIT KISHORE | CHIEF ENTERPRISE BUSINESS OFFICER, VODAFONE IDEA

Digitisation will act as a driver for decarbonisation and building work and living spaces of the future. With the present advancement in technology, we can create solutions that provide positive impulses, transparency, control, and enhanced decision-making

PRAVIN RAO | COO, INFOSYS

## SHORT TAKES

### Ola Electric to set up 1 lakh charging points

**Bangalore:** Ola Electric Thursday unveiled the Ola 'Hypercharger Network', the charging network for its upcoming two-wheeler products starting with the Ola Scooter to be launched in the coming months. Ola said in a statement it will offer "the most comprehensive" set of charging options to its electric vehicle customers through a combination of widely deployed high-speed Ola Hyperchargers and the home-charger that will come bundled with the Ola Scooter.

### Covid shaves off 20% Capex of ONGC

**New Delhi:** Oil and gas producer ONGC spent about one-fifth less than its budget Capex in 2020-21 fiscal after Covid-19 related restrictions delayed projects but fuel marketers such as IOC exceeded targeted capital spending, a government report showed. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) had budgeted ₹32,502 crore of capital spending in the fiscal from April 2020 to March 2021 but ended up spending only ₹26,441 crore, according to the report by Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell.

### 'Industry in recovery mode'

**New Delhi:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Thursday said the industry is in recovery mode and several Budget proposals are on course, despite a fresh wave of coronavirus infections and local lockdowns. The government has been taking steps to deal with the second wave with regard to supply of medicines and oxygen, she said. The government has been taking decisions like import of medical oxygen, and boosting supply of medicines, she said.

### Discord ends talks with Microsoft

**San Francisco:** Popular online chat app Discord has reportedly ended talks with Microsoft for its \$10 billion acquisition deal. The Wall Street Journal reported, as the company now aims to launch an initial public offering. Reports surfaced last month that in a bid to enter the competitive social media market, Microsoft may acquire popular chat and communications platform Discord for more than \$10 billion.

## SECOND COVID WAVE

# FUTURE SENTIMENT INDEX FOR REAL ESTATE FALLS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 22:** The onset of the second major wave of the Covid-19 pandemic has led to a fall in future sentiments index in the real estate industry for the next six months but it still remains in an optimistic zone, according to a report.

As per the 28th Edition of Knight Frank-FICCI-NAREDCO Real Estate Sentiment Index Q1 2021 (January - March 2021) Survey, the 'Future Sentiment score' saw a decline from 65 in Q4 2020 to 57 in Q1 2021 due to uncertainties amid spread of a second wave of Covid-19 infections. However, it remained in the optimistic zone.

"The 'Current Sentiment score' recorded a marginal improvement,



inching up from 54 in Q4 2020 to 57 in Q1 2021. This improvement can be attributed to the healthy momentum in the commercial and residential real estate segments during Q4 2020 and during January - February 2021," Knight Frank India said.

A score of over 50 signifies optimism in sentiment, a score of 50

The sentiment of stakeholders remained cautious for both Current and Future Sentiment scores in Q1 2021, owing primarily to the second wave of the pandemic, resulting in economic uncertainties

means the sentiment is neutral, while a score of below 50 shows pessimism. Similarly, the Q1 2021 outlook of

supply side stakeholders reflects caution on the future of real estate for the next six months, even if their scores remain in the optimistic zone.

With the substantial increase in Covid-19 cases since March 2021, the outlook for residential launches and sales has softened in Q1 2021.

Even so, the share of respondents that expect the residential market to grow or remain steady in the next six months is more than 80%, across parameters of launches, sales and prices.

Similarly, the second wave of Covid and the resultant mobility restrictions and possible lockdowns in some cities has adversely impacted office occupancy levels. This has resulted in weakening of the

future market outlook for the next six months.

Shishir Bajjal, Chairman and Managing Director, Knight Frank India said, "The sentiment of stakeholders remained cautious for both Current and Future Sentiment scores in Q1 2021, owing primarily to the second wave of the pandemic, resulting in economic uncertainties."

The real estate sector had seen a strong bounce-back during the last few quarters, which has kept the future sentiment of stakeholders in the positive zone, he said.

"With the central government refraining from a second nationwide lockdown, the sector would be hoping to hold onto the progress made so far," Bajjal said.

# S&P Global forecasts 11% growth for India this fiscal

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 22:** S&P Global Ratings Thursday said the Indian economy is projected to grow at 11% in the current fiscal, but flagged the "substantial" impact of broader lockdowns on the economy.

In its report on Asia-Pacific Financial Institutions, S&P said the control of Covid-19 remains a key risk for the economy. New infections have spiked in recent weeks and the country is in the middle of a second pandemic wave.

"Our forecast growth of 11% for India in 2021 is followed by a 6.1%-6.4% forecast increase for the next couple of years... Some targeted lockdowns have already been implemented and more will likely be needed. The impact of broader lockdowns on the economy could be substantial, depending on their length and scope," it said.

S&P, which currently has a "BBB-" rating on India with a stable outlook, has forecast an 11% growth in the Indian GDP for the fiscal beginning April 1 on account of a fast economic reopening and fiscal stimulus.

As per official estimates, the Indian economy contracted 8 per



## FIGHT CONTINUES

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The rating agency, which currently has a "BBB-" rating on India with a stable outlook, has forecast an 11% growth in the Indian GDP for the fiscal beginning April 1

cent in 2020-21 fiscal, which ended March 31, 2021.

Last week, another global rating agency Moody's Investors Service had said the second wave of Covid infections presents a risk to India's growth forecast, but double-digit GDP growth is likely in 2021

given the low level of activity last year.

India is in the middle of the second wave of Covid pandemic and has witnessed over 3.14 lakh new infections and 2,104 deaths Wednesday. Active Covid cases in the country stand at over 22.91 lakh.

In the report, S&P said credit conditions have improved for Asia-Pacific banks over the past quarter.

Economies are recovering smartly, countries are rolling out vaccinations, and regional financing circumstances remain supportive. And yet, the pandemic has so seriously set back the finances of households and corporates, with deeply negative effects on lenders, S&P said. It expects banks may need years to fully recover.

Public authorities across Asia-Pacific have blunted the economic effects of Covid-19. This includes an unprecedented level of fiscal and monetary policy support for households and corporates and measures to encourage banks to lend and show forbearance toward stressed borrowers.

But for this support, the hit on the Asia-Pacific financial institutions would have been much more significant.

# With Europe's economy lagging, ECB to keep stimulus running

AGENCIES

**Frankfurt, April 22:** The European Central Bank is expected to signal Thursday that even if inflation rises later this year it won't consider cutting back support for Europe's economy, which is lagging the US and China amid a drawn-out struggle with the Covid-19 pandemic.



Extended lockdowns amid a resurgence of the virus, coupled with slow vaccination rollouts, have pushed back hopes for what should eventually be a robust rebound.

The central bank for the 19 European Union countries that use the euro still has almost 900 billion Euros left in its pandemic bond purchase programme, set to run through March 2022. So analysts don't expect an announcement of

more support when the bank's 25-member governing council holds its regular policy meeting.

Instead, bank President Christine Lagarde will likely reiterate that the bank is nowhere near withdrawing any of its extraordinary measures, even if inflation jumps later this year. Consumer inflation is expected to temporarily climb above

2% annually in the later part of the year. But the bank says that will be the result of transitory factors such as the withdrawal of pandemic tax breaks and comparisons with an earlier period of very low oil prices — and not a reason to withdraw any of its efforts to keep credit cheap for companies, governments and consumers. Inflation in the eurozone was an annual 1.3% in March. The bank's goal is close to but below 2%.

# Apple pips Samsung to take 2nd spot in India tablet market



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 22:** Riding on the surge in remote work, learning and fun activities at home during the pandemic, Apple dethroned Samsung to take the second position in the India tablet market with a market share of 29% in the January-March quarter of 2021, a new report revealed Thursday.

In Q1 2021, Apple iPads continued to perform exceptionally in India with more than 140 per cent (year-on-year) growth, as per estimates by market research firm CyberMedia Research (CMR).

In Q1, Apple iPad 8 garnered 17% market share while Apple iPad Air 2020 had a 9% market share in India.

# India needs over \$400bn capex to fight climate change: Report



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 22:** The country needs over \$400 billion in capital investment which could save over 100 GW of energy and 1.1 billion tonne of greenhouse gasses between 2015 and 2030, if it goes ahead with the measures to control pollution under the Paris climate agreement, says a report.

Since the country is set to far exceed most of its 2015 Paris Agreement targets on climate change, analysts are keenly watching whether India raises its pollution curtailment targets or signals a 'net carbon neutrality' deadline at the two-day Climate Summit that began Thursday.

The government's push towards blending ethanol up to 25 per cent and move towards green hydrogen are encouraging. Bank of America Securities said in a note Thursday.

## BIZ BUZZ

### 500 tonne of liquid O2 available at JSPL Angul

**BHUBANESWAR:** The leading steelmaker Jindal Steel & Power Ltd (JSPL), in a post on Twitter, said that over 500 tonnes of liquid oxygen stock is readily available at its Angul steel-making facility. "We are waiting for the users to send their tankers. We can fill up on a first come first served basis or as per the priority decided by the Ministry of Steel," added the Twitter message. Earlier, JSPL's Chairman Naveen Jindal promised to supply medical oxygen from its Odisha and Chhattisgarh units. "JSPL has always stood with the people of India during calamities and will continue to do so now," Jindal said.



### IOB appoints EY as digital consultant



**CHENNAI:** Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) has said that it has appointed Ernst & Young (EY) as its digital consultant. According to IOB, the digital consultant would help it to stay focussed on leveraging and adopting new technologies and to enhance the service quality and service delivery to its customers. With this new initiative, the bank is poised to attract millennial customers. We will now be confident of providing customers a hassle free and seamless banking experience, said Partha Pratim Sengupta, MD & CEO of IOB.

# OPTCL signs MoU with Union Bank of India for term loan

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL), one of the largest transmission utility in the country, Thursday signed a loan agreement with Union Bank of India for term loan of ₹607.12 crore in the presence of Nikunja Bihari Dhal, Principal Secretary of Energy Department. OPTCL tweeted about the agreement in social media platform.

According to the report, the loan amount is expected to be used for construction of 18 EHT projects which was started in 2016-17. It was told that the total cost for 18 EHT projects is ₹857.12 crore.

Samir Kumar Swain, Director (Finance) and Ramakanta Pradhan, Field General Manager of Union



Bank of India signed the MoU on behalf of OPTCL and Union Bank of India respectively.

According to a government official, the state gave approval for equity infusion of ₹250 crore over a period of five years for these projects. The rest amount of ₹607.12 crore was arranged by availing loan from Union Bank of India.

According to the report, OPTCL is likely to repay the loan amount over a period of

17.75 years including moratorium period of 2.75 years.

Many nationalised banks and financing institutions participated in the bid invited by OPTCL and Union Bank of India, quoted lowest rate of interest of 7.20% MCLR with other favorable terms & conditions of loan repayment to OPTCL.

Sanjeev Singh, MD, OPTCL, all the functional directors and senior officials from OPTCL & GRIDCO were also present.

# Musk, Dorsey bat for Bitcoin as 'future' of renewable energy

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

The 'Bitcoin Clean Energy Initiative' has developed a short research paper as a "starting point to share our vision for how bitcoin mining — in conjunction with renewable energy and storage — is especially well suited to accelerate the energy transition"

**New Delhi, April 22:** Arguing for Bitcoin as a key driver of renewable energy's future on Earth Day, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey and Tesla CEO Elon Musk have come forward to support the fast-growing cryptocurrency, saying that Bitcoin incentivises renewable energy.

Dorsey's digital payment services company Square and global asset management firm ARK Invest have jointly released a white paper on "Bitcoin as Key to an Abundant, Clean Energy Future".

In a tweet Wednesday, Dorsey said: "Bitcoin incentivises renewable energy." Musk replied: "True," after tweeting that starting next week, "Tesla Solar Panels and Solar Roof will only be sold as an inte-



Elon Musk (L), Jack Dorsey (R)

grated product 'with' Tesla Powerwall battery". In the white paper, Square and ARK Invest said that "the energy asset owners of today can become the essential bitcoin miners of tomorrow".

The 'Bitcoin Clean Energy Initiative' has developed a short research paper as a "starting point to share our vision for how bitcoin mining — in conjunction with renewable energy and storage — is especially well suited to accelerate the energy transition".

To complement this work, ARK Invest has contributed an open source model that demonstrates how bitcoin mining could augment these renewable + storage systems to supply a larger percentage of a grid's base-load energy demand for comparable or lower cost unit economics.

"Bitcoin miners are unique energy buyers in that they offer highly flexible and easily interruptible load, provide payout in a globally liquid cryptocurrency, and are completely location agnostic, requiring only an internet connection," the paper read.

Bitcoin miners are an ideal complementary technology for renewables and storage.

"Combining generation with both storage and miners presents a better overall value proposition than building generation and storage alone," the research paper noted.

"By combining miners with renewables + storage projects, we believe it could improve the returns for project investors and developers, moving more solar and wind projects into profitable territory," it added.



# PADIKKAL'S ROYAL SHOW

LEFT-HANDER'S TON COMPLEMENTED BY KOHLI'S HALF CENTURY HELPS RCB SCRIPT 10-WICKET WIN OVER RAJASTHAN ROYALS



DEVIDUTT PADIKKAL

week of the tournament. Royals, with a team that hardly inspires confidence, are again looking good for bringing up the rear.

Kohli's 50 came off 34 balls and was followed by a personal milestone of 6,000 runs in IPL as Royals surrendered way before the match officially ended.

Earlier, Rahul Tewatia's (40, 23b, 4x4, 2x6) impressive death overs hitting ensured a fighting 177/9 for Rajasthan Royals after yet another familiar top order no-show.

On a good batting surface, Royals managed a total which may be 25 runs short but credit for the decent score goes to a counter-attacking effort from all-rounder Shivam Dube (46, 32b, 5x4, 2x6) which stemmed the rot and big-hits from Tewatia (40 off 23 balls) that helped them get past 175-run mark.

Dube and Riyan Parag (25) added 66 runs for the fifth wicket off only 6.2 overs to give his team's total some semblance of respectability.

For RCB, Mohammed Siraj's (3/27) off-cutter first-up cleaned Jos Buttler (8) and Manan Vohra (7), with another atrocious shot selection off Kyle Jamieson (1/28), might have ensured a lengthy spell for himself in the dug-out.

Siraj then unleashed a perfect toe-crusher for David Miller (0) as skipper Kohli made a perfect call for DRS. Samson (21), maintained his



VIRAT KOHLI

near decade-long IPL tradition of fizzling out after one or two good knocks as a six off Washington Sundar was followed by an indiscreet chip shot at mid-wicket.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Rajasthan Royals 177/9 (Shivam Dube 46, Rahul Tewatia 40, Mohammed Siraj 3/27, Harshal Patel 3/47) lost to Royal Challengers Bangalore 181/0 (Devidutt Padikkal 101 n.o., Virat Kohli 72 n.o) by 10 wickets.

## CHENNAI SUPER KINGS' IPL TURNAROUND

# Fleming credits shift in attitude

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 22: Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming has attributed the team's turnaround, after the flop show in last IPL, to a shift in attitude and addition of some key personnel.

Three-time champions CSK are occupying the top spot following three successive wins in the ongoing league, less than six months after failing to make the tournament's playoffs for the first time, in the UAE.

"Winning three out of four prob-

## 'COVID SITUATION IN MSD'S FAMILY UNDER CONTROL'

MUMBAI: CSK coach Stephen Fleming said the franchise will 'monitor' the condition of skipper MS Dhoni's parents, who are being treated at a private hospital in Ranchi after testing positive for COVID-19. "From the management point of view, we're well aware of his family situation and the support has been set up for MS and his family. The situation is under control for now but we will monitor that over the next few days," Fleming said. The former India skipper's parents, mother Devika Devi and father Pan Singh, were admitted to the hospital after testing positive for the highly contagious virus Wednesday. The New Zealander said he has spoken to the skipper about it and they have created a set-up for his family.



ably exceeded the expectations. We felt maybe three out of five or if we got a couple would be good," Fleming said at the post-match media interaction after beating Kolkata Knight Riders Wednesday.

"We're very proud of the way the batting in particular is standing up that's two 190s and two 220s. So we're playing well in that department and that's by design which is good."

While Sam Curran has carried forward his form from the last season, the real value addition has been the off-spin all-rounder Moeen Ali, who is giving them the flexibility with his hard-hitting approach at No.3. "I think we've added some players that made a difference already, but the attitude is probably the number one thing, so real mind shift.

"It's probably both of those things,

just making sure that we have a lot of batting that you can play a high-risk game and that gives confidence to the players to play a certain way.

"We felt we were a little bit thin last year to play a high-risk game. So we had to really swivel around and change more attitude than anything in this year," Fleming said.

Backing the players has been CSK skipper MS Dhoni's success mantra, and opener Ruturaj Gaikwad reposed the faith by returning to form with a 42-ball 64, which set it up for Faf du Plessis (95 not out from 60 balls) to finish the innings on a rousing note.

CSK started the ongoing league with a defeat against Delhi Capitals, but regrouped after that to win their next three matches and grab the top spot in the points table.

# Women boxers put India in 7th heaven

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 22: It was raining gold for India's women boxers at the Youth World Championships in Kielce, Poland Thursday with all seven finalists notching up splendid summit victories, making it the country's best ever performance at the marquee event.

Gitika (48kg), Babyrojisana Chanu (51kg), Poonam (57kg), Vinka (60kg), Arundhati Choudhary (69kg), Thokchom Sanamachu Chanu (75kg) and Alfiya Pathan (+81kg) ensured a perfect finish to the campaign for the women's contingent.

While Gitika prevailed 5-0 over

Poland's Natalia Kuczewska, Babyrojisana defeated Valeriia Linkova of Russia by a similar margin after a close opening round. Poonam clinched a comfortable 5-0 triumph over France's Sthelyne Grosy.

Vinka outclassed Kazakhstan's Zhuldyz Shayakhmetova, forcing the referee to stop the contest midway through the final round. Arundhati outwitted Barbara Marcinkowska 5-0 in the final.

Chanu edged past Kazakhstan's Dana Diday which ended with Indian prevailing in a split 3-2 verdict. In the last bout of the evening, Alfiya completed the gold sweep with a 5-0 hammering of Moldova's Daria Kozorez.



# MI seek consistency; PBKS eye win



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 22: Mumbai Indians would be aiming to address their batting woes to achieve consistency while Punjab Kings would be desperate to arrest their overall slide when the two sides clash in an IPL

match here Friday.

The Rohit Sharma-led Mumbai crashed to defeat against Delhi Capitals following an inept batting performance and will look for redemption. The skipper shone with the bat, but others could not get going and the misfiring middle-order would be a major concern for the side.

The MI bowlers have more often than not risen to the occasion and won matches for the team. However, they couldn't do so against Delhi and would like the batters to put up bigger scores for them to do the job.

Rohit looked in good touch against Delhi. However, Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan, stars of the team's victorious 2020 campaign, have not been able to make match-winning contributions and that has hurt MI along with middling performances from Kieron Pollard and the Pandya brothers - Hardik and Krunal.

It is still early days in this year's

**TODAY'S MATCH**

MI VS PBKS

TIME 7.30 PM

Telecast: Star Sports channels

IPL but Mumbai Indians would like its players to find form and consistency and a match against an under-performing Punjab could well be the beginning.

Punjab have flattered to deceive after a winning start. Being shot out for 120 by Sunrisers Hyderabad Wednesday hinted at bigger problems for the KL Rahul-led team, which has more than one issue to resolve, especially their composition.

The formidable batting unit hasn't hit the straps, save for Rahul and Mayank Agarwal and the bowling has been pedestrian.

'Universe Boss' Chris Gayle has not been able to boss over proceedings while his fellow West Indian Nicholas Pooran, expected to provide the big shots in the middle, has come a cropper so far.

Three straight losses would have definitely dented Punjab's morale and the team needs to recover quickly or else their play-off hopes would slip fast.

Rahul has got two fifties in four games so far but has lacked support from others. His captaincy has not inspired a lot of confidence and muddled team selection has compounded his woes.

Deepak Hooda showed what he is capable of, but greater consistency would be needed from him if the team has to prosper. They bet on Australian



pace imports Jhye Richardson and Riley Meredith to up the ante but they have proved expensive and already lost their place in the XI.

Punjab may look to bring in the talented Ravi Bishnoi in place of Murugan Ashwin and fit in Chris Jordan in the XI.

# Benzema helps Real beat Cadiz



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, April 22: Karim Benzema scored two goals and set up another to lead Real Madrid to a 3-0 win over Cadiz in the Spanish league (La Liga) in the team's first game since the implosion of the proposed Super League.

The Cadiz players wore T-shirts before the game condemning the Super League, which was proposed by some of Europe's top clubs Sunday but essentially folded within days. Madrid president Florentino Perez had been one of the key figures behind the proposal.

Alvaro Odriozola also scored as Madrid pulled even with Atletico Madrid, who have a game against Huesca. Madrid, which is ahead of Atletico on the head-to-head tiebreaker, had lost ground last weekend after being held to draw at Getafe.

Benzema opened the scoring in the 30th minute by converting a penalty awarded by video review. The French striker then set up Odriozola's close-range header with a well-placed cross in the 33rd, and added the third with a header in the 40th for his 21st league goal, moving two behind scoring leader Lionel Messi of Barcelona.

# MAN CITY, SPURS SCRIPT WINS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, April 22: A tough week for Manchester City and Tottenham, two of the rebel clubs in the aborted Super League project, got even more difficult when they fell behind on their return to Premier League action.

Both teams recovered to register vital wins and leave them in good spirits for their next match — their meeting at Wembley Stadium for the English League Cup final Sunday.

City fought back from conceding a goal after just 20 seconds to beat Aston Villa 2-1 and move 11 points clear in its march to a third league title in four years. A maximum of eight points are needed by Pep Guardiola's team from their final five games.

Each side had a man sent off at Villa Park, with City defender John Stones' straight red card for a reckless lunge late in the first half rule-



Phil Foden (C) celebrates his goal against Aston Villa with teammates

ing him out for three matches — starting with the cup final.

Tottenham needed a 90th-minute penalty from Son Heung-min to clinch a 2-1 victory over Southampton and close to within two points of fourth-place Chelsea in the race for Champions League qualification.

It was a great way for Ryan Mason to start his interim tenure as manager, as the replacement for the fired Jose Mourinho. At 29 years, 312 days, Mason became the youngest person to manage a team in a Premier League game.

Phil Foden stood out, the 20-year-old England forward cancelling out John McGinn's very early opener for Villa by scoring the equalizer with a volley at the end of a flowing team move involving Riyad Mahrez and Bernardo Silva. Rodri glanced in Bernardo's deft cross for what proved to be the winner in the 40th.

Stones' red card, for a late and high lunge on Jacob Ramsey, left City

vulnerable but Matty Cash picked up two yellow cards in a three-minute span — both for fouls on Foden — to make it a 10-a-side game from the 57th.

Tottenham climbed into sixth place with the win over Southampton and the fight for the two Champions League qualification places behind City and United looks fierce. Just three points separate Leicester in third from Liverpool in seventh.

Mason's decision to recall Gareth Bale for his first start in more than a month was rewarded when the Wales forward equalized with a curling shot into the top corner in the 60th, cancelling out the opener by Danny Ings in the 30th.

Son was handed a chance to win the game from the penalty spot after Sergio Reguilon was fouled just inside the area, thanks to a VAR check. Son sent the goalkeeper the wrong way.

# Jerry signs long-term deal with Odisha FC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 22: Odisha FC reached an agreement with Jerry Mawihmingthanga over a contract extension that will see the Mizoram winger retained on a long-term contract.

The 24-year-old winger, with five assists from 17 games, recorded the maximum number of assists by an Indian in the previous season of Indian Super League.

In addition to that, he also scored two goals. Jerry played 34 matches in two seasons for Odisha FC scoring four goals and providing 10 assists in total and bagged the FPAI Young Player of the Year Award for 2019-20 season as well. He had also represented Hero ISL clubs - NorthEast United FC and Jamshedpur FC after starting his career at DSK Shivajians Academy.

"We are delighted Jerry has committed his long term future to the club. He was one of the standout players last season and is integral to our ambitions of building a side competing for honours. There will be further exciting news being announced shortly which I am sure will delight our supporters," explained club president Raj Athwal.

Expressing his delight over contract extension, Jerry said, "I am very happy that I will continue playing for Odisha FC. I have always enjoyed my time at the club and am looking forward to the same in my upcoming days with the team."

"I am extremely thankful to the club management for their continuous support and would want to make the club and its fans proud with some good performances in the future."

